



REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS



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FICTION

Adler, David A. and Terry Widener. *THE BABE AND I*. San Diego: Gulliver Books, 1997. 28p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$16.00, ISBN 0-15-201378-4. 97-37580. (Juvenile)

Texas illustrator Terry Widener's remarkable acrylic paintings vividly bring to life David Adler's tale of a young boy in the Bronx who helps his family during the Depression. Although his dad leaves for work each day with a briefcase, a boy (who remains nameless) is startled to discover his dad selling apples on the street. His father does not see him, so he keeps the secret. The boy determines to get a job, and his friend Jacob teaches him to be a "newsie" selling newspapers at Yankee Stadium by calling attention to the exploits of Babe Ruth. Other boys tout the front-page headlines, but Jacob and the boy have figured out a profitable sales pitch. An actual sale to the Babe of a newspaper nets the boy a five-dollar bill that he promptly spends to purchase tickets for Jacob and himself to see a Yankees' game.

The paintings, done in a style popular in the 1930s, are bold and colorful and accent the role baseball played in providing entertainment to Americans during a difficult period of history. Young readers will enjoy this story about moneymaking projects, the Depression, unemployment, baseball, and teamwork.

Sally Dooley

Bonner, Cindy. *RIGHT FROM WRONG*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1999. 329p. Hardcover: \$21.95, ISBN 1-56512-104-X. 98-044870.

A sad love story, *Right from Wrong* is Cindy Bonner's fourth novel chronicling the lives of the DeLony, Lange, and O'Barr families who live in rural McDade, Texas. Beginning in 1913 when cousins twelve-year-old Sunny DeLony and fourteen-year-old Gil Dailey begin puberty, their relationship as playmates evolves into adult sexual attraction. Their mothers, who are sisters, preach to them that it is wrong to feel that way since they share blood. It would almost be incest, they warn. But in attempting to deny their feelings and "do what is right," these two young people make disastrous choices. The immaturity of the pair combined with

their selfishness hurts them and their families. Truly their parents and culture failed to teach them the difference between right and wrong. The novel is an absorbing tragedy about love, loyalty, divorce, family condemnation, and finally exile and death. Details of daily life during World War I and a description of the changes it wrought provide a realistic setting for the star-crossed lovers.

Bonner's earlier novels about the predecessors of Gil and Sunny are *Lily*, *Looking After Lily*, and *The Passion of Dellie O'Barr*. The author, a native Texan now living in Yorktown, Texas, received honors for her previous books from the American Library Association, and the novels have been translated into Spanish and German. *Right from Wrong* won the Pen Texas Award in 1997.

Sally Dooley

Braun, Matt. *RIO GRANDE* (originally *THE STUART WOMEN*). New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 358p. Paperback: \$5.99, ISBN 0-312-96663-6.

Interest in "westerns" has waned. Many writers, though, recognize that the history of the American West, as recorded in early fiction, was formulaic and non-representative of the true West. Today's western writers follow no formula. The authenticity of place is a major difference; another is the consciousness of the characters.

In *Rio Grande*, formerly printed in 1980 as *The Stuart Women*, the male protagonist is Irish, Tom Stuart. He is boorish. He chews tobacco, gambles, and is ready with his guns. He has a vision of a Tom Stuart shipping empire on the Rio Grande. Arranging for new river steamers with his new designs, he goes to New Orleans where he is treated to another vision—a beautiful Creole girl, born of sunbeams—exotic, yet doll-like.

The two are fascinated with each other and are married despite cultural and family differences. His return to Brownsville with his bride Jovette effects racial conflicts, but she adapts. She separates this "western" from others as she develops a realization of herself as a woman and proceeds to avail herself of the empowerment such consciousness brings.

Complications arise when a ruthless competitor attempts to take over the financial empire Tom is building. The story is historically accurate, set during the time Zachary Taylor brought the boundary dispute between Mexico and Texas to an end in 1847. Braun

takes full advantage of twentieth century attitudes.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

Cooper, J. California. *THE WAKE OF THE WIND*. New York: Doubleday, 1998. 373p. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-385-48704-5. 98-21594.

Around the time of the Civil War there was a saying that the period of life the Southern plantation owners had known was "gone with the wind." But as Texas author J. California Cooper notes in this arresting novel, the wake of the wind was nearly as challenging and horrifying to the newly-freed black slaves as slavery had been. After centuries of being chattel of white owners, the slaves had no family structure and were further hampered with ignorance and illiteracy. The wind then caught these people and tossed them about; they lived with fear, hunger, and homelessness. They faced profound prejudice everywhere. Still, they strove to make a new life for themselves and to own land to work.

When Emancipation came to Texas, Lifee, an educated black woman, and her husband Mor fled their plantation in East Texas and walked for three months across three states seeking a better life. They were joined by other freemen and women who had no families either, so together they formed an extended family economic unit. Everyone worked and contributed what they could for the good of the group. Lifee began educating them. They successfully farmed some land, but disguised themselves as raggedly poor and inexperienced so as not to arouse the envy of poor whites. After several lynchings and fires, they decided it was dangerous to remain in Alabama and they trudged on to Savannah, taking in more poor strays en route. They worked hard and saved their precious money. Lifee's children and those of others were educated and even sent to the colleges newly opening for blacks. Constantly the reader is made aware of how harsh conditions were in the South after the Civil War, but Lifee not only endured — she prevailed. She exulted at the end: "I must have my life. It is worth it. I'll bear the white man's yoke. I make money to protect us from its weight. But I am the better off, I think. I am me. And my own is my own; before me and after me. My ancestors were from Africa and they suffered to survive. For me, though they did not know it. For the future which they did not know. And I am here. Me and mine. I am me."

Cooper accurately captures the hardships these people endured in a compelling story that fleshes out what one might read in a history book about the period. The characters are memorable, and the plot reveals the horrors of slavery and the deep roots of prejudice in modern culture. America has come a long way with desegregation, civil rights, and affirmative action, but much work remains to be done. Told simply and in some dialect, the novel is easy and absorbing reading. Cooper's previous novels are *Family* and *In Search of Satisfaction* and five collections of short stories, in-

cluding *Homemade Love*, which won the American Book Award in 1989.

Sally Dooley

Cuyler, Margery and Yu Cha Pak. *FROM HERE TO THERE*. New York: Henry Holt and Co. Inc., 1999. 30p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$16.95, ISBN 0-8050-3191-X. 98-19647. (Juvenile)

Vivid colored illustrations by Yu Cha Pak depict Margery Cuyler's simple text in this delightful read-aloud book. The story line introduces the reader to Maria Mendoza and her place in her family, neighborhood, town, county, and state. The paintings continue describing Maria's location in the United States, North America, Western Hemisphere, and Earth and on to the solar system, galaxy, and universe. Undoubtedly, this book will help youngsters understand their unique place in creation, especially when the child is nestled in the lap of a favored grown-up.

Margery Cuyler is the author of numerous children's books, and she lives in New Jersey. Houstonian Yu Cha Pak, a Korean native, was the illustrator of Texan Naomi Shihab Nye's *Benito's Dream Bottle*. Her bold drawings are beautiful to look at and make the text meaningful and alive. Let's hope Cuyler and Pak team up again on another book.

Sally Dooley

Diaz, Tony. *THE AZTEC LOVE GOD*. Normal: FC2, 1998. 156p. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 1-57366-0361. 98-17585.

How can a young man rise to obscurity? This the question Tony Diaz addresses in *The Aztec Love God*, a dark comedy full of multicultural conflict and generational differences. The protagonist is Tio, a young Latino man struggling to become a comedian whose persona is the Aztec Love God. However, Tio has many obstacles with which he must contend. He literally grew up and still lives in the Clever's home where "Leave It to Beaver" was filmed. His father, in an attempt to combat "Sombrero Hysteria," cashed in a CD designated for Tio's college education, purchased the house, and had it moved to Chicago. Consequently, Tio feels his life is a version of "Leave It to Burro," in which he stars as the burro.

Tio's goal in life is to become a successful comedian; however, his girlfriend, her family, and his family all disagree with his plan. Then enters Jester, an older comedian who wants to promote Tio's career. The young man is then conflicted because he must decide whether he will perform Latino stereotypes as Jester demands or try to develop the Aztec Love God on his own.

Janet K. Turk

Douglas, Carole Nelson. CAT IN AN INDIGO MOOD: A MIDNIGHT LOUIE MYSTERY. New York: Forge Books, 1999. 381p. Hardcover: \$24.99, ISBN 0-312-86635-6. 98-643455.

This is the tenth book in the mystery series featuring Midnight Louie and his amateur detective roommate Temple Barr. The setting is the ever busy Las Vegas, Nevada. Readers of the previous title in this series will be pleased to have Detective Molina take a more substantial role. All the favorite characters are still part of the story, including the mysterious Max, mild mannered Matt Devin, and the lovable landlady Miss Electra Lark.

Carmen Molina finds herself in the midst of murder, not unusual for a homicide detective. This time however, her personal car is part of the crime scene. The body of the female victim is found in the parking lot of the Blue Dahlia, a blues nightclub. Does this crime have any bearing on Carmen's personal life? Is she in personal danger? The clue "She Left" is wide open for interpretation. Carmen is very careful about the safety of her own teenage daughter and has been very successful in keeping her career separate from her home life up to now. Carmen finds that she needs to seek help from unlikely sources for her own peace of mind.

Temple Barr and Midnight Louie share an apartment and expertise in crime solving. Temple is very surprised when Detective Molina asks for her special assistance since Temple's former roommate, the Mysterious Max, is under careful police scrutiny. While Temple and Carmen work on solving the human crimes, Midnight Louie teams up with his (maybe) daughter, Midnight Louise. They have their own puzzle to solve when the whereabouts of a client's boyfriend needs to be determined. Midnight Louie knows his limitations and asks for help from unlikely sources. Recommended for public libraries.

Dorothy Leising

Epner, Paul. HERBERT HILLIGAN AND HIS MAGICAL LUNCHBOX. Austin: Eakin Press, 1994. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$13.95, ISBN 1-57168-255-4. 95.133171. (Juvenile)

Herbert Hilligan begins his day in the ordinary way, waking up, eating his breakfast, fixing his lunch in his "cool" lunchbox, and getting on the bus. From there, this tale takes the reader on a wild ride. It all starts when the bus has no brakes. Herbert's magical lunch box saves the day by transforming into a huge teddy bear that cushions the bus to a stop so no one is hurt. Then Herbert takes a balloon ride (in his magic lunchbox, of course), and when the balloon pops, he lands in jello (more transformations!). A large lake full of crocodiles is no match for Herbert and his lunchbox boat. Finally, he makes it to school where he is able to whip through his math test. Herbert's adventures are fun, and the colorful illustrations are a good fit with the

story. The author uses rhyming, which will make this a great read-aloud book for primary grades.

Diane Fusaro

Epner, Paul. HERBERT HILLIGAN'S PREHISTORIC ADVENTURE. Austin: Eakin Press, 1997. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$13.95, ISBN 1-57168-256-2. (Juvenile)

Herbert and his magical lunchbox are back! This time Herbert's lunchbox transforms into a time machine, allowing Herbert to travel to the era of the dinosaurs. A brontosaurus becomes a huge slide, thanks to Herbert's lunchbox, which changes into steps leading up the beast's large back. Herbert flies in his lunchbox plane with a pterodactyl, and he rides a triceratops, which takes his new friend on a tour. Of course, no dinosaur book would be complete without T-rex making an appearance. Luckily, Herbert's lunchbox transforms back into the time machine before he becomes dinosaur dinner.

While this tale is fantastical and wild, its strength lies in the author's use of math throughout the story, making this book a real teaching tool. Herbert does not just slide down the back of a brontosaurus, he slides down "one less than ten" times. And the stairs which were "steep and tall" numbered "six dozen in all." How long is a triceratops' shortest horn? $[50 - (20 \times 2)]$. And the T-rex is twenty-one times taller than Herbert's four-foot height.

As in the first Herbert book, the author uses rhyme, making the story a delight to read aloud. He even uses rhyming for the mathematical story problems, which may add a language-related challenge for some students. The illustrations provide a lot of color and interest to the book. Excellent for the middle elementary grades.

Diane Fusaro

Jenkins, Dan. RUDE BEHAVIOR. New York: Doubleday, 1998. 421p. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-385-47000-2. 98-24275.

