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From the Reference Desk

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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Conclusions

Implementation at GTC was very successful and the library is very proud to be the first participant from the United States in the *reSearcher* community. As one who was directly involved in all phases of its implementation, I can attest to not only the quality of this product, but to also the high level of professional service and assistance from the developers at **Simon Fraser University**. *reSearcher* is slowly starting to garner attention from the open source library software community and some academic libraries in the United States are deciding to implement this product. For example, the **Baker University Library**, in Baldwin City, Kansas is using **GODOT** and **CUFTS A-Z**. **Lee College** in Baytown, Texas is in the process of implementing *reSearcher*. In late 2007, I presented *reSearcher* to librarians at the **College of St. Mary** in Omaha, Nebraska and there are plans for implementation in late 2008. As *reSearcher* emerges as part of the discussion regarding electronic resource management software, it will be interesting to see its overall impact on the development of subsequent open source library applications and commercial products.

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Published by **ABC-CLIO Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora Origins, Experiences, and Culture** (2009, 978-1-85109-873-6, \$295) forgoes the typical alphabetical arrangement that most users are accustomed to. Editor **M. Avrum Ehrlich** and his contributors provide readers a three-volume reference that collects hundreds of essays and organizes them around major themes and specific countries, regions, and communities. However, this arrangement does not detract from its overall value. The scholarly content and scope of coverage remain impressive.

The first volume is subtitled Themes and Phenomena of the Jewish Diaspora and contains articles that cover history, major concepts and themes, various ethnicities, interaction with other religious traditions, persecution, the role of women, music and culture, the place of Israel, as well as current developments. The essays in this volume are descriptive and offer valuable background information. Volumes two and three discuss the Jewish communities throughout various regions of Asia and Europe as well as in numerous countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and North America. The articles in these two volumes are fact filled, often containing basic statistics, a historical overview, and contemporary status. The articles can also be quite specific and focus on groups as small as Syrian Jews in New York and as large as Jews in South Africa. The articles in all three volumes have selected bibliographies and the third volume contains a helpful glossary and a general index useful for finding specifics.

No doubt many libraries will gladly find room for *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora Origins, Experiences, and Culture* in reference. However, the organization of this work may make it equally useful in circulating collections where patrons are afforded more time to uncover the wealth of information and insights it provides. But regardless of its placement, it will be welcomed and appreciated by serious students and scholars. Recommended for academic libraries supporting classes in Jewish Studies and for public libraries

Encyclopedia of Global Health (2009, 978-1-4129-4186-0, \$425) is a recently released four volume set that provides researchers with a broad overview of an extremely important issue. Published by **Sage** and edited by **Yawei Zhang** of **Yale University**, these four volumes contain more than 1,200 survey articles on a variety of relevant topics and should appeal to all types of libraries where global health is of interest.

One of the cornerstones of the set are the numerous articles devoted to specific countries that provide brief but objective analysis, along with basic statistics. Numerous countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific are included. There are also articles that discuss individual diseases and conditions, mental health concerns, treatments, therapies and drugs as well as current research methods and relevant organizations and government agencies. In addition, there are articles that focus on health issues related specifically to men, women and children. The *Encyclopedia* also has a reader's guide grouping articles by category, a 57-page glossary, an appendix of core health indicators by country and a chronology highlighting events and advances. Each entry has a bibliography, some stronger than others. Any future edition might consider enhancing these as a way of adding value to researchers who are using the set as a springboard for further research as well as for the information it provides.

The *Encyclopedia of Global Health* offers students, health professionals, as well as general readers, a valuable background source that is well supplied with useful and relevant facts. Editor **Zhang** and her contributors have compiled a wealth of information in a well organized and easy to access reference work that helps lend clarity to an increasing recognized area of study. Academic, public and some special libraries should give it full consideration.

Libraries seeking up-to-date maps and geographical information on a global scale need look no further than the *Oxford Atlas of the World* (2008, 9780195374513, \$80). Affordable and updated annually, this new 15th edition easily measures up to its predecessors providing extensive information along with state of the art maps and images that graphically depict our world.

While satellite images, maps and other impressive visuals are the essence of the *Atlas*, as in past editions, there is a brief section that provides useful statistics on countries,



where there
is strong
interest.

