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Book Reviews-Monographic Musings

Deborah Vaughn

College of Charleston, vaughnd@cofc.edu

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A few new editions have also come to light and are deserving of attention. First published in 1991, *Scribner's African American Writers* was well received and along with the other titles in the *Scribner Writers Series*, it has found a place in many reference collections. An expanded and updated second edition has now been released which will prove even more useful. Also edited by **Valerie Smith**, the second edition of *African American Writers* (2001, 068480638X, \$225) adds 20 new authors to its coverage, as well updating and revising all prior entries. Authors like **Jamaica Kincaid**, **August Wilson** and **Octavia Butler** join **James Baldwin**, **Langston Hughes** and **Zora Neal Hurston** in this new edition. Also contained in this 2 volume set are revised essays on slave narratives, the Black Arts Movement, and a new essay on spiritual biography. But obviously, it is the author essays that garner the most attention. They offer a skillful melding of biographical sketches with literary criticism. The life story, education and influences of each writer are included, along with a brief analysis of specific works and discussion of the author's overall contribution. Each entry has a selective bibliography of the writer's own work, as well as helpful listings of secondary sources.

The second edition of *African American Writers* lives up to the quality that readers and librarians expect from the *Scribner Writer Series*. Reading these essays offers an enlightening overview of each author treated, and lays the groundwork for further exploration. It will prove a highly useful set for high school students and undergraduates, as well as the general reader. Most public, undergraduate and high schools libraries will want to consider it.

The third edition of **Springer's Encyclopedia of Aging** (2001, 0826148425, \$199) is primarily intended for students of gerontology and geriatrics along with clinicians working in the field. As with prior editions, this new version will prove a significant resource for both. However, the *Encyclopedia of Aging* has broader appeal. It covers a topic that is of growing interest to a number of people and is written in a clear and intelligible fashion.

The *Encyclopedia* has expanded to a 2-volume set and according to the blurb on the dust jacket, 200 of the 600 articles are

"brand new." How they derived this figure is unclear, but a page count shows 88 pages of additional text. (I suspect that they are including "brand new and revised" articles.) Nonetheless, there are a number of new and significant entries including ones on Calcium Metabolism, Baby Boomers and their Future, Family and Medical Leave Act, Palliative Care and AIDS: the Epidemiological and Social Context.

As you can tell, this reference draws from a number of diverse disciplines to address issues facing the aged and their caregivers. The *Encyclopedia* is informed by recent research from fields ranging from biology and genetics to sociology and economics, and from medicine and nursing to psychology and policy studies. It is the type of reference set that serves to answer specific questions, as well as offer a starting place for more involved exploration. The bibliography remains impressive. It consists of 165 pages of double columns, filled with the citations referred to within the text of the *Encyclopedia*. While this is actually fewer pages than the bibliography in the second edition, it has been updated and edited to include the latest research available.

This newest edition of the *Encyclopedia of Aging* will only add to its reputation as a comprehensive and practical reference. The editors have expanded the scope of the *Encyclopedia*, and updated

its contents to reflect the most recent developments in this growing field.

And finally, reference librarians will be glad to know that the 2001 edition of the *American Reference Books Annual* (2001, 1563088886, \$115) has hit the shelves. This is the 32nd edition of this reference standard and a total of 1561 book and CD-ROM reviews of items mostly published in 2000 are squeezed in between the covers. (A few titles from 1999 are also included.) A total of 37 chapters fully cover the growing diversity of subjects now part of the reference literature, as well as the various categories of reference tools, i.e., encyclopedias, atlases, directories, etc. This edition also carries on the practice started in the 2000 edition of including a chapter that reviews professional library literature on varying of topics whether related to reference or not.

The *American Reference Books Annual* remains an essential purchase for reference collection development. It gives selectors both a bibliography of recent reference titles, as well as professional reviews to assist in evaluating their relevance. I have only one problem with this publication. With their growing numbers, it is time that *ARBA* begin reviewing Web versions of reference sources. Reviewing books and CD-ROMs is no longer enough. 🐉

Book Reviews: Monographic Musings — Airing the Classics

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

In tropical climates, like those in India and parts of Nepal, hot, wet weather bathes the land and its inhabitants during the summer months. From June to September, books are at-risk items, particularly susceptible to mold and mildew. For this reason, the monastic library collections are

tended to on the sixth day of the sixth moon in a celebration known as Airing the Classics. There is some history

behind this "Double Sixth" observance: on their journey down the river to China, Buddhist pilgrims suffered a dose of turbulence, leaving their books drenched with water. Immediately, they nursed their library collection—they aired their classics—in order to save their precious volumes.

