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Book Reviews-Monograph Musings and Children's Critical Corner

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documents, a chronology and an index end the book. The entries are short, clearly written and factual. However, the author does not shrink from dealing with touchy issues like the role of the Vatican or the depth of Hitler’s involvement in the “final solution.” Overall, Adolf Hitler: A Biographical Companion is an orderly and succinct work that provides easy access to a good deal of useful information.

But why a biographical reference about Adolf Hitler? There is already a cottage industry consisting of works about Hitler and Nazi Germany. Do we really need one more? Well, as the author rightly states, Hitler “created a moral trauma that will never and should never be surmounted. The nature of his barbarity … the forces that made him possible, are still matters calling urgently for assessment and judgement.” With his book, David Nicholls provides a legitimate starting point for more thorough analysis. Given its format and ease of use, students and lay readers will find it equally compelling. It merits consideration for public, high school and undergraduate collections.

Another worthy second edition is Garland's Encyclopedia of Human Evolution and Prehistory (2000, 0815316968, $175) edited by Eric Delson et al. Updating the 1988 edition, this new version maintains the same quality and expands coverage to an additional 200 topic headings in over 135 new pages of text. Even re-visited entries have updated bibliographies and “see also” references. Coverage is thorough and comprehensive including articles on topics ranging from general evolutionary concepts to specifics like time intervals, tools, dating methods, localities and sites, biographical entries, archaeological industries and taxonomy. The second edition also has a number of new illustrations and photos, as well as a general index, a feature lacking in the first edition. The only factor in the minus column is the binding. It is a step down, being paper rather than buckram. However, I have one suggested improvement. Given the number of specialized terms used throughout the text, this book could benefit from a glossary.

But these are minor reservations. The Encyclopedia of Human Evolution and Prehistory deserves serious consideration. It is a top-notch background source for students, professionals and the informed general reader. More substantial than the Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution (1993, 0521323703, $100) and with a more useful alphabetical arrangement, this reference will be of particular interest to academic and larger public libraries.

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**Book Reviews**

**Monograph Musings and Children’s Critical Corner**

Column Editor: Deborah Vaughn (College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

Number one on my list of millennium resolutions: read more books. With a new house and five pets, I often find it hard to read amidst the walls in need of painting, the cats in need of feeding, and the dog in need of walking. This year, however, I have vowed to make time to peruse more monographic publications. Just in case increased reading is also on your list of millennium resolutions, I offer you a plethora of thumbnail reviews to whet your literary appetite.

In this issue, newcomer Kathy Sterounis examines Online Competitive Intelligence. Kathy received bachelor’s degrees in both History and English from the University of Tennessee in 1994. In 1997, I had the pleasure of being her friend and classmate at the University of South Carolina College of Library and Information Science. Focusing on special and business libraries, Kathy created an internship at the Disney World Library. After earning her MLIS in 1999, Kathy remained in Florida where she is currently a Technical Services and Reference librarian at Warner Southern Christian College in Lake Wales.

Something new for the New Year: reviews of children’s books and young adult literature. Jennie Vaughn joins me in examining a handful of tomes for these delightful audiences.

I welcome suggestions for book reviews from authors, publishers, and readers. I am also forever seeking individuals who would like to become ATG reviewers. Please do not hesitate to drop me an email message. Happy Millennium and Happy Reading!

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Reviewed by Kathy Sterounis

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Want to know the wave of the future for corporations in the way of gathering information on the competition? It should come as no surprise that the latest and some of the most accurate company information can be found by using online sources. And why not?

For years we have used the world wide Web to find information, and now Helen Burwell’s *Online Competitive Intelligence* tells us how to find corporate information on the Internet.

Competitive intelligence (or CI, to which continued on page 69

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Bernan also produces original reference works, including collections of hard-to-find government statistics and analysis that are not available in print from any other source. As an additional service to customers, Bernan now issues print versions of selected U.S. government publications that are otherwise primarily made available by the issuing agencies only in electronic form.

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It is often referred to as the "use of publicly available information on competition and competitors to help your company gain an advantage, through strategic decision-making in a line of business in which it competes."