Disappointing. One of us has changed, and I did not have the energy to reread any of Jenkins' earlier sports spoofs to help me decide which one of us it was. The preposterous story line of seeking a pro-football team for the rural area between Amarillo and Lubbock is just a vehicle to put 421 pages of contrived one-liners into print. Excepting the addition of some smaller-than-life Fort Worth barflies and ex-jocks, the crowd of characters is mostly the same: Barbara Jane, Shrake, and Big Ed (but I did not stick with it long enough to encounter them except in Billy Clyde's chatter). Sex and drinking are the most popular pass times in the 100 pages I trudged through. Don't get me wrong, there are a few chuckles and even a few cynical messages about sports and life buried deep in the bar room repartee. If

this book makes into a movie, my guess is that it will be X-rated and animated. Sorry, Dan, I would have enjoyed a bad round of golf more than this novel.

Jenkins' previous novels are Semi-Tough, Dead Solid Perfect, and Limo with Bud Shrake. The nonfiction books of Jenkins include The Best 18 Golf Holes in America, Fairways and Greens, and You Call It Sports But I Say It's a Jungle Out There. He began as a newspaper sports writer in Fort Worth and gained fame as a mainstay at Sports Illustrated magazine.

A.R. Dooley

Juárez, Tina. SOUTH WIND COME. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1998. 286p. Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 1-55885-231-X. 98-10312.

The turbulent history of Texas, Mexico, and the United States after the Texas Revolution is the backdrop of Tina Juárez's second novel. As a sequel to the thrilling Call No Man Master, this new book continues the story with the granddaughter of the heroine of that novel, Carmen Rangel. As headstrong as her grandmother, Teresa and her family continue to play pivotal roles as history unfolds around the issue of slavery and Mexico's political struggles. In frontier Texas, Sam Houston is president of the republic of Texas and a close family friend. His conversations with Teresa reveal much about early Texas and its problems. As slavery grows as a divisive issue, Sam Houston's thinking greatly influences young Teresa. On the Texas border, she and her grandmother assist runaway slaves who are escaping to freedom in Mexico. The United States' invasion of Mexico is shown to be a misadventure, but during this time, Teresa becomes friends with U.S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, both young lieutenants. These associations will prove useful in the future when America is split during the Civil War and Mexico is rife with war between the followers of Benito Juárez and internal forces as well as the French attempt to crown Maximilian. Teresa is a spunky gal, street smart and dedicated to the abolition of slavery. She falls in love with Jorge Montemayor who sides with Juárez. This draws Teresa into intrigue on both sides of the border. Finally she is the one person with vital information that can mean the end of the Civil War or the extension of fighting.

Fast moving and entertaining, this novel depicts an important period in Texas history. Occasionally the dialogue is a little stilted as Ms. Juárez endeavors to convey facts in the framework of fiction. Also abolitionist activities are often referred to but never detailed, so they seem only to provide a reason for Carmen and Teresa's location on the border where most of the action is. Still the book piques one's interest to read more deeply about this period.

Sally Dooley

Judd, Cameron. SNOW SKY. New York: St. Martin's

Press, 1990. 220p. Paperback: \$5.99, ISBN 0-312-96647-4. 91-287711r93

Judd, Cameron. TEXAS FREEDOM. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 297p. Paperback: \$5.99, ISBN 0-312-96809-4.

Judd, Cameron. TIMBER CREEK. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 188p. Paperback: \$5.99, ISBN 0-312-96767-5. 89-3768911r93.

Cameron Judd is touted as the New Voice of the Old West. Given time, distance, and a body of literature to draw from, a writer may create a story more authentic than earlier tales. What's "new" in Judd's novels, however, is complexity of his plots, as if he is inspired by the axiom "Oh, what a tangled web we weave / When first we practice to deceive." Adding mystery to western writing is a trend publishers encourage.

Snow Sky opens with mystery. Tudor Cochran and his wife operate an inn on the road to Snow Sky. A man of few words and a disturbed boy stop overnight. The wife insists Tudor follow them and bring the boy back should there be problems.

An intricate story line follows with a charlatan, Rev. Josh Lybrand. With his murderous gang, he defrauds the church people, robs and kills any and all whose deaths benefit him. Tudor, who dares not return home without solving the boys dilemma, cooperates with the outgunned sheriff to find truth amid the tangled web of Lybrand's lies.

In Texas Freedom, Bushrod Underhill, a Missourian, has been made into a folk hero by exaggerated tales of his scouting the frontier and fighting Indians. The book is an embarrassment to Bush. Judd has constructed another plot with a fraudulent empire builder at the center of the web of lies, William Trippler. Trippler has taken prisoner Bush's eldest son and family (and a very sick man, supposedly Davy Crockett) for blackmail.

Bush and his boys scotch the treason and bring about the demise of Trippler. When Bush returns home with a land grant from Sam Houston, he says to his wife, "You will love Texas, Lorry. It's a new place. A grand place." Because of the labyrinthine plot, the preposterous flimflam, the incredible acts of bravery of the Underhill family, Judd could be parodying the Buntlines of early westerns.

Timber Creek is an on-the-road story. Luke McCan goes to the Black Hills of Dakota seeking gold, but he stops over at Deadwood. Temporarily he drives a freight wagon, making a friend of a black man. On the street some cowboy calls his buddy "nigger" and a scrap ensues. Witness to the trouble, Evan Bridger, a stranger, takes McCan's side and teaches him to shoot. Later, Caleb Black, McCan's mining partner, finds his brother dead at the hand of Evan Bridger. For ten years the friends "dog and cat" Bridger and eventually achieve the vengeance they sought. McCan takes

to the road again.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

Kutchinski, Marjorie. *LIBERTY, JUSTICE, & F'RALL: THE DOG HEROES OF THE TEXAS REPUBLIC*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1998. 138p. Paperback: \$9.95. ISBN 1-57168-227-9. 97-48558. (Juvenile)

Marjorie Kutchinski has found a fun and inventive way to present history through the eyes of three dogs named Liberty, Justice and F'rall. The story of Sam Houston's life and exploits will never be the same after reading this book about three dogs who help him achieve hero status. These dogs are loyal, brave, and loving rascals. They are also key to Sam Houston's success against Santa Anna and the Mexican army during Texas' battle for independence.

This tale takes the reader from Sam Houston's early life with the Cherokee to his friendship with Jim Bowie, and through various adventures and misadventures, with a lot of help from the dogs. The battle between the Mexican people and the Texans brews throughout the entire book, leading up to Houston's being made General of the Texas army, his struggle to train the men and keep them together, and the final battle with the defeat of Santa Anna.

Throughout, the dogs are helpmates, clowns, and companions. They keep Houston warm when he is cold, and they find game for him when he is hungry. They are messengers, herders, and friends. Liberty, the original dog of the trio, is Houston's best friend, and tries to teach his human mentor about silence as well as allowing Houston to rub his head so he can think better. Liberty is also tireless in keeping Justice and F'rall in line, stopping only occasionally to roll in some wonderful poop.

Kutchinski obviously knows dogs and has used their natural charm to create a great way to help students, especially animal lovers, remember their Texas history. This book also provides a natural way to compare fiction and nonfiction, as students can check the book for historical accuracy. It gives teachers an example of how their students can present a piece of written history as part of a creative writing project, telling the story from the point-of-view of an animal. A wonderful book for schools and libraries.

Diane Fusaro

Martinez, Manuel Luis. *CROSSING*. Tempe: Bilingual Press, 1998. 119p. Paperback: \$11.00, ISBN 0-927534-80-0. 98-35881.

Based on the newspaper account of thirteen undocumented Mexicans who were found suffocated in a railroad car near El Paso, *Crossing* is a horrific exploration of how this dangerous journey affected the men. Luis

is a sixteen-year-old Mexican who wants to make money to help his widowed mother. When an unscrupulous "coyote" arranges for him and twelve others to cross the border in a boxcar, they all pay money for this opportunity to find work. The short trip stretches into days of extreme heat, a shortage of water, no food, and a growing restlessness among the men. Luis befriends an aged man, Berto, who realizes that this trip is certain death, and he confesses a terrible secret to Luis. Berto sincerely believes that the devil is on board the train, and as the merciless sun and dehydration degrade the men, Luis agrees with Berto. Dead and murdered bodies litter the floor that is covered with vomit and excrement. The stench is sickening, and Pablo, the evil man, threatens the men with an axe. Martinez writes with a gritty realism about this crossing, but he demonstrates a wisdom about life through his characters and themes. The fear of the men turns the boxcar into a hell presided over by the devil with whom each man must contend. At the end Luis must face his own devil if he is to survive.

Born and raised in San Antonio, Martinez is an assistant professor in the English department at Indiana University in Bloomington. This is his first novel, and readers will want more of his spare and simple style that provides both meaningful and intriguing reading.

Sally Dooley

Medearis, Angela Shelf. *POPPA'S ITCHY CHRISTMAS*. New York: Holiday House, 1998. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$15.95. ISBN 0-8234-1298-9. 96-40170. (Juvenile)

This is a wonderful, magical tale about Christmas and presents. George is a young boy living with Poppa and Grandma Tiny. Big Mama and Aunt Viney are visiting for the holidays, and the story begins with George waking everyone to open Christmas presents.

George makes guesses about each present before he opens it. The first should be a BB gun, but Aunt Viney has given him an extraordinarily long and ugly muffler. The next present is sure to be a baseball mitt, but it isn't. Big Mama has given George and Poppa a pair of itchy, red long underwear. Finally, deciding against any more guessing, George opens his last present — oh joy! Ice skates.

Later, Big Mama finds George under the bed, where he is hiding with the ham that he has filched. George is ordered to cut firewood, and before he goes, he is told to put on his long underwear. Aunt Viney wraps the new long scarf around his neck, arms and chest to keep him warm, and Big Mama tells George to put on his new long underwear. George doesn't mind too much. He takes his ice skates planning to try them after he cuts the firewood. Unfortunately, the ice is thin, and soon George is in trouble, floundering in the water. Poppa saves George, using the long, ugly scarf to reach him and pull him out. And the itchy, red long under-

wear is so large that it gets hooked on a piece of ice at the pond's surface, keeping George afloat.

The illustrations by John Ward are wonderful. Together with the words, the people become quite real. The expressions on George's face throughout the book are especially precious. And the language is clever; for example, Big Mama tells George "It's so cold out today, my false teeth froze while they were soaking."

The best part of this book is that its words and pictures so clearly illustrate the happiness and love shared by the characters. The message of how much George is loved is clear, but the lesson about accepting and being thankful for gifts, even those that we think we don't want is an important one. As George says, "Looks like the present I wanted got me into trouble, and the presents I hated saved my life."

Diane Fusaro

Sachar, Louis. *HOLES*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. 233 p. Hardcover: \$16.00. ISBN 0-374-33265-7. 97-45011. (Young Adult)

Young readers should find *Holes* by Louis Sachar, an Austin-based writer, an intriguing and enjoyable novel. The word "holes" in the title refers to holes that must be dug by the main character Stanley Yelnats and other boys at Camp Green Lake, a Texas boot camp for juvenile offenders. The novel describes the injustice that leads to Stanley's coming to the camp and the internal and external conflicts with which he must deal. To become a leader Stanley learns to cope with his own problems, as well as with the harsh physical environment and the cruelty of the camp bully and camp administrators.

Sachar interweaves three plots: Stanley's story; the story of his family members who alternately feel fatalistic and hopeful; and the story of Camp Green Lake. The novel ends happily with the reader cheering for Stanley. The novel's strengths are its multiple plot lines and its unique, well-developed characters with whom young readers can identify. The author's sense of humor and ability to create suspense make the book fun and exciting to read. His emphasis on moral courage makes the book especially valuable.

As a lawyer who is now a prolific children's book author, Sachar deals well with several social justice issues. These include the abuses of children's rights by those in the legal and law enforcement community; the inequitable legal treatment of the poor; and the questionable effectiveness of such juvenile justice approaches as boot camps. Some readers may find the plot to be improbable with too many coincidences and a contrived ending. Others, however, may find that the author's use of fantasy and exaggeration contributes to the book's appeal.

Holes should provide thought-provoking, entertaining

reading for youth and be appreciated by teachers and librarians. The book received the 1999 John Newbery Award and the 1998 National Book Award for Young People's Literature.

Jan Kilby

Scott, D. Travers. *EXECUTION, TEXAS*: 1987. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. 211p. Hardcover: \$20.95, ISBN 0-312-16830-6. 97-15661.

