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From the Reference Desk

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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Robert Scott Small Library, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29424; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

It might be refreshing news for some, and a shock to many, but print indexes still have a place in academic research. Admittedly, they must be qualitative and selective, focused on a specifically defined topic and well organized. But, if an index measures up to these criteria, it will find a warm reception on library reference shelves. Such is the case with **Kelly S. Janousek's *United States Supreme Court Decisions 1778-1996*** (2002, 0810839989, \$110).

Published by Scarecrow, this book updates and continues the work that **Nancy A. Guenther** started with her two editions of ***United States Court Decisions: An Index to Excerpts, Reprints and Discussions***. **Guenther's** last edition covered Supreme Court cases through 1980. (According to **Amazon**, **Guenther's** second edition is still available from a variety of booksellers, (1983, 0810815788, \$24+). In the most recent edition, **Janousek** takes us up to 1996 in case coverage, as well as listing recently published works on cases previously covered by **Guenther**. Her book is arranged chronologically and lists over 4,000 case entries, providing the names of the parties, the date of the decision, all reporter citations for the case, as well as listing the cases that were decided with the main case, when that occurs. But the main value of this reference is the selective list of sources that points the reader to

reprints and discussions of each case from non-law oriented books and journals. Choosing from standard indexes and book reviews, **Janousek** references 108 books and 114 journals. Besides the chronological arrangement of entries, there are a number of indexes providing access to specific cases. There is an A-Z Case Subject index that lists topics along with the relevant entry numbers, a Case Name index and a Popular Law Name index. There is also a Words and Phrase index that give entry numbers to cases that have argued the legal meanings of word and phrases.

Kelly S. Janousek's *United States Supreme Court Decisions 1778-1996* is a valuable and useful resource. Like its predecessor, it offers knowledgeable guidance to anyone interested in Supreme Court decisions in an easy to use format. The index selectively recommends resources containing commentary and discussion on each case. Given the incredible amount of information currently available on the Supreme Court, such guidance is a godsend, especially to high school students and undergraduates.

The ***Oxford Companion to the Body*** (2002, 019852403X, \$75) is one of a group of companions recently published by Oxford University Press. Containing over 1,000 alphabetically arranged articles, this volume covers the physical aspects of the body and body systems, as well as discussing disorders that affect the body. Readers will find articles that cover body organs like the heart, lungs and skin as well as functions like respiration, reproduction, and blood circulation.

Coverage also includes disorders like cerebral palsy and epilepsy, as well as conditions ranging from heat stroke to hysteria. However, this is not only a biological/medical reference. The unique value of this ***Oxford Companion*** lies in its coverage of the many diverse issues related to the human body. Topics run the gamut and include fasting, sport, health foods, dance, hygiene, sculpture, funeral practices, hypnosis, sexual orientation and religion. All of these topics are discussed as they relate to the body thus offering a reference that has multiple applications ranging from social to biological and from artistic to medical. The book has been handsomely produced with a number of black and white photos and diagrams, as well as a few selected color plates. In particular there is a collection of color plates at the end of the book that depict the major body systems.

The ***Oxford Companion to the Body*** is a book that could find a place on either reference or circulating shelves depending on need. Written in a straightforward, accessible style, this book offers a perspective not found in traditional references on the human body that emphasize the physical biology. It has broader applications and should be welcomed by both undergraduate, as well as larger public libraries.

Another Oxford companion of interest to both public and academic libraries is the ***Oxford Companion to Music*** edited by **Alison Latham** (2002, 0198662122, \$60). Some 8,000 entries fill almost 1,400 pages

continued on page 74

Fons & Davidson Interview from page 71

TF & LD: Yes, and it will continue to get better. If you look at how many vendors did this even a year and a half ago compared to how many are doing it now or plan to in their next version, it's striking. I really do think this is going to become something far easier to deal with as vendors realize the importance of being able to handle these kinds of link requests. It's just taken off in the past two years.

And then it becomes hard to keep track of it all, when you've got 180 different places you can link to. Eventually it would be nice to get to the point that each of these vendors has a known URL structure or an API with instructions how to pass a search to it — without all this data being kept in local files that need periodic updating.

ATG: Though it may be a little tough for some of them, because it means admitting that users that don't start in or return to their native interface—there's some loss of control or stickiness...

TF & LD: Right, that's an excellent point. It means accepting a different model of how your users get to you.

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with biographical sketches and descriptions of instruments, discussions of historic movements and definitions of musical forms and concepts. However, the title should probably read the *Oxford Companion to Western Classical Music*, for that is the vast majority of what is covered. Promotional ads claim some reference to jazz, but with no entries on Louis Armstrong or Duke Ellington such a claim is, of course, mostly hype. (In her introduction, editor **Alison Latham** proudly admits the focus on the "Western Classical Tradition.")