It seems nowadays that this technique of information acquisitions can be helpful not only for large corporations, but also for small or one-office operations. Knowing what information is "out there" in the business world gives companies a spirited edge. The everknowledgeable Burwell has included all the necessary routes to take in order to achieve that spirit.

One of the top professionals in the field of CI and president of Burwell Enterprises, Inc., Burwell knows the "ins and outs" of information consulting. She has helped revolutionize this practice since its inception and has made it her top priority to keep those in the field informed with *The Burwell Directory* (now in its 14th edition). The Burwell Enterprises Web site (www.burwellinc.com) also provides valuable business research.

As can be seen from her background, Burwell knows CI and has written a source to introduce all researchers to the wonderful online tools that have proven helpful to her and her company. *Online Competitive Intelligence* is broken up into sections. Geared towards the beginner up to the advanced, the book explains the importance of online resources—from the obvious, big names (such as Dow Jones and LexisNexis) to the small online journals and local newspapers (which also hold important tidbits of CI information). The strategies for CI information gathering are mapped out in great detail, and searching shortcuts are offered to make research cost-effective as well as accurate.

The old saying "knowledge is power" describes what is possible with the information we acquire and use in the Information Age. However, concerning competitive intelligence, this reader believes a more appropriate saying is "information retrieval is power." The online world, according to *Online Competitive Intelligence*, can be a mighty tool for achieving that power.

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Reviewed by Jennie Vaughn
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It isn't particularly reader-friendly. The photographs are a little fuzzy. The writing is stiff, and so densely filled with facts that it doesn't flow very well. But folks who want to know about a group of vaudeville performers called H.M. Barnes' Blue Ridge Ramblers or an old-time string band named The Konnarock Critters probably aren't looking for graceful prose. They're looking for names, dates, facts, and discography. And they'll find that information in spades in Marty McGee's latest book, a comprehensive anthology of seemingly every traditional musician (read: Doc Watson and others of his ilk) that ever set foot in the Central Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina and Virginia. *Traditional Musicians* contains detailed biographies of nearly 100 artists and bands, sprinkled with a few fascinating tidbits. For example, we learn that Thomas Norman of The Shady Mountain Ramblers is left-handed and thus plays his banjo upside down and backwards, with his forefinger playing what would normally be the drop-thumb notes of a right-handed player, and that Dock Walsh achieved his unique "Hawaiian" or "bottleneck" banjo sound by placing pennies under the bridge and using a knife for fretting.

Unfortunately, most of the writing isn't nearly this interesting, and consists largely of birth and marriage dates, lists of which musician influenced which other musician, and other facts that will quickly overwhelm and/or bore the lay reader. This is unfortunate, but it isn't surprising. McGee writes from the perspective of both a traditional music scholar and a lifelong devotee. He is entrenched in this stuff.
and expects us to be, too. For the readers who are approaching the subject cold, he provides a five-page introduction which briefly outlines the history and trends of the genre from 1916 to the present. While informative, this simply isn’t enough for anyone but the serious music buff. In short, McGee tells us every detail of every tree but fails to back up and introduce us to the forest.

Nonetheless, McGee’s work is important because of its specialized subject matter. Traditional music has shaped not just Appalachia but all of America, and it’s a pity that it hasn’t received even a fraction of the press of, say, rock ’n’ roll or rap. That McGee is beginning to address this dearth of literature is admirable indeed.


and


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I remember being told in library school that printed Internet guides are seldom helpful. The fickle nature of cyberspace almost always insures that the information in these guides is obsolete by the time of publication. As I began to review this pair of books, however, I was proved wrong. *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching on the Internet* and *Multicultural Resources of the Internet: The United States and Canada* are two exceptional Internet resource guides that break the mold. These tomes go beyond mere “weblogographies” by offering useful tips and by attempting to give readers a lesson in searching in general, be it on the virtual library we know as the Internet or in an actual library building.

*Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching on the Internet*, by Charles C. Sharpe, takes the sometimes confusing and always arduous process of legal research and makes it understandable and less laborious. In his preface, Sharpe states, “What formerly required costly and time-consuming trips to a Patent and Trademark Depository Library can now be easily accomplished in one’s home or office using a PC—if the searcher knows how and where to look.” Sharpe homes in on a weighty issue: “going online” has become a convenience, but it has also brought with it a voluminous responsibility. It is not enough to know how to dial into an Internet Service Provider; one must also be able to search effectively and evaluate one’s findings. *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching* aids readers in their responsibility. This book is an exceptional resource for three main reasons: the chapters are extraordinarily informative because of Sharpe’s direct style of writing and his explanation of the research process; the appendices contain educative examples of patents, patent forms, and copyright form letters; and practice search exercises are included to help the reader get into the routine of searching.

It would have been enough for Sharpe, a litigation consultant, to simply list government Web sites that pertain to patent, trademark, and copyright needs—but he went much further. Divided into four parts, *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching* addresses the finest particulars of this branch of legal research. In-depth examinations are made about patent and trademark searching in general—not only about searching on the Internet. Sharpe examines such issues as whether or not one needs to hire a patent lawyer, when one should give in the towel and trek to a Patent Depository Library, and even gives the invaluable insight to bring a few rolls of dimes for the photocopy machine. This kind of attention to detail makes *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching* a must-have for anyone who is doing such search-

*Multicultural Resources on the Internet: The United States and Canada*, by Vicki Gregory, Marilyn H. Karrenbrock Stauffer, and Thomas W. Keene, Jr., is another gem of an Internet guide. Like Sharpe, Gregory, Stauffer, and Keene go past simply listing Web sites that deliver information on various cultural and ethnic groups; they first give their readers lessons in Internet mortality and basic Web searching tricks.

In their introduction, Gregory, Stauffer, and Keene own up to the Web’s “essentially ephemeral nature” and make no apologies for the risk that they took when they decided to publish a book that deals with Internet resources. They openly admit that the sites contained in their guide might not exist in a few years. Moreover, they give the readers tips on how to find other sites and how to review search engines. The authors also state that readers “still have to evaluate (and explore) for [themselves] the different sites” that search tools present. Gregory and her crew remind their readers of the responsibilities that lie on their searching shoulders.

Following the introduction, *Multicultural Resources*’ thirteen other chapters cover comprehensive multicultural sites: Native American, African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Chinese American, Japanese American, Asian Indian American, Jewish American, Middle Eastern and North African, French Canadian, Cajun and Creole, and Hawaiian American Web resources. All of these chapters are organized directory-style; that is, they are broken down into sub-resources—sites addressing business, fine arts, history, popular culture, and sometimes even food and drink. Each citation is annotated with a brief overview of the site’s contents.

Because of the richness of content and the expert organization, this Internet guide is ideal for public, school, and especially academic libraries. Any college or university with cultural or ethnic programs of study can enrich their resource collections simply by utilizing the information found in the Web sites offered in *Multicultural Resources*. Our library offers Research Guides for each major and minor at the College of Charleston—I jumped on the chance to use several of the Internet sites listed in this book to enhance these guides.

Perhaps most printed Internet resource handbooks do not contain up-to-date information. Likewise, perhaps the information in *Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Searching* and *Multicultural Resources* will be obsolete by the time this review is published. Because of the research process tips, practice exercises, and searching hints, these books will still contain valid information in one, two, or even five years. In terms of research strategy and evaluation, Sharpe and Gregory, Stauffer, and Keene have written books that will withstand the test of the Internet’s flying time.


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Lazlo S. Gasy is the brand new kid at Brookhaven School. He doesn’t fit in. We don’t know where he is from or why he speaks in a funny accent. All we know is that he is different and strange and weird.

I have always admired Katie Couric. As a journalist, she never fails to get to the heart of an issue. As an anchorwoman, she is kind and compassionate without sacrificing information. As a widow and a mother, she is graceful, dignified, and all-around beautiful. Now, as a writer, she touches on ideas that all children should learn: thoughtfulness, kindness, acceptance, and standing up for what you believe in.

