February 1998

From the Reference Desk

Tom Gilson

College of Charleston, gilsont@cofc.edu

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

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

Recommended Citation

Gilson, Tom (1998) "From the Reference Desk," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 10: Iss. 1, Article 19.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3298>

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

From the Reference Desk

Column Editor: **Tom Gilson** (College of Charleston) <gilson@cofc.edu>

*Eating crow is not generally part of my diet, but this issue's column starts with a correction and an apology. In my recent review of Routledge Press' **Biographical Dictionary of Psychology** (ATG 12/97-1/98, v.9#6, p.32) the price I gave was incorrect. The price that I quoted was from the Web version of **Books in Print** and listed the book as costing \$195 when, in fact, it is priced at \$155. An apology is due to the folks at Routledge because in my review, the cost of the book was a major criticism. At the correct price, the **Biographical Dictionary of Psychology** is unquestionably a worthwhile investment. With that having been said, let's get on to less humbling concerns.*

Public administration and policies studies have been recognized academic disciplines for a number of years with a reference literature that has shown steady growth. Efforts like the Garland Press *Public Affairs and Administration Series* of bibliographies, ABC-CLIO's *Public Administration Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (1988, 0874364981, \$51.50) and Marcel Dekker's *Handbook of Public Administration* (1989, 0824779649, \$245) evidence this growth. However, the one resource missing from the mix was a multi-volume subject encyclopedia devoted to these disciplines. That is until now. The publication of Westview Press' *International Encyclopedia of Public Policy and Administration* (1998, 0813399777, \$425) has filled that gaping hole in the literature.

Edited by Jay M. Shafritz (well known to many PA students for his *Classics in Public Administration*, a widely used text), the *International Encyclopedia of Public Policy and Administration* is a singular achievement which will set the standard for years to come. Shafritz describes the intent of the encyclopedia as the "international integration of the literature on public policy and administration ... two sides of the same coin." The set includes some 900 articles by 462 contributors, many scholars of note like H. George Frederickson, Robert T. Golembiewski, Victor H. Vroom and Albert C. Hyde. Articles cover concepts like leadership, social equity and federalism as well as specific aspects of policy and administration like organizational theory, ethics, policy analysis, budgeting, personnel administration and administrative law. There are also entries dealing with the contribu-

tions of major figures like Dwight Waldo, Herbert Simon and Mary Parker Follett, important commissions like the

Brownlow, Hoover and Lambert Commissions as well as significant governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. But, possibly the most important feature of this work is its international scope. Articles which outline the administrative practices in other countries, besides those of the United States and Europe, are a major contribution. Coverage ranges from the administrative traditions of Japan to those of Islamic, African and Latin American nations. Countries which have made individual contributions like Mexico, Malaysia and New Zealand are also included. In addition, there are articles on the Treaty of European Union, GATT and other international treaties and agreements.

The set is attractive and well organized. The articles are arranged alphabetically and there is a table of contents which helps give a sense of scope. However, a referral to the index is necessary for the most efficient use of the encyclopedia. As an example, information about Charles Lindblom's theory of incrementalism is found under its popular slang term "muddling through." Only someone familiar with the theory would think to look there but a quick look in the index leads you right to it. A listing of contributors is provided and each article is signed. The articles are scholarly and well-written and will be of most help to students and faculty. However practitioners and informed lay readers will also find this set of use. Each article contains a bibliography, some of which could have been more extensive; on the whole, however, they are more than satisfactory. Charts and tables are interspersed throughout the set when appropriate. The only noticeable flaw in this encyclopedia is the lack of "see" and "see also" references. Even with an index and table of contents, "see" and "see also" references provide quick and helpful links to related articles and this encyclopedia could benefit from them.

International Encyclopedia of Public Policy and Administration is a reference which academic libraries supporting policy studies and public administration programs will find essential. Large public libraries will also want to consider it to complement their government and political science reference collections. My main complaint is that this set was not available when I was studying for my MPA degree!

