Against the Grain

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Briefly Noted

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THE GUN DEBATE — edited by **Grey House Publishing** (2016, *Grey House Publishing*, 978-1-68217-102-8) — In modern history, there has quite possibly been no greater controversy compared to that over guns. That being said though, it is hardly a new subject of discussion, as this collection points out. Having the ability to judge this versus some of this set's other books, this one's narrower focus makes it a much more useful tool. A compendium of not just the court cases in the U.S., but

also the organizations that have fought for and against gun control. It is interesting to see how the discussion has shifted over the years, and would be a must read for anyone looking to discuss the long running ramifications of the fight over the 2nd Amendment; a controversy that shows no sign of losing steam.

RADIO DRAMA AND COMEDY WRITERS, 1928-1962 — by **Ryan Ellett** (9781476665931 / 9781476629803 \$39.95) — Author Ryan Ellett is here to give some unspoken writing heroes their due. Before television became mainstream, the venue for aspiring writers was radio and both veterans and newcomers wound up entering the field. The reference source is a catalog of not just who they were, but also the notable work they created, who they collaborated with, and if they continued to do anything after the world of

entertainment moved on. It should be noted however, that extra focus was given to making sure the "underlings" got their due, as the author makes it clear that it was always a possibility for these people to get swept up and away by the grand scale of the discussion. A great beginning point for anyone interested in learning more about radio, academically or otherwise.

WORLD EPIDEMICS — by **Mary Ellen Snodgrass** (9781476671246 / 9781476631066 \$95.00) — The only thing scarier than getting sick from a nasty disease is to be caught up into a global pandemic. This reference material collects the records of every outbreak epidemic that has occurred in record human history. Thankfully, the entries also include the record treatments that were used, possibly to alleviate the notion that this was simply a catalog of the terrible diseases that humanity has encountered. A useful record to study for both those

who are interested in disease and those study the spirit of human perseverance.

THE CASSIA SPY RING IN WORLD WAR II AUSTRIA — by **C. Turner** (9781476669694 / 9781476629919 \$35.00) — CASSIA, though possibly unknown to many casual observers, was the spy ring in the heart of Nazi territory that kept the Allies up to date on the machinations of Nazi command, until a fatal error ultimately got most of the team killed. With a scale as large as the second World War, it becomes understandable that some events would get lost in mix of everything else, but this book goes into depth and detail

of a group of heroic civilians who could have been killed any day but still risked it all to help the Allied cause. A gripping story of forgotten heroes, and a must read for anyone interested in the early days of spies and espionage.

AMERICAN NATION-BUILDING — by **Kevin Dougherty and Robert J. Pauly, Jr.** (978-0-7864-9796-6/978-1-4766-2821-9 McFarland Press \$39.95) — When it comes to battle, the United States has a habit coming to battle in other countries...without feeling a need to clean up the mess left behind. This book, however, seeks to show that, despite the seemingly warmongering efforts of the forces, the country is trying to revitalize the countries where war has gone on. It's also interesting to see that the writers acknowledge that contro-

versy that surrounds these actions. One is left debating the benefits of actually "cleaning up the mess" versus forcing one's systems on another country. It also does its best to remove the politics from the situation. Overall, an interesting discussion about war and responsibility.

STAR-BEGOTTEN: A LIFE LIVED IN SCIENCE FICTION — by **James Gunn** (978-1-4766-7026-3/978-1-47662966-7 McFarland Press \$25.00) — Though the name might not initially ring a bell, James E. Gunn was instrumental in laying the groundwork for how Science fiction became a serious subject. Interestingly enough, it wasn't for any major fantasy or lasers and spaceships, but instead by grounding his stories in realism. No longer was the genre relegated to children and the childish, and given his later decision to become a teacher, science fiction became a subject that one could candidly discuss without fear of ridicule. This biography offers an enticing look into the life of a man who, despite being a big fish in a little pool, was a major player in shaping the American cultural landscape.