In her book *The Brand New Kid*, Couric introduces Lazlo to readers as he is introduced to Miss Kincalid’s second-grade class. Immediately, Lazlo’s classmates shun and ostracize him until he “kept his continued on page 71
New, Completely Revised Sixteenth Edition
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In case you’re wondering, yes, it’s that Jamie Lee Curtis. And believe it or not, she writes pretty OK books for kids. Her latest, Where Do Balloons Go? An Uplifting Mystery, is a whimsical rhyme that works fairly well, though at times it descends to ridiculousness. But perhaps the best part of this book is its illustrations, a series of bright watercolors with some subtle humor that will go right over kids’ heads but will have parents chuckling, even occasionally laughing out loud. “Where do balloons go when you let them fly free?” the story begins. “It can happen by accident. It happened to me.” The words are matter-of-fact enough; meanwhile, the illustration shows a young boy reporting his missing balloon as though it were a missing person; a TV reporter asks for comments. Dorky, perhaps, but kind of funny, too.

More questions follow about these wayward balloons. Do they float to the countryside? Don’t they get bored? What do they do all day? “Do they tango with airplanes or cha-cha with birds?” Can plain balloons read balloons printed with words?” Later, our narrator’s imagination travels even further. “Do some go so far that they end up in space? Do they challenge the rockets to float them a race?” The illustrations here are especially clever, including a tube of sunscreen marked, “Beyond Ozone: 1 Billion+ SPF.” Toward the end of this reverie, the mood becomes more reflective. One especially deep line: “Does it float there free remembering me? And know that I’m happy continued on page 72

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and


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Just in time for the gift-giving season comes a delightful new book from the folks who brought us *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie, If You Give a Pig a Pancake,* and more. *If You Take a Mouse to the Movies* is whimsical, endearing — and it has a fun Christmas twist. “If you take a mouse to the movies,” it begins, “he’ll ask you for some popcorn. When you give him the popcorn, he’ll want to string it all together.” Soon our diminutive protagonist wants a Christmas tree on which to hang his popcorn strings. He’ll build a snowman, then a snow fort, and he’ll insist on a snowball fight. Then he’ll get cold; he’ll want to come inside and listen to Christmas carols. He’ll make ornaments for the tree — he’ll need glue, and lots of glitter — and then decorate it. When he steps back to examine his work, he'll remember that he forgot the popcorn strings. He'll want some popcorn — and chances are, he'll want to go to the movies.

For readers of this delightful series of books, the formula here is nothing new. But if it ain’t broke, why fix it? The “circular” plot is fun and inventive, the text is simple and memorable, and the illustrations are nothing short of adorable. This book is a winner. And if this review isn’t convincing enough, consider this: in the spirit of the season, the publishers have dedicated a portion of the book's profits to First Book, a national non-profit organization that promotes children’s literacy.

On a more serious — but equally heartwarming — note is *The Christmas Menorahs: How a Town Fought Hate.* Based on a true story, this book recounts how a small town fights back against hate crimes. The year is 1993 and the place is Billings, Montana. It’s the third day of Hanukkah and almost every window in the Schnitzer house is lit with a menorah. Young Isaac is doing his math homework when a rock crashes through his bedroom window. When the police chief arrives, he tells Isaac’s parents that the incident was a hate crime — that they were targeted because they were Jewish. He encourages them to put up their menorahs. But Isaac’s parents aren’t about to let fear and hatred triumph. She calls the TV station and tells them what’s happening. The newspaper runs a story. A special town meeting is called. “The Schnitzers have been urged to take down their menorahs so they won’t be a target,” a community leader says. “What if the rest of us were told to take down our Christmas trees and lights because people might throw rocks at us for being Christians? I say, let’s take a stand. Let’s all put up menorahs.”

What happens next is truly inspiring. After the meeting, churches of every denomination distribute pictures of menorahs for people to tape to their windows. The local newspaper prints a full-page picture of a menorah and asked the townpeople to display it on their windows. Thousands do — and soon not a street in Billings is without a menorah. For a while the window smashing continues. But soon it slows to a trickle — and then stops all together.

This simple story is a beautiful illustration of hope and goodness. It teaches that bigotry and hatred, no matter how powerful, can be beaten if people join together and fight for what’s right. It’s a wonderful story for the new millennium.