From the Reference Desk

Thomas Gilson

College of Charleston, gilsont@cofc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation

Gilson, Thomas (2008) "From the Reference Desk," Against the Grain: Vol. 20: Iss. 6, Article 23.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2618

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
Conclusions
Implementation at GTC was very successful and the library is very proud to be the first participant from the United States in the reSearcher community. As one who was directly involved in all phases of its implementation, I can attest to not only the quality of this product, but to also the high level of professional service and assistance from the developers at Simon Fraser University. reSearcher is slowly starting to garner attention from the open source library software community and some academic libraries in the United States are deciding to implement this product. For example, the Baker University Library, in Baldwin City, Kansas is using GODOT and CUFTS A-Z. Lee College in Baytown, Texas is in the process of implementing reSearcher. In late 2007, I presented reSearcher to librarians at the College of St. Mary in Omaha, Nebraska and there are plans for implementation in late 2008. As reSearcher emerges as part of the discussion regarding electronic resource management software, it will be interesting to see its overall impact on the development of subsequent open source library applications and commercial products.

References


cities, climate, and physical dimensions like ocean depths and the heights of mountains. There is also an updated gazetteer of nations offering brief descriptions of the geography, politics and economy of individual countries. Another added value feature is the *Atlas’ 48-page introduction to World Geography* including discussions of the solar system, the earth’s geology and landforms, the oceans and atmosphere, climate change, biodiversity, and population growth and migration. In addition, this introduction covers more specific concerns including health conditions, food production, energy and mineral wealth, employment and industry, trade and industry, urban centers and worldwide standards of living. Overall, this section is not only informative and fascinating. It is also enhanced with numerous photos, graphs, tables, and maps.

However, any atlas worthy of the name needs its mapping to be visually compelling. And even in our world of high definition TV, the photographs and satellite images in this volume prove themselves visually captivating while the maps are striking with crisp detail and vivid use of color. The major map section of the *Atlas* is divided into physical and political plates of the world followed by maps of the oceans and the Atlantic islands and island chains. These in turn are followed by plates of the continents further divided by maps of individual countries and regions including a section devoted to Australia and Oceania (including the Pacific and its islands). Providing access to specific locations there is an index that includes 84,000 entries with their relevant pages and letter-number grid designations as well as latitude and longitude coordinates. The *Atlas’* city map section has been revised to include some 69 cities and offers both a map of the surrounding city and one of the city center.

The only downside to this atlas is that the size of the images and maps do not lend themselves to easy copying or scanning. However in the overall scheme of things, this is a minor issue. In every other respect, the *Oxford Atlas of the World* is an investment that most libraries will find more than worthwhile. It is reasonably priced and continues the tradition of top-notch quality that users have come to expect from this publication.

Public librarians in particular will be delighted with the publication of two recently updated fascinating and fun encyclopedias. The 2nd edition of the *Encyclopedia of Superheroes on Film and Television* (2008, 9780786437559, $75) written by John Kenneth Muir and published by McFarland is a work that will appeal to both enthusiasts of the superhero genre as well as serious students of popular culture. It is full of interesting facts and offbeat trivia about old standbys like Captain Marvel and Wonder Woman along with coverage of recent superheroes like Hellboy and Painkiller Jane. Each entry is introduced by an essay covering the origins and history of the superhero and a broad discussion of their various film and TV incarnations. This is followed by coverage of the individual films and shows including reviews, list of cast members and the producers, directors and editors. In the cases of the TV shows episode by episode titles, synopses, airdates, and guest casts are provided. With the ever popular nature of this topic, the *Encyclopedia of Superheroes on Film and Television* is another one of those titles that many libraries will need a second copy. Librarians will want access for reference purposes and fans will want one to checkout.

The same can be said for *Fact on Files Encyclopedia of Animated Cartoons* (2009, 970816065998, $85). Written by Jeff Lemburg and now in its third edition, this reference traces more that 100 years of animated cartoon history with both seriousness and affection. From KoKo the Clown to Betty Boop and Popeye and including South Park, the Simpsons and Sponge Bob Squarepants, the coverage is thorough and comprehensive with more than 3,100 entries. Author

continued on page 58
Column Editor’s Note: In this issue, I am pleased to offer insights from two new reviewers: Katherine Head and Amber Malcolm. Both of ATG’s newest reviewers are graduate students at the School of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina. They present thoughtful reviews on books that are sure to peak your patrons’ (and perhaps even your own!) interest. Katherine examines Melody Peterson’s Our Daily Meds. She has learned about the pharmaceutical and medical industries through her own searching and with the guidance of a husband in a health profession, though she freely acknowledges her generalist status. Amber, a Disney enthusiast, hopes to one day work in the Big Apple at the Museum of Natural History or the New York Public Library. A hearty welcome to these budding information specialists, and happy reading, everyone! — DV