Nonetheless, what this *Oxford Companion to Music* covers, it covers very well. This reference is an updated, revised version of two previous standards, the first *Oxford Companion to Music* and the two-volume *New Oxford Companion to Music*. Its high quality pedigree shows in the breadth and depth of the coverage, as well as in the obvious expertise of the 150 contributors. The treatment will appeal to specialist and generalist alike. It is comprehensive and scholarly without being overly technical in style. It is easy to use with an alphabetical arrangement, as well as an additional index of people referred to, but without their own entries. Production values are fairly high. The print is good and the binding strong enough to hold up under repeated use. And priced at \$60, it will find a broader market than libraries. In short, it is hard to find its match in a one volume musical reference.

Other recent or updated Oxford Companions include: *The Oxford Companion to American Law* (May 2002, 0195088786, \$65); *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century British Politics*: (April 2002, 0198601344; \$75).

There is an increasing need for, and interest in, comparative, cross-national reference works. ABC-CLIO's *Legal Systems of the World: A Political, Social and Cultural En-*

cyclopedia 2002, 1576072312, \$385) fits this category nicely. Besides breaking legal systems down country by country, this four-volume set offers comparative treatment of legal concepts ranging from federalism to feminist jurisprudence and from rehabilitation to retribution, as well as covering bodies of law as diverse as Buddhist law, contract law, natural law and labor law. The other major contribution of this reference is the discussions of individual national law. These articles are generally divided into sections offering country information, then a brief history, coverage of legal concepts, legal structure and staffing and lastly the impact of the legal system. Each country article also has a map as well as a helpful chart outlining the legal structure of the court system.

Each of the articles in the set is signed and has a brief bibliography, as well as "see also" references to related articles. There is a general index that is useful and a short, limited glossary. Admittedly, some of this information is available in sources like the *Europa Year Book* and there are other treatments like **Maurice Sheridan's** *EC Legal Systems: An Introductory Guide* (Butterworth, 1992, 0406002738, price NA) and his *EFTA Legal Systems: An Introductory Guide* (Butterworth, 1993, 0406010218, price NA). However, for background information on legal systems worldwide, nothing else is as comprehensive and inclusive as these four volumes.

While this set is not intended for the legal expert, it provides a valuable overview of the legal systems of the world for undergraduates, the informed lay reader and even serious high school students. Both academic and large public libraries will want to consider it.

Another ABC-CLIO reference set that will spark wide interest is *Religions of the World: a Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices* (2002, 1-57607-223-1, \$385). This four-volume reference work edited by **J. Gordon Melton** and **Martin Baumann** contains over 1,200 articles authored by more than 200 contributors. (**J. Gordon Melton** also edited Gale's *Encyclopedia of American Religions* of which a new edition is due in 2003.) While the treatment is scholarly, this set approaches the subject differently than classic references like **Mircea Eliade's** *Encyclopedia of Religion*. It is not so much grounded in the larger themes like ritual, myth, devotion and sacred texts as it is in current conditions. Although it is subtitled a *Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices*, the entries in this work give the reader more

of a profile, or status report of the religions and church entities covered. The majority of articles focus on the "nearly 1,000 most important religious bodies in the world, the majority being communities within larger religious groupings." However, these "larger religious groupings" are not neglected. In fact, major religious traditions are presented in the encyclopedia in what the editors call, "the core essays." Naturally these include the obvious like Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, but also consist of Jainism, Shinto, Zoroasterism, and Sikism/Sant Mat as well as treatment of Ethno religions, traditional African religions and the Western esoteric tradition (currently called New Age). The encyclopedia also provides individual country essays that trace the religion conditions in designated countries recognized by the UN. These essays trace the historical development of the religions of each country up to the present day, and provide statistical tables with figures from 2000, and projections for 2025 and 2050. As an additional feature there is also a statistical section at the beginning of volume one. This section lists the number of religious adherents of the major religions in each continent and region within continent. The first volume also has a thorough listing of contributor credentials, along with the articles they wrote. Other helpful features in this set are brief bibliographies for each entry and addresses for the individual church groups covered.

The more time one spends with *Religions of the World*, the more one is impressed. It is a well researched work of scholarship that will enhance religious collections in both academic and public libraries.

Libraries that are also interested in more specialized coverage should consider Routledge's *Society and Religion* series of one-volume encyclopedias: *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism* (2001, 0415922445 \$125); *Encyclopedia of Millennialism and Millennial Movements* (2001, 0415922461, \$125) and *Encyclopedia of African and African-American Religions* (2001, 0415922453, \$125).

