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Book Reviews-Monograph Musings and Children's Critical Corner

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From the Reference Desk
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documents, a chronology and an index end the book. The entries are short, clearly written and factual. However, the author does not shrink from dealing with touchy issues like the role of the Vatican or the depth of Hitler's involvement in the "final solution." Overall, *Adolf Hitler: A Biographical Companion* is an orderly and succinct work that provides easy access to a good deal of useful information.

But why a biographical reference about Adolf Hitler? There is already a cottage industry consisting of works about Hitler and Nazi Germany. Do we really need one more? Well, as the author rightly states, Hitler "created a moral trauma that will never and should never be surmounted. The nature of his barbarity ... the forces that made him possible, are still matters calling urgently for assessment and judgement." With his book, David Nicholls provides a legitimate starting point for more thorough analysis. Given its format and ease of use, students and lay readers will find it equally compelling. It merits consideration for public, high school and undergraduate collections.

After only 3 years, Oxford University Press has felt the need to update its *Oxford Dictionary of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology* (2000, 0198506732, \$65). This revised edition corrects the minor mistakes and defects of the first, as well as revising or re-writing 400 articles and adding 50 new ones. Broadly speaking, the dictionary reflects current usage in fields that attempt to "explain the behaviour of life-forms in molecular terms." Definitions include those for genes, enzymes, amino acids, proteins, reactions and even equipment. Each definition is clearly written and understandable, especially for students with some background. Abbreviations and symbols are included in the definition of a term whenever necessary and are also listed in the alphabetical arrangement with reference to the full term. The presentation is appealing with the headwords in bold type. In addition, there are useful appendices containing clarification of Greek letter symbols and references to nomenclature publications, organizations and Internet resources. Unfortunately, as in the first edition, there are no pronunciations.

The *Oxford Dictionary of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology* is a highly useful tool for undergraduates in need of clear definitions for terms uncovered in their textbooks and in other reading.

However, the changes are not that significant from the first edition and libraries owning it may not see the need to update. By my count a little over 2% of the definitions are revised or new. But at this price, an argument can be made to place the older edition in cir-

ulation while shelving the new edition in reference. Libraries needing additional, more in-depth coverage might also consider the *Concise Encyclopedia of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology* published by Walter de Gruyter (1996, 3110145359, \$99.95).

Another worthy second edition is Garland's *Encyclopedia of Human Evolution and Prehistory* (2000, 0815316968, \$175) edited by Eric Delson et al. Updating the 1988 edition, this new version maintains the same quality and expands coverage to an additional 200 topic headings in over 135 new pages of text. Even un-revised entries have updated bibliographies and "see also" references. Coverage is thorough and comprehensive including articles on topics ranging from general evolutionary concepts to specifics like time intervals, tools, dating methods, localities and sites, biographical entries,

archaeological industries and taxonomy. The second edition also has a number of new illustrations and photos, as well as a general index, a feature lacking in the first edition. The only factor in the minus column is the binding. It is a step down, being paper rather than buckram. However, I have one suggested improvement. Given the number of specialized terms used throughout the text, this book could benefit from a glossary.

But these are minor reservations. The *Encyclopedia of Human Evolution and Prehistory* deserves serious consideration. It is a top-notch background source for students, professionals and the informed general reader. More substantial than the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution* (1993, 0521323703, \$100) and with a more useful alphabetical arrangement, this reference will be of particular interest to academic and larger public libraries.

Book Reviews

Monograph Musings and Children's Critical Corner

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

Number one on my list of millennium resolutions: read more books. With a new house and five pets, I often find it hard to read amidst the walls in need of painting, the cats in need of feeding, and the dog in need of walking. This year, however, I have vowed to make time to peruse more monographic publications. Just in case increased reading is also on your list of millennium resolutions, I offer you a plethora of thumbnail reviews to whet your literary appetite.