DEFINING DOCUMENTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY: IMMIGRATION & IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES (1650-2016) — edited by **James S. Pula** (978-1-68217-285-8/978-1-68217-286-5 Grey House Publishing \$175.00) — The United States of America is a country that was founded by immigrants, and for immigrants...eventually. Unfortunately, a mistrust of outsiders is nothing new in America, as displayed prominently

by this collection of how cultures migrated to the U.S. and were initially hated until they found a place to call their own, and as time progressed, were ultimately integrated into our culture. What's more; this catalog of immigrants honestly, albeit possibly unintentionally, shows how U.S. society ultimately benefitted from being a more accepting culture. An incredibly useful tool for those concerned about the country's latest anti-immigrant craze as it shows how illogical the issue really is.

A HOLLYWOOD TRAGEDY: LAIRD CREGAR — by **Gregory William Mank** (978-0-7864-4956-9/978-1-4766-2844-8 McFarland Press \$49.95) — The early days of Hollywood was something of a lawless place. Indeed, so great was the draw of fame, that history is littered with horror stories of women pushed to the edge and ultimately, tragically, destroyed by the machine. This book however, tells the tale of a man who sought to change himself and instead died young. Although Laird was actu-

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ally well received as a brutish actor, indeed he was critically acclaimed for it, he sought the fame boost that could only come from being seen as attractive. Like many others, he sought to remedy this by going on an extreme diet, failing to realize that as a man of large stature he was never meant to be at the size he strove for. A relatable tragedy for all walks of life made all the worse by the fact that this is the first time it's ever really been brought to light.

UKRAINE OVER THE EDGE — by **Gordon M. Hahn** (978-1-4766-6901-4/978-1-4766-2875-2 **McFarland Press \$39.95**) — In recent years, we as a country have grown weary of Russia possibly restarting the Cold War. If one incident put people on edge the most it was their seeming move to recapture Ukraine. Though things have calmed down for a moment, with only a section of the country taken, that doesn't ease anyone's suspicions. This book looks to explain the events, in their entirety, to the western audience, on the grounds that many might not have seen what happened on the ground that, unless something massive occurred, most would have likely not heard anything on what had gone down. This book is an interesting study of the world possibly repeating itself, and possibly a harrowing portent into what is to come.

JAPAN'S GREEN MONSTERS — by **Sean Rhodes and Brooke McCorkle** (978-1-4766-6390-6/978-1-4766-3134-9 **McFarland Press \$39.95**) — On August 6, 1945 the life of mankind was changed forever; the atom bomb was dropped. While reactions to the incredible show of force, ranging from fear to almost reverence, one response that has surprised many is the emergence of "Kaiju" cinema. Seen almost as the antithesis to nuclear fire-power, this genre was created a decade after the bombs dropped and almost exclusively

seem to feature plotlines about ecological issues, be they manmade or semi-natural occurrences. As time passed, it became clear that the franchise was used as a coping mechanism for what issues were bothering the creators. An interesting study of both film and psychology, and a must read for franchise fans outside Japan who may not have realized the deep rooted history the franchise has.

CLASSIC ARCHITECTURE VOL.1-3 — by **Gene Waddell** (\$25.00 each vol. 1 978-1-9744-5405-1, vol. 2 978-1-9761-3458-6, vol. 3 978-1-9746-6307-1) — A trio of in depth, well researched breakdowns of architecture, ranging from ancient to modern, by art historian Gene Waddell, these books offer an easy to read breakdown of the material covered within each volume. Offering both an in-depth breakdown of the tactics used in construction of their era, and a history lesson to justify and

explain why the architecture was done the way it was. This duality is what makes the books so useful, both as a history book and as a history of building. The ease of use also elevates the texts above the standard fare of a history textbook. The text was split apart to give in-depth detail about its different categories, and to allow further exploration into the subject's background and previously mentioned history (vol. 1 Greek and Roman Architecture, vol. 2 Renaissance Architecture, vol. 3 Academic Architecture).