D. Travers Scott's debut novel is set in one of the former small towns now turning into a strip-malled suburb east of Dallas. Seeger King, a senior at Execution High School, struggles through a world of woe: confused sexual orientation, divorced parents, drink and drugs, and most of all a longing for a personal identity that will convert his alienation into something different and special.

Seeger's efforts to navigate the choppy waters among his girlfriend's needs, the allure of the charismatic school athlete he really desires, the normalcy of his father and stepmother's suburban sincerity, and the wackiness of a distant demanding New Age mother, all combine to comprise the plot. Finding comfort in his Walkman and excitement down the freeway in the Dallas club scene, he stumbles toward escape to New York City.

The novel, which is freighted by improbable mysticism, succeeds at least in giving a realistic and sympathetic picture of disaffected teen life in the burgeoning Texas suburbs.

Randall Holdridge

Scott, Anne C. *OLD JAKE'S SKIRTS*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Publishing Co., 1998. 36p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$15.95, ISBN: 0-87358-615-8. 97-42328. (Juvenile)

The book begins with a hermit named Jake, his dog, Shoestring, and an old trunk full of colorful women's skirts that Jake finds in the road. When no one claims the clothing, Jake finds himself using the skirts for different things. One skirt clothes his scarecrow, and another becomes neckerchiefs for Jake and his dog. The horse gets a new feedbag, and new pillows, drapes, and patches in old clothing take on the patterns of beautiful calico skirts. Slowly, Jake's barren existence becomes rich with color. This transformation cheers him, the crops grow better than ever, and Jake even greets visitors with a cordiality that he never has before.

One day a girl and her father come to claim the missing trunk. The girl's mother, who died, was the original owner of the trunk. By then, there is only one skirt left, which Jake is glad to give to the little girl, but he feels badly that this is all he has left. To try and cheer the child, Jake offers her a choice of one of the woodcarvings that he is always working on. She chooses the carving of a small girl in a calico skirt.

A simple story on the surface, this book could mean a lot to a child trying to deal with loss. The spirit of the dead mother and wife took over the care of Jake and his dog. Her skirts comforted Jake and made his existence richer and fuller. In return, Jake was able to offer a precious gift to the little girl. After the "year of the skirts," as Jake liked to think of it, his life had changed forever. He was no longer a hermit, and by the end of the story, he finds himself married.

This tale is made richer by the illustrations by David Slonim, which are lovely. The pictures of Shoestring are especially charming, as are the ones featuring the First Baptist Church of Quail's Good Samaritan Ladies' Committee, who are determined to change Jake and his independent ways.

This is a story about the timelessness of life. As long as someone lives in memory or deed, he or she is never really dead. The woman's skirts were her memory, and they helped an old man find his life.

Diane Fusaro

Skibell, Joseph. *ABLESSING ON THE MOON*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1997. 256p. Hardcover: \$21.95, ISBN 1-56512-179-1. 97-18788.

In a remarkably original debut novel, Joseph Skibell establishes himself as a major talent. *ABlessing on the Moon* is a surreal tale told against the backdrop of the Holocaust where Skibell lost eighteen members of his Polish forebears. As a child growing up in America, this historical event was not talked about, leaving Skibell, with a lack of understanding of what happened and the horror of it. Unlike other fictional works about this period, Skibell uses fantasy, folk tales, and religious imagery to give a memorable rendering of the Holocaust. The novel opens as Chaim Skibelski and other Polish villagers are rounded up, shot by the Germans, and buried in a mass pit. Instead of a blissful rest in the World to Come, Chaim has the ability to roam the earth with his bleeding wounds for reasons he does not understand. He returns to his former home, now occupied by a Christian family, where he befriends a dying girl. In his further extraordinary adventures, he journeys with his town rabbi, who is now a crow; he carries a talking decapitated head that belongs to one of the soldiers who shot him; and they visit a grand hotel that turns menacing. The moon falls from the sky at the novel's beginning seeming to symbolize that God's order for the world has been disrupted by men. It is only after his travels that Chaim can help restore the moon, now pock-marked and bloody, to its rightful position. He is finally able to praise the God who earlier he was questioning, "What are You thinking?" Now he can rest.

This is a rewarding book to read for its plot, its complexities, and its collage of visual images; it is literature. Skibell is a recipient of a James A. Michener Fellowship, and he earned an MFA from the University

of Texas Center for Writers. Presently he teaches at the University of Wisconsin.

Sally Dooley

Townsend, Tom. *NADIA OF THE NIGHTWITCHES*. Unionville, New York: Royal Fireworks Press, 1998. 158p. Paperback: \$7.99, ISBN 0-88092-273-7. 98-226273. (Young Adult)

Tom Townsend has written another action-packed young adult novel based on the real experiences of Russia's Nightwitches, the courageous women who piloted tiny 1920s open-cockpit biplanes in daring night bombing raids on the German invaders. Nadia, a fifteen-year-old peasant girl, witnessed the killing of her family by German tank troops; frantically, she fled from the collapsed barn and was rescued from her German captors by a leader of the Nightwitches. She becomes the squadron mascot and then graduates from flight school to become a nightwitch herself. Because of her desire for revenge and her expectation of imminent death, she becomes a very skillful, daring pilot with a German price on her head. She tries not to care deeply about anyone, but her strong friendship with other pilots and her navigator, a budding romance plagued by lengthy separation and the uncertainty of life, and a growing disenchantment with war are a part of her maturing process. This slice of world history reveals the horrors of war through the eyes of one of America's allies. The author has written twenty-three books including juvenile, young adult, mainstream, historical romance, and dark fantasy as well as movie and television scripts. The suspense in this tale will keep the reader turning pages to the end. An epilog records the historical facts about three of the main characters.

Frances M. Ramsey

Vaughan, Robert. *ADOBE WALLS*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 272p. Paperback: \$5.99, ISBN 0-31296-737-3.

This enjoyable novel is fairly accurate historically. However, it leaves something to be desired geographically. The author, Robert A. Vaughan, has incorporated several historical figures into Hank Tyreen, the main character, but this in no way takes away from the story. Tyreen moves through the last half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. He meets Lt. Col. George A. Custer, Capt. Frederick Benteen, Wild Bill Hickock, and Bat Masterson. He is an Indian scout, lawman, and buffalo hunter. There is the raid at the Washita River by Custer where they rescue a white woman captive who becomes Tyreen's wife. Bat Masterson tames Dodge City with Tyreen's help, and this is where he meets Bill Hickock. He then takes up buffalo hunting and is very successful. In the climactic scene of the book, Tyreen is credited with making an incredible shot, over a mile, which kills an Indian chief whose band of warriors has Adobe Walls and its contingent of buffalo hunters under siege. Adobe Walls, located in North Texas, was a trading post defended by a handful

of hunters against five hundred Indians. When Tyreen kills the chief, the Indians lose the will to fight and everyone is saved. This book is recommended for public libraries and all readers of Western lore.

Jayne Kitterman

POETRY

Bedell, Jack. *AT THE BONEHOUSE*. Huntsville: Texas Review Press, 1998. 48p. Paperback: \$11.00, ISBN 1-881515-16-8. 97-44278.

Winner of the 1997 Texas Review Poetry Prize, Jack Bedell's collection of poetry, *At the Bonehouse*, offers a refreshing perspective of life. His use of imagery and command of language eloquently paint pictures of everyday life, emotions, and landscape, which move beyond the ordinary. The collection is divided into three sections: "Sunday-Morning Voices," "A Strange Impatience," and "The Slow, Consuming Burn of Water."

The title poem, "At the Bonehouse," describes the speaker's contemplation of death, or more precisely, his thoughts of burial processes as he watches his father pay the last installment on the family mausoleum. After the father pays the bills, he "smiles, / some adult pressure relieved, / some burden of ambiguity sealed." Meanwhile, Jack, the son, notes the locations of the future dead: "Five Bedells choose their spots— / mine, upper right corner, / farthest from the water that pulls / at everything here until it's gone." On a lighter note, Bedell offers "Hunting Quail on Strange Land with an Environmental Dog." In this sonnet, the speaker wakes early for a quail hunt only to be dragged through briars, over stinkweeds, and past bee hives. Never does the dog lead him to the coveted quail. "This new-age dog, it seems, works only to please / environmentalists," and the speaker finds "a curious wisdom at last—/ abandon desire; move toward breakfast."

At the Bonehouse offers twenty-eight poems, each skillfully crafted. The collection will be a welcome addition to bookshelves of all poetry lovers. *Sleeping with the Net-Maker* is another chapbook written by Bedell. It won the Devil's Millhopper competition.

Janet K. Turk

Karr, Mary. *VIPER RUM*. New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1998. 96p. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-8112-1382-X.

Karr has a few images in *Viper Rum* that are fresh and unusual. A tree snake becomes a "single strand of luminous-green linguini" in "Viper Rum," her flagship poem, and the speaker's front porch turns into the "maw of some great beast" in "The Century's Worst Blizzard." However, overall the collection's similes are inconsistent and weak. She even lapses into a few old tried and true images in other poems: a woman is

"gnarled like tree roots" in "Beauty and the Shoe Sluts," smoke curls like "alter offerings" in "Four of the Horsemen (Hypertense and Stroke, Coronary Occlusion and Cerebral Insult)," and boys "leap like wild stags" in "Lifecycle Stairmaster." She does use active verbs coupled with unusual nouns, though this too is used inconsistently. Using "ream" to describe heart surgery in "Four of the Horsemen" is undermined by the triteness of a "lo" in "Requiem for a New Year" and a "dear reader" in "Dead Drunk (Or the Monster-Maker at Work)." Karr complains in her afterward about Amy Clampitt's vague references to Greek mythology, yet she does the same thing herself. Though Karr does word her poem so that the reader who may not be familiar with *Arelus* understands she is referring to a leader who meditates in his tent before every battle in "The Last of the Brooding Miserables." The afterward in "Viper Rum" is an essay titled "Against Decoration," a Pushcart Prize winner, which also set off a major controversy when it was first published in *Parnassus*. Coupled with this collection of poems, however, it sounds more like a diatribe against something Karr is unable, not willing, to do. When an author pulls down traditions or standards or ideas in writing—Karr dislikes ornamental language and neo-formalism—he or she must have something better and more innovative to erect in their place. Karr's *Viper Rum* does not.

Rita Self

SHORT STORIES

Hynes, James. *PUBLISH AND PERISH: THREE TALES OF TENURE AND TERROR*. New York: Picador USA Press, 1998. 335p. Paperback: \$14.00, ISBN 0-312-19696-7. 96-53532.

In *Publish and Perish*, Hynes presents three unique short stories with a common thread well known to those in the academic setting: the need to publish or lose a job. While the stories pertain to academia, any reader will enjoy the witty satire Hynes presents. The first story, "Queen of the Jungle," offers Paul and Elizabeth and their cat, Charlotte. Elizabeth's academic career is soaring at Chicago University, while Paul's is faltering at the local community college. Paul, feeling neglected because of Elizabeth's weekly commutes, becomes involved with Kym, a young woman on his college campus. What he does not realize is that the cat takes items, particularly personal clothing, belonging to Kym and stashes them away only to bring them out when Elizabeth comes home on the weekends. The story escalates into a humorous battle between Paul and the cat from hell. The second story, "99," offers no cats but does present Gregory Eyck, a current BBC host and a former professor of anthropology. In an attempt to uphold his tenure obligations, Eyck presents a conference at his university. Unfortunately, his conference is politically incorrect, biased against women and Hawaiians. Chaos reigns when the conference opens, and he loses his job. The BBC job results, and Eyck is sent to Wiltshire to explore stones and Neo-

lithic tumuli. Eyck reluctantly goes to Wiltshire and through a series of missteps becomes the sacrificial offering of an unknown culture. "Casing the Rune" is the third story. It presents a villainous professor, Karswell, who steals other people's scholarly papers and publishes them as his own. He takes care of the plagiarism problem by casting spells on the true authors so they die mysterious deaths. Karswell attempts to cast a spell on Virginia, a young woman whose ideas he has stolen, but Beverly appears. Beverly is the widow of one of Karswell's victims, and she understands what he is trying to do. The two women join forces to defeat the diabolical professor.

Hynes is the recipient of the Hopwood Award and a Michener Fellowship. His other works include The Wild Colonial Boy and the criticisms in Mother Jones and the Utne Reader.