Another recently published set of significance is John Wiley's *Encyclopedia of Acoustics* (1997, 0471804657, \$395) edited by Malcolm J. Crocker. This reference is a unique and highly useful contribution. Prior to its publication, students had to consult multiple textbooks and journal articles to get the comprehensive view of the field which is presented here. The *Encyclopedia of Acoustics* is divided into eighteen parts containing some 160 individual chapters dealing with the various aspects of linear and non-linear acoustics, underwater sound, aeroacoustics, ultrasonics, mechanical vibrations, architectural acoustics, speech communication, musical acoustics as well as other topics. This set is a meticulous and scholarly endeavor. Each chapter has been individually authored and peer reviewed. A list of all contributors as well as a partial list of reviewers (some chose to remain anonymous) is included. To help insure comprehensiveness, an outline was developed by the editor for each chapter using the PACS classification of subjects utilized by the *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*. Diagrams, formulas, tables and charts abound and each chapter has a useful bibliography. Given that this set does not follow the typical alphabetical approach, the use of the index is essential to get specific information especially for the non-specialist, and this index is up to the task. In searching for information on building acoustics a quick look in

continued on page 55

Reference Desk
from page 54

the index led me to sections on building design guidelines and noise control codes for buildings, as well as a "see" reference for ratings and descriptors for the acoustical environment of buildings.

The overall effect is one which will be of most use to specialists in the field, although others interested in acoustics like architects, engineers and musicians will find the set of value. This is a definite purchase for any academic or special library which supports the study of acoustics and its related fields.

In collaboration with the American Council on Education, Walter de Gruyter has just released the 15th edition of *American Universities and Colleges* (1997, 3-11-014689-4, \$199.95). Referred to as the "preeminent directory of American institutions of higher learning" by *ALA's Guide to Reference Books*, this reference features narrative and statistical information on over 1900 universities and colleges throughout the United States. But *American Universities and Colleges* is more than just a directory of institutions. Introductory articles on the evolution, structure and future of higher education as well as articles on undergraduate and graduate education, the government's role and impact of foreign students provide informed commentary and analysis regarding these important facets of American higher education. An expanded section on professional education is included which lists institutions offering a range of degrees in some 45 different fields. However, the directory or "institutional exhibits" section of the book is still its most significant part. Each entry provides basic information like addresses, telephone and fax numbers and email and Web page addresses. In addition, information like institutional characteristics, brief histories, accreditation, admission and degree requirements, fees and expenses, financial aid, faculty and student body characteristics, distinctive programs, etc. are also provided. Appendices include information on academic costume and ceremony, tables of earned doctorates and master's degrees, listings of ROTC programs, and summary data on enrollment, faculty and earned degrees for each of the 1900+ institutions included in the directory section. An institutional and a general index round out the volume and here there could be a minor improvement. Even though the directory is arranged by state, it would be helpful to have an index by specific location, i.e. city or town. In addition, each state section could have a state map, similar to the ones provided in the *College Blue Book's Narrative Descriptions* volume. Often people moving to a specific location want to know which colleges and universities are located in that area. Such an index, along with state maps, would be very helpful with these types of questions.

However, this suggestion does not cancel the fact that *American Universities and Colleges* has earned its reputation as one of the best of the higher education directories. There is a great deal of well organized information provided in this reference which all types of libraries will find useful. Most academic and public libraries, as well as some school libraries will want to consider its purchase.

Sports fans, trivia buffs and public librarians will welcome two new books just published by McFarland: *Sports Leagues and Teams: An Encyclopedia, 1871-1996* by Mark Pollak (1998, 0-7864-0252-0, \$65) and *Professional Sports Statistics* by K. Michael Gaschnitz (1997, 0-7864-0252-0, \$85). These references unearth and bring together an avalanche of facts about professional sports teams.

Relying on other sources as well as his own original research,

Mark Pollak organizes *Sports Leagues and Teams* by professional sport and then provides information on each league. Besides the "big four" of professional sports: baseball, football, basketball and ice hockey, Pollak covers soccer, roller hockey, volleyball, tennis, softball, team rodeo, bowling, boxing, golf and lacrosse. Dates, total number of teams, league structure, original teams, subsequent additions and yearly champions are given for each league. An attempt is also made to measure the league's market penetration based on census rankings of the cities comprising the league. Individual team entries include nicknames, playing fields, championships and status (moves, mergers, etc.). There is so much information in this book that a good index is a must. Luckily, the author provides a very helpful "Alphabetical Guide to the Teams, Nicknames, Leagues, Cities, and Playing Fields and Arenas." In addition, there are listings of primary sources, newspapers and individuals consulted, as well as specific libraries (and librarians) which proved particularly helpful. There is, however, one caveat, *Sports Leagues and Teams* is an encyclopedia of "major leagues." Minor league franchises like Charleston's own Carolina Stingrays ice hockey team are not covered.

