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Book Reviews-Noteworthy Compositions

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Book Reviews — Noteworthy Compositions

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston)
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In this issue, a veritable cornucopia of books is presented for your thoughtful consideration. I would like to introduce and thank the College of Charleston's **Phillip Powell** for enlightening us with his review of *Strangers at Home and Abroad: Recollections of Austrian Jews Who Escaped Hitler*, edited by **Adi Wimmer**. Phillip is a reference librarian and the Bibliographic Instruction Coordinator. While this is his first (but not certainly not his last) review for *ATG*, he has also written reviews for *American Reference Books Annual*. Welcome to the Grain, Phillip!

Robots for Kids: Exploring New Technologies for Learning
Edited by **Alison Druin and James Hendler**
(2000, Morgan Kaufmann Publishers,
1558605975, 377 pp, \$44.95)

If you have recently watched MTV's *Real World New Orleans*, you might be familiar with the house dog. For those of you who have not given up a Tuesday evening at the ten spot for the sake of witnessing popular culture, what you have been missing is a robotic canine. Most of the *Real World* casts are given fish; the *New Orleans* crew was given a hunk of wires and metal named Shorty. Being slightly skeptical of the usefulness of a robotic dog, I jumped at the chance to read editors **Alison Druin and James Hendler's** *Robots for Kids: Exploring New Technologies for Learning*.

Many of the books I review address one of the many issues associated with technology; *Robots for Kids* is no exception. Arguably the new technological frontier, robots are no longer funny little humanoids that used to make us laugh on television shows like *Silver Spoons* and *Saved by the Bell*. Rather, robots and other forms of artificial intelligence (AI) are used not only as toys and pets but also as assistants to the disabled and as educational tools. *Robots for Kids* is certain to introduce you to new frontiers in mechanical technology.

Druin and Hendler are no strangers to robotics. Druin, an assistant professor at the **University of Maryland** in both the **Institute for Advanced Computer Studies** and the **College of Education**, has focused her recent research on robotic storytelling technologies. Hendler, also a professor at the University of Maryland, heads the **Autonomous Mobile Robotics Laboratory** and the **Advanced Information Technology Laboratory**.

Robots for Kids covers three central topics: robot technologies for children, robots in education, and future visions for robotics. It is in the first section that **ABIO**, Sony's four-legged autonomous friend, is discussed. These entertainment robots, like the *Real World's* Shorty, have five modes of enjoyment: watching (It's so cute!), interacting (through gestures and vocal stimulation), raising (much like a child), controlling (as in playing a game with the robot), and developing (creating your own robot). *Robots for Kids* thoroughly explores the ingredients needed for creating a pet-type robot, the design opportunities and limitations, and the implementation of these robots into real-life situations. Pet-type robots are not the only mechanical issue explored, however; Druin and Hendler also highlight **PETS (Personal Electronic Tellers of Stories)**, the **LEGO Intelligent House**, the **KISS Institute**, girls and technology, and several other themes. Kid's View sections essays by children that describe personal experiences with robotics are also included.

Robots for Kids begins with an exceptional table of contents that allows the reader to easily and quickly flip to chapters and sections of interest. Diagrams of robot construction, tables and graphs representing case study findings, black and white photographs, and color plates are also included. In short, this interesting book offers a bundle of information on a topic that is rarely explored in such depth. If your academic library supports programs in educational or instructional technology, engineering, artificial intelligence, and/or human-computer interaction, *Robots for Kids* would be a beneficial addition to your collection.

PC Buyers Handbook 2000
by **Gordon P. Foreman**
(2000, McFarland, 078640907x, 127 pp, \$22.50)

The month of September conjures up memories of buying new pencils, searching for the coolest notebook for English class, shopping for back-to-school clothing, and hoping to figure out exactly what your new teachers expect from you. It is not surprising that many students—from kindergarten to college—are expected to have access to a computer. If you are shopping for a new Mac or Windows machine, be sure to reference **Gordon P. Foreman's** *PC Buyer's Handbook 2000*. Right away you might be thinking that it is useless to buy a book about computers when the information in it is obsolete