In this issue, newcomer **Kathy Sperounis** examines *Online Competitive Intelligence*. Kathy received bachelors' degrees in both History and English from the University of Tennessee in 1994. In 1997, I had the pleasure of becoming her friend and classmate at the University of South

Carolina College of Library and Information Science. Focusing on special and business libraries, Kathy created an internship at the Disney World Library. After earning her MLIS in 1999, Kathy remained in Florida where she is currently a Technical Services and Reference librarian at Warner Southern Christian College in Lake Wales.

Something new for the New Year: reviews of children's books and young adult literature. **Jennie Vaughn** joins me in examining a handful of tomes for these delightful audiences.

I welcome suggestions for book reviews from authors, publishers, and readers. I am also forever seeking individuals who would like to become ATG reviewers. Please do not hesitate to drop me an email message. Happy Millennium and Happy Reading!

Burwell, Helen. *Online Competitive Intelligence: Increase your Profits using Cyber Intelligence*. Tempe, AZ: Facts on Demand Press, 1999.
396p. ISBN 1889150088. \$25.95.

Reviewed by **Kathy Sperounis**
(Warner Southern Christian College, Lake Wales, FL) <kearnol@yahoo.com>

Want to know the wave of the future for corporations in the way of gathering information on the competition? It should come as no surprise that the latest and some of the most accurate company information can be found by using online sources. And why not?

For years we have used the world wide Web to find information, and now Helen Burwell's *Online Competitive Intelligence* tells us how to find corporate information on the Internet.

Competitive intelligence (or CI, to which
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on competition and competitors to help your company gain an advantage, through strategic decision-making in a line of business in which it competes."

It seems nowadays that this technique of information acquisitions can be helpful not only for large corporations, but also for small or one-office operations. Knowing what information is "out there" in the business world gives companies a spirited edge. The ever-knowledgeable Burwell has included all the necessary routes to take in order to achieve that spirit.

One of the top professionals in the field of CI and president of **Burwell Enterprises, Inc.**, Burwell knows the "ins and outs" of information consulting. She has helped revolutionize this practice since its inception and has made it her top priority to keep those in the field informed with *The Burwell Directory* (now in its 14th edition). The Burwell Enterprises Web site (www.burwellinc.com) also provides valuable business research.

As can be seen from her background, Burwell knows CI and has written a source to introduce all researchers to the wonderful online tools that have proven helpful to her and her company. *Online Competitive Intelligence* is broken up into sections. Geared towards the beginner up to the advanced, the book explains the importance of online resources—from the obvious, big names (such as Dow Jones and Lexis Nexis) to the small online journals and local newspapers (which also hold important tidbits of CI information). The strategies for CI information gathering are mapped out in great detail, and searching shortcuts are offered to make research cost-effective as well as accurate.

The old saying "knowledge is power" describes what is possible with the information we acquire and use in the Information Age. However, concerning competitive intelligence, this reader believes a more appropriate saying is "information retrieval is power." The online world, according to *Online Competitive Intelligence*, can be a mighty tool for achieving that power.

it is often referred) is the "use of publicly available information

McGee, Marty. *Traditional Musicians of the Central Blue Ridge: Old Time, Early Country, Folk and Bluegrass Label Recording Artists, with Discographies*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000. 235p. ISBN 0786408766. \$25.00.

Reviewed by **Jennie Vaughn**
(Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC)
<jvaughn@warren-wilson.edu>

It isn't particularly reader-friendly. The photographs are a little fuzzy. The writing is stiff, and so densely filled with facts that it doesn't flow very well. But folks who want to know about a group of vaudeville performers called H.M. Barnes' Blue Ridge Ramblers or an old-time string band named The Konnarock Critters probably aren't looking for graceful prose. They're looking for names, dates, facts, and discography. And they'll find that information in spades in **Marty McGee's** latest book, a comprehensive anthology of seemingly every traditional musician (read: Doc Watson and others of his ilk) that ever set foot in the Central Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina and Virginia. *Traditional Musicians* contains detailed biographies of nearly 100 artists and bands, sprinkled with a few fascinating tidbits. For example, we learn that Thomas Norman of The Shady Mountain Ramblers is left-handed and thus plays his banjo upside down and backwards, with his forefinger playing what would normally be the drop-thumb notes of a right-handed player, and that Dock Walsh achieved his unique "Hawaiian" or "bottleneck" banjo sound by placing pennies under the bridge and using a knife for fretting.