I have made a personal resolution this year to observe this Buddhist holiday. On the sixth day of the sixth moon, I am going to dote on my own library. I will dust my books and their shelves, I will give them air to breathe, and I will take an hour or so to do nothing but consider other works to add to my collection. Perhaps this month's reviews will help you consider the same.

Happy reading!

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Bentley, Karen Anne. *Stop Out-of-Control Eating: The Big Heart Way to Create Strength through Inner Peace*. Concord, MA: Lovejoy and Lord, 2000. 0966696719. \$14.95.
Reviewed by **Jennie Vaughn** (Assistant to the Vice President for Public Relations, Warren Wilson College)
<jvaughn@warren-wilson.edu>

Author **Karen Bentley** sent us a personal letter along with the review copy of her book *Stop Out-of-Control Eating*, crowing that her method of “weight loss from the spiritual perspective of inner peace... literally turbo charges weight loss results.” She welcomes our review – but only if we like the book. I guess she won’t be receiving this clip.

Bentley, the founder and president of **The Big Heart Corporation**, is a public speaker who teaches a program called **A Course in Miracles**. She touts her “unique” perspective – as though she’s the only one who has ever had a problem with out-of-control eating – and calls her five-step program a “breakthrough.” That’s some pretty heady stuff. Unfortunately, she doesn’t live up to her claims.

To begin with, **Overeaters Anonymous**, a weight-loss program modeled after more famous **Alcoholics Anonymous** concept, focuses very heavily on God and the concept of a “Higher Power.” (According to the Twelve Steps, after OA members admit that they are “powerless over food,” they “[make] a decision to turn [their] will and [their] lives over the care of God...” That sounds about as spiritual as you can get.)

Like OA, the Big Heart Program has steps (five instead of twelve) that must be worked each day. These steps involve the work of the mind, the spirit, the heart, and the body, and “the work of food.” These steps are described in vague and facile terms over the course of the book’s first hundred or so pages. Some of this information is actually pretty insightful – such as the concept of “the Holy Instant” when one decides not to overeat – though again, it is nothing new.

After that, the book goes down hill. For the last 50 pages, the reader is forced to digest an endless litany of minutiae about food exchanges, body fat percentage, aerobic target zones, and more. This practical information isn’t particularly helpful, and in some cases could actually work against someone who is trying to lose weight. Bentley urges folks to eat only at mealtimes, but research has proven that it is better to eat smaller amounts more often throughout the day. She bans entirely certain foods like refined sugar and white rice, which forces increased attention to food and could lead to obsession about it.

Perhaps the worst thing of all is the publisher’s choice of graphics. Each of Bentley’s real-life examples is punctuated by a Big Heart (get it?), and listings are introduced by smaller hearts turned sideways.

This reviewer’s edict: Don’t waste your money on this drivel. If you want a spiritual weight-loss plan, go to OA. Fifteen dollars will buy you a lot of Special K.

Graham, Buck. *TCP/IP Addressing: Designing and Optimizing Your IP Addressing Scheme*, 2nd ed. San Diego: Morgan Kaufmann, 2001. 0122950216. \$34.95.
Reviewed by **Corbett Consolvo** (Network Analyst, Academic Computing and Telecommunication Services, College of Charleston) <consolv@email.cofc.edu>

There is a handful of books out there all trying to explain the workings of TCP/IP. They are often outdated or offer subtle misinformation. The second edition of *TCP/IP Addressing* by **Buck Graham** explains in depth both the current version of IP and the upcoming

ing IP version 6, making it one of the most informative IP books in the industry. Topics covered are at an intermediate to somewhat advanced level—a book not written for those completely new to networking, but for those who have some basic knowledge of networking and wish to gain a solid understanding of TCP/IP.

The book starts with an overview of network layer theory, which is essential to the understanding of any network protocol. It also presents subnet masking in a rather novel way, using a photograph to help illustrate the concept of network addresses versus host addresses. While using a photograph to illustrate the way something works is fairly normal, Mr. Graham uses his photograph to show how a computer differentiates between a host (or machine) address and a network address. Most books will show this only in binary, which isn’t always very easy to understand. He also spends some time explaining binary math, which is fundamental when learning IP concepts.