Janet Turk

Bauld, Jane Scoggins, ed. COME TO THE GATHERING: A CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR CHILDREN. Austin, TX: Evelyn W. Allen, 1998. 95p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN: 0-9651123-2-2. (Juvenile)

This is a compilation of short stories, poems, and puzzles written by a group of Texas authors who call themselves the PyroWriters. The strength of this book lies in its variety of writing and illustrations and also in its lighthearted, touching, and appropriate stories for children.

While some of the writing and illustrations are amateurish, the enthusiasm and moral messages that run throughout this book make it worthwhile. Some of the strongest work includes "Poet" by Sue Snowden Craig, which takes the reader through the writing process. Craig also does a good job with another poem, "Listen to the Moon", a lyrical piece about bravely following your dreams. "Moon Dream" is a whimsical poem, and "Toad in the Commode" is sure to delight children who will find the idea of finding a frog in the toilet funny. There are some very fine and touching stories to share with children, including "Peppermint Green Mouse," "Grandma's House," and "The Dog who Couldn't Bark." Sylvia Bett's illustrations are excellent, as is David Shakelford's drawing of a small girl in bed surrounded by the books she loves, but does not know how to read. And Penny McKee's drawing of a Samoyed is simple, but engaging.

However, the strongest stories have timeless messages and morals. "Mother's Kitten" by Tanja Chenault tells a story of a black woman and white woman who become friends in spite of the "Jim Crow" laws. The story speaks of bias and asks the reader and the child in the story to reverse the prejudice in their own lives. Need an activity for a rainy day? Shawn Walton's "Treasure Hunt" offers one. A mother hands each of the bored children on her front porch a piece of paper with a word on it, like "love" or "friendship." The children are told to

find something that represents their word. The story gives a good example of how such words can be depicted. Then the author provides different words for parents and teachers to repeat the activity.

"The Butterlight, a Goodnight Story" by Pamela Overeynder is a lovely tale about a mass of glowing butterflies which are let loose upon the earth and bring such beauty that sick people feel better. The dingy surroundings of the poor are made colorful through the butterflies, and a butterfly bridge spans a raging river, helping a man return to his village. When warring people see the butterflies they forget to hate and instead invite each other in for tea. "Beauty creates more beauty" is the moral, and a fine story to include in this book, where the authors have tried to do just that. Overall, this is a good collection of stories and drawings to share with children.

Diane Fusaro

Winship, Robert. THE BRUSHLANDERS. Huntsville: Texas Review Press, 1992, Reprint 1998. 127p. Hardcover: \$16.95. ISBN 1-881515-00-1.

The Brushlanders by Texas writer Robert Winship is a collection of ten short stories, originally published in 1992 as the winner of the Southern and Southwestern Writers Breakthrough Award of the Texas Review Press, the book was reprinted in 1998.

Set in the Texas Hill Country and in West Texas, the mostly contemporary stories reveal the extraordinary drama of daily life. The characters range from ranch bosses and hired hands to blue-collar workers and young adults.

Winship's stories present the simple, sometimes harsh, realities of rural life. The plots involve characters with both internal and external conflicts who are trying to find peace and promise in life. The stories range in theme and tone from humorous to serious. Strengths of the author's writing style include his sense of place, descriptive ability, great sense of humor, originality of colloquial expressions and dialect, ability to create suspense, and energy of language. More than a writer, the author is a gifted storyteller with a unique voice. Through his well-developed characters, Winship captures the mysteries and complexities and joys and sorrows of many types of human relationships. His compassionate portrayal of people's foolishness and failures and their ability to survive them reveals his knowledge of human nature, optimism, and charity. The author excels at depicting conflicts emerging from differences in class, culture, and race common among those in Texas and the ways they are resolved. What makes the stories universal in appeal is his treatment of larger themes: injustice and justice; infidelity and loyalty; failure and redemption; loss and renewal; and ignorance and knowledge.

Some readers might find the language and humor

rather earthy and the subjects mature. Some may also prefer to have more clear endings for some stories. The Brushlanders may be of most interest to readers and to librarians of Texana collections who are interested in adult literary fiction.

Jan Kilby

NONFICTION

ART

Carter, Robin Borglum. GUTZON BORGLUM. Austin: Eakin Press, 1998. 95p. Black-and-White Photos. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$21.95, ISBN 1-57168-247-3. 98-205039

The famous Mount Rushmore sculptor is fondly remembered in this brief narrative written by his granddaughter who was raised in Texas and now lives in Corpus Christi. This work exemplifies the museum display supplement genre and is therefore quite concise and focused.

As the author states, this succinct work is not intended to be a scholarly examination of her grandfather's work, and she does not presume any artistic criticism abilities. She merely wishes to provide a glimpse into the fascinating life of her grandfather and to broaden reader awareness of his entire life's work beyond the obvious association as the Mount Rushmore artist.

Images of seventy-six pieces of Borglum's range of artistic skills, representing his entire career, are presented, including pencil sketches, pen-and-ink drawings, oils, and small and monumental sculptures. His letters and other unpublished papers provide additional glimpses into his zest for life and the controversies he confronted during his creative days.

Born in Idaho to Danish immigrants, Borglum grew up hearing of the hardships on the Mormon Trail and Viking legends, and he lived a sweeping life among mountains, lakes and great grass prairies, establishing an ardor for the outdoors and the expansiveness of the great American West that obviously influenced his passion for America and adventure, most noticeably expressed at Rushmore.

His few years in Texas, the many major themes in his work, and the range of emotions explored in his art add to this fascinating, albeit brief background into this important American life. While not the definitive work on the life of Borglum, this concise and accessible synopsis will be a useful item for all public libraries.

Dale Farris

BIOGRAPHY

Apple, Max. I LOVE GOOTIE: MY GRANDMOTHER'S STORY. New York: Warner Books, 1998. 244p. Hardcover: \$24.00, ISBN 0-446-52074-8. 97-032318.

In a warm and tender memoir of his Yiddish-speaking grandmother, Max Apple captures the essence of an uneducated, even superstitious, woman who also possessed a certain wisdom. Gootie's stories of her native Lithuanian shtetl, Serei, intrigue the young child Max growing up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the post World War II era. The Jewish immigrant culture that Apple was immersed in as a child deeply affected his world view. Grandson and grandmother decide on a trade: he will explain American culture to his naive grandmother, and she will share memories of Serei, a world that was no more. On seeing their first elevator in Herpolshelmer's Department Store, Gootie instructed fearfully, "Let's go home. This kind of thing isn't for Jews." To which Max replied as an American, "I'm going for a ride. It doesn't cost anything." On the other hand, Gootie's observation helped Max realize the shallowness of facets of American teenage values. "I had been to Kewpies a hundred times, but this time I saw it through her eyes. She didn't have to say anything to make me wonder why I was looking at girls I didn't dare speak to and would never see again, why I was overpaying for coffee...when I wasn't even thirsty. I felt ashamed that Gootie saw me as I was, as I had become—a sixteen-year-old more connected to a car than to my ancestors."

Max Apple, formerly a Rice University professor, now lives and writes from San Francisco. Upon this detailed canvas we behold, he paints a portrait of a loved one in a rich cultural milieu. His previous book, Roommates, recalled experiences with his grandfather Rocky, Gootie's husband. The reminiscences of Gootie flesh out Apple's heritage for his readers, and no doubt for Apple himself. As a writer, his articles and stories have appeared in Esquire, the New York Times, Atlantic, and other national publications.

Sally Dooley

Malsch, Brownson. LONE WOLF GONZAULLAS, TEXAS RANGER. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. 240p. Photographs. Forward. Preface. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$13.95, ISBN 0-8061-3016-4. 98-6495.

Written in the clinched style of popular Western history and calculated to entertain, Lone Wolf Gonzaulas, Texas Ranger reveals some interesting sociological aspects of crime and law enforcement in Texas, especially in the 1920s and 1930s. M.T. Gonzaulas's career as a Ranger and federal prohibition agent began in 1920, and it extended until he retired in 1951, to become a Hollywood consultant. He was an important figure in the professionalization of state law enforcement with the founding of the Department of Public Safety and its assumption of control over the formerly freewheeling Rangers, but his roots were firmly in the

fast-shooting, tough-talking tradition of myth and legend.

In emphasizing this part of Gonzaullas's career, Brownson Malsch gives an overly detailed description of dozens of raids on stills, bootleggers, and speakeasies in the small towns of North Texas and near Galveston. More interesting are accounts of the unbridled wildness of the East Texas oil boom towns and of the handling by Texas political and legal authorities of racially motivated lawlessness in Sherman (1930) and Beaumont (1943).

That Malsch's primary bibliographical source is the 500 page scrapbook collection of Lone Wolf Gonzaullas himself, who was, to put it charitably, quite self-assured, insures that his judgments of Ranger exploits during the years covered is uncritical and journalistic.

Randall Holdridge

O'Neal, Bill. *TEX RITTER, AMERICA'S MOST BE-LOVED COWBOY*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1998. 157p. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Paperback, \$21.95, ISBN 1-57168-249-X. 97-28565.

Tex Ritter was born near Carthage, Texas on January 12, 1905 and passed away in Nashville, Tennessee, on January 2, 1974. In the almost sixty-nine years of his life, he managed to graduate from the University of Texas; star in radio, movies, and a Broadway play; and become a singer and songwriter. He was labeled "America's Most Beloved Cowboy" by the Hollywood publicity agencies and is still known today as a hero to those who grew up watching his movies. During the time of Gene Autry and Roy Rogers, Tex Ritter enjoyed the same popularity. Twenty-seven of his movies survive on tape and he also sang an Academy Award-winning number. This book highlights his career with photos and scenes from many of his movies and concerts at the Grand Ole Opry. An appendix of his movie and record credits makes this a complete biography. Mr. O'Neal used primary resources and family scrapbooks to produce this book. The only other biography of Tex Ritter is out of print. Tex Ritter was the All-American cowboy and he never forgot his Texas heritage. At his request, he was buried at Oak Bluff, near Nederland, Texas, where he once lived. This book is recommended for all libraries.

Jayne Kitterman

Pankowsky, Hanna Davidson. *EAST OF THE STORM: OUTRUNNING THE HOLOCAUST IN RUSSIA*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1999. 218 p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$28.95, ISBN 0-89672-408-5. 98-35211.

The horrors of being a refugee from World War II and the Holocaust are vividly recalled in this moving memoir of survival by San Antonio resident Hanna Davidson Pankowsky. Hanna was only ten-years-old when

the Nazis invaded Lodz, Poland, in September 1939. Her father, Simon, and brother, Kazik, had been conscripted to defend Warsaw. When Hanna and her mother discovered that Simon and Kazik were living and in the Soviet-occupied zone of Poland, they risked a dangerous escape to join them. The Davidsons were not safe on Russian soil either because Simon had been active in anti-communist groups and was actually a Russian native who had fled years before World War II. Inventing and memorizing an entirely new family history would protect them but would be a cause of enormous anxiety during their eight years of flight. Persecution, war, famine, and political change oppressed them as well as living conditions that were crowded, dirty, and void of any privacy. Moreover, the lack of hygiene contributed to disease and lice, but still the family fought to live and stay together. A map traces their escape from Lodz to Moscow and east of there while fleeing the Germans and then traces their slow return to Lodz in 1947. Through efforts of the United Nations and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, they were fed, clothed, housed and transported until final word came that Mexico would accept them as immigrants. As always their joy was nearly overshadowed by the knowledge of all their Jewish friends and relatives who were systematically murdered. This amazing story is an impressive, well written document to add to the growing collection of Holocaust literature. The courage and resilience of the family against all odds is laudable.

Hanna later married a young American physician and moved to the United States. In 1964 she became a citizen of the United States. In addition to this book, Pankowsky has shared her experiences with school groups.

Sally Dooley

Robertson, Robert J. *HER MAJESTY'S TEXANS: TWO ENGLISH IMMIGRANTS IN RECONSTRUCTION TEXAS*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998. Black and white photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 184p. Hardcover: \$25.95, ISBN 0-89096-841-1. 98-19819.

Robert Robertson's first book, *Her Majesty's Texans: Two English Immigrants in Reconstruction Texas*, offers major accomplishments to those interested in Texas history. The most important is his success in humanizing the Reconstruction era in Texas history. It is such a complicated area of study, but Robertson succeeds in taking two young English immigrants who arrived in the late 1860s and weaving their very interesting stories into the state and national history of the era. He allows the reader painlessly to absorb some reconstruction history by tracing the careers of Will Johnson and John Leonard who became a part of the white Democratic backlash against the Republican Reconstruction program in the South.