Sports junkies addicted to statistics will get a major "fix" from *Professional Sports Statistics*. Divided into two sections, this book also covers the "big four" of baseball, basketball, football and hockey, as well as selected other sports. The first section is arranged by year, starting in 1876, and gives information like final standings, won and lost records, coaching changes, league leaders and playoff and championship results. The second section is an alphabetical listing by team which includes home city and arena, origin of name, regular season records, playoffs and championships and coaching history. There is one problem in this section. The sport is not clearly identified. A league affiliation is

continued on page 56

PROVE YOUR POINT

Invest in your
collection with
OCLC/AMIGOS
Collection
Analysis Systems.

Ask for a FREE Collection
Analysis CD demo set for
results you can see!

- ◆ Compare your collection to more than 2,300 institutions
- ◆ Measure effectiveness of your collection development policy
- ◆ Justify budget requests
- ◆ Evaluate resource sharing opportunities
- ◆ Support accreditation studies

amigos@amigos.org 800/843-8482 972/851-8000

Reference Desk
from page 55

given but only with an abbreviation, so unless you know that NBL stands for the National Basketball League you are left unsure what sport the team played. There is a list of abbreviations in the front of the book but flipping back and forth is cumbersome. In addition, this book does not cover the Negro Baseball Leagues or the Women's professional sports teams, as Pollak's book does. This is a major oversight that should be remedied in any future edition.

However, both of these compendiums are extremely useful. They gather together facts from a variety sources in one convenient place. Most public libraries serving avid sports fans should consider them for their collections.

Greenwood Press adds to the reference literature in Classical Studies with its *Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology*. (1997, 0-313-22066-2, \$225). This two-volume set focuses on the history of classical archaeology as a specific discipline. Included within the definition of classical archaeology are Greek and Roman artifacts and remains, as well as those of the cultures of the Bronze Age Aegean and the Etruscans. Naturally, this encyclopedia stresses the uncovering of archaeological evidence in Greece and Italy; however, it also discusses evidence of classical archaeology throughout Europe and Asia Minor. Fifteen years in the making, this work includes 1,125 articles by 171 contributors. Entries include biographies of individuals like artists, collectors and scholars who have helped shape the study of classical archaeology, as well as specific sites, monuments and statuary. Arranged alphabetically, the articles are straightforward and factual with a brief bibliography following the text. The set also contains a chronology of "landmark discoveries and publications" a selected bibliography of additional sources as well as a helpful index including "see" and "see also" references.

This current set is not intended as a replacement for the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* originally published in 1976 (Books on Demand, 0835775593; \$180). It is broader in its aims and not as deep in its coverage of specific sites. But it certainly has a place in most classic studies collections. Shelves next to contributions like the recent *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (019866172x, \$99.95) and Scribner's *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean* (no longer in print), the *Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology* lends another needed perspective to the field.

Here is a novelty, a solid reference source with a preface by popular novelist **Michael Crichton**. But who else knows more about things Jurassic, so on second thought, maybe it is appropriate that Mr. Crichton introduce us to Academic Press' *Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs* (1997, 0-12-226810-5, \$99.95)

This volume ranks along with David B. Weishampel's *Dinosauria* (U of California Press, 1990, 0520067266, \$110) and *Dinosaurs: The Encyclopedia* by Don Glut (McFarland, 1997, 0899509177, \$145), as one of the more thorough treatments of the world of dinosaurs. Far more scholarly than the *Macmillan Illustrated Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs and Prehistoric Animals* (1988, 0025801910, \$39.95), this volume provides both a general overview and "point of reference" for further exploration. Editors Philip J. Currie and Kevin Padian have organized their book well with a table of contents, as well as the articles themselves, being arranged alphabetically. In addition, there is a very helpful thematic table of contents which groups articles under broad categories like: dinosaurs around the world, the biology of

dinosaurs, environments of the past, important localities, geology and dinosaurs and the history of dinosaur discoveries. Helpful tables, charts, drawings and photographs, some in color, illustrate the book. This encyclopedia is intended for students and scholars, so the articles can be technical, but interested lay readers will also find a wealth of useful information here. Each article is followed by a good bibliography containing citations from both books and journals and there are "see" and "see also" references linking to related articles. Rounding out the volume is an alphabetized classification list, a chronology of major events and discoveries, a glossary and an index. The *Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs* is a necessary addition for any academic library collecting in this area and should be considered by public libraries where interest is strong.

