The Theoretical Minimum: What You Need to Know to Start Doing Physics
By: Susskind, Leonard and George Hrabovsky (Authors)
QC23.2 .S87 2013

Review from: Choice    July 01, 2013
The Theoretical Minimum rests in what seems to be an otherwise unoccupied shelf in the library of physics; it is difficult to think of another volume quite like it. The book grew out of a noncredit course Susskind taught at Stanford for many years, designed for people with some training in calculus and a strong interest in understanding real theoretical physics, including the mathematics. The authors clearly address this audience in The Theoretical Minimum and accomplish their goal. Along with tutorials in differential and integral calculus, they host a tour through spaces, dynamical laws, Lagrangian formalism, Hamiltonian mechanics, and Poisson brackets, while sustaining a focus on symmetries and conservation laws and providing periodic exercises. Excellent as an introduction to theoretical physics for the educated layperson, the book will also be useful to students and physicists for its elegant summary of the complete structure of classical mechanics.

Frankenstein’s Cat: Cuddling up to Biotech’s Brave New Beasts
By: Anthes, Emily
QH442.6 .A58 2013

Anthes tours the intersection of the animal kingdom and human sciences, showing different examples of how humans are reshaping animal life for good, questionable, and trivial purposes. From reproducing and reprogramming genes to creating animal prosthetics, Anthes reveals the curious ways humans have come to use and support animal lives with little regard for the consequences of their actions. Narrator Hillary Huber turns in a mixed performance. While she can imbue her narration with tone and personality, she also reads with a nasally projection that feels removed. Despite this performance, the combination of narration and content will keep listeners engaged throughout the production.

Five Days at Memorial: Life and Death in a Storm-Ravaged Hospital
By: Fink, Sheri
RA975.D57 F56 2013

Review from: Library Journal    December 06, 2013
Fink’s meticulous and extensive research is apparent in her first book, a detailed description of a large urban hospital in New Orleans in crisis during Hurricane Katrina. Memorial Hospital was seen as a place to shelter from the pending storm, and even had patients transferred there from other facilities. When the woefully unprepared hospital lost power and seemed under siege, the doctors made some difficult and controversial decisions about evacuation and triage, with the most physically able people leaving first. As a result of this policy, a doctor and two nurses were charged with injecting some patients with drugs to hasten their deaths. The first half of the book vividly describes the situation in the hospital and the equally engrossing second half describes the legal cases resulting from the storm’s aftermath, a situation that took years to play out.

Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit
By: Estabrook, Barry
SB349 .E78 2012

In this eye-opening expose, Vermont journalist Estabrook traces the sad, tasteless life of the mass-produced tomato, from its chemical-saturated beginnings in south Florida to far-flung supermarkets. Expanding on his 2010 James Beard Award-winning article in Gourmet magazine, Estabrook first looks at the tomato’s ancestors in Peru, grown naturally in coastal deserts and Andean foothills, with fruit the size of large peas. Crossbreeding produced bigger, juicier varieties, and by the late 19th century, Florida had muscled in on the U.S. market, later benefiting from the embargo on Cuban tomatoes; the Sunshine State now produces one-third of the fresh tomatoes in this country.

Farms with a Future: Creating and Growing a Sustainable Farm Business
By: Thistlethwaite, Rebecca
S441 .T433 2012

In this down-to-earth, business-oriented guide to running a farm, Thistlethwaite gives new and prospective farmers a hard-nosed taste of what it takes to run a sustainable farm and what steps are needed to succeed in this field, drawing on her six years of farming and a yearlong adventure visiting and interviewing small farmers across America. The book covers topics familiar to anyone starting a business-market niches, business plans, financing, accounting, human resources—in the context of farming, as well as farm-specific issues like finding land, choosing equipment, managing soil and water, harvesting, and processing.
Think Like a Programmer: An Introduction to Creative Problem Solving
By: Spraul, V. Anton
QA76.6 .S685 2012

Review from: Choice March 1, 2013
Programming instructor Spraul has based this book on teaching methods employed over his 15-plus-year career. His approach to creative problem solving starts with general techniques using classic puzzles that involve no programming, followed by problem solving with programming examples. These start out fairly simply, using input and output, and become more complex, including arrays, pointers and dynamic memory, classes, recursion, and code reuse. Code examples are in C++ (source code available on Spraul’s website), and basic syntax and semantics of the language are assumed as a prerequisite. However, the problems could be coded in another object-oriented language. The programming-specific chapters start by summarizing the fundamentals needed to solve the types of problems related to that topic.

A History of the World in 100 Objects
By: MacGregor, Neil
GN740 .M16 2011

Review from: Choice June 01, 2012
This remarkable volume could at first glance be seen as an exhibition catalogue with color photos of objects from the British Museum's rich collections, selected and presented by museum director MacGregor. Instead, BBC Radio 4 collaborated on the selection of 100 objects and divided them into 20 sets of 5 for given weekly programs. Almost all the weekday presentations included a comment from selected “experts and commentators,” presumably delivered orally on the radio and quoted in the book format. "Exploring a distant world through things is not only about knowledge but also imagination, and necessarily involves an element of poetic reconstruction”–especially important for radio listeners. One could easily criticize the portrayal as too dominated by objects from rich, powerful men and the presentations as too formulaic…

Wall Street [electronic resource]
By: Geisst, Charles R.
HG4572.G4 2012

Review from: Booklist September 01, 2012
Geisst offers the first history of Wall Street from its beginning as an outdoor market in lower Manhattan to the 2009 recession in this updated edition first published in 1997. He chronicles the major events in finance and government from 1790 to 1840 that provided a foundation for trading techniques and rules, considers the era of the trader-speculator between 1830 and the Civil War and market activity in the late nineteenth century, and addresses the 1929 crash and the regulation that emerged in 1933 with new securities law that began a war against unrestrained bigness in business and finance. He presents the Enron story, explaining that the company was a major source of fees for Wall Street until its 2001 collapse. Concluding with the 2009 great recession, Geisst observes, as the markets meandered during the Great Recession, it became clear that Wall Street had little intention of reforming unless forced to do so by Washington.

Playing for Change: Music and Musicians in the Service of Social Movements
By: Rosenthal, Robert and Richard Flacks (Authors)
ML3916 .R67 2011

Review from: Choice July 1, 2011
Sociologists Rosenthal (Wesleyan Univ.) and Flacks (Univ. of California, Santa Barbara) offer here a complex, theoretical analysis of music and social movements. They focus on the US but include references to music throughout the world. The authors begin by defining social movements and movement songs, popular songs, and folk songs. Drawing on a wide range of historical and sociological studies, they discuss the music industry, performers, song lyrics, musical styles, and audience reactions. In so doing, they say they go “beyond a simple documentation of the frequent link between music and social movements to catalogue and illustrate the many uses of music claimed or suggested by analysts, performers, and movement members…

Solomon Northup [electronic resource]: The Complete Story of the Author of Twelve Years a Slave
By: Fiske, David
E444.N87 F57 2013

Review from: Choice January 01, 2014
A national sensation when it first appeared in 1853, Twelve Years a Slave remained a staple of slave narratives for its intense evocation of slavery from the point of view of a literate, “free” man. Any concerns about its authenticity have long abated, so that the historical illuminations here are primarily to make obscure material generally accessible. The most important of the expansions are, first, the fine-grained offerings on the legalities of Northup's attempts to find satisfaction through the law in prosecuting the conspirators against him and, second, the lingering question of what, exactly, became of Northup after his disappearance in 1857…