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Charleston Conference Future Dates

Editor

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Books That Matter from page 67

American culture and avoid taking the kids to Disney World will relish **Kunstler's** dissection of that place, its venal values and its troubling symbolism, replete with (another surprise here, perhaps) death and destruction.

His final section is on people who have envisioned solutions in one way or another, including the developer of Seaside, Florida, the new small town that functions like an old, small town; practioners of sound zoning regulations and planning principles called "Traditional Neighborhood Development;" and open space conservation groups and creators of land trusts. He leaves us with the somewhat reassuring belief that there are more and more people out there recognizing what has gone wrong, finding a vocabulary to explain how and why it's wrong, and then applying solutions.

I'd like to close by mentioning two other—much happier—books I highly recommend. One is *Seedfolks*, (New York: Harper Trophy, 1999. 0064472078. 80 pages. \$4.99.), by **Paul Fleischman**, a book selected for a town-wide read in my hometown of Arlington, Massachusetts, which is how I happened to come across it. It is a fictional account of how a community garden is created in Cleveland, told through the eyes of a series of characters from different ages and ethnic backgrounds, all of whom find themselves engaged in and reawakened by the transformation of a vacant lot into a garden, starting with the efforts of one nine-year-old child who plants seeds in honor of her dead father, a farmer in his native Vietnam. It is a very moving, inspiring sliver of a book—one that you can read

in one sitting, but which will leave you wanting to get out there in the dirt and grow things, to reconnect to nature, yes, but also to get to know your neighbors, to build community, and to spread a bit more goodness and hope in your own neighborhood.

The other book is **Alexander McCall Smith's** *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, (New York: Anchor, 2003. 1400034779. 240 pages. \$11.95.), as well as the others in the same series. These books probably need no introduction from me, as they are bestsellers and widely read. But if you haven't tried these touching, entertaining, and somehow ennobling books, you are missing a treat. The stories center on the confident, kind, and insightful Precious Ramotswe, a Batswana woman who does an extraordinary thing for her time and place—she opens a detective agency. The agency operates more through **Mma Ramotswe's** uncanny intuition about people, through her ability to cleanse souls and lead them to their own truths, rather than as a traditional crime-solving unit. The way **Mma Ramotswe** reveals the hearts and minds of her clients and their situations, the way she teases apart the psychology behind their problems, yields a set of novels that have appeal that transcends the traditional mystery/detective genre. Beyond the engaging characters and plotlines and the working through of very human problems, **McCall's** appeal on another level, too. They capture the nuances

charleston conference dates

future


	Preconferences and Vendor Showcase	Main Conference
2003	5 November	6-8 November
2004	3 November	4-6 November
2005	2 November	3-5 November
2006	8 November	9-11 November
2007	7 November	8-10 November
2008	5 November	6-8 November
2009	4 November	5-7 November
2010	3 November	4-6 November

of life in a simple and traditional—but changing—society, such that one yearns for his Botswana nostalgically, even if one has never known it or a place like it.

Please write <efinnie@mit.edu> and tell me what you think of these books if you read them.

I will close with an offer: I've been reading mountains of what has been termed "doggie lit"—books on human/canine relationships. I have been quite uncertain about whether **ATG** readers would want to hear about these books, but if any of you do, let me know, and I'll write my next column on that topic. There are many, many great books out right now about how and why humans relate with their dogs as they do, and I'd love to tell you about them if you are interested!

Happy Reading,

Your book lover 

ATG Profiles Encouraged

by **Michelle Flinchbaugh** (Acquisitions Librarian, Albin O. Kuhn Library, UMBC, 1000 Hilltop Circle, Baltimore, MD 21250; Phone: 410-455-6754; Fax: 410-455-1598) <flinchba@umbc.edu>

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BORN & LIVED: Germany, Georgia, South Carolina.

FIRST JOB: Exporter/translator with an import/export company.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Head of Monographs and AV Acquisitions at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC. My favorite part includes curriculum analysis and working with colleagues who truly care about quality collection development. Research areas include the role of information and technology in society, education, economic development, human rights, globalization, and national security.

IN MY SPARE TIME I ENJOY: Painting, drawing, photography, digital media, music, scenic road trips, philosophical discussions with friends, technical assistance to non-profits.

PHILOSOPHY: Mutual respect and fairness cover a multitude of shortcomings.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Work more closely with linking information and education with human and economic development in the South and in tropical America.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Libraries will continue to thrive, become more savvy in marketing their value to constituencies, and continue to mix print resources with high-tech information tools. Specialized libraries and research offices will move more toward specialized databases to save space and maximize access to more information. The tension between print and electronic resources

will continue, and the reality of libraries' finite budget will bring more ideas about new electronic-access pricing models to the table. Print and electronic will be increasingly polarized: print will continue to be the preferred medium for traditional full-length books, "e-books" will find a niche primarily for quick-look-up reference tools and course-pack-driven texts for computer-based distance education, the sciences will prefer the latest research online while the humanities retain more of their print roots. Multimedia teaching tools will break into the college-level market and thus gain more respectability for academic contexts and be viewed as less of a children's medium. E-journals, aggregated databases, pricing issues, subscription-packaging models, and the tension between print and electronic media will continue to evolve. 