Unfortunately, most of the writing isn't nearly this interesting, and consists largely of birth and marriage dates, lists of which musician influenced which other musician, and other facts that will quickly overwhelm and/or bore the lay reader. This is unfortunate, but it isn't surprising. McGee writes from the perspective of both a traditional music scholar and a lifelong devotee. He is entrenched in this stuff

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and expects us to be, too. For the readers who are approaching the subject cold, he provides a five-page introduction which briefly outlines the history and trends of the genre from 1916 to the present. While informative, this simply isn't enough for anyone but the serious music buff. In short, McGee tells us every detail of every tree but fails to back up and introduce us to the forest.

Nonetheless, McGee's work is important because of its specialized subject matter. Traditional music has shaped not just Appalachia but all of America, and it's a pity that it hasn't received even a fraction of the press of, say, rock 'n' roll or rap. That McGee is beginning to address this dearth of literature is admirable indeed.

Sharpe, Charles C. *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching on the Internet*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., Inc., Publishers, 1999. 240p. ISBN 0786407573. \$32.00.

and
Gregory, Vickie L., Marilyn H. Karrenbrock Stauffer, and Thomas W. Keene, Jr. *Multicultural Resources of the Internet: The United States and Canada*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1999. 366 p. ISBN 156308676X. \$30.00.

Reviewed by **Deborah Vaughn**
(College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

I remember being told in library school that printed Internet guides are seldom helpful. The fickle nature of cyberspace almost always insures that the information in these guides is obsolete by the time of publication. As I began to review this pair of books, however, I was proved wrong. *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching on the Internet* and *Multicultural Resources of the Internet: The United States and Canada* are two exceptional Internet resource guides that break the mold. These tomes go beyond mere "webliographies" by offering useful tips and by attempting to give readers a lesson in searching in general, be it on the virtual library we know as the Internet or in an actual library building.

Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching on the Internet, by Charles C. Sharpe, takes the sometimes confusing and always arduous process of legal research and makes it understandable and less laborious. In his preface, Sharpe states, "What formerly required costly and time-consuming trips to a Patent and Trademark Depository Library can now be easily accomplished in one's home or office using a PC—if the searcher knows how and where to look." Sharpe hones in on a weighty issue: "going online" has become a convenience, but it has also brought with it a voluminous responsibility. It is not enough to know how to dial into an Internet Service Provider; one must also be able to search effectively and evaluate one's findings. *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching* aids readers in their responsibility. This book is an exceptional resource for three main reasons: the chapters are extraordinarily informative because of Sharpe's direct style of writing and his explanation of the research process; the appendices contain educative examples of patents, patent forms, and copyright form letters; and practice search exercises are included to help the reader get into the routine of searching.

It would have been enough for Sharpe, a litigation consultant, to simply list government Web sites that pertain to patent, trademark, and copyright needs—but he went much further. Divided into four parts, *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching* addresses the finest particulars of this branch of legal research. In-depth examinations are made about patent and trademark searching in general—not only about searching on the Internet. Sharpe examines such issues as whether or not one needs to hire a patent lawyer, when one should give in the towel and trek to a Patent Depository Library, and even gives the invaluable insight to bring a few rolls of dimes for the photocopy machines. This kind of attention to detail makes *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching* a must-have for anyone who is doing such search-

ing. Special libraries, law firms, public libraries, and academic libraries can all benefit from the information contained in Sharpe's pages.

Multicultural Resources on the Internet: The United States and Canada, by Vicki L. Gregory, Marilyn H. Karrenbrock Stauffer, and Thomas W. Keene, Jr., is another gem of an Internet guide. Like Sharpe, Gregory, Stauffer, and Keene go past simply listing Web sites that deliver information on various cultural and ethnic groups; they first give their readers lessons in Internet mortality and basic Web searching tricks.