The book proceeds to some fairly complex notions dealing with IP routing design and management. These sections are certainly intermediate in level, and possibly even cross over to the advanced category. Not to worry, though, as Mr. Graham’s explanations are clear. Such topics include proxying, route table management, and the ever more popular “mobile computing,” where one can interact with one’s network from possibly anywhere in the world.

There are also many more concepts covered, but to go through them in a review would not really do them justice (and probably would be fairly dry). Suffice it to say that *TCP/IP Addressing* covers a multitude of in-depth IP and routing concepts indispensable to those that want to have an excellent understanding of TCP/IP and how it works.

In addition, the book has a set of practice/review questions at the end of each chapter. Not only do these questions cover information in the chapters, some questions require outside research, which helps establish a practical understanding of the concepts discussed.

All in all, *TCP/IP Addressing*, while not for the networking light at heart, is a terrific resource for gaining a solid understanding of TCP/IP and how IP networks interact. It is a highly recommended book for those who are interested in bringing their network knowledge to a high level.

Ogden, Tom. *Wizards and Sorcerers: From Abracadabra to Zoroaster*. New York: Facts on File, 1997. 0816031517 (hardcover). \$45.00.

Reviewed by **Justin Consolvo** (PC Technician, Academic Computing and Telecommunication Services, College of Charleston) <consolvj@email.cofc.edu>

Who would have thought that mysticism and magic could be so pervasive through our society? And yet we encounter evidence of it every day: psychic advertisements on television, billboards offering palm readings, not to mention supernatural Internet sites galore. Even the entertainment industry is full of references to the numinous and the occult. With all of these different inputs, it’s nice to finally find a book to explain the different practices and their antecedents.

Tom Ogden’s *Wizards and Sorcerers: From Abracadabra to Zoroaster* is a handy reference tool that gives a brief explanation of hundreds of people, books, and practices, covering everything from ballet to the Australian Aboriginal rituals. The classical sources of mysticism are examined along with the more modern television programs and musicals. While the book is by no means complete, it is a nice starting-off point for those obscure references found in other works. And if you find the occult fascinating, you will find several new avenues of possible reading opened up by Mr. Ogden. My new book list will include

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any volumes I can find having to do with the **Order of the Golden Dawn**, a society in nineteenth century England whose members included **W. B. Yeats**.

Powell, Mary Reynolds. *A World of Hurt: Between Innocence and Arrogance in Vietnam*. Chesterland, OH: Greenleaf Enterprises, 2000. 0966531957. \$12.95.
and Cargill, Mary Terrell and Jade Quang Huynh. *Voice of Vietnamese Boat People: Nineteen Narratives of Escape and Survival*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000. 0786407859. \$32.50.

Reviewed by **Jennie Vaughn** (Assistant to the Vice President for Public Relations, Warren Wilson College)
<jvaughn@warren-wilson.edu>

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, journalists and political pundits have mostly shifted their attention away from the old Communist threat. AIDS is the new media darling. School shootings continue to make the headlines, and even the six-year-old Oklahoma City bombing is in the news again as accused killer Timothy McVeigh's execution date nears.

But twenty-six years ago, the war in Vietnam was killing more people every day than have died in all the recent school shootings. The U.S. death toll from AIDS is a drop in the bucket of the blood-bath that was Vietnam. And though the killing ended a quarter-century ago, thousands of veterans are still suffering from their war wounds: they languish in understaffed VA hospitals or beg on street corners, unable to work because their bodies or their minds were shattered by the constant gunfire.

Two recent books illuminate this time in history, though from entirely different perspectives. The first is **Mary Reynolds Powell's** *A World of Hurt: Between Innocence and Arrogance in Vietnam*. Powell was a twenty-three-year-old nurse in 1970 when she flew to Vietnam for her year-long tour of duty. She worked at the 24th Evacuation Hospital on Long Binh Post, the U.S. Army's main headquarters in Vietnam. For Vietnam, it was a good job, maybe even a little cushy. She was right on base, not out in the field, and nowhere near the front lines. Still, what she saw – the waste of human and economic resources, and the destruction of the beautiful Vietnamese landscape and culture – changed her life forever. In harrowing detail, she tells the stories of soldiers mutilated by bullets and shrapnel, their bodies literally torn apart. She tells of the suicides, the rampant drug use, the corruption, the hopelessness. But Powell is no whiner – she's simply telling it like it is. Her story is far from pleasant, but it is vitally important. A significant portion of the U.S. population hasn't lived through a war (the Persian Gulf incident doesn't count) and doesn't realize its terrible human toll. *A World of Hurt* provides critical insight, especially in our new, war-happy administration.