Two new popular fiction bibliographies have recently arrived which are worth considering. Published by Gale, *What Fantastic Fiction Do I Read Next* (1998, 0787618667, \$89) and *What Western do I Read Next* (1998, 0-7876-1865-9, \$68) are genre specific compilations from Gale's *What Do I Read Next* annuals stretching from 1989 to 1996.

What Fantastic Fiction Do I Read Next, edited by Neil Barron, will be a godsend to fantasy, horror and science fiction buffs, not to mention reader's advisory librarians. A total of 4850 books are cited with each entry containing the author's name, book title, publisher, story type, major characters, time period and locale, a brief plot summary and a list of "other books you might like." But the real strength to this book is the index, or should I say, indices. There are eight of them including indices by series, time period, geographic location, story type, character name, character description, author and finally book title. As a further help, editor Barron also provides a "key to story types" which defines the various story types referred to in that index.

Mr. Barron has a history of helping librarians. He has edited the Garland Publishing's guides *Fantasy Literature* (1990, 0824031482; \$20) and *Horror Literature* (1990, 0824043472, \$20.00), as well as Bowker's 4th edition of *Anatomy of Wonder: A Critical Guide to Science Fiction*, (1995, 0835236846, \$39). (The latter title was of great personal help in assisting a recent class in science fiction literature.) *What Fantastic Fiction Do I Read Next* is another of his works that librarians will turn to in assisting readers.

Wayne Barton provides a similarly detailed approach to western fiction in *What Western Do I Read Next*. A western author himself, Mr. Barton lists entries for 1550 titles and offers the same thorough indexing described above for *What Fantastic Fiction Do I Read Next*. Having a personal interest in western fiction I found this book of particular value. In searching for novels about the Rocky Mountains and the early fur trade, I browsed through the story type index and found the term "Mountain Man" and under it, found a listing of titles and authors which I recognized. Reading some of the entries for books which I had previously enjoyed, I paid particular attention to the section "other books you might like." I was delighted to note a number of authors and titles with which I was unfamiliar and now have a list of interesting titles to pursue during my next visit to the public library. This exercise did reveal a possible problem for future editions of these guides. Browsing through the story types index and making educated guesses about which story type relates to a specific interest works for now, but as the coverage increases, more specific story types or "see" and "see also" references should be added.

While some may consider such efforts exercises in creative repackaging, both these volumes provide quick and convenient access to current fiction in two of the most popular fiction genres. Libraries who have already invested in the *What Do I Read Next*

continued on page 57

The Year in Review — Personal Lessons of 1997

by Celia Scher Wagner (Academic Book Center) <celiaw@acbc.com>

All in all, 1997 was an instructive year for me. Early in the year, I gleaned two choice tidbits at an exhibit on *The Animal Figure in African Art*. First, I learned what “crepuscular” means. (For those who have wondered, “crepuscular” is similar to “nocturnal” or “diurnal” and means “active primarily at dawn and dusk.” I’m hoping someday to use it in a sentence other than: Water buffalo are crepuscular.) Second, I found out about pictographic potlids.

Imagine a wooden lid (as for a cooking pot) on which is carved a tiny cart with a goat harnessed to either end. The goats strain to pull the cart in opposite directions. Pictographic potlids are used by the wives of an African tribe (the Yoruba?) both to cover pots and to remind their husbands — nonverbally — of proverbs which suggest solutions to marital discord. (The exhibit did not relate whether the husbands generally take the hint.) I don’t know what marital strife is exemplified by, “If you harness goats to both ends of your cart, you won’t get anywhere,” but if pictographic potlids were part of my culture, I would find out.

Pictographic potlids intrigued me. I fantasized briefly about quitting my job and opening a pictographic potlid atelier. I am free of artistic talent, but the marketing sounded easy: Marriages are in peril in America! Men are visual, women are verbal! Get your pictographic potlids here!