In their introduction, Gregory, Stauffer, and Keene own up to the Web's "essentially ephemeral nature" and make no apologies for the risk that they took when they decided to publish a book that deals with Internet resources. They openly admit that the sites contained in their guide might not exist in a few years. Moreover, they give the readers tips on how to find other sites and how to review search engines. The authors also state that readers "still have to evaluate (and explore) for [themselves] the different sites" that search tools present. Gregory and her crew remind their readers of the responsibilities that lie on their searching shoulders.

Following the introduction, *Multicultural Resources'* thirteen other chapters cover comprehensive multicultural sites: Native American, African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Chinese American, Japanese American, Asian Indian American, Jewish American, Middle Eastern and North African, French Canadian, Cajun and Creole, and Hawaiian American Web resources. All of these chapters are organized directory-style; that is, they are broken down into sub-resources—sites addressing business, fine arts, history, popular culture, and sometimes even food and drink. Each citation is annotated with a brief overview of the site's contents.

Because of the richness of content and the expert organization, this Internet guide is ideal for public, school, and especially academic libraries. Any college or university with cultural or ethnic programs of study can enrich their resource collections simply by utilizing the information found in the Web sites offered in *Multicultural Resources*. Our library offers Research Guides for each major and minor at the College of Charleston—I jumped on the chance to use several of the Internet sites listed in this book to enhance these guides.

Perhaps most printed Internet resource handbooks do not contain up-to-date information. Likewise, perhaps the information in *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching* and *Multicultural Resources* will be obsolete by the time this review is published. Because of the research process tips, practice exercises, and searching hints, these books will still contain valid information in one, two, or even five years. In terms of research strategy and evaluation, Sharpe and Gregory, Stauffer, and Keene have written books that will withstand the test of the Internet's flying time.

Couric, Katie, ill. by Marjorie Priceman. *The Brand New Kid*. New York: Doubleday, 2000. 48p. ISBN 0385500300. \$15.95. Ages 3-8.

Reviewed by **Deborah Vaughn**
(College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

Lazlo S. Gasky is the brand new kid at Brookhaven School. He doesn't fit in. We don't know where he is from or why he speaks in a funny accent. All we know is that he is different and strange and weird.

I have always admired **Katie Couric**. As a journalist, she never fails to get to the heart of an issue. As an anchorwoman, she is kind and compassionate without sacrificing information. As a widow and a mother, she is graceful, dignified, and all-around beautiful. Now, as a writer, she touches on ideas that all children should learn: thoughtfulness, kindness, acceptance, and standing up for what you believe in.

In her book *The Brand New Kid*, Couric introduces Lazlo to readers as he is introduced to Miss Kincaid's second-grade class. Immediately, Lazlo's classmates shun and ostracize him until he "kept his

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head bowed and stopped trying to please and simply prepared for the next taunt and tease." Because of his insensitive classmates, Lazlo's mother is upset and afraid that she will have to take Lazlo out of Brookhaven School. Heroine Ellie McSnealy wonders what she can do to help the situation. One morning she walks up to him at his locker and asks, "Would like to come over and maybe play soccer?" Terrifically excited, Lazlo invites Ellie to his house. They snack on Mrs. Gasky's strudel, kick around the soccer ball, and even play a round of chess. At school the next day, the children are offended and puzzled at Ellie's newly formed friendship with the oddball Lazlo. Ellie's reply is truly inspirational: "Now I know him, you see, Lazlo isn't that different from you and from me. He's terrific at chess, and his Mom's really sweet. Playing soccer the guy doesn't have two left feet. He may look slightly strange, have an accent and stuff, but if you knew him, you'd like him, it wouldn't be tough." You go, Ellie!