Reviewed by Amber Malcolm (Graduate Student, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina)

Gabler, Neal’s biography of Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination provides an intensive look into one of the world’s most well known names. Beginning with a comprehensive look at Walt Disney’s family roots, Gabler takes the reader through Disney’s life in an attempt to explain the motivations and reasoning behind the man who became an American legend. Gabler divides the biography into eleven chapters — each chapter discussing a specific period in Disney’s life. To set the tone and pace of each chapter, Gabler uses descriptive words and phrases for the titles. He then stays true to the titles in such a way that the reader is drawn completely into an unknown side and world of Walt Disney. Starting with the first chapter, “Escape,” Gabler pinpoints the fact that Walt was always looking for an “Escape” and that this was his main motivation throughout his life. Gabler details the Disney family legacy, which allows the reader to see a family that was constantly searching for something better, a way to “Escape” the realities of the world. “Escape” dives head first into chapter two, “Go-Getter,” in which Gabler plunges the reader into Walt’s mindset as he realizes his destiny lies with animation. Gabler captures the sense of urgency and motivation with which Disney threw himself into being the best animator possible while maintaining his underlying goal of creating a way to “Escape” from reality. When Walt does not get the results he hoped from the small city, he uproots to Hollywood, which becomes a “Wonderland,” the title of the third chapter, for all of his dreams. What starts out as an “Escape” and “Wonderland” soon leads to a sour turn of events — Walt’s company, The Disney Brothers, lost several of their animators in a production company dispute and are forced to start over.

Gabler transitions into “The Mouse,” the fourth chapter, named due to Walt’s most famous character, created not from ingenuity, but out of necessity. Mickey Mouse starred

Another popular and useful new edition from Grey House is the fifteenth edition of the Complete Learning Disabilities Directory (2008, 978-1-59237-3680, $145). This resource affords a comprehensive and compact guide to a wealth of helpful information, not only for those who are learning disabled, but also to their families and the professionals that serve them. The nearly 5,000 entries in this work offer detailed information about associations and government agencies, camps and summer programs, conferences and workshops, resources for literacy and learning skills, exchange programs, professional periodicals and texts, testing resources, and schools and colleges. It also contains sections that offer guidance on computer resources as well as other media ranging from books to pamphlets to videos and Websites. Each entry provides the essential information to access, contact or purchase the resources covered. As a value added resource, the National Center for Learning Disabilities’ advocacy brief Understanding the Standards-based Individualized Education Programs is provided. This brief explains the Standards based IEP which is being adopted by school districts across the country. Academic libraries supporting special education programs as well as public libraries where there is interest will find this a valuable guide for students, professionals and the general reader.

Libraries that have found the various Grey House Publishing directories and statistical handbooks valuable will be glad that a number of new 2008 and 2009 editions are now available.

One of the more popular, America’s Top Rated Cities: a Statistical Handbook (2008, 9781592373499, $225) is now in its fifteenth edition. Divided into four volumes by region; Southern, Western, Central and Eastern, this set continues to provide background, rankings and numerous statistical tables drawn from a variety of sources on the top 100 cities in America. Sixteen new cities have made the most recent list and of course 16 have been removed. Statistics and ratings related to education, employment, income, government expenditures, real estate, transportation, and business are all included. Smartly compiled with an assortment of useful information, libraries that have purchased earlier editions will want to continue that tradition.

A new edition of the companion set to this work. America’s Top Rated Smaller Cities: a Statistical Handbook 2008/2009 (978-1-59237-284-3, $195) is also available from Grey House. This is the seventh edition of this work and it consists of two volumes arranged alphabetically by state and covering 111 smaller cities ranging from Dublin, OH to Rio Rancho, NM and from Folsom, CA to Franklin, TN. The contents are similar to the larger four-volume set with background, ratings and numerous statistical tables being provided for each city. Both these sources provide useful and fascinating information for those researching their home town or contemplating a move to a new locale.

Lenburg organizes his book starting with a “nutshell” history of animated cartoons and then proceeds with major sections on silent cartoon series, theatrical sound cartoons, full-length animated features, animated television specials, and TV cartoon series. Each entry provides historical background information, voice credits (except for the silent productions), the year produced, and complete filmographies when appropriate. Lenburg follows these sections on the specific cartoons and cartoon series with ones on awards and honors and a chronology entitled milestones of animation. He ends the book with a selected bibliography and a general index. There are black and white images throughout the volume but the section of color plates in the middle is interesting and fun to browse with images ranging from the Chipmunks to Bevis and Butthead, Doonesbury to Davey and Goliath, and Felix the Cat to Shrek. The Encyclopedia of Animated Cartoons is another one of those reference handbooks valuable will be glad that a number of new 2008 and 2009 editions are now available.