The atelier fantasy must have been symptomatic. In July, I did leave my job of 19-plus years, having been offered a position with another vendor. The new job would start in September, on the first day of school. I had eight weeks off.

Eight weeks off! My last long vacation was twenty years ago, after college graduation. Without an assured job awaiting me in the fall, though, I spent that summer

worrying, mailing out resumes, and suffering unsuccessful interviews. I feared I was heading from graduation to the gutter. It wasn’t a carefree time.

This time, I had the chance to pursue large, worthy goals: painting the house, or re-reading *Moby Dick*. I had the chance, but not the inclination. Instead, I goofed off. I strung beads. I went to the beach. And now, in the spirit of the ’90s, an era filled with books on “life’s little lessons,” I offer the following Zen-like insights from my sabbatical:

On my deathbed, I won’t say, “I wish I had scrubbed the tub more.” I did scrub the tub, the morning of my first day off. It looked good. I was admiring it when the horror struck: What was I doing? Was I going to fritter my summer away cleaning house?! I went out and signed up for a class I had long wanted to take.

Recreation is a metaphor for life. The class was Trapeze for Adults. (When I was a new mother, I tried to teach myself to juggle. I reasoned I was already juggling work, home, and friends, so how hard would it be to keep three bean bags in the air? Harder than it looked, as it happened.) Trapeze seemed a good metaphor for swinging into the unknown, letting go of safety (my long-time job), taking a calculated risk.

The question is: Compared to what? (I knew from past Book Pricing columns that data is but data, while data-plus-analysis can be enlightening.) Consider: The other adults in Trapeze fell into two groups — muscular young men, and strong, supple young women. I was not a trapeze phenomenon, but in the females-over-forty category, I was (and I say this advisedly) peerless.

Foundations that appear solid may collapse under you. The week after Trapeze

ended, my daughter and I embarked on our adventure of the summer, a raft trip down the Salmon and Snake Rivers in Idaho. I anticipated white-water thrills, but nothing worrisome. On the second day of the six-day trip, in the middle of rapids, our large, sturdy cargo raft buckled. My foot was in the fold, and my toes bent back toward my shin. There was a noise I would not have guessed a human joint could make.

If you wreck your ankle on a wilderness trip, make it a raft trip. I didn’t have to walk after I hurt my foot. Coach Wally, one of the men on the trip, wrapped my ankle in a Louisiana Heel Lock. We propped it up on the front of the raft, kept it cold, and floated out. I lounged like Cleopatra on her barge. When we got home, I got my cast.

If you have a summer off, others may envy you. If, however, you *start work in a cast, they will envy you less.* My ankle is nearly all better. My new job is great. And our family just got a puppy. He is adorable, but he chews constantly, both things he should and things he shouldn’t. The only time we don’t have to watch him is when he is asleep.

Let sleeping dogs lie. Right now, he’s asleep under the desk. While I have the chance, I’m going to work on my potlid. Imagine a little springer spaniel, curled up and flaked out. 🐕

Reference Desk from page 56

annuals will have to decide whether the convenience is worth the cost. However, other libraries with the need for reader’s advisory bibliographies in fantasy and western literature will be well-served by these books.

Although some librarians feel that a number of these titles are more appropriate for circulating collections, Scarecrow Press’ *Historical Dictionary series* often covers countries where there is an unfiled need for a reference work. *The Historical Dictionary of Trinidad and Tobago* (1997, 0-8108-3173-2, \$84) is a case in point. There are not that many background references which focus on Trinidad and Tobago. The most recent *Area Hand-*

book was done in 1976 and many of the more useful histories are equally dated.

In his book, author Michael Anthony treats both the historic events as well as the major, and some minor, players in this island nation’s history. There are 630 pages of brief, factual entries which help define the history of Trinidad and Tobago followed by a bibliography of sources by category like histories, bibliographies and travel accounts as well as subject specific like literature, migration, sociology and women and the family. Unfortunately there is no index or table of contents; access to the information is strictly alphabetical by entry. However there are “see” references which help to link related articles. For those libraries with a need for information on Trinidad and Tobago, or the Caribbean in general, the *Historical Dictionary of Trinidad and Tobago* is worth considering. 🐕