In the first read-through, Couric's writing seems slightly off—the meter just isn't there. However, after reading *The Brand New Kid* again (and again—it is definitely a tome to be read repeatedly), I quite like the offbeat and non-singsong rhythm of the text. Caldecott recipient **Marjorie Priceman's** fabulous illustrations are filled with every morsel of emotion that Couric's words generate; the smile on Lazlo's face when Ellie asks him to play is nothing but dazzling.

In her introduction, Couric states, "Surely, we have all known someone like Lazlo." My Lazlo was Jennifer Johnson. Jennifer was extremely bright and very pretty, and she loved horses. I don't know where she lived before her family moved to Clemson, South Carolina, but she was quite the equestrian when she got to Tiger Town. I still do not understand why all of us in Mrs. Perkin's third grade class didn't like Jennifer, but my old school friend Renya Lutzcz was our heroine. She was not afraid to play with Jennifer, and she taught us to befriend her. An asset to any children's collection, *The Brand New Kid* teaches us all to befriend our Lazloes—a laudable lesson at any age.

Curtis, Jamie Lee, ill. by Laura Cornell. **Where Do Balloons Go? An Uplifting Mystery.** New York: Janna Cotler Books. An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2000. 32p. ISBN 006027980X; ISBN 0060279818 (lib. binding). \$16.95. Ages 4-8.

Reviewed by **Jennie Vaughn**
(Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC)
<jvaughn@warren-wilson.edu>

In case you're wondering, yes, it's *that* **Jamie Lee Curtis**. And believe it or not, she writes pretty OK books for kids. Her latest, *Where Do Balloons Go? An Uplifting Mystery*, is a whimsical rhyme that works fairly well, though at times it descends to ridiculousness. But perhaps the best part of this book is its illustrations, a series of bright watercolors with some subtle humor that will go right over kids' heads but will have parents chuckling, even occasionally laughing out loud. "Where do balloons go when you let them fly free?" the story begins. "It can happen by accident. It happened to me." The words are matter-of-fact enough; meanwhile, the illustration shows a young boy reporting his missing balloon as though it were a missing person; a TV reporter asks for comments. Dorky, perhaps, but kind of funny, too.

More questions follow about these wayward balloons. Do they float to the countryside? Don't they get bored? What do they do all day? "Do they tango with airplanes or cha-cha with birds? Can plain balloons read balloons printed with words?" Later, our narrator's imagination travels even further. "Do some go so far that they end up in space? Do they challenge the rockets to float them a race?" The illustrations here are especially clever, including a tube of sunscreen marked, "Beyond Ozone: 1 Billion+ SPF." Toward the end of this reverie, the mood becomes more reflective. One especially deep line: "Does it float there free remembering me/And know that I'm happy

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that it's floating free?" This is a bad move. After all, anthropomorphism is pretty heady stuff for the four-to-eight set. Still, on the balance, it's a lovely little book with especially lovely illustrations, and a worthwhile addition to any children's collection.

Numeroff, Laura, ill. by Felicia Bond. *If You Take a Mouse to the Movies*. New York: A Laura Geringer Book. An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2000. 40p. ISBN 0060278676; ISBN 0060278684 (lib. binding). \$15.95. Ages 3-7.
and
Janice Cohn, D.S.W., ill. by Bill Farnsworth. *The Christmas Menorahs: How a Town Fought Hate*. Morton Grove, Ill: Albert Whitman and Co., 1995. 40p. ISBN 0807511536. \$6.95. Ages 9-12.

Reviewed by **Jennie Vaughn**
(Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC)
<jvaughn@warren-wilson.edu>

Just in time for the gift-giving season comes a delightful new book from the folks who brought us *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *If You Give a Pig a Pancake*, and more. *If You Take a Mouse to the Movies* is whimsical, endearing – and it has a fun Christmas twist. "If you take a mouse to the movies," it begins, "he'll ask you for some popcorn. When you give him the popcorn, he'll want to string it all together." Soon our diminutive protagonist wants a Christmas tree on which to hang his popcorn strings. He'll build a snowman, then a snow fort, and he'll insist on a snowball fight. Then he'll get cold; he'll want to come inside and listen to Christmas carols. He'll make ornaments for the tree – he'll need glue, and lots of glitter – and then decorate it. When he steps back to examine his work, he'll remember that he forgot the popcorn strings. He'll want some popcorn – and chances are, he'll want to go to the movies.