Voices of Vietnamese Boat People, a collection of narratives compiled by **Mary Terrell Cagill** and **Jade Quang Huynh**, casts light on the Vietnam War's ugly aftermath – the crackdown of the North Vietnam government on "intellectuals" and others they considered to be a threat to the new Communist regime. Seeking to preserve their freedom – and often their very lives – thousands of South Vietnamese took to the sea in rickety boats, often with few supplies, and faced the dangers of nature, pirates, and starvation. Many didn't make it. Even those that did faced struggle and hardships in refugee camps.

The stories compiled here are those of people who were sponsored by churches and other groups to come to America. They are filled with unbelievable pain and strife. But behind these struggles is a remarkable spirit of resourcefulness and resilience. With hope, determination, and a huge amount of hard work, these

"boat people" prove that the human spirit cannot be extinguished. Unfortunately, we are able to hear only from the survivors. It is important to remember that many, many more South Vietnamese did not live to tell their tales.

The salon.com Reader's Guide to Contemporary Authors.

Ed. Laura Miller with Adam Begley. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. 014028088X. \$16.95.

Reviewed by **Debbie Vaughn** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

"An opinionated, irreverent look at the most fascinating writers of our time" – so claims the cover of *The salon.com Reader's Guide to Contemporary Authors*, edited by **Laura Miller** with **Adam Begley**. Sporting graphically-genius caricatures of writers **Stephen King**, **Amy Tan**, **Salman Rushdie**, **Toni Morrison**, **Kurt Vonnegut**, and **John Updike**, this posh cover cradles one of the best guides I have ever come across. When I began writing my review for this publication, I quickly sent an email message to my boyfriend, revealing my excitement in discovering such a firecracker piece of work. If you do not add this to your public, academic, or personal library collection, you will be missing out. Three cheers to Miller and her contributors for putting together a reader's guide that is as equally entertaining (if not, in some cases, more so) as the literature itself.

Beginning with an explanatory preface and a stellar introduction from Miller, *The salon.com Reader's Guide* encapsulates 225 modern international litterateurs through profiles, reviews, bibliographies, and essays of "the authors who matter most now." Fiction, nonfiction, poetry, novels under pseudonyms, and other works are listed for each "celebrity" author – from Greenville, South Carolina's **Dorothy Allison** to Manchester, England's **Jeanette Winterson** to Richmond, Virginia's **Tom Wolfe**. For each writer, contributors (most of whom write for such book review canons as *The New York Times Book Review*, *The New Yorker*, *Publishers Weekly*, *The Village Voice*, and *The Washington Post*, to name a few) embolden the handful of titles that they consider "recommended" reads and denote the "best" with an asterisk. Several of the featured authors also act as contributors, offering books that they enjoy reading, essays about their influences, or subject-specific annotated bibliographies. Novelist **Ann Beattie**, for example, submits "Navel-Gazing Raised to an Art," while storyteller **Peter Carey** presents "A Walk on the Wild Side: Very Original Novels." Also integrated within the text are genre-oriented essays, such as contributor **Elaine Showalter's** "The Female Gothic." Finally, the crème de la crème of *The salon.com Reader's Guide* is illustrator **Zach Trenholm**; his *The New Yorker*-style author caricatures add a raw edge to the manuscript, fitting in with much of contemporary writing's rough and often severe texture.

"Opinionated" and "irreverent" do, indeed, describe the tone of *The salon.com Reader's Guide*. "Infotainer" **Michael Crichton** does not earn even a single emboldened recommended book; contributor **Dwight Garner**, an editor for *The New York Times Book Review*, shamelessly sums up Crichton's accomplishments as nothing more than "very, very good business." Contributor **Sarah Vowell**, who has several credits to her name, takes a more personal-attach approach to popular author **John Grisham**. "Grisham has lived in Mississippi, where people have died to earn the right to vote," Vowell observes, making his eventually-above-the-law characters "reprehensible" and his trains of thought "sickening." Even the cult hipster **Charles Bukowski** (to whom my boyfriend recently turned me on) receives slight scorn from contributor **Andrew Essex**: by the end of his career, Essex claims that Bukowski was no longer a fertile and hard-boiled drunk, but rather that he had become a "rich, grumpy septuagenarian alcoholic" and describes his last novel, *Pulp*, as "inferior." Never fear – there is some positive commentary included in *The salon.com Reader's Guide*. Contributor **David Lipsky**, author of