As local history, this book is also excellent. Southeast

Texas comes alive in this story, as Will and John, young, single, educated immigrants, arrived in Beaumont to join their uncle, R. H. Leonard, an attorney who immigrated in 1854. They moved to Beaumont which was described as "a lumber camp stuck in a mud hole," and, with their British educations, taught school, worked for and organized newspapers, and practiced law. Later their cousin Hannah Leonard Lamb and her husband Tom Lamb immigrated from England by way of India and took over Will Johnson's school.

Hardin County and Orange County are also drawn into the picture when John opened a branch office of his Uncle's law practice in Hardin, Texas, and Will practiced law in Orange. Both men ran into legal problems themselves, and in the case of Will, his may have contributed to his voluntary disappearance a short time later, abandoning his wife and children and relocating to California where he died after years in a hospital. After learning of his whereabouts shortly before his death, his Beaumont family rejected him.

Robertson, using extensive research and thirty-two letters written to family members back in England, basically concludes his study with the departure from Beaumont of Will and John in the 1880's. John Leonard left openly, later married, worked for the Chicago Daily Telegram, and created the first Who's Who in America, as well as other types of directories. Will Johnson, as stated, disappeared and later reappeared under the name James W. Leonard. He worked as a newspaper man who covered De Lesseps' attempts to build the Panama Canal, and after trips to Hawaii and Australia, he worked for the San Francisco Examiner. He married again (not bigamously, because his Beaumont wife, Viola Ogden had divorced him for desertion), and after the untimely death of his second wife, Bernice, his drinking reemerged, and he spent the last nine years of his life, seldom speaking, in the Ventura (CA) County Hospital.

Their lives are interesting, well researched, and woven into the fabric of British immigration to the U. S. and of the post Civil War history of southeast Texas, the South, and the nation. This book is excellent on reconstruction, on late nineteenth century East Texas, and on the British Civil War era migration. I strongly recommend it to libraries and individuals.

Jo Ann Stiles

Rodge, Mary King. WHERE THE CREOSOTE BLOOMS. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1999. 235p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 0-87565-193-3. 98-14193.

This entertaining memoir provides a snapshot of a specific time, the 1920s, and a place, El Paso, a desert climate where only hardy native plants like the creosote can survive. As a ten-year-old, the author and her family made the hazardous trip east from Redlands, California, to a job in El Paso that her father had in a cotton mill. At the time this far west Texas city was primarily a

health resort for tuberculosis patients and a military fort. Rodge relates memories of her family life, friends, and neighbors. Family outings, gardening, swimming, dance lessons, and church activities filled her life. Her childhood and adolescence are remembered with a touch of nostalgia, but they are well balanced with the tough realities of the economic Depression and despair, suicide, abortion, and terminal illness. Desiring more education, she worked several stints at Kress behind the lunch counter for six ten-hour-days a week with an hour off for lunch. She was paid \$10 a week, but received a free lunch daily. With her interpretations of her own past, honesty and humor are displayed, as when she observed that "... our first grade teacher was as optimistic as a seed catalog."

After the Depression hit, she began her college studies in summer school at the College of Mines, now the University of Texas at El Paso. The book ends there, but the book jacket pictures her at age eighty in 1995 when she earned her second M.A. at the University of North Carolina. Professors there spurred her talent into producing this book, which is number 19 in the Chishom Trail series of TCU Press.

Sally Dooley

Shaffer, Roger L. SPINDLETOP UNWOUND. Plano, TX: Republic of Texas Press, 1998. 265 p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$16.95, 1-55622-550-4. 97-12739

In 1901 the Spindletop gusher blew in the modern oil age. Roger L. Shaffer tells the story of the greed, ambition, and murder which were fueled by huge oil fortune. Attorney Shaffer introduces a colorful cast of characters along the ninety-year trail of claims and lawsuits over the mineral rights to the parcel of land originally granted to William Humphries in 1834. He ably covers the convoluted Humphries-McFaddin family tree, the Regulator-Moderator war in East Texas, the many claimants to the fortune and their lawsuits, and a socialite indicted for first degree murder. The complexities of property ownership and transfer involved in the lawsuits are particularly well elucidated. The lack of a chronological historical approach is at times a bit confusing, but the persistent reader can eventually make sense of the complex events. The last third of the book consists of appendices: an extensive Spindletop chronology covering the entire history, a selected abstract of title covering the land transactions, and reproductions of selected documents. The book is a useful addition for collections featuring East Texas or oil history.

Kathleen Murray

Spears, Sally. CALL SIGN REVLON: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF NAVY FIGHTER PILOT KARA HULT-GREEN. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1998. 306p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$27.95, ISBN 1-

55750-809-7. 98-19084.

Written in a balanced manner by her mother, San Antonio attorney Sally Spears, Kara Hultgreen's life and accidental death as a U.S. Navy fighter pilot are recounted. Kara, who was only twenty-nine when her Tomcat jet slammed into the Pacific in 1994, always wanted to fly jets and eventually to become an astronaut. Athletic, energetic, and determined, Kara endured gender discrimination as she embarked on her Naval career after college graduation in aerospace engineering. She pioneered the change of rules and customs in the Navy and in the perceptions of society allowing women in combat. Like her male colleagues, Kara was extremely bright, quick, and aggressive, which led to her excellent performance and popularity on the job. (These same qualities often brought trouble to her from her superiors.) Her physical attractiveness and pleasant personality brought her much media attention as she worked her way to being a pilot; hence, her call sign was "Revlon" after the cosmetic line. The story of her death made headlines world wide. An official inquiry absolved her of error and put blame on engine malfunction. Spears writes knowingly and amazingly as objective as a mother could of her daughter. She describes Kara's failings as well as her perseverance and exuberance. Relying on Kara's diaries and letters and personal interviews with colleagues and friends, Spears creates an interesting portrait of the first female to qualify as an F-14 carrier pilot.

Sally Dooley

BUSINESS

Galaskiewicz, Joseph and Wolfgang Bielefeld. *NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, Inc., 1998. 290p. Notes. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$23.95, ISBN 0-2023-0566-X. 98-17049.

The purpose of this monograph was to see how well different theories developed in the fields of organizational sociology and management science could explain changes in a panel of nonprofit organizations in a single case community. In this case, the defined community was the twin cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.

The authors are sociology professors (University of Minnesota, University of Texas at Dallas), and the work exemplifies their academic approach to social science research. The result is a tedious, dry report that illustrates the classic methodology practiced in this vague, ambiguous and impractical field. There is the standard and overly thorough review of the literature and several organizational theories, indicating they did read everybody else's research (a requirement of their peers), another standard explanation of their research methodology, and their findings with all the correct qualifying explanations how difficult it is to generalize their results to other communities.

The longitudinal frame of the research was 1980 to 1994, with a focus on why the selected nonprofit organizations in this specific Minnesota community changed during this time frame. Testing their numerous hypotheses required use of various theoretical models, all thoroughly explained in typical sociological terms, making for an output of use only to other sociologists interested in a similar research topic in order to maintain their own tenure.

A not surprising finding that an organization's coping strategies keep it afloat indicates that a twenty-page synopsis of this overly inflated social research would probably be a far more cost effective investment by this publisher. Useful only for a select few larger university libraries supporting doctoral level sociology curriculum.

Dale Farris

CHRISTIAN LIFE

Swindoll, Charles R. *YOU & YOUR CHILD: A BIBLICAL GUIDE FOR NURTURING CONFIDENT CHILDREN FROM INFANCY TO INDEPENDENCE*. Nashville: Word Publishing, 1982. Reprint. 1998. 182p. Paperback: \$12.99, ISBN 0-8499-3710-8. 98-39062

Chuck Swindoll is a masterful Bible expositor, bringing the ancient text to life through his knowledge and experience as a teacher, father, and author. Presently he is the president of Dallas Seminary, host of the nationally syndicated radio program "Insight for Living," and the author of numerous books on aspects of Christian living. The father of four grown children, he predicated his book on the idea that it is the home, not the school or church, that prepares children for dealing with life in a moral and loving manner. He uses examples from his parenting, counseling, and studying Scripture to teach and encourage his readers, in this case, parents.

His basic assumption is that parents must seek to know each child, which takes time, care and sensitivity. From that base, a parent can discern how to relate, reproof, and enjoy each child, and each one is different, he stresses. Special chapters deal with rebellion and disobedience and the needs of extra special children. Especially meaningful chapters concern Jesus' home environment and approaches to sons as well as to daughters. For parents who are in despair over their grown children, the final chapter offers hope. The book concludes with a study guide for thought provoking self-study or with others in a small group.

Sally Dooley

COMPUTERS

Edge, Laura Bufano. *MACRO MAGIC IN MICROSOFT WORD 6 & 7: A KIDS ONLY GUIDE TO WRITING MAC-*

ROS. Gardiner: Rhache Publishers, Ltd., 1998. 248p. Illustrations. Paperback \$20.00, ISBN 1-887288-02-3. 97-26408.

Edge, Laura Bufano. *MACRO MAGIC IN WORDPERFECT 6.1 & 7: A KIDS ONLY GUIDE TO WRITING MACROS*. Gardiner: Rhache Publishers, Ltd., 1998. 532p. Illustrations. Paperback \$25.00, ISBN 1-887288-03-1. 97-23953.

Ever since Melissa made macros famous, people fear them, thinking of macros as tools for virus writers. This is a pity, as macros are valuable tools that let people automate tasks in word processors, spreadsheets, and other computer programs that support macros. Laura Edge's books explain how to use macros in Microsoft Word and Corel's WordPerfect. Edge claims that the books are suitable for youngsters ages ten and up. As a former teacher and a computer professional with over twenty years of experience, I'm not sure the books are suitable for ANY ten-year-old. Unlike some computer books, these aren't books for idiots. They are for people who can read and follow instructions and who think about what they are doing. Edge presents many useful examples of macros, such as assignment sheet macros for students, thank-you note macros, bibliography macros, and many, many more. Some might find the lack of a CD or disk including the macros on them to be a problem. However, not having the disk encourages people to type the macros and get used to using macros, which is a plus. If there is a weakness to these books, it is that they don't mention the very real danger of macro viruses or how to protect oneself from them. I hope this will be addressed in the next release of these books. Despite this, I'd suggest the book for middle school and up libraries and as a text for word processing courses using Microsoft Word or Corel's WordPerfect.

Mike Avery

COOKERY

Hensperger, Beth. *BREADS OF THE SOUTHWEST: RECIPES IN THE NATIVE AMERICAN, SPANISH, AND MEXICAN TRADITIONS*. Chronicle Books, 1997. 156p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback \$22.95, ISBN 0-8118-0973-0. 97-6014.

Lavishly illustrated with photographs by Laurie Smith, *Breads of the Southwest* is sure to delight bakers, whether they are amateur, professional, or just dreamers. The book covers how to make traditional breads, including flat breads, quick breads, corn breads, and yeast breads. Since these are traditional recipes, no bread machine recipes are given, which is just as well as artists, not machines, should make these breads. Special attention is given to the needs of bakers in higher altitudes, where bread doesn't always come out quite right. For people in areas where the traditional ingredients aren't available, Beth Hensperger includes a list of suppliers who will sell via mail order. The book

is almost too beautiful to take into a real kitchen, but it will be a valuable addition to any baker's collection, as well as to any library with a cooking collection.

Mike Avery

Weaver, Nevilee Maass. *GERMAN-TEXAN CULINARY ART, WHEN EVERYTHING WAS HAUSGEMACHT, REZEPT*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1999. 128p. Index. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 1-57168-248-1. 98-048361

One of the worst things about being a stranger in a strange land is the food. It is different. The early German settlers in Texas handled this problem the same way many other immigrants did; they adapted their recipes to the ingredients around them and cooked locally available produce in ways that they were familiar with. This book shares with us the recipes, philosophy, and even the aphorisms of the early German settlers in Texas. People of German descent, such as I, will find recipes for things that our grandparents cooked and served, things that we'd love to share with our children and grandchildren. Things that aren't in REAL German cookbooks - like okra. Even if you don't use a single recipe in this book, you will find it enlightening and entertaining. This book is a good choice for libraries with large German communities in the area and a worthy addition to any cookbook collection.