For readers of this delightful series of books, the formula here is nothing new. But if it ain't broke, why fix it? The "circular" plot is fun and inventive, the text is simple and memorable, and the illustrations are nothing short of adorable. This book is a winner. And if this review isn't convincing enough, consider this: in the spirit of the season, the publishers have dedicated a portion of the book's profits to First Book, a national non-profit organization that promotes children's literacy.

On a more serious – but equally heartwarming – note is *The Christmas Menorahs: How a Town Fought Hate*. Based on a true story, this book recounts how a small town fights back against hate crime. The year is 1993 and the place is Billings, Montana. It's the third day of Hanukkah and almost every window in the Schnitzer house is lit with a menorah. Young Isaac is doing his math homework when a rock crashes through his bedroom window. When the police chief comes, he tells Isaac's parents that the incident was a hate crime – that they were targeted because they were Jewish. He encourages them to put away their menorahs. But Isaac's parents aren't about to let fear and hatred triumph. She calls the TV station and tells them what's happening. The newspaper runs a story. A special town meeting is called. "The Schnitzers have been urged to take down their menorahs so they won't be a target," a community leader says. "What if the rest of us were told to take down our Christmas trees and lights because people might throw rocks at us for being Christians? I say, let's take a stand. Let's all put up menorahs."

What happens next is truly inspiring. After the meeting, churches of every denomination distribute pictures of menorahs for people to tape to their windows. The local newspaper prints a full-page picture of a menorah and asked the townspeople to display it on their windows our doors. Thousands do – and soon not a street in Billings is without a menorah. For a while the window smashing continues. But soon it slows to a trickle – and then stops all together.

This simple story is a beautiful illustration of hope and goodness. It teaches that bigotry and hatred, no matter how powerful, can be beaten if people join together and fight for what's right. It's a wonderful story for the new millennium.

Adventures in Librarianship — Convention Mirror Site

by **Ned Kraft** (Order Librarian, Ralph J. Bunche Library,
U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

7:00 a.m. "Fun Crawl/Sit" — The 3rd annual Fun Crawl/Sit will surely attract librarians who had too much fun in our host city the night before. Participants can chose either the 1K Crawl or the 40 minute Sit. Registration is \$15 in advance, \$20 on-site and includes one bloody mary and the commemorative "Semi-Conscious" t-shirt.

7:30-9:30 "Books for Breakfast" — Have breakfast with best-selling author J. D. Salinger. Fresh from the talk-show circuit, Mr. Salinger promises a lively discussion of "phoniness" in the American psyche, and the symbolic importance of game shows in our culture. Should be a blast!

8:00-8:45 "Wet Behind the Ears" — If you've never been to a library conven-

tion before, listen in while three "older-but-wiser" librarians tell you how to spot a meaningless meeting, how to schedule bathroom breaks, and how the whole **** profession is going to **** in a handbasket. Good guidance from folks in the know!

9:00-10:00 "The New Volunteers" — Library directors from leading public libraries describe how they use child-volunteers to upgrade systems, lay fiber-optic cable, and run Web searches. "Children under 10 are a valuable untapped resource," says one director, "and many children, if asked nicely, will do just about any chore asked of them... it's the parents we have trouble with." Learn how to steer clear of those parents, and the many other advantages of child labor, from professionals in the field.

9:30-10:30 "Fun with Funds" — A panel of library finance directors shares their tips for getting budget increases. Find out how civil disobedience could work for you. Learn the correct way to apply various pressure techniques such as harassment, blackmail, and overdue retrievals.

10:00-11:00 "E-Books: Are they coming? Are they not? Have you seen any?" — Find out how e-books will affect your library. Several of our panelists claim to have actually seen an ebook, others say they know people who have seen one. Could this be a trend?

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