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The American Indian: A Multimedia Encyclopedia is a very good product that combines several reference sources and makes searching for information easy and enjoyable. Topics not identifiable from the main access points can usually be retrieved with the search function. We could not identify a single topic about which we could not locate at least some information. Many of the entries contain printed pronunciation information, particularly for tribal names. A multimedia encyclopedia should replace these notes with an authoritative audio pronunciation. 🌿

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Liberty party, the Nationalist Socialist White People's Party to the Black Panthers and the National Women's Party to the Chicano La Raza Unida Party. The fourth part of the encyclopedia consists of biographies of the main actors associated with the parties discussed. Included are more familiar names like Jane Addams, Robert LaFollette, and H. Ross Perot, as well as the more obscure like Lucy Parsons, Nathaniel Banks and Vito Marcantonio. The set also includes biographies and a glossary of terms.

Besides giving specific information about the parties discussed, this *Encyclopedia* reveals both the difficulties faced by third parties in the American political system and the significant impacts these parties had on the mainstream. Most of the parties included in this encyclopedia were blips on the political radar screen. The fact they existed at all, is testament to political vitality and independent thought. Reading through this work makes this crystal clear. Academic, public and some high school libraries will find the *Encyclopedia of Third Parties in America* a worthwhile and useful purchase. 🌿

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by the time it goes to press; for this reason, Foreman updates his *PC Buyer's Handbook* every year.

Each significant computer-buying question receives its own chapter. Issues such as whether or not you even need a computer, which platform is best suited to your needs, reading computer advertisements, portable systems, peripherals, and software suites are thoroughly (but not overwhelmingly) explored. The appendix covers information such as the future of computer hardware and price evaluation. Finally, Foreman rounds up his work with a glossary of computer jargon.

Obviously, there are more than a handful of how-to-buy-a-computer books on the market. What makes *PC Buyer's Handbook* unique is that it is direct and to-the-point. Foreman does not assume that his readers are computer scientists, nor does he treat them like torpid information illiterates. Even the most computer savvy of us can stand to have a brush-up lesson on things such as motherboards, DIMM, and towers.

Admittedly, I find the price too much for a handbook that is revised and reprinted yearly. However, *PC Buyer's Handbook* is worth its cost, especially in a public library budget. For those patrons who frequently ask for computer system recommendations, Foreman's book merits a look.

Free and Low Cost Software for the PC
by Victor D. Lopez
(2000, McFarland, 0786408472, 216 pp, \$32.00)

While you are studying *PC Buyer's Handbook* in preparation for a new computer, it would be wise to take a look at *Free and Low Cost Software for the PC* by Victor D. Lopez. With the constantly increasing cost of software from Microsoft, Macromedia, Adobe, and other big-name producers, it is refreshing to find that even the computer industry still offers great bargains without sacrificing quality. Lopez's book is your key to locating utilities, productivity programs, educational tools, Internet instruments, and games for low or no expense.

Free and Low Cost Software is organized by type of program and further categorized by genre. Screen captures and tabular data are given for each specific program that is highlighted, including the program type (demo, freeware, or shareware); the company's name, Web address, and email address; any fees associated with the program; and a general evaluation examining utility, ease of use, ease of learning, and documentation. For example, the unit on educational programs is subdivided into testing and training aids, speed reading, courseware, and grading programs. *Chalksoft's Courseware Web Series* is briefly presented, three screen captures and descriptive text are provided, and it is given an excellent overall rating.

What puts Lopez, a business professor at SUNY's College of Technology in Delhi, on my A-list is his Word to Librarians at the conclusion of his introduction. Often, we wonder about licensing restrictions and other legal uncertainties when we think about making demos, freeware, and/or shareware readily available to our patrons. Lopez addresses these anxieties and even gives a few good tips for earning some money for your library by taking advantage of free resources.

While \$32.00 might seem steep for a soft cover resource, think of the money that can be saved as a result of acting on Lopez's tips. Used together, *PC Buyer's Handbook* and *Free and Low Cost Software* are superb choices to augment your collection.

*The Race for the Governor's Cup: The Pacific
Coast League Playoffs, 1936-1954*
by Donald R. Wells
(2000, McFarland, 0786407603, 484 pp, \$29.95)

There is nothing quite like relaxing in a stadium with the people of your community, ingesting cold beer and doughy pretzels, and witnessing the great American pastime of minor league baseball. With the AAA playoffs and World Series right around the corner, it seems most appropriate to investigate Donald R. Wells' *The Race for the Governor's Cup: The Pacific Coast League Playoffs, 1936-1954*. Wells has written a no-nonsense, fascinating ac-

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count of the **Governor's Cup** playoff games during a time in which west coast baseball was essentially a league of its own.