ASSEMBLING THE MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE — edited by **Julian C Chambliss, William L Svitavsky, and Daniel Fandino** (978-1-4766-6418-7/978-1-4766-3285-8 **McFarland Press \$39.95**) — One might wonder if anyone sets out one morning to change the world, do they look at what they create and think "This will change how the world sees the country I live in?" This is addressed because, for better or worse, Disney/Marvel's "Cinematic Universe" has undeniably become a facet of how the world perceives

America. This essay collection tackles the subject in three phases: what it's like to try to make such a massive collection of interwoven stories, what it's like to be the manifestation of this new universe, and what the end product says about the people who made it. It's undeniable that no company has ever tried something this ambitious before, and this collection is a fascinating study of the ramifications of almost literal world building.

HARRY POTTER AND CONVERGENCE CULTURE — edited by **Amanda Firestone and Leisa A Clark** (978-1-4766-7207-6/978-1-4766-3253-7 **McFarland Press \$39.95**) — Speaking of multi-media empires, the Harry Potter franchise has truly taken a life of its own, almost exclusively thanks to its fans. Despite the massive reach of this series, its creator has only written nine books, one film, and contributed to the creation of a play. Every other aspect has been fueled by fan demand. This essay collection explores all the ways the

world of Harry Potter has been expanded upon in the internet age, and how this franchise might have been the first to be fully embraced in this fashion. An interesting look at "Millennial" culture, and an enjoyable case study of the powers of the Internet.

BASEBALL GREATNESS — by **David Kaiser** (978-1-4766-6383-8/978-1-4766-2862-2 **McFarland Press \$35.00**) — A must read for all baseball fanatics, the author uses the Wins Above Average metric to not only breakdown the winning teams of each year, through 2017, but to also show just exactly why those teams won so handily, pointing to who really were those teams MVPs. The only issue the book has is the slightly alienating effect of its own technical prowess. While it's true that the author does their best to make the book ap-

proachable, it is still undeniable that the information may be too tied up in the science of baseball to be of interest to anyone other than its own die-hard niche. Quite possibly the most in depth discussion of baseball success that one could have, and a must have for fantasy baseball players.

JACK LORD: AN ACTING LIFE — by **Sylvia D Lynch** (978-1-4766-6627-3/978-1-4766-3175-2 **McFarland Press \$39.95**) — Though a name that may escape the purview of modern TV fans, Jack Lord made his name during the '70s as the driving force behind seminal cop drama Hawaii 5-O. That being said, as he was a prolific character actor, it makes sense to know that he had a notable life prior to his television heyday. An interesting case study of an actor who, though he never made an indelible mark on the Hollywood scene, continually produced material of solid caliber to earn respect. Recommended for those interested in '70s pop culture, or those interested in the groundwork to the popular procedural drama genre.

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A Reference Book You May Have Missed

by **Marjorie Hlava** (President, Access Innovations, Inc.) <margie_hlava@accessinn.com>

***Chinese Medicinal Plants, Herbal Drugs and Substitutes: An Identification Guide* by Christine Leon and Lin Yu-Lin. Publisher: Kew.**

Place of publication: Richmond, Surrey, UK. Hardback, English.
ISBN: 9781842463871. UPC: 9781842463871. EAN: 9781842463871.

It's the organization of the book that sets this reference, *Chinese Medicinal Plants, Herbal Drugs and Substitutes: An Identification Guide*, apart from all the others. The listings include a wealth of well-done photographs of the plant in all its forms: living leaves, flower, fruit, as well as dried in crude form, decocted, carbonized and sometimes ground. Identifying the native habitat where the plant is found, the morphology, methods for decocting the pieces, harvesting, how to process, which parts to use (and not use), the common and botanical names including a full synonymy (botanical names change with amazing rapidity). Plant descriptions provide both a botanical and a layman's plant description. There is also a handy conservation status of the plant in China and globally. It is an indispensable guide for anyone working with traditional or herbal remedies. The items covered in the book are recognized in the **Chinese Pharmacopoeia (CP)** and western medical associations. It is the first botanically authoritative as well as

practical identification guide for traditional Chinese medicine. It is easy to read and beautifully illustrated.