Greenwood seems to be getting more serious about multi-volume reference sets. The *Greenwood Encyclopedia of International Relations* (2002, 0313307431, \$475) is a case in point. The four volumes of this work contains over 6,000 entries describing events ranging from battles to diplomatic conferences and offering biographical sketches as well as defining concepts of international law. Written by historian **Cathal J. Nolan** this set is heavily inclined toward the history of international relations and not the nuances of diplomacy. The vast majority of coverage is post 1500 with reference to prior events made only when necessary to provide context. The writing is objective and fact laden and there

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From the Reference Desk
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is a thorough index, as well as a good selective bibliography in the last volume. However, this is one of those sets that is more worthy of the title "Dictionary" of *International Relations*. The entries, while factual and clearly written, are for the most part, brief and descriptive. This is understandable. Trying to pack over 6,000 entries into four volumes is going to result in brevity. Price is also a concern. This is a four-volume dictionary at an encyclopedia price. While the *Greenwood Encyclopedia of International Relations* is a scholarly work of obvious quality, it is pricey at nearly \$500 and may give libraries pause. Nonetheless, if you library has a need, and you can part with the money, then go for it.

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

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

Weiss-Morris, Loretta, ed. *Quick Training Tips! How To Teach Computer Skills To Practically Anyone*. Hopatcong, NJ: Systems Literacy Inc., 2001. 097125740X. 148 pages. \$39.95.

Reviewed by **Debbie Vaughn** <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

When I teach a library instruction session, I request that my students keep an open mind about the subject at hand. Even if I cover material that they already know, I tell them, I might introduce a new method of doing something or another angle of a topic to explore. Upon first glance, I must sorely admit that I wasn't practicing what I was preaching when it came to reviewing Loretta Weiss-Morris' *Quick Training Tips! How To Teach Computer Skills To Practically Anyone*. Initially, the informality of the publication put me off. Some of the clipart is dated, the binding is spiral, the cover is slight, and the presentation is—upon first glance—a bit amateur. But you can't judge a book by its cover, even if the cover is slightly flimsy. Once I made up my mind to learn a thing or two, I wised up to the plenteous *verbum sapienti*. The truth is, Weiss-Morris' book is packed with words of advice and food for thought.

Quick Training Tips is an outgrowth of Weiss-Morris' Website (<http://www.QuickTrainingTips.com>). The Website includes links to a "Tip of the Week," "True Training Tales," "Industry News & Trends," a "Job Bank," a "Résumé Bank," and "Recommended Resources." Though the medium of the printed page does not allow for a job or résumé bank, Weiss-Morris stays true to her online format with Tips, Tales, and Recommended Resources, and adds articles by and interviews with professional trainers. Editorial comments and recommendations complete the publication.

With eleven chapters, *Quick Training Tips* covers the gamut of modern training techniques from personal introductions to online instruction. The first chapter, "Breaking the Ice," consists of nothing more than tips sent to Weiss-Morris' Website. These tips come from a variety of people and places: Regions Financial Corporation, New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, York University (Ontario), the Center for Disease Control, and the University of Wisconsin are but a few examples. The sheer number of people offering guidance and testimonials hint at the number of users (and, subsequently, the amount of support) for Weiss-Morris' Website. It goes without saying that such site-loyalty is indicative of quality information.

Chapter two, "Polishing Your Presentation Skills," begins with a quiz. Have you ever considered how long a person can listen to a lecture before his/her mind begins to wander? According to Weiss-Morris, three to seven minutes. Though the reference citation for this particular "fact" is not given,

having done some training it sounds accurate to me. In fairness, Weiss-Morris does not offer this quiz (and others like it) for scholarly or statistical information. She uses

the quiz as an attention grabber, and it fits in perfectly with one of the major themes of

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Quick Training Tips: positive contact and the ability to keep an audience's attention is paramount in praiseworthy training.

My favorite chapter by far is "Dealing With 'Difficult' Students: How To Have 'Win-Win' Interactions." Weiss-Morris begins with several possible scenarios, one of which hit all-too-close to home for me: "This student lets you know that team exercises and learning games are a waste of time—and it just so happens that you've got several planned for the session." Frequently, individuals do not attend classes or training sessions on a volunteer basis. For example, library education sessions are rarely elective; furthermore, students' learning curves vary dramatically. No doubt, we try our darnedest to engage our co-eds and to allow them to feel as though they have learned valuable information and skills. But it doesn't always work, and every so often (at best) we have pupils who put up a roadblock to learning. Weiss-Morris has gathered tips from her Website which illustrate ways to capture student involvement. Advice from others in the field is invaluable.

Every imaginable topic concerning computer training is covered. Weiss-Morris does not only address classroom settings; "How To Conduct a Win-Win Training Session With a High-Powered Executive" demythologizes one-on-one tutoring. Tips for teaching basic skills classes are followed by those for instruction on advanced computer concepts. Though the chapter dealing with teaching Internet skills focuses on beginner audiences, several tips can be applied to more advanced learners. Over eighteen pages focus on information about online instruction success, and much of the content comes from OnlineLearning.net's Director of Online Curriculum and Instructor Development, Susan Ko.

One could argue that purchasing *Quick Training Tips* isn't necessary—most of the information contained in its pages is available for free on the Internet. The added value of the book is its categorical nature and added articles and interviews. Sure, much of the information is available on Weiss-Morris' Website, but it's scattered. I highly recommend this book for your public library patrons and for personnel who carryout any sort of computer training. I also recommend sending it to the bindery for a hardcover.