

December 2008

## Book Reviews -- Monographic Musings

Debbie Vaughn

College of Charleston, [vaughnd@cofc.edu](mailto:vaughnd@cofc.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Vaughn, Debbie (2008) "Book Reviews -- Monographic Musings," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 20: Iss. 6, Article 24.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2619>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

**From the Reference Desk**  
from page 57

**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

*continued on page 59*

# THE MOST POWERFUL TOOL IN MEDICAL RESEARCH.

Have You Experienced The R2 Digital Library?

- Health sciences specific electronic book platform
- More than 650 titles in medicine, nursing, allied health, and consumer health. All integrated in one platform
- Enables the purchase of individual resources
- Purchase one time – for life of edition
- More than 30 leading publishers in STM
- Fully searchable, topic driven database

[www.R2Library.com](http://www.R2Library.com)

RITTENHOUSE  
**R<sub>2</sub>**  
DIGITAL  
LIBRARY



SIGN UP TODAY FOR A FREE 30-DAY TRIAL.  
RITTENHOUSE BOOK DISTRIBUTORS, INC.  
800.345.6425 • [www.rittenhouse.com](http://www.rittenhouse.com)

## Book Reviews from page 58

in a few cartoons, namely *Steamboat Willie*, one of the first sound cartoons, and was an instant hit. The fifth chapter discusses “The Cult” that arose from **Mickey’s** success and how it forever changed animation and **Walt’s** life. In “Folly,” **Walt** once more is blazing the trail in an effort to create an “Escape” and on-screen “Wonderland” by making the first full length animated feature. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was an incredible success, and from there, it appeared **Walt** could do no wrong — he was at the top of the mountain, or “Parnassus,” as the seventh chapter is called. **Walt’s** company produced a few films before reality caught up as World War II broke out. “Two Wars” discusses not only the **Disney** company’s involvement in the war effort and the reasoning behind it, but also the infamous workers strike at the company. Even with reality taking over his studio, **Walt** still attempted to “Escape” by going to South America to get inspiration for more films. The outcome of the actual “Two Wars” left the **Disney** studios somewhat “Adrift,” as the ninth chapter focuses on **Walt’s** attempt to return to his original goal of creating his own reality and “Escape,” though he does not find his focus until chapter ten. “City on a Hill” shows the “Go-Getter” side of **Disney** melding with his want for an “Escape” in his attempt to create a new kind of amusement park. **Disney** was able to realize his dream for a created reality of which he was in control, and despite his age and

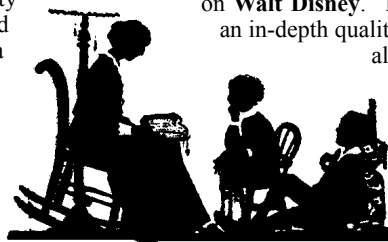
decreasing health, **Disney** rallied his “Go-Getter” attitude to continue improving the world around him. The final chapter, “Slouching to Utopia,” presents **Walt** in his final days as he tried to quickly accomplish as many plans as possible in his realization of his failing health. The biography ends with the death of **Walt**, who changed America in so many ways, but also shows that his legacy is an ongoing process — always changing and always improving, just as **Disney** lived his life.

This biography is intended for avid **Disney** fans who want to know more about what drove the man who became a household name worldwide. **Gabler** maintains an unbiased tone, presenting several accounts of the stories he includes, though one can see that **Gabler** holds **Disney** in high regard. **Gabler** does not appear to have any previous affinity or bias towards **Disney**. He has authored three other books, all dealing with Hollywood and celebrities. **Gabler** has been published in several leading newspapers and magazines, such as *The New York Times* and *Vogue*. He also has experience in television and currently works for PBS. **Gabler** truly did his research, much of it coinciding with the reviewer’s previous knowledge on **Walt Disney**. The information had an in-depth quality about it, and overall the biography was very thorough and offered a new perspective for the reviewer. The name “**Walt Disney**” and all that goes along

with it is a daily part of a large majority of the world today. While this book appears to be written for individuals who share a passion for knowing more about the man, **Walt Disney**, it could definitely be an interesting read to those with only a mild interest. The **Disney** company has permeated almost every aspect of people’s lives, and so it is a book just about any person off the street could relate to.