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(among other works) *The Pallbearer*, says of literary great **John Updike**: "...his forty books record his forty productive years with a fidelity unmatched by any competitor, or by any of the other media that have become a writer's scariest competition. It's an amazing achievement." Likewise, contributor **David Eggers**, uncomplicatedly states of the "science fiction aficionado, WWII vet, lover of women, pitier of the poor, cranky luddite, fun-loving doomsayer, sometime postmodernist" **Kurt Vonnegut**: "Vonnegut is good." (In his own unique character, Eggers adds, "Also: He has a mustache." Thanks, Dave.)

There is one tiny thing I would alter in *The salon.com Reader's Guide*: guidewords. Though the text is arranged alphabetically by featured author, guidewords would make this quick refer-

ence even quicker. But don't let *my* opinionated and irreverent statement keep you from acquiring this gem; hurry and add it to your collection. This book is a *must* if you ever act as a reader's advisor. And it even pays homage to Gale's *Contemporary Authors* series—what more could you ask for?

I am hoping that Miller and her cohorts will publish a supplement to this Y2K edition of *The salon.com Reader's Guide*. I would be thrilled to ingest critical commentary on such authors as the afore-mentioned **Dave Eggers**; the College of Charleston's own **Bret Lott**; Oprah's Book Club members **Jane Hamilton** and **Alice Hoffman**; southern stylists **Clyde Edgerton**, **Anne Rivers Siddons**, and **Kaye Gibbons**; **Rob Thomas** of the young adult genre; **Helen Fielding** of *Bridget Jones* fame; Pulitzer Prize winner **Frank McCourt**; the internationally acclaimed **Gabriel García Márquez**... come to think of it, a second edition couldn't come quickly enough!

You Gotta Go to School for That? — The Perfect Office Mate

by **Jared Alexander Seay** (The librarian formerly known as "Jerry")

I have lost a perfectly good office mate. Whatever shall become of me? I am now left with only the thoughts of my past good fortune and how it came to be. For three years I shared an office with **Betsy Jean Williams**. Now, of course, Jean is not her real middle name. But, upon making her acquaintance I determined that "Jean" somehow fitted her quite well. I thus dubbed her the librarian known as **Betsy "Jean."** Understanding my overall quirkiness and my resulting tendency to rename everyone I know, **Betsy**, characteristically took it in good humor and continued on with her delightful ways.

Over the years I came to see Betsy as the quintessential person with which to share an office. She was kind, witty, understanding, sharing, and a darn good librarian. Besides being a top-notch librarian and overall pleasant human being, **Betsy Jean** showed her office mate perfectioness in the ways that few office mates did. Her office mate capabilities were so well delivered that I was moved to create the Rules of a Perfect Office Mate based directly on characteristics that **Betsy Jean** exhibited so remarkably well.

Here then are the **RULES OF BEING A PERFECT OFFICE MATE** as based on the remarkable office mate characteristics of **Betsy Jean Williams**. I trust you

will investigate these characteristics well when shopping for an office mate.

Rule #1: Betsy did not talk too much: Though conversation can be golden, a chatty office mate usually disgorge information that is both on a need to know basis (and I really don't need to know it) as well as interruptive of personal thinking patterns. The good office mate is highly selective of when she should and should not audibly divulge her thoughts.

Rule #2: Betsy never commented disparagingly on my decorating style (or lack thereof): The good office mate, while quick to recognize good office decorating taste when she sees it, is nevertheless slow to comment on the lack of such good taste in her fellow office mates. It matters not how many conference speaker nametags, bizarre cartoons, outdated "to do" lists or sticky pad notes that a mate sticks to the walls. The tactful office mate smiles and makes no comment.

Rule #3: Betsy shared with me interesting web sites and e-mail of questionable virtue. She was also appreciative when I did the same with her. The perfect office mate understands that the office mate relationship is one that demands shared joy. Thus, it is important to forward all truly humorous email (but only the very funny

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doubles and
your staff budget
doesn't—
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