The book is organized into major sections depending on the plant part most used: underground (rhizomes, roots, tubers and bulbs) above ground (aerial parts and whole plants), stems and woods, barks, leaves, flowers and their parts, fruits, seeds and other fruit parts. Each section is color coded at the page edge and then alphabetic order by their Pin Yin names as used in the CP2015. In addition there are three layout types for the pages:

Layout A — Single species which are not widely used outside of China,

Layout B — Comparative text for a pharmacopoeia drug obtained from more than one species not widely used outside of China, and

Layout C — A pharmacopoeia drug obtained from more than one species traded internationally.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the book is that it gives the official and unofficial substitutes.

This is a safety feature that most libraries will want to have available to their patrons. Use of potent "natural medicines" has high risk due to the similarities of the plants, especially when they are dried. Many of these plants are easily confused or adulterated with other plants making them unsafe or ineffective. There are many substitutions made and the user must be alert to which are effective versus those which are placebos or, worse, dangerous to the point of poisons.

There is extensive front matter and a very extensive 30 page index in this 806 page tome. The authors, **Christine Leon** and **Lin Yu-Lin**, spent 15 years collecting, assembling, testing, and checking the information contained in the reference. The work is the result of a joint project of the **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**, and the **Institute of Medicinal Plant Development at the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences**. The taxonomy and scientific nomenclature reflects current opinions by aligning with **Kew's Medical Plant Name System (MPNS)** portal which allows a cross walk from The Chinese Medical sources to Western Medicine. A significant bonus for the researcher and layman alike. 🌿

About the Book's Authors

Christine Leon is a medical botanist specializing in Chinese medicine. She has worked at the **Kew Royal Botanic Gardens** since 1997 where she helped establish the **Chinese Medicinal Plants Authentication Centre** at Kew, in partnership with the **Institute of Medicinal Plant Development** in Beijing, China.

Lin Yu-Lin is a Professor at the **Institute of Medicinal Plant Development, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences** and **Peking Union Medical College** known as the leading authority on Chinese medical plants and their *materia medica*.

Marjorie Hlava is the President of Access Innovations, Inc. where she is known for her work applying taxonomies and other controlled vocabularies to digital collections. She has a degree in Botany as her first love and continues to read widely on the subject.

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IMPACT LEARNING — by **Clarence Maybee** (978-0-0810-2103-3/978-0-0810-2077-7 **Chandos Publishing \$80.95**) — An amazing guide to breaking down the steps to getting the most out of teaching higher education students, incorporating the best of Purdue's university library system. This collection breaks down not just methods to reach out to the student population, but also to staff. A very useful read for those who are having issues with their outreach programs, or need more talking points for why there are so many nuances to working in the library, something many a librarian has

had to deal with. Basically, it serves as the best teaching guide to the process for using the IMPACT system, recommended for the librarian and the patron.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR INFORMATIONISTS — by **Antonio P DeRosa**

(978-0-0810-2016-6/978-0-0810-2017-3 **Chandos Publishing \$79.95**) — The very concept of information is something that many take for granted, and why wouldn't they? It is so easy to go out and find whatever information you are looking for in this age of instant gratification. However, one might fail to consider that someone has to put that information there before you can access it; this can become especially problematic for those in the medical field.

This guide offers a two prong method for moving forward in the information field with medical professionals, not only offering methods to get your information to the public but also pointers on the best way to convey this, so that your readers will easily understand it. A useful thing to read for those both in the information management field and the medical field. 🌿