Mike Avery

EDUCATION

Veninga, James F. *THE HUMANITIES AND THE CIVIC IMAGINATION: COLLECTED ADDRESSES AND ESSAYS, 1978-1998*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1999. 496p. Index. Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 1-57441-052-0. 98-42778

For the last two decades, the humanities have been under attack by professional schools and political opponents. During this time, James Veninga, Executive Director of the Texas Council for the Humanities (TCH), again and again rose to the defense of the humanities. He used his position as a bully pulpit to preach against the naysayers and for the scholarship of public service.

This anthology gathers twenty-nine of his addresses and essays under three headings that describe their general focus: politics, education, or society. Veninga argues for multiculturalism and an expanding canon of texts; he lays open the divisive split between the National Endowment for the Humanities-especially, under its former director Lynn Cheney-and its related state agencies like TCH. He chastises the academic profession for narrow specialization and jargon-filled writing that the educated layperson finds impenetrable. And he maintains that responsible citizens are best educated through familiarity with the humanities.

Veninga practices what he preaches. In a political climate plagued by the uncompromising rhetoric of diatribe and invective, his writing serves as a model of clear, sensible public discourse. It is reasonable, allusive, and well organized. A typical essay will quote a passage from biography, history, or literature, show how the quotation is relevant to today's issues, and number the ways that we can use its lesson to improve modern society. Taken as a whole, this anthology is a goldmine of suggestive ideas and eloquent statements.

An extensive sixteen-page index makes it easy to retrieve information and locate favorite passages. Recommended for the general public and for scholars.

Stephen Curley

GUIDEBOOKS

McDermott, John D. *A GUIDE TO THE INDIAN WARS OF THE WEST*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. 211p. Photographs. Map. Notes. Bibliography. Paperback: \$16.95, ISBN 0-8032-8246-X. 98-16048.

John D. McDermott, retired historian of the National Park Service and the Council on Historic Preservation, has produced a book in two parts. The first part gives the general reader broad background about U.S. wars against the Indians of the West between 1860 and 1890. The second part provides a state-by-state listing grouped by region of forts, battlefields, and Indian heritage sites that might interest highway travelers. The abrupt division in parts is awkward, with neither part really individually comprehensive nor the two very well coordinated.

Like most writers on this subject, McDermott is both more interested and more knowledgeable about the Indian wars on the Northern Plains, and especially the Custer fight at the Little Bighorn. As a result, he has very little to say about struggles against Apaches, Comanches, or Kiowas in the Southwest, and his book is skimpy in both parts on information that would be of special interest to Texans.

However, he provides some technical information that is engrossing (although dry) about the evolution of U.S. uniforms, military field equipment and tactics, and about tribal distinctions in fashion and lifestyle among Plains Indians. Statistical tables about Indian population and tribal census are also accessible and fascinating. It is not McDermott's purpose to provide much color, narration, or biography, although there is a workmanlike condensation of Little Bighorn in the Northern Plains/Montana section. This is then a rather odd "beginner's" book that has difficulty finding a point of balance among its aims, none of which it serves extremely well.

Randall Holdridge

HISTORY

Abernathy, Alta. *BUD & ME: THE TRUE ADVENTURES OF THE ABERNATHY BOYS*. Irving, Texas: Dove Creek Press, 1998. 162p. Photographs. Maps. Hardcover: \$18.95, ISBN 0-9662166-0-1. 97-78048.

When Louis "Bud" Abernathy was nine, and his younger brother, Temple, only five, the two boys set out with their father's blessing to ride horseback from Frederick, Oklahoma, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and back again . . . alone. They went not out of necessity, nor on some desperate errand; they went for the fun of the adventure. It was 1909. In the next four years they would undertake even more prodigious travels through America, becoming minor celebrities, securing corporate endorsements and meeting President Taft in the White House. This tale is told by Temple Abernathy and written by his wife of sixty-four years, Alta Abernathy.

The Abernathy boys were sons of an Oklahoma Strip land rusher who was renowned for a stunt which involved riding down prairie wolves on horseback and wrestling them to earth barehanded. This dangerous feat—and Jack Abernathy's colorful character—so impressed President Theodore Roosevelt in a 1904 Western campaign swing, that he named the progressive Republican cowboy to serve as United States Marshal for Oklahoma.

Jack Abernathy put up little resistance when his two sons decided to ride across Caprock country and the Llano Estacado to Santa Fe. They made the long journey with little difficulty. In Santa Fe, they were guests of the territorial governor, which they took as much in stride as the generous hospitality they received occasionally along the way at scattered ranch houses.

The next year, the Abernathy boys set out to ride from Oklahoma to New York City. They would be part of the media circus which greeted Teddy's return from an African safari. Now known as the "Rough Riding Abernathy Boys", their stops were carefully planned. They stayed overnight with Quanah Parker, and met Wilbur Wright in Dayton, Ohio. Bands sometimes greeted their arrival, and in Washington they had a private audience at the White House. At church in New York, they sat in the Rockefeller pew.

While their horses returned to Oklahoma by train, the Abernathy boys set out to drive back in a little two seat Brush automobile. They set a cross country record, 2,512 miles in twenty-three days, even though Temp was so small he had to perch on the edge of the seat and lean against the steering wheel to reach the pedals.

Yet their biggest ride was still ahead of them. Their managers challenged them for \$10,000 to ride cross country, from Coney Island to Golden Gate Park, in sixty days, sleeping and eating out the entire way. On their journeys, the Abernathy boys survived terrible cold, thirst, encounters with wild bulls, rattlers and

misanthropes, outlaw camps, lost horses, theft, and accidents aplenty. Still they stuck together as adoring brothers, looked for boyish delights, and had on balance a whale of a good time.

Bud & Me is a shared treasure, and it is a reminder of things American. This happy little book deserves an audience of both children and adults.

Randall Holdridge

Bradfield, Bill and Clare Bradfield. MULESHOE & MORE: THE REMARKABLE STORIES BEHIND THE NAMING OF TEXAS TOWNS. Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1999. 218p. Index. Paperback: \$15.95, ISBN 0-88415-865-9.

In Texas Names and Towns, we run the gamut of names from Abilene to Zephyr. Some of these names are from people, where some are derived from towns and cities in other states or countries, and some are several names put together. For instance, Weslaco is named for the W.E. Stewart Land Company. Muleshoe, incorporated in 1926, is named for the Muleshoe Ranch, headquartered nearby. On its main street is the National Mule Memorial, unveiled on July 4, 1965. There are four towns called Liberty in Texas, the largest being on Highway 90 on the banks on the Trinity River.

This is an informative and sometimes amusing book for public libraries, a condensation of the Handbook of Texas city and town articles. Texas towns are named for people, cities, plants, trees, rivers, creeks, and streams, but no matter what they are named for, it is very interesting reading. What was your hometown named for?

Jayne Kitterman

Franco, Jere' Bishop. CROSSING THE POND: THE NATIVE AMERICAN EFFORT IN WORLD WAR II. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1999. 232p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 1-57441-065-2. 98-44928.

This is an important book. Although hundreds of volumes have been published concerning the Second World War, little has been written about the experience of Native Americans during the conflict. In this thoroughly researched and skillfully written work, number seven in the University of North Texas Press series War and the Southwest, Jere' Bishop Franco, a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona, takes a significant step in meeting that need. Readers expecting the fluff so often associated with subjects of this type will be pleasantly surprised to see that Dr. Franco takes her work seriously, providing a careful analysis of how the war affected Native Americans. She traces the pre-war conflict over support for the war effort between John Collier and the Indian Bureau reformers on one side

and Jerome Bruner, Frederick Collett, Alice Lee Jemison and the American Indian Federation conservatives on the other. She shows that in spite of divisions among the Indians, conflicts over Indian citizenship, and jurisdictional disputes between government agencies, ninety-nine percent of all eligible Native Americans registered for Selective Service. Slightly over 44,000 Indians, or over ten percent of the Native American population, served in the armed forces. Two Native Americans received the Congressional Medal of Honor and many others were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Silver Star and Bronze Star.

Crossing the Pond is filled with pertinent information relating to the use of tribal lands for military purposes (oil, timber, and agriculture), efforts to overcome discrimination and false stereotyping of Native Americans in the military, and the struggle for postwar civil rights for Indian veterans. This is a volume that belongs in every high school, public, and collegiate library. But more than that it is a book that should be read by all interested in the Second World War, Native Americans, ethnic studies, and civil rights. The author and the University of North Texas Press are congratulated on this contribution to our knowledge and understanding of these vital issues.

Ralph A. Wooster

Huffines, Alan C. BLOOD OF NOBLE MEN—THE ALAMO SIEGE & BATTLE—AN ILLUSTRATED CHRONOLOGY. Austin: Eakin Press, 1999. 221p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$27.95, ISBN 1-57168-194-9. 98-48359.

Published in an era of renewed academic interest in the history of the battle of the Alamo, this new book offers a concise compilation of many eyewitness and contemporary accounts of the siege and fall of the Alamo. The author, Alan Huffines is a fifth generation Texan and a combat arms officer, and his interpretations of the original accounts are interspersed in the form of a short introduction to each chapter and in the form of numerous footnotes. His observations and interpretations are very interesting and helpful, but his greatest contribution is in the collecting and orderly chronological presentation of the writings of so many participants in the battle and their contemporary observers. Many of the quotations are first-hand, but a few second-hand articles such as newspaper articles from the last part of the nineteenth century are also included. As might be expected, there is disagreement in many of the details in the various writings, which Huffines does not filter, allowing the reader to sense some of the difficulties faced by Alamo historians. This collection and presentation is masterfully accomplished, and I believe no other writer has done so much to allow the reader, with access to but one volume, to gain a good understanding of this historical event and site.

Huffines is joined by Gary Zaboly, an effective freelance historical illustrator, whose dramatic and detailed sketches of the siege and battle are generously anno-

tated with descriptions of the many different uniforms worn by the participants on both sides, the equipment and arms used, and other small details such as the beards worn by the zapadores, or pioneers of the Mexican army, and their techniques in entrenching as the siege was established. A map of the settlement of Bexar is used to show the advance and encirclement by Mexican forces under Gen. Santa Anna. The map, drawn from an aerial perspective, effectively gives a sense of scale and perspective. Today, only the church and the long barracks remain from a fortified compound which covered perhaps fifteen times the area of these two structures. Most of the compound is now replaced by the downtown streets and buildings of modern-day San Antonio, and it is made much easier to gain an appreciation of the size and orientation of the fort by referring to the perspective view of the compound that Zaboly provides. One small criticism suggested itself during my walk around the mission grounds; it would be very helpful, even if detracting from the character of the remainder of the illustrations, if one view could have superimposed modern-day street locations, for this would have helped me better understand the site.

I believe this book will prove to be very popular among those interested in Texas history and nineteenth century military history. Certainly, every Texas library should add this to its holdings, and I can recommend it to every Texan interested in his or her heritage.

Ray W. James

Milner, Jay Dunston. CONFESSIONS OF A MADDOG: A ROMP THROUGH THE HIGH-FLYING TEXAS MUSIC AND LITERARY ERA OF THE FIFTIES TO THE SEVENTIES. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1998. 248 p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$29.95, ISBN 1-57441-050-4. 98-23419.

Two pages before the end of his narrative, the author rewards faithful readers with a passage expressly stating what he thinks his book is about. He does so, he says, to make sure if he himself knows and can briefly sum it all up. Since Mr. Milner begins the book with a not quite tongue-in-cheek disclaimer that "the people and places in this story are enigmas of my imagination," it's nice to see his almost 250 pages of gossip about old friends and acquaintances have been headed somewhere after all. And since his summary so clearly reveals Mr. Milner's desire to review his own book, I am both happy and lazy enough to let him. I quote: "This book is about a group of Texas writers who became friends early in their careers (some had been friends as far back as high school) and remained friends through the years that saw them producing a lot of good journalism and some reasonably serious fiction and music. More handsomely for some and less so for others, but individually, and as a group—were [sic: the sentence as printed in the book has no grammatical subject] far enough ahead of their time to break down some intellectual and emotional stumbling blocks for those coming along behind to enable them, perhaps, to write better and with more confidence be-

cause those psychological barriers were already battered down."