The Race for the Governor's Cup is broken down by year. Each chapter begins with a brief narration summarizing the playoff games as a whole and also enlightening the reader about how the games and the league fit into the larger picture of sports. Wells has done his homework for the statistics that follow; game-by-game accounts of each player's achievements are given in chart format. Key players are listed at the end of each chapter. An appendix is included that offers more records concerning standings and prize money.

It is the narrative information that makes *The Race for the Governor's Cup* a gem, though. Wells has taken no shortcuts to provide the particulars: who batted for whom, crowd size, weather conditions, and the like. The [Portland] **Padres** were anxious to leave for home, especially **Rupert Thompson**, who was getting married — insight like this allows the reader to feel like a contemporary spectator. Photographs are also provided. One such prize-worthy shot depicts **Lefty O'Doul** (who holds the National League record for most hits in a season) and **Dominic DiMaggio** (brother of the infamous **Yankee Clipper**, who also got his start in the **Pacific Coast League** with the **San Francisco Seals**).

Though the price tag is a bit high for a soft cover book, *The Race for the Governor's Cup* explores the relatively-early history of the Pacific Coast League and of minor league baseball as a whole. Sports books are always good ways to attract male high school readers; an effective book talk about Wells' book would definitely prompt young adults to check it out. Public and academic libraries should welcome *The Race for the Governor's Cup* into their collections as well it is rare that hard-core stats and unequivocal commentary are combined, making it a must-read for any baseball fan. After all, it cannot be forgotten that several of the players in the Pacific Coast League went on to play for the majors.

It is a shame that not one of the teams represented in Wells' work are currently active in the Pacific Coast League. Be sure, though, to mark your calendars and check the ESPN listings for September 18-22; that is when I will be watching the **AAA World Series**, hoping that the **Fresno Grizzlies**, the **Sacramento River Cats**, the **Tacoma Rainiers**, the **Memphis Redbirds**, or others from the PCL will be representing their predecessors with pride.

***Strangers at Home and Abroad: Recollections
of Austrian Jews Who Escaped Hitler***

Edited by **Adi Wimmer** and translated by **Ewald Osers**
(2000, McFarland, 0786406682, \$29.95)

Reviewed by **Phillip Powell** (College of Charleston)
<powellp@cofc.edu>

In the literature concerning **European Jewry** in the 1930s and 1940s, much has been written about the experiences of both those who survived and those who did not. Readers are familiar with the details of the dehumanizing legislation of the **Nuremberg Laws** and rampant anti-Semitism climaxed by **Kristallnacht** in 1938 and escalating to the horrors of the death camps. Americans of a certain age are aware of Jews who escaped from Germany and Austria prior to September 1939, and immigrated to this country. But only recently have works been published discussing the experiences of these refugees. [Newman, Jacob. *Kinder Transporte: A Study of Stresses and Traumas of Refugee Children*; **Schneider, Bronka**. *Exile: A Memoir of 1939*; **Whiteman, Dorit Bader**. *The Uprooted: A Hitler Legacy: Voices of Those Who Escaped Before the Final Solution*.] The stories of Jewish exiles from pre-World War II Europe have been greatly overshadowed by the experiences of death camp survivors. Wimmer speaks of the self-generated censorship of the exiles feeling their problems were negligible by comparison.

This book is unique in this relatively small group for a number of reasons. The compiler, **Adi Wimmer**, is an Austrian Catholic who was born shortly after World War II in the same town where Hitler was born 60 years before. The fact that his given name is Adolf is a stark reflection of Austrian memory and culpability for the anti-Semitic attitudes and acts of its citizens before and after the War. Wimmer suggests the compilation of this book be a reminder of how history repeats itself, how the relentless rise of right-wing violence continues throughout the world. But as important, this book may be viewed as an act of contrition for that which occurred in one of the world's most beautiful and cultured countries.