The reviewer firmly believes that this book definitely appeals to a certain audience. The importance of the subject matter, **Walt Disney’s** life, is up to the individual who might read the book. The reviewer has a rather extensive knowledge of **Walt Disney** and his empire from several other books, but was excited to read another book with a different perspective on the subject. This book was one of the best on **Disney** and his life and legacy and the reviewer feels it truly encompassed the real **Walt Disney** and what motivated him. The strengths of this book are too numerous to elaborate on each, but there are one or two that are worthy of mention. **Gabler’s** chapter titles not only set the tone and pace of the chapters, but also reflected **Walt’s** life in its entirety. One could almost graph **Walt’s** life based on the chapter titles and pinpoint his accomplishments and defeats as well. **Gabler** also took the chapter titles one step further and really made each chapter its own. The “Go-Getter” and “Parnassus” are the best examples; while reading “Go-Getter,” the reader gets so caught up in whether or not **Disney** will be able to succeed, despite knowing the end result. **Gabler’s** writing style draws the reader into **Walt’s** life, and the reader is able to really experience the ups and downs alongside

*continued on page 60*



Walt and his company. The book does not just take on a lackadaisical view of **Disney's** life; instead it becomes the reader's created reality, with **Gabler** following in **Walt's** footsteps — creating a reality and an escape for the people around him. The only weak-

ness of the book, according to the reviewer, is the size of the book. First impressions make the book appear to be an extremely daunting task, with over 800 pages to read. On second glance, one realizes that 200 of the final pages are appendices. Overall, the reviewer thoroughly enjoyed this biography and recommends it for any **Walt Disney** fan, new or old.

**macia** (now owned by **Pfizer**) to market their incontinence medication, **Detrol**, to a larger audience. They "sold" the phrase by paying physicians and celebrities such as **Mary Lou Retton** to speak of the serious detriment that an overactive bladder has on a person's life. With a new law permitting television advertisements for prescription medications, the company reached their target audience easily. The same marketing strategy was applied for **PMDD** (premenstrual dysphoric disorder). "Think it's PMS? It could be **PMDD**," said **Eli Lilly's** commercials for **Sarafem**, a pink and lavender repackaging of **Prozac**.

---

**Petersen, Melody.** *Our Daily Meds: How the Pharmaceutical Companies Transformed Themselves Into Slick Marketing Machines and Hooked the Nation on Prescription Drugs.* New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2008. 432 pages. 9780374228279. \$26.00.

Reviewed by **Katherine E. B. Head** (Graduate Student, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina)

---

Over the last two decades, large companies such as **Merck**, **Bristol-Meyers Squibb**, **Pfizer**, and more have increasingly hired business executives and marketers to run their companies. The effect has been increased sales, but sometimes at the peril of the patient.

Americans are taking enough medications to supply plenty of excess income to major pharmaceutical producers, which largely goes toward more marketing. According to a study by the **Kaiser Family Foundation** in May 2007, the average American picked up more than twelve different prescriptions from the pharmacy in 2006, up from eight in 2004. Pharmaceutical companies court physicians with extravagant vacations, dinners, and lunches while promoting the latest prescription drug. In 2002, **Forest Labs** paid for hundreds of events including a lavish French dinner at Daniel in Manhattan to promote their new drug **Lexapro**, at which they paid physicians \$500 to attend. Such dinners and conferences sometimes pose as continuing education, although they are marketing ploys to convince doctors to write more prescriptions for the given drug. Pharmaceutical companies pay physicians to promote the drug to other physicians without disclosing their financial ties.

A danger in these promotions is that they are sometimes based on weak or faulty evidence of the drug's efficacy. Until recent legislation requiring that pharmaceutical companies release all studies for new drugs, some companies hid results, and only released results that were favorable. **Merck**, the makers of **Vioxx**, could have prevented thousands of deaths if they had not suppressed their original findings that **Vioxx** increases risk of heart attacks more than other pain medications. It took several years of being on the market before it was pulled in 2004, but in November of that year, a scientist from the **FDA** testified that **Vioxx** may have caused heart attacks in as many as 139,000 Americans. Pharmaceutical companies have also performed unethical research. **Novartin's** trial for **Ritalin LA** removed participants with negative effects from the pre-trial. The industry has been known to hire ghostwriters to produce articles that depict their drug favorably, regardless of whether the research is valid.