Most of the figures (all men) Milner spotlights were or are journalists, novelists, playwrights, and country-music lyricists who have since the 1960s referred to themselves as Maddogs, a bunch of allegedly substance-abusing party animals, whose usual circuit was Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin, with New York, Washington, and Houston sometimes in between. They had just enough booklarnin' to fancy themselves as possible successors to Hemingway (with bullfights in Mexican bordertowns substituting for Pamplona) or at least as Texas' answer to the Merry Pranksters (with a hearse making do for Ken Kesey's bus). Too many of them felt it necessary to disregard the polished artistry of Katherine Anne Porter, whom Milner (with less reason than he suspects) dismisses, as too inclined to deny her Texas roots. Which is not to say that these good ole boys haven't managed individually to make splashes of their own. Someone outside Texas and the newspaper industry may even instantly recognize a few of them, particularly Larry McMurtry, the late John Henry Faulk, and Willie Nelson, all three of whom seem to have taken care to remain well on the periphery of most Maddog fun and games. Despite Mr. Milner's noblest efforts to sort out who was doing what in the company of whom and when, it is difficult even for him to say who really was a Maddog and who was just slumming. The following names (with literary main claims to fame in parentheses) figure prominently in the book: Milner himself (Incident at Ashton); Billy Lee Brammer (The Gay Place); Larry L. King (The One-eyed Man, The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas); Gary Cartwright (The Hundred Yard War, Heartwise Guy), Bud Shrake (But Not for Love); and Willie Morris (North Toward Home).

John H. Dye

Rubin, Louis D., Jr. SEAPORTS OF THE SOUTH: A JOURNEY. Atlanta: Longstreet, 1998. 338p. Photographs. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$25.00, ISBN 1-56352-499-6. 98-66376.

This book is the outcome of a retirement dream come true: a reunion of two college buddies visiting all the major Southern ports, from Hampton Roads to Corpus Christi. Louis Rubin, founder of Algonquin books of Chapel Hill and author of almost four dozen books, does the writing. His buddy John F. Harrington illustrates the text with 70 striking color photos. The pair revel in the chance they get to travel together, observe ports up close—usually from the rail of a tugboat—and describe what they see. The readers overhear a pleasant conversational account of a specialized world of work. We learn about tractor tugs; containerships (a Southern innovation in 1955 that revolutionized shipping); loading operations; cargoes as varied as automobiles and porcelain powder; motels and restaurants; and colorful seacoast people. Of the thirteen ports visited, more than half lie along the economically robust Gulf Coast: Tampa, Mobile, Pascagoula, New Orleans, the Louisiana Offshore Oil

Port (L.O.O.P.), Houston, and Corpus Christi. By the way, Rubin calls the twenty-five-mile-long Port of Houston the most advanced he has ever seen. The well-being of the modern South, Rubin says, is due in no small part to its technologically healthy ports. At each stop, the focus is on the port's major cargo-oil in Corpus, for example. As a sidelight we hear some local gossip and history, especially about the role played by the port in the Civil War. The book could use maps: they would make the many facilities and place names a whole lot easier to follow. At the very least, there ought to be one map of the South's coastline and one of each of the thirteen ports. The book has no index but contains a fine bibliography with pithy annotations. And Rubin's travelogue style effectively mixes local color and technology. Recommended for the layperson who enjoys watching ships and wondering exactly what goes on in ports.

Stephen Curley

Salvant, J.U., and David G. McComb. *THE HISTORIC SEACOAST OF TEXAS*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999. 86p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-292-77741-8. 98-42171.

In *The Historic Seacoast of Texas*, evocative watercolor paintings and authoritative essays successfully complement each other. The book takes us on a pictorial journey west along the coast with stops at the Sabine Crossing, the Bolivar Peninsula, Galveston (subject of the longest essay), the Brazos Landing, Matagorda Bay, the Aransas Passage, Corpus Christi, and Padre Island. One can choose to read the entire book or browse through the watercolors, reading only the captions. Salvant, artist for two similar works about Texas forts and ranches, does a spectacular job of capturing the colors of the seacoast. Her twenty-seven watercolors include studies of nature (dunes at Padre Island), architecture (lighthouses), and the vanished past (a street scene in Indianola). In addition, iconic images, such as gray half-tones-birds, a crab, a sand dollar, a shrimp, and shells, accompany each chapter heading. The calm and nostalgic feel of the book is a tribute to her artistic vision. McComb, author of four books about Texas including histories of Texas and of Galveston, provides the writing: an introduction, eight chapters, and an afterword. His essays, documented by four two-column pages of endnotes, give an overview of each locale, peppered by a well told anecdote or two. The common thread in his history is the threat of hurricanes, making life along the coast tenuous at worst.

Some minor problems. Readers could use an index (mentioned in the book's Library of Congress notation but surprisingly missing from its actual text) and a list of illustrations. One also wonders why some paintings are smaller than page dimensions allow. The resulting loss of detail is obvious when one compares the dust-cover's watercolor of Padre Island sand dunes with the text's twenty-five percent smaller version. Salvant and McComb collaborate well. Their eleven-inch tall by

ten-inch wide book is a handsome addition to pictorial Texana. It would make a welcome gift and would grace any coffee table.

Stephen Curley

Sansom, Andrew and Wyman Meinzer. *TEXAS PAST: ENDURING LEGACY*. Austin: Texas Parks and Wildlife Press, 1997. 150p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$39.95, ISBN 1-885696-19-1. 97-36856.

As a sequel to their popular 1995 collaboration *Texas Lost*, Andrew Sansom, executive director of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and photographer Wyman Meinzer have teamed up again to produce an easy-to-read, attractive history of Texas, concentrating on the forces that have shaped the state's development. The book provides a grand sweep of Texas with photographs that add drama, color, and visual representation to the well-written text. From the story of ancient Texans, the Native Americans here before exploration and colonization, to the present space age, Texas history unfolds in a pleasing manner to the general or casual reader. At times the sweep is too broad though. In recounting the story of the Spindletop oil boom in 1901, for example, Captain Anthony Lucas is said to be a driller from Corsicana. True. But he came there after emigrating from Austria.

Revolution, farming, ranching, railroads, oil booms, and an emerging petrochemical industry are discussed with buildings and sites pictured in magnificent contrast of shape, color, and texture. The diversity of geography and elements of history are combined for a meaningful exposition of Texas' past. Upon completion of the book, one can easily see the derivation of the mythic images of Texas (the cowboy, longhorn, roughneck and wildcatter) and how they became symbols of the state. Occasionally the style lapses into colloquialisms with a government being "up close and personal" and the town of Jefferson becoming "outside the loop" on the Red River.

Sansom is a leading Texas conservationist and has published widely in *Texas Monthly*, *Texas Observer*, *Texas Parks and Wildlife*, and *Texas Highways*. Meinzer is considered to be one of five leading outdoor photographers in the United States today. His photographs have appeared in over 200 national magazines and book covers, and he has published numerous books of photographs.

Sally Dooley

Spurlin, Charles D. *TEXAS VOLUNTEERS IN THE MEXICAN WAR*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1998. 140p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 1-57168-168-X. 98-48358.

The annexation of Texas propelled the United States into a war with Mexico in 1846. With the official declaration of war by Congress, the call went out for volun-

teers to serve in the war campaign. Among those most eager to answer the call to arms were the residents of the union's newest state, many of whom had an axe to grind against their former Mexican nemesis.

In a text of 140 pages comprising six chapters, Spurlin focuses on the many Texan volunteer military groups involved in the two-pronged campaigns in Mexico: the Monterey campaign in the north under General Zachary Taylor, and the campaign in the east from Veracruz to Mexico City under General Winfield Scott. Spurlin details many aspects that, perhaps, would get little mention in many history books on the Mexican War. For example, the types of guns and rifles used in the War are detailed. The salary schedules for soldiers in the federal service are also mentioned. Using primary source documents and eyewitness accounts, the author relates the intensity of feelings that many Texan volunteers harbored against the Mexicans. Many of them never forgot incidents like the Alamo, Goliad, and the Meier Expedition of a few years back. It was actually a chore for the American military commanders to protect the Mexican civilians against acts of reprisals against them by the Texans. It was no surprise that many of the Texan volunteers were called Los Diablos Tejanos. Several other primary anecdotes are related throughout the book as well. What should be of interest to some readers are the reconnaissance and scouting stories, which record skirmishes between the Texan units and the Mexican irregulars or partisans.

The book has many photographs and two helpful maps of the Mexican campaigns. A nice bonus in the book is an appendix listing of the Muster Rolls of Texas Military Units in the Mexican War. The author did publish this same roster of muster rolls in 1984. An index was provided for the rolls in these books, but not in this one. Including this additional index would have improved the usefulness of this book for genealogical and Texana researchers. Another flaw noted is the omission of Point Isabel, an important staging site for the Americans in the Monterey campaign, from the maps. The remainder of the book is comprised of footnote pages, a very good bibliography and an index covering only the text. Libraries already possessing Spurlin's other book, Texas Veterans in the Mexican War: Muster Rolls of Texas Military Units, may consider this book as an optional purchase for their Texas genealogy collections. Otherwise, Texas Volunteers in the Mexican War would be a fine addition for any academic or public library.

Jon P. Tritsch

MEDICINE

Cartwright, Gary. HEARTWISE GUY: HOW TO LIVE THE GOOD LIFE AFTER A HEART ATTACK. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 243p. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-312-18591-X. 98-10193.

Gary Cartwright, a senior editor at Texas Monthly

Press, has seen the light, and he is as zealous as an evangelist to spread the word. It is no longer cool to drink great quantities of alcohol, smoke packs of cigarettes, eat a rich diet, and be a couch potato. After years of hard living as a journalist, Cartwright began to wise up when high blood pressure was followed by a heart attack and a pacemaker, and then quintuple bypass. He would die, his doctor advised, unless he slowed down and lost forty pounds. This book tells the story of the sea change he chose. To those who read about health, nutrition, and fitness, there is nothing new here, but to those like Cartwright, who think they're bulletproof, this history and perspective may be of great value. People CAN change lifelong habits if they dedicate themselves to it. To Cartwright this meant stopping smoking, limiting alcohol, beginning to exercise, and switching to a heart-healthy diet. Cartwright extols how much more he enjoys life now, that he's sober and fit. With great detail he recounts his past attempts and failures with various fad diets—scenarios with which many readers will identify. He describes the joy of weight lifting, exercising, and taking food supplements and vitamins. Descriptions of his sexual escapades are meant to show that age does not necessarily mean "over the hill," but this reviewer found them embarrassing. Oddly, at the end he includes an essay about the illness and death of his grown son. In a way, this shows the pains of life endured, but here again, Cartwright copes and adjusts and continues to live life to the fullest. He is a heartwise guy.

Cartwright's previous books are: Dirty Dealing, Galveston: a History of the Island, and Flood Will Tell. He has also published extensively in Harper's, Life, and Esquire.

Sally Dooley

MUSIC

Guerrey, Jack, ed. ESSAYS ON ARTISTIC PIANO PLAYING BY SILVIO SCIONTI. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1998. 140p. Paperback: \$19.95, ISBN 1-57441-041-5. 97-41858.

Silvio Scionti (1882-1973) was a distinguished pianist/teacher famous in the major music centers of Europe and this continent. World War II interrupted his career and he accepted the position of artist-in-residence at North Texas State College in 1942.

Gerry, his student, published in 1991 Silvio Scionti: Remembering a Master Pianist and Teacher, the success of which encouraged him to compile these essays. The first section is "Basic Points in Fine Piano Playing" inclusive of observing dynamics, much of which is a bit obvious. These basic points are followed by "The Art of Pedaling." Scionti concurs with Anton Rubenstein's statement: "The pedal is the soul of the piano." This part of the collection to this reviewer is the most valuable inasmuch as Scionti says many music teachers,

even university teachers, fail to give adequate instruction in the artistry and imaginative musicality of mastering pedaling technique.

Miscellaneous essays compose the final section concluding with Scionti's own recipe for spaghetti and meatballs. The value of the book to an aspiring pianist, however, is in the ninety-nine examples from master composers with technical directions for achieving professional effects.

Ernestine Sewell Linck

NATURAL HISTORY

Andrews, Jean. *THE PEPPER LADY'S POCKET PEPPER PRIMER*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998. 184p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$17.95, ISBN 0-292-70483-6. 96-51216.

Dr. Jean Andrews is known far and wide as "The Pepper Lady." When journalists have questions about peppers, they are counseled to "call the pepper lady." This small volume joins the pepper lady's previous books as must read, must buy additions to every pepper lover's library. In a small volume she gives a brief history of peppers and explains the nomenclature of pepper naming. After this, she shows photographs of every pepper commonly found in the USA, with an accompanying discourse about the peppers, discussing the size, possible colors, uses, and possible substitutions for each pepper. This is a treasure trove of information, and beginning pepper lovers will find it especially useful in the grocery store when they discover their grocer is out of THAT special pepper they needed. Highly recommended for any library - or pepper lover.

