FEATURED TITLES

OCTOBER 2013

The Man Who Saved the Union: Ulysses Grant in War and Peace
By: Brands, H.W.
E 672 .B8 2012

Review from: Library Journal July 1, 2012
Ulysses S. Grant, Civil War general and two-term president, has been the subject of much historical scholarship, with historians often awarding Grant higher praise for his military than his political career. In this extremely sympathetic portrait, Pulitzer finalist Brands... treats Grant's entire life, showing its full arc. He breaks with earlier interpretations to give Grant good marks for his presidential leadership, concluding that Grant did the best he could in trying circumstances, particularly in the area of civil and minority rights.

Killing Kennedy: the End of Camelot
By: O'Reilly, Bill, and Martin Dugard
E 842.9 .O74 2012

Review from: Publisher's Weekly December 24, 2012
Bill O'Reilly and Dugard deliver a riveting account of the John F. Kennedy assassination that illuminates key moments in the life of the 35th president, as well as the events that led up to his death. Covering everything from Kennedy's experiences during World War II and the schemes of Harvey Lee Oswald to the Cuban Revolution and the alienation of Lyndon B. Johnson by the Kennedy brothers, the author weaves a coherent and intriguing narrative...

The Battle that Forged Modern Baseball: the Federal League Challenge and its Legacy
By: Levitt, Daniel R.
GV 875 .F43 L48 2012

Review from: Publisher's Weekly March 12, 2012
Almost a century has passed since Major League Baseball faced its last serious challenge from an upstart league, but the short-lived Federal League left its mark... Backed by wealthy owners and an aggressive business strategy that included selling public shares in some cities, the organization struggled to gain players and profits. Award-winning writer Leavitt... offers a richly detailed account of how the battle between the leagues played out in the press and in the courts. Not only was the Federal League responsible for introducing the first successful labor union to the game, its failure resulted in the landmark 1922 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that the Sherman Anti-Trust Act did not apply to Major League Baseball... Leavitt's thorough research makes for dense yet rewarding reading.

Behind the Beautiful Forevers
By: Boo, Katherine
HV 4140 .M86 2012

... takes a look at the stark lives of the inhabitants of Annawadi, a slum across from Mumbai's Sahar Airport, to reveal the wrenching inequality and urban poverty still endemic in India's democracy. Using recorded and videotaped conversations, interviews, documents, and the assistance of interlocutors, Boo profiles the lives of some of the slum dwellers from November 2007 to March 2011. There is Abdul, a young adult scavenger with a profitable trade in recyclables. The one-legged Fatima's home is divided from Abdul's by merely a sheet. Readers follow the treacherous paths of these and other lives. A fateful chain of events leads to a criminal case against Abdul and his family. Boo presents glimpses of the corrupt police who feed on those without political power or education...

Marvel Comics: the Untold Story
By: Howe, Sean
PN 6725 .H69 2012

Review from: Booklist October 1, 2012
Howe's in-depth account of Marvel's business history, revered personalities, and pop-culturally ingrained characters boasts exhaustively researched and intricately integrated information... It's Stan Lee and Jack Kirby creating a pantheon of modern American superheroes. It's the rote staff changes and personnel quirks that made Marvel the company it was. It's the siren call of Hollywood cash that made it the company it is today. It's a look at the American comic-book industry as a whole over the last half-century. It's a priceless collection of anecdotes about the artists and writers reflecting and filtering the eras they worked in. The most timely strand threads through issues of creators' rights and intellectual property, an argument that's heating up today's comics climate. Casual fans may find more than they bargained for, but for the Marvel faithful, this is the definitive book on the company responsible for aligning the cosmos in their favorite fictional universe.
Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Hobbit
By: Olsen, Corey
PR 6039 .O32 H635 2012

