Maureen Creamer, Publicity and Advertising Manager, at Texas A&M University Press, provided this interesting column. The list of the press’ best kept secrets is headed by Dan Stuart’s Fistic Carnival the highly unusual story of how governments and religious leaders of a century ago tried to stop the popular sport of boxing. Another “secret” is a memoir by the first African American woman commissioned as an officer in the U.S. armed forces, and the last book is a Q&A guide to safe drinking water written by a member of the National Academy of Engineering.

Books dealing with Texas and the Southwest, women’s studies and military history illustrate the strengths of the A&M Press and are reflected in this list of bestsellers. The granddaddy of bestsellers, in terms of numbers sold, is really the Landscapes of Texas: Photographs from Texas Highways Magazine, first published nearly 20 years ago; second runner up is Women in the Field: America’s Pioneering Women Naturalists which Maureen chose to list.

Texas A&M University Press
Best Kept Secrets


“At the turn of the century, boxing was illegal in most states ... Fights were mostly held on the sly, but word of mouth made fighters into nationwide heroes even as preachers denounced the game from their pulpits. In 1895, Dan Stuart, a shrewd gambling man from Dallas, had the idea of staging a world championship boxing match. In an entertaining and lively style, Miletich examines the madcap story of the early impossible days of boxing promotion ... This is the story of Stuart’s fight in the political ring against a wall of interference from politicians and evangelists all over the Southwest. Stuart’s eventual success ... changed federal and state laws. Miletich brings together a wealth of material about popular culture and sports in the days of the expanding Western frontier. A work of serious research, this is an engaging story of the infancy of a sport that from the start was one of devoted fans, horrified critics, and self-interested promoters.” — Publishers Weekly, November 28, 1994

“... terrific reading ... The El Paso writer Leo Miletich has uncovered a tragicomic story of frontier politics, business, and American sport, and he tells it with appropriate exuberance.” — American Heritage, Editor’s Choice, February/March 1995

“One way the reality described by Miletich is a wilder west than that portrayed in Hollywood ‘Oaters’ ... For students of American culture Dan Stuart’s Fistic Carnival is a must read.” — Canadian Journal of History of Sport, 12/95

Texas A&M University Press
Bestsellers


American Women Afield, Writings by Pioneering Women Naturalists by Marcia Myers Bonta. ISBN 0-89096-633-8 cloth $35.00. ISBN 0-89096-634-6 paper $15.95. LC 94-3664. 6x9. 272 pp. 25 b&w photos. Bib. “... excerpts from the writings of 25 women field naturalists of the 19th and 20th centuries that emphasize how and why they did their fieldwork, their concern for conservation issues long before such issues became popular, and their ability to write entertainingly about their work and their love of nature... This book will appeal to natural scientists and backyard observers of nature as well as to all who enjoy the company of these courageous feminists.” — Library Journal, March 15, 1995


Birds of Texas, A Field Guide by John H. Rappole and Gene W. Blacklock. ISBN 0-89096-544-7 cloth $34.95. ISBN 0-89096-545-5 paper $15.95. LC 92-8488. 6x9. 372 pp. 592 color photos. 10 line drawings. 619 maps. Bib. Index. “Most of the 619 birds treated ... are not restricted to Texas, though its Coastal Bend region claims some unique species ... A superior effort in every respect.” — Booklist

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