The company pays physicians to "author" such articles by "editing," then attaching their name and submitting it to a medical journal or other source for publication. According to the documents of an ex-insider of a major pharmaceutical company, the marketing firm **Medical Education Systems** performed such ghostwriting services for **Parke-Davis's** drug, **Neurontin**. The faxed status report read "DRAFT COMPLETED. WE JUST NEED AN AUTHOR." This highlights the importance of peer-review for journals. Unfortunately, even reviewers occasionally have had ties to the industry.

In congruence with **Petersen's** claims that physicians accept financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry, medical associations are beginning to acknowledge the problem by advocating against it. The **National Physicians Alliance** has launched the "Unbranded Doctor Campaign" to encourage all medical professionals to eliminate the acceptance of gifts from pharmaceutical companies and reduce the influence those companies have on the field. **NoFreeLunch.org** is a not-for-profit group of health care providers who "believe that pharmaceutical promotion should not guide practice."

Mass amounts of money are spent on marketing while research time is spent on creating copy-cat drugs. **Zantac**, for example, is a copy-cat of **Tagamet**. **Vioxx** was a copy-cat of **Celebrex**. Rather than devote R&D time toward moving forward, pharmaceutical companies look for ways to create the next "blockbuster" drug. With massive marketing campaigns and a drug that works just differently enough to claim some type of "one-up" on its original, the industry makes billions off copy-cat drugs. "In 1986 **Zantac** passed **Tagamet** to become the biggest-selling drug on earth" by marketing essentially the same product toward heartburn sufferers to increase the consumer numbers, rather than focus on **Tagamet's** original purpose as a healer for stomach ulcers.

Rather than search for cures, companies focus on chronic ailments to ensure lifelong customers. The industry also uses marketing to create the perception of chronic ailments previously unlabeled as such. For example, "overactive bladder" was coined by **Phar-**

The industry is increasingly marketing toward a younger audience to gain life-time customers. **National Depression Screening Day** is a campaign organized by **Screening for Mental Health, Inc.** (funded by **Eli Lilly**, **Pfizer**, **Wyeth**, **Forest Laboratories**, and **GlaxoSmithKline** — all makers of anti-depressant drugs). The day involves "screening" college students with brief surveys looking for symptoms of stress, anxiety, and sadness — all symptoms one would expect in the average college student. At **Central College** in Pella, Iowa, the results of the screening indicated "almost half" of the 190 students who took the test scored "diagnosis likely, further evaluation needed."

The information in **Petersen's** nonfiction book is relevant to every American, as we are exposed to pharmaceutical marketing when we watch television or read a magazine. The free samples we get from our doctors would not be there without pharmaceutical companies' marketing strategies. We should all be informed consumers. While **Petersen** does not downplay the real need for pharmaceutical medications, she challenges the deceptive mass marketing strategies that have become commonplace in the industry. The book is well worth the price. It might save you hundreds of dollars on unnecessary prescriptions, and an informed consumer can ask doctors better questions and recognize marketing schemes.

**Melody Petersen** is a journalist who covered pharmaceutical companies for the *New York Times* from 1999 until 2003. On the same subject is *Hooked: Ethics, Medicine, and Pharma* by **Howard Brody, MD, PhD**. On his blog, **Brody** credits **Petersen** with her series of articles in the *Times* for inspiring his work. **Petersen's** book is straightforward and understandable for someone without a background in the medical field. It is loaded in the back with a Notes section, full of citations and support for her claims. This reviewer only has two complaints: 1) Topics are sometimes dropped and revisited later, making the book occasionally seem out of chronological and/or sequential order. Nevertheless, it was not a difficult book to follow overall; and 2) In the first chapter, **Petersen** briefly diverts from pharmaceutical companies and prescription drugs to share statistics about money wasted on unnecessary tests and procedures. The paragraph is not long enough for her to explore the argument and back up her comments. 🐾