Wimmer has included the memories of 30 Austrian refugees. The project began in the late 1980s with several of those interviewed having since died. People who shared their recollections were from Great Britain, Israel, and the United States. The glaring omission is that none of the refugees interviewed returned to Austria except for visits.

The group of refugees from whom Wimmer got these recollections varied widely in age with about a 25 year span. Although most of them left Austria in 1938 and 1939, a couple departed as early as 1935 and one did not leave Austria until after the War but rather lived underground. With rare exception, this was a group of well-educated and motivated people who did well in their post-War lives. But the theme of loss, mourning, and anger pervades these interviews. It is a much different book than Whiteman's *The Uprooted: A Hitler Legacy*. Where Whiteman painted a much larger picture, Wimmer's refugees provides the reader with intimate, often poignant, and often painful details of living in the inhumane conditions in Austria in the late 1930s. The intimate nature of the recollections allows the reader to often delve deeply into the psyches of these survivors — an intriguing, yet discomfiting, experience.

This primary source gives the reader insights into the experiences of an often-neglected group. *Strangers at Home and Abroad* is a small book which is quite readable with themes that are persistent and pain that is brutally evident.

Military Religion in Roman Britain

by **Georgia L. Irby-Massie**

(1999 xv, Leiden: Brill, 90-04-10848-3, 385 pp, \$103.00)

Reviewed by **Darryl A. Phillips** (Program in Classics,
College of Charleston) <phillipsd@cofc.edu>

The Roman military and Roman England have long been favorite topics for lay readers, undergraduate students, and mature scholars alike. **Irby-Massie** combines these two fields in a new monograph published as part of Brill's series *Supplements to Mnemosyne* (Vol. 199). The subject warrants interest as Roman soldiers were not just conquerors, but were also ambassadors bringing new cultures with them to Britain. Legionaries and auxiliary recruits came from all corners of the **Roman Empire**, from as far away as Spain and Syria. The customs of these soldiers gradually combined with local traditions resulting in a rich blend. Irby-Massie looks at religious practices, especially those documented by inscribed dedications, to understand this complex interaction.

Irby-Massie's study is divided into two parts, a narrative discussion of military religion in Roman Britain and an extensive catalog of inscriptions that document religious activity. The two sections are of different quality and value. In the first part she surveys the deities worshipped in Roman Britain, categorizing them as part of Roman State religion, Eastern cults, or Celtic religions. Throughout this section, it is unclear whom the author envisions as her audience. Often she seems to assume no prior knowledge, discussing the basics of each god to an extent that serious students and researchers are likely to find distracting. For example, in preparation for her discussion of **Jupiter** (p.55ff), she rehearses the history of his worship beginning with the first temple to Jupiter built in Rome by King **Tarquin** in the 6th century B.C. This background information, common knowledge

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art and private letters where only one copy may exist.

There is a difference between the copy and the copyright that is often confused by ordinary folks and by libraries which hold manuscript collections. The author of the letter owns the copyright in the literary work, that is the letter; the recipient of the letter owns the only copy of the letter, or the recipient may have donated the original copy of the letter to a library or museum. The institution seldom actually holds the copyright, but it may still restrict access to the copy it holds. In exchange for the right of access, the institution may restrict the types of use to which the letter may be put. Often, the donors of the letter (who may be either the author or the recipient) may put restrictions on the availability or use of that letter to which the institution must agree at the time of transfer.

There may not be a clear public policy reason for treating letters as works of authorship rather than as gifts to the recipient, but clearly the law has considered them to be literary works for many years. Perhaps this is because even early works of biography included letters by the subject of the work and those biographical works are also literary works.

Issues such as invasion of privacy also must be considered with letters since letters were intended as private correspondence between two parties. One could argue that either party should have the right to make the letters public. Under copyright, however, the law protects the right of first publication so that the author or his or her heirs have the first right to publish the text of letters for the duration of the copyright. 🌿

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the case involved analysis of Irving's writings and statements. The final decision was that Lipstadt's statements were not defamation because they were true. According to the judge, "The charges which I have found to be substantially true include the charges that Irving has for his own ideological reasons persistently and deliberately misrepresented and manipulated historical evidence; that for the same reasons he has portrayed Hitler in an unwarrantedly favorable light, principally in relation to his attitude towards and responsibility for the treatment of the Jews; that he is an active Holocaust denier; that he is anti-semitic and racist and that he associates with right wing extremists who promote neo-Nazism."²⁴

So what have we learned today? The implication for writers is that you are responsible for what you write. Publishers are responsible for determining whether their authors are making potentially defamatory statements. If false statements constitute *libel per se*, the plaintiff doesn't have to show actual damages. So publishers need to be aware of what authors are writing.