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cities, climate, and physical dimensions like ocean depths and the heights of mountains. There is also an updated gazetteer of nations offering brief descriptions of the geography, politics and economy of individual countries. Another added value feature is the *Atlas*' "48-page introduction to World Geography" including discussions of the solar system, the earth's geology and landforms, the oceans and atmosphere, climate change, biodiversity, and population growth and migration. In addition, this introduction covers more specific concerns including health conditions, food production, energy and mineral wealth, employment and industry, trade and industry, urban centers and worldwide standards of living. Overall, this section is not only informative and fascinating. It is also enhanced with numerous photos, graphs, tables, and maps.

However, any atlas worthy of the name needs its mapping to be visually compelling. And even in our world of high definition TV, the photographs and satellite images in this volume prove themselves visually captivating while the maps are striking with crisp detail and vivid use of color. The major map section of the *Atlas* is divided into physical and political plates of the world followed by maps of the oceans and the Atlantic islands and island chains. These in turn are followed by plates of the continents further divided by maps of individual countries and regions including a section devoted to Australia and Oceania (including the Pacific and its islands). Providing access to specific locations there is an index that includes 84,000 entries with their relevant pages and letter-number grid designations as well as latitude and longitude coordinates. The *Atlas*' city map section has been revised to include some 69 cities and offers both a map of the surrounding city and one of the city center.

The only downside to this atlas is that the size of the images and maps do not lend themselves to easy copying or scanning. However in the overall scheme of things, this is a minor issue. In every other respect, the *Oxford Atlas of the World* is an investment that most libraries will find more than worthwhile. It is reasonably priced and continues the tradition of top-notch quality that users have come to expect from this publication.

Public librarians in particular will be delighted with the publication of two recently updated fascinating and fun encyclopedias. The 2nd edition of the *Encyclopedia of Superheroes on Film and Television* (2008, 9780786437559, \$75) written by **John Kenneth Muir** and published by **McFarland** is a work that will appeal to both enthusiasts of the superhero genre as well as serious students of popular culture. It is full of interesting facts and offbeat trivia about old standbys like *Captain Marvel* and *Wonder Woman* along with coverage of recent superheroes like *Hellboy* and *Painkiller Jane*. Each entry is introduced



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by an essay covering the origins and history of the superhero and a broad discussion of their various film and TV incarnations. This is followed by coverage of the individual films and shows including reviews, list of cast members and the producers, directors and editors. In the cases of the TV shows episode by episode titles, synopses, airdates, and guest casts are provided. With the ever popular nature of this topic, the *Encyclopedia of Superheroes on Film and Television* is another one of those titles that many libraries will need a second copy. Librarians will want access for reference purposes and fans will want one to checkout.

The same can be said for **Fact on Files Encyclopedia of Animated Cartoons** (2009, 970816065998, \$85). Written by **Jeff Lenburg** and now in its third edition, this reference traces more than 100 years of animated cartoon history with both seriousness and affection. From KoKo the Clown to Betty Boop and Popeye and including South Park, the Simpsons and Sponge Bob Squarepants, the coverage is thorough and comprehensive with more than 3,100 entries. Author

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Lenburg organizes his book starting with a “nutshell” history of animated cartoons and then proceeds with major sections on silent cartoon series, theatrical sound cartoons, full-length animated features, animated television specials, and TV cartoon series. Each entry provides historical background information, voice credits (except for the silent productions), the year produced, and complete filmographies when appropriate. **Lenburg** follows these sections on the specific cartoons and cartoon series with ones on awards and honors and a chronology entitled milestones of animation. He ends the book with a selected bibliography and a general index. There are black and white images throughout the volume but the section of color plates in the middle is interesting and fun to browse with images ranging from the Chipmunks to Bevis and Butthead, Doonesbury to Davey and Goliath, and Felix the Cat to Shrek. The *Encyclopedia of Animated Cartoons* is another one of those reference works that appeals to readers because it is not only useful in finding elusive facts, it also offers the enjoyment of browsing that sparks new discoveries.

Libraries that have found the various **Grey House Publishing** directories and statistical handbooks valuable will be glad that a num-

ber of new 2008 and 2009 editions are now available.

One of the more popular, *America's Top Rated Cities: a Statistical Handbook* (2008, 9781592373499, \$225) is now in its fifteenth edition. Divided into four volumes by region; Southern, Western, Central and Eastern, this set continues to provide background, rankings and numerous statistical tables drawn from a variety of sources on the top 100 cities in America. Sixteen new cities have made the most recent list and of course 16 have been removed. Statistics and ratings related to education, employment, income, government expenditures, real estate, transportation, and business are all included. Smartly compiled with an assortment of useful information, libraries that have purchased earlier editions will want to continue that tradition.