Mike Avery

Beck, C. Malcolm and John Howard Garrett. *TEXAS BUG BOOK*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999. 168p. Color Photographs. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$24.95, ISBN 0292-70869-6. 98-3594.

Authors Beck (Garden-Ville Fertilizer Co.) and Garrett (Dallas WPAP 820 radio host, "The Natural Way" and Dallas Morning News columnist), combine their many years of experience and research in organic gardening in this very useful collection of information how to identify, understand the life cycle of, and control or protect Texas insects, mites, snails, slugs, nematodes, beetles, and other such critters. Extensive full-color photos and black-and-white drawings add to the value of this neat reference that makes the insect world exciting and manageable.

Both authors are experts in organic gardening, and this work is grounded in their personal philosophy how to organically control common Texas insects, emphasizing the use of natural, non-toxic mechanisms to

control the "bad guys," such as garlic or pepper tea, liquid seaweed, pyrethrum, citrus oil, horticultural oil, or something as simple as all-purpose flour.

The information is alpha sorted by common names and cross-referenced for easy access, and each listing includes the most used common name, other common names, scientific names, relative sizes of the insect, physical characteristics to aid in identification, biology and life cycle, habitat, feeding habits, economic importance, natural controls, and organic controls. An "insight" section contains interesting and very entertaining tidbits of personal information and real-life stories about the insect that clearly indicates Beck and Garrett are true Texans.

The work also contains useful appendixes about beneficial insects, organic roses, pecan trees and fruit trees, and the basics of an organic growing program.

This work is targeted at gardeners, farmers, ranchers, landscape and nursery people, and anyone interested in insects, concentrating on Texas bugs, beetles, and insects. The authors want to help readers better understand and enjoy not only insects but all of nature and to live without the use of harmful toxins. Sections on pest management and the many helpful forms of animal life that help control insects aid in creating a unique bug guide that is a sure bet for all public libraries.

Dale Farris

Chilton, Earl W. II. *FRESHWATER FISHES OF TEXAS*. Austin: Texas Parks and Wildlife Press, 1998. 98p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 1-885696-23-X. 98-168208.

Earl W. Chilton III is a fisheries biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. In *Freshwater Fishes of Texas*, he and a skilled staff of illustrators have produced a very appealing look at forty-six of Texas' most common freshwater gamefish. Walking the line between scientific field guide and angler's tackle box reference, this book is straightforward easy reading, but not at all condescending. Information concerning range, habitat, distribution, and taxonomic identifiers are combined with advice on bait, water temperature, and feeding patterns. Interesting tidbits about fisheries management are also included, along with rather more sophisticated discussions of fish ecology and physiology.

The illustrations are excellent: clear, subtly colored, and large enough to be genuinely helpful. A fine book for either library or outdoor use.

Randall Holdridge

Powell, A. Michael. *TREES AND SHRUBS OF THE TRANS-PECOS AND ADJACENT AREAS*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998. 464p. Photos. Drawings.

Paperback: \$34.95, ISBN 0-292-76573-8. 97-13155.

Trees and Shrubs of the Trans-Pecos is a revision of its equally technical predecessor, and its appeal is still only to libraries and the most abstruse of individual botanists. No doubt, scientists and highly scientific Big Bend ranchmen (if such exist) will find value in this extraordinarily precise taxonomic treatment of West Texas native trees and shrubbery, but the information falls within the reach of more comprehensive botanicals that don't limit themselves to the arbitrary geographic outlines of the Lone Star State.

Although we can see new hairs split on about thirty percent of the Trans-Pecos woody plants in Texas, the differences are rarefied. The great value of this text is that the information moves from restricted publication by the Big Bend Natural History Association to the University of Texas Press, promising wider distribution at a lower price.

What is irksome about this text is its refusal to get down in the Texas dirt. If there is any value to "regional flora" studies, then it must be in a kind of locational specificity, by county, town, stream flow, plain or mountain upthrust, which this study in its generalized scientific wisdom resists. Dr. Powell must have seen all these plants *in situ*, and the average Texan really interested in botany might like for him to provide more specific details about the bushes on the ground. Where can they actually be seen? What are their qualities? Laymen's recognition of them would also require better illustrations.

Collegiate libraries will want to own this book. The rest of us will wait until Dr. Powell speaks to the avidly normal.

Randall Holdridge

Ryan, Julie. *PERENNIAL GARDENS FOR TEXAS*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998. 384p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$27.95, ISBN 0-292-77089-8. 97-4692.

Numerous books are devoted to perennial gardening but probably none are quite so useful to Texas gardeners as this one. By dividing the state into eight ecological regions which take into account soil, temperature range, and rainfall, and then providing charts of which plants are best adapted plus their cultivation requirements, the author has greatly simplified plant selection for both the home gardener and the professional nurseryman. Nearly all gardening books include the cold hardiness zones; this one shows heat tolerance data as well, which is just as important in Texas. And one has only to look at the difference in the plant life in Dallas and Tyler to see the importance of knowing soil acidity/alkalinity as well as rainfall and temperature ranges.

Part One of the book offers a historical sketch of cottage

gardens and perennial borders. Part Two defines the eight regions with both words and with color photos of public and private gardens in each region. Part Three contains information for creating one's own garden, with pictures of over 300 flowering perennials, bulbs, foliage plants, and old roses suitable for Texas plus lists of possible companion annuals, shrubs and small trees.

Ms. Ryan concludes with lists of mail order suppliers, a list of Texas public gardens with perennial plantings, a reference list by region, a general bibliography, and an index. Julie Ryan is a well-known gardening writer, consultant, and photographer. She was coauthor of *Landscaping with Native Texas Plants*.

B.J. Cale

Taber, Stephen W. *THE WORLD OF HARVESTER ANTS*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998. 213p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$34.95, ISBN 0-89096-815-2. 97-39206.

Most everyone who has stepped outdoors in Texas has encountered red ants. If they were unlucky, they suffered from their sting, which is far worse than that of the smaller, important fire ants. Aimed both at laymen and scientists (who will be no doubt pleased to see a new species identified for the first time), this authoritative and, yes, entertaining study is devoted entirely to harvester ants, of which the red ant is one. The author, an entomologist, has traveled the hemisphere studying harvester ants, so named because their favorite food is grass seeds. He describes the harvester ants' habitat, nests, self-defense, communication, reproduction, anatomy, natural enemies, and even the numerous legends the Native Americans had about the ants. As he discusses the biology of the species that is spread from southern Canada to Tierra del Fuego, however, the author takes pains not to bog down the text with scientific jargon and data. In fact, much of the dry data, such as listing of scientific names and key to species, is relegated to appendices at the back. Thus, even the reader who may not have ant particular interest in harvester ants could have his or her mind changed by this lively, lore-filled text.

Mary M. Fisher

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Baum, Dale. *THE SHATTERING OF TEXAS UNIONISM: POLITICS IN THE LONE STAR STATE DURING THE CIVIL WAR ERA*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998. 283p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$37.50, ISBN 0-8071-2245-9. 98-10534.

This work by Dale Baum, Associate Professor of History at Texas A&M University, offers a thorough view of

the political landscape in the Lone Star State immediately before, during, and after the American Civil War. However, the book is more than a history survey of the time. Baum quantitatively analyzes Texas voting returns and comparable demographic information to see how pro-union tendencies evolved among the voters during the era.

In his research, Baum neatly identifies the voters in such diverse categories as slave holders or non-slave holders, German Texans or Mexican Texans (Tejanos), lived in East Texas or the western frontier, etc., and investigates pro-union or secessionist feelings among them as demonstrated by their voting patterns in the elections of the turbulent period. In many instances, groups as these would come together in informal alignments over issues that resulted in certain unionist or secessionist candidates winning these elections one year, and the next year some or all of these same groups would vote differently or perhaps not vote at all. Baum uses statistical techniques and extrapolations to come up with many examples of probable rates of voter participation, new voters, voter apathy, and even determines if the accusations of voter fraud and manipulation in some of these elections were justified.

Among the important elections and referendums that Baum examines in this book of Texas unionist tendencies is the 1859 comeback election for Sam Houston in the gubernatorial race, the secessionist referendum of 1861, the elections during the state's Confederacy period, the voting during the Reconstruction period, and the controversial gubernatorial race of 1869, which resulted in the election of radical Republican Edmund J. Davis. Unionism has many definitions to Southern historians. For Baum, it represents "the failed attempts during these years by various Texans to create, for whatever reason, a viable and enduring political alternative to the dominant Democratic party." The radical Reconstruction policies of the Congress effectively ended any chance for an alternative like the Republican party to be a force in Texas politics for years to come.

The book is illustrated with informative maps and portraits of the Texas governors during the period, plus thirty-nine tables of election figures and statistics that would probably boggle the minds of the casual reader. It would not be surprising if Baum's work on Texas unionism and the politics of this period will become a consulted work in Texas history. The book is definitely recommended for upper-division and graduate history and political science collections of academic libraries.

Jon P. Tritsch

PSYCHOLOGY

Furman, Laura. *ORDINARY PARADISE*. Houston: Winedale Publishing, 1998. 167p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-965-7468-4-4. 98-27467.

This memoir grew out of a novel Laura Furman wrote in 1986 that concerned keeping secrets from children. In writing that novel, her thoughts returned to her own childhood and the secrets her family had kept. When her mother died of ovarian cancer when she was forty-seven and Laura was an impressionable thirteen-year-old, her family did not talk about the process of dying or of grief nor of how each family member felt as they all attempted to adjust. Very simply, there was a hole in the fabric of their lives. Laura and her sister Valerie, who was two years older, were bereft; but there was no expressing it. Their father never talked about his loss. In the preface, Furman writes: "If I've learned one thing from writing this

memoir, it is that denial is a vast ocean, not the hillock I'd always thought it to be . . . 'In denial' is a storm that gathers force and picks up objects as it goes, making it more dangerous than before." Her journey through her memories, mental illness, and suicide attempt is finally completed with this book. "My life now is an ordinary paradise I thought I would never live to enjoy," she writes.

Furman writes poignantly of her painful memories which had no voice in her youth, but she has now come to the shore of the vast ocean with a new understanding of what those unspoken thoughts and feelings did to her and her family. The book ends with surgery removing her ovaries, which were found to be normal. Now she no longer feels that she is losing her life, her marriage, and the relationship to her son.

Furman, a native of New York City, now lives in Austin. Her previous novels are *Tuxedo Park* and *The Shadow Line* and she has two short story collections, *The Glass House* and *Watch Time Fly*.

Sally Dooley

SOCIOLOGY

Vackar, Cathey. *DO YOU KNOW A SAFE PLACE? WHAT EVERY PERSON SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUTH GANGS*. Wilsonville, OR: BookPartners, 1996. 151p. Paperback: \$14.95. ISBN 1-885221-36-3. 95-83969.

Cathey Vackar, author of *Do You Know a Safe Place?: What Every Person Should Know About Youth Gangs*, wrote her book "to put gang activity in a true perspective and by doing so perhaps reduce the threshold of anxiety many parents feel." In her book, she shares practical personal ways to help protect children from gangs by describing "how to minimize contact with gang elements and to recognize signs of gang penetration."

Vackar, a San Antonio, Texas-based youth gang consultant, speaker, and trainer, writes from experiences that have given her insight into youth gangs. She previously worked as an F.B.I. agent in Houston, Texas, a public school teacher, and a youth gang specialist for San Antonio's Northside Independent School District.

The author organizes the book around five questions she has found helpful to ask during interviews conducted as part of her gang research: Do you know about gangs? Who can name a gang? Who is not afraid of gangs? Who is afraid of gangs? Do you know a safe place?

Vackar defines and classifies gangs, focusing on youth gangs. She describes what leads children to join gangs and the activities and slang of gangs. She also identifies political, legal, and economic forces and journalistic practices that prevent communities from ending youth gang violence. The author devotes an entire chapter to parenting strategies that protect children from gangs.

Do You Know A Safe Place? is an excellent guide for parents, educators, law enforcement personnel, and community leaders who are concerned about youth gangs. Vackar provides a logical analysis and cites relevant professional experiences, statistics, and newspaper reports to support her views. She also expresses a sincere desire to protect children from youth gangs and to end youth gangs. Librarians should find this book an excellent addition to their collections.

Jan Kilby

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