New Publications


Armageddon Now: The End of the World A to Z, by Jim and Barbara Willis (450 pages, October 2005), serves as an encyclopedia of eschatological speculation on how the world might end, from the Second Coming and the Rapture to nuclear devastation, a wayward asteroid, or alien invasion. Religious viewpoints aren’t limited to Christianity; the Willises include the beliefs of Hindus, Jews, New Age movements, Buddhists, and indigenous peoples. Other entries cover individuals (Nostradamus, Hal Lindsey), concepts (failed prophecy, eternal life), groups (Millerites, Heaven’s Gate), books (Left Behind, Lord of the Rings), techniques (numerology, Bible code), and mechanisms (polar shift, peak oil, Big Crunch). $52.00. Omnigraphics. ISBN 0-7808-0923-8.

Asbury Park’s Glory Days: The Story of an American Resort, by Helen Chantal-Pike (208 pages, May 2005), recalls the era from the 1890s to the 1960s when Asbury Park, New Jersey, was an extraordinarily popular seaside resort featuring fancy hotels and restaurants, a boardwalk, pony rides, amusement rides, paddle boats, theaters, and bands. The city went into a steep decline starting in the 1970s, and only in the past few years has the downtown begun a tentative cultural and economic revival. This well-illustrated history shows what a vacation mecca Asbury Park was in its heyday. $29.95. Rutgers University. ISBN 0-8135-3547-6.

Choro: A Social History of a Brazilian Popular Music, by Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia (254 pages + CD, November 2005), examines the origins and development of an African-based Brazilian folk genre that influenced Latin jazz as well as the music of Heitor Villa-Lobos. An instrumental form that developed in Rio de Janeiro around 1870, choro features melodic leaps, rapid modulations, and soaring improvisation. Although displaced by samba, modern jazz, and rock in the mid-20th century, choro experienced a revival in the 1970s and a rebound in the 1990s that shows little signs of fading. $55.00. Indiana University. ISBN 0-253-21752-0.

Creating a Comprehensive Information Literacy Plan, by Joanna M. Burkhardt, Mary C. MacDonald, and Andrée J. Rathemacher (174 pages + CD-ROM, November 2005), provides practical advice on planning, writing, implementing, and assessing an information literacy program for an academic library. The CD-ROM allows users to customize their own planning worksheets. $89.95. Neal-Schuman. ISBN 1-55570-533-2.

Rolland Golden: The Journeys of a Southern Artist, by John R. Kemp (208 pages, October 2005), features nearly 200 paintings by Louisiana artist Golden, who describes himself as an “abstract realist, a combination of the in-
tellectualism of abstraction and the emotion-
alism of realism.” Many of his scenes feature
Southern highways and landscapes, cows
and road signs, Civil War battlefields, and
French scenery and still life. Kemp provides
an overview of the artist’s life, style, and jour-
nies that inspired his works. $60.00. Pelican.
ISBN 1-58980-290-X.

The Sea Rover’s Practice: Pirate Tactics and
Techniques, 1630–1730, by Benerson Little
(303 pages, August 2005), surveys the weapons,
ships, and stratagems
used in the golden age of
sea piracy. Quoting
frequently from con-
temporary sources, Lit-
tle describes what life
was like for those who
took to the high seas
in search of plunder,
especially the meth-
ods pirates used to
attack other ships by
surprise. Several appendices offer glossaries of
nautical terms, 17th-century weights and mea-
sures, and an essay on pirate cuisine which
reveals that barbecue originated with the buc-
caneers of Hispaniola. $27.50. Potomac Books.

Spunk and Bite: A Writer’s Guide to Punch-
zier, More Engaging Language and Style, by
Arthur Plotnik (263 pages, November 2005),
offers a book full of remedies for literary list-
lessness, sprinkled with examples of ringing
prose penned by wordsmiths from Poe to
Proulx. Plotnik rips past the rigid rules of
Strunk and White’s 1959 Elements of Style
and calls on writers to invigorate stodgy
phrasings and pallid diction with freshness,
texture, force, and form. Each chapter con-
tains apt advice on what to avoid (action-
less action, wandering modifiers, exhausted
adverbs) and what to emulate (over-the-top
tropes, killer megaphors, enallage, foreign-
isms, nuanced semicolons, edgy style). An
energetic and entertaining read for cramped
writers. $16.95. Random House. ISBN 0-375-
72115-0.

Three Mile Island: A Nuclear Crisis in Histor-
cal Perspective, by J. Samuel Walker (303
pages, March 2004), reviews the events of
March 28–April 1, 1979, in the light of 24
years of analysis and hindsight. I missed
this when it was first published, but caught
the December 2005 trade paperback edi-
tion. Walker, a historian for the U.S. Nu-
clear Regulatory Commission, recreates the
confusion and uncertainty experienced in
those days before anyone knew that the
event could have been prevented by wa-
ter-level gauges on the reactor vessel as a
check on the faulty pressurizer relief valve
that failed to close. In retrospect, the inci-
dent fell far short of the catastrophe that
occurred seven years later at Chernobyl,
yet it signaled an abrupt decline in the
public perception of the safety of nuclear
power plants. $16.95. University of Califor-