A new edition of the companion set to this work, *America's Top Rated Smaller Cities: a Statistical Handbook 2008/2009* (978-1-59237-284-3, \$195) is also available from **Grey House**. This is the seventh edition of this work and it consists of two volumes arranged alphabetically by state and covering 111 smaller cities ranging from Dublin, OH to Rio Rancho, NM and from Folsom, CA to Franklin, TN. The contents are similar to the larger four-volume set with background, ratings and numerous statistical tables being provided for each city. Both these sources provide useful and fascinating information for those researching their home town or contemplating a move to a new locale.

Another popular and useful new edition from **Grey House** is the fifteenth edition of the *Complete Learning Disabilities Directory* (2008, 978-1592373680, \$145). This resource affords a comprehensive and compact guide to a wealth of helpful information, not only for those who are learning disabled, but also to their families and the professionals that serve them. The nearly 5,000 entries in this work offer detailed information about associations and government agencies, camps and summer programs, conferences and workshops, resources for literacy and learning skills, exchange programs, professional periodicals and texts, testing resources, and schools and colleges. It also contains sections that offer guidance on computer resources as well as other media ranging from books to pamphlets to videos and Websites. Each entry provides the essential information to access, contact or purchase the resources covered. As a value added resource the **National Center for Learning Disabilities'** advocacy brief *Understanding the Standards-based Individualized Education Programs* is provided. This brief explains the Standards based IEP which is being adopted by school districts across the country. Academic libraries supporting special education programs as well as public libraries where there is interest will find this a valuable guide for students, professionals and the general reader. 🐼

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>



Column Editor's Note: In this issue, I am pleased to offer insights from two new reviewers: **Katherine Head** and **Amber Malcolm**. Both of **ATG's** newest reviewers are graduate students at the School of Library and Information Science at the **University of South Carolina**. They present thoughtful reviews on books that are sure to peak your patrons' (and perhaps even your own!) interest. **Katherine** examines **Melody Peterson's Our Daily Meds**. She has learned about the pharmaceutical and medical industries through her own searching and with the guidance of a husband in a health profession, though she freely acknowledges her generalist status. **Amber**, a **Disney** enthusiast, hopes to one day work in the **Big Apple** at the **Museum of Natural History** or the **New York Public Library**. A hearty welcome to these budding information specialists, and happy reading, everyone! — **DV**

Gabler, Neal. *Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination*. New York: Knoph, 2006. 9780679438229. 880 pages. \$40.00.

Reviewed by **Amber Malcolm** (Graduate Student, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina)

Neal Gabler's biography of **Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination** provides an intensive look into one of the world's most well known names. Beginning with a comprehensive look at **Walt Disney's** family roots, **Gabler** takes the reader through **Disney's** life in an attempt to explain the motivations and reasoning behind the man who became an American legend. **Gabler** divides

the biography into eleven chapters — each chapter discussing a specific period in **Disney's** life. To set the tone and pace of each chapter, **Gabler** uses descriptive words and phrases for the titles. He then stays true to the titles in such a way that the reader is drawn completely into an unknown side and world of **Walt Disney**. Starting with the first chapter, “Escape,” **Gabler** pinpoints the fact that **Walt** was always

looking for an “Escape” and that this was his main motivation throughout his life. **Gabler** details the **Disney** family legacy, which allows the reader to see a family that was constantly searching for something better, a way to “Escape” the realities of the world. “Escape” dives head first into chapter two, “Go-Getter,” in which **Gabler** plunges the reader into **Walt's** mindset as he realizes his destiny lies with animation. **Gabler** captures the sense of urgency and motivation with which **Disney** threw himself into being the best animator possible while maintaining his underlying goal of creating a way to “Escape” from reality. When **Walt** does not get the results he hoped from the small city, he uproots to Hollywood, which becomes a “Wonderland,” the title of the third chapter, for all of his dreams. What starts out as an “Escape” and “Wonderland” soon leads to a sour turn of events — **Walt's** company, **The Disney Brothers**, lost several of their animators in a production company dispute and are forced to start over.

Gabler transitions into “The Mouse,” the fourth chapter, named due to **Walt's** most famous character, created not from ingenuity, but out of necessity. **Mickey Mouse** starred

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