Review from: Publisher’s Weekly  July 2, 2012
Since 2009, Washington College English professor Olsen’s Web site, The Tolkien Professor, has provided accessible insight into the works of famed academic and fantasist J.R.R. Tolkien. Fans of that site will be pleased to discover Olsen narrowing his focus here to The Hobbit, the children’s book in which the first tentative steps that would eventually lead to Mount Doom itself were taken. Olsen studies Tolkien’s work chapter by chapter, illuminating details of character and plot that might otherwise escape the reader; the various versions of the work in question and the reasons why Tolkien altered his work are likewise examined. A work of love backed up by professional experience, this book is packed with information; the author’s infectious enthusiasm pervades his words, ensuring that what could have been a dry work in other hands will retain even a casual reader’s interest. The result is a text suitable for fans and scholars alike.

Paradox: the Nine Greatest Enigmas in Physics
By: Al-Khalili, Jim
Q 173 .A395 2012

Review from: Publisher’s Weekly  July 2, 2012
Tailor-made for puzzle fans and science aficionados, Al-Khalili’s (Quantum: A Guide for the Perplexed) latest dives into “deep questions about the nature of time and space and the properties of the Universe”—and shows just how tantalizing these problems can be. Al-Khalili, a quantum physicist at the University of Surrey, sets the stage for well-known problems like the “Monty Hall paradox,” in which a contestant’s attempt to guess which of three boxes contains the keys to a Lincoln Continental provides an object lesson in conditional probabilities... Readers who enjoy mental challenges and scientific mysteries will have fun with Al-Khalili’s light-hearted, accessible discussion.

The Stem Cell Dilemma: the Scientific Breakthroughs, Ethical Concerns, Political Tensions, and Hope Surrounding Stem Cell Research
By: Furcht, Leo, and William Hoffman
QH 588 .S83 F87 2011

Review from: Choice  July 1, 2012
Who is going to win the latest scientific race—the US or another country? Should this race be entered at all? Here, Furcht and Hoffman (both, Univ. of Minnesota Medical School) discuss the promise of stem cell research and the controversy surrounding it, updating advances made in the field since the first edition was published in 2008... The potential of stem cells is undeniable. The ability to treat Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, paralysis, and other human conditions motivates scientists to spend entire careers studying them. Furthermore, biotechnology companies invest significant numbers of research dollars in the hopes of profiting from them. However, the politics behind stem cell research in the US can be overwhelming. These politics dictate federal funding, which in turn dictates what types of experiments will be conducted... Overall, the authors present a broad overview of the science, law, and ethics over stem cells...

Full Body Burden: Growing Up in the Nuclear Shadow of Rocky Flats
By: Iversen, Kristen
TD 195 .N85 I84 2013

Review from: Booklist  June 1, 2012
... The Iversens lived near Rocky Flats... a criminally mismanaged federal nuclear-weaponry factory that between 1952 and 1989 manufactured 70,000 plutonium triggers for atomic bombs, each containing enough breathable particles of plutonium to kill every person on earth... Iversen offers, without bombast, meticulously documented accounts of egregious safety violations and unjust legal maneuvering; tales of heroic whistle-blowers, protestors, and the attorney who took the people’s case to court; and her own harrowing personal saga, which reveals how easy it was for the community to remain oblivious to the significance of high cancer rates and deformed animals. News stories come and go. It takes a book of this exceptional caliber to focus our attention and marshal our collective commitment to preventing future nuclear horrors.

Engines of Change: a History of the American Dream in Fifteen Cars
By: Ingrassia, Paul
TL 23 .I54 2013

Review from: Choice  February 1, 2013
Ingrassia... is an excellent choice to take a detailed look at the cultural effects of the automobile in America. He makes this task manageable and interesting by exploring the history of 15 specific automobiles. These are not the 15 best or fastest or most successful cars, but impactful and interesting. They include opposites like the Corvette and the Volkswagen Beetle, and the Chrysler minivan and the Pontiac GTO. In each instance, Ingrassia writes clearly, professionally, and effortlessly, providing facts and anecdotes that are approachable and enjoyable...