Of course, a public figure or elected official must show that not only was the statement false, but it was made with actual malice. Otherwise he or she will not win their defamation suit. However, publishers still need to be careful. Just remember that truth is always an absolute defense. And although libel makes publishers squirm, don't just sweep it under the table. By having a program to detect potentially defamatory statements early, publishers can head off lawsuits. Remember: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. 🌿

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to get together to talk. Just as it is difficult to imagine the concept of *family* independent of the home, it is near-impossible to imagine *community* independent of town square or the local pub. ... In the absence of walkable public places — streets, squares, and parks, the *public realm* — people of diverse ages, races, and beliefs are unlikely to meet and talk."

One story the authors tell captures the absurdity of designing without placing enough emphasis on the impact the community and on individuals. They describe a town in which the firefighters demanded job security in the form of large trucks, which require large numbers of staff to drive and maintain. Such trucks meant streets had to be wide to accommodate them, which in turn meant that the people in the town were dwarfed by the roads, cars moved too fast, and walking was discouraged. Apparently, designing roads to be excessively wide to accommodate the largest scale emergency vehicle is not unusual. The authors conclude that "one of the most important aspects of our new towns is being shaped around an extremely unlikely emergency, with the result that they function inadequately in nonemergency situations." Ironically, there are more accidents on these streets designed to accommodate emergency vehicles: "wide streets lead to an increased number of traffic accidents, since people drive faster on them."

And they don't simply drive faster. They drive *more*. The wider the street or highway becomes, the more people drive on it, in a phenomenon called 'induced traffic,' another of this book's surprising revelations. It appears that for years experts (but not the *right* experts) have known that widening a road solves a traffic problem only temporarily, since additional traffic inevitably arrives to fill the road to capacity again. But because engineers are in charge of roads, and their sole emphasis is on efficiency of traffic movement, the beat goes on. Once again, our lives are being organized — and our communities defined by — the needs of cars and trucks, not people.

The authors do provide ideas for how to change the trends, and some of them, I've noted in the mainstream press, are catching. Taming the automobile and creating a pedestrian-friendly environment is certainly near the top of their list. They also have creative ideas for attracting retail space back to towns and inner cities, away from malls. They have ideas for encouraging mixed use devel-

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among scholars, is not necessary to explain Jupiter to a general audience, and such detail is only tangentially related to the cult of Jupiter in Britain six centuries later. At the same time the author quotes lengthy passages in Latin without offering translations, making much of her work inaccessible to all but the expert. More troubling problems appear as Irby-Massie becomes too focused on Britain, and fails to consider larger trends throughout the Roman Empire. Thus she concludes that the large number of dedications to the emperor **Septimius Severus** found in Britain indicates that "the troops and officers in Britain felt obligated to demonstrate their loyalty to Severus after the civil wars of the 190's" (p.203). This would be a reasonable conclusion were the trend limited to Britain alone. However, the Severan period has furnished an extraordinary number of inscriptions empire-wide. Changes in epigraphic habit and chances of survival are better explanations for the British dedications.

The strength of the book, and an aspect that may warrant its purchase, is the annotated catalog of inscriptions

presented in the second part. The author has brought together epigraphic evidence for religious cults in Roman Britain from scattered sources that are available only at top research libraries (**Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum**, **Roman Inscriptions of Britain**, and **Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani**). Furthermore, she has incorporated other evidence published in the *Journal of Roman Studies and Britannia*. The result is a useful reference work for scholars researching a particular cult in Britain. It will reduce the time and frustration of any future study. The collection is easy to use with a table of contents summarizing the entries. References to Irby-Massie's catalog numbers are included in the general index to the book. Scholars will likely skip the first part of the book and use the evidence contained in the second section to draw their own conclusions. Catalogs and indices of this type are much needed in many areas of Classical Studies. Some researchers are certain to thank Irby-Massie for her contribution. 🌿