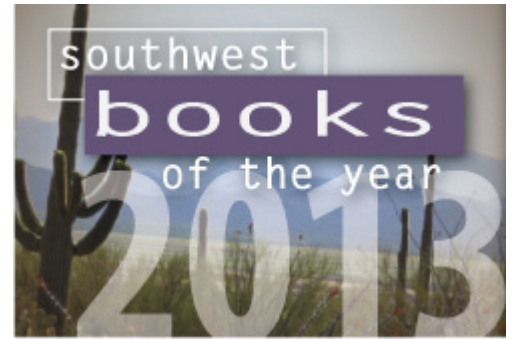


Southwest Books of the Year 2013 Complete List



Southwest Books of the Year is our guide to all the books published during the year, both fiction and nonfiction, with a southwestern setting or subject.

Our panel of subject specialists reviews the books we receive and pick the ones they think are the best. Their choices are published in our annual publication, *Southwest Books of the Year: Best Reading*.

The 2013 panel: Bill Broyles, Ann Dickinson, Bruce Dinges, W. David Laird, Christine Wald-Hopkins, and Helene Woodhams.

49 Trout Streams of Southern Colorado

By W. Chad McPhail, Mark D. Williams. University of New Mexico Press. 111 pp. .

Whether you are a die-hard flycaster or just someone who enjoys walking alongside a frisky stream, this book will send you scurrying for maps of campgrounds in southwest Colorado. The beautiful color photos and brief descriptions of 49 streams make for dreamy reading. Lime, Snow Spur, and Hermosa creeks and even the vaunted Gunnison and Rio Grande rivers are beckoning with Mark Williams and Chad McPhail as your guides. I bought two copies, one for me and one for a fishing buddy. [Bill Broyles]

Ahead of the Flaming Front: A Life on Fire

By Jerry D. Mathes II. Caxton Press. 260 pp. \$17.95.

Authentic wildland firefighter Jerry Mathes takes on the fire line with him and his hotshot crew, and by the end of his fast-paced battles against fire and bad bosses, we admire the men and women on the line. One chapter occurs in the Southwest.

All the Land to Hold Us

By Rick Bass. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. \$25.00.

What possible sustenance can a love sick young geologist, a despairing woman whose marriage withered 30 years earlier, and a one-legged treasure hunter take from the forbidding West Texas desert? It's a place where passions bleed out and dreams come to die, where only the toxic greed for artifacts, salt and oil survive. But, "a strange and powerful landscape summons strange and powerful happenings," according the author, so even though the searing heat can roast an elephant and the quicksand of the deadly drifting salt flats are dotted with the skeletons of luckless adventurers, the possibility of redemption persists at the place where their stories intersect. In this lyrical tour de force, Bass, the winner of multiple awards for both fiction and nonfiction, creates a desert dreamscape somewhere beyond the edge of reason, where the improbable meets the surreal and the surreal bumps up against the truly bizarre, and populates it with characters as vivid as their extraordinary setting is starkly unforgettable. [Helene Woodhams]

American Indian Tribes of the Southwest

By Michael G. Johnson. Osprey Publishing. 48 pp. Index. This book continues Osprey's series of Men-at-Arms titles on the history, costume, and material culture of the native peoples of North America, which is organized into geographical regions, language groups, and tribes. . \$17.95.

If you remember those Cliff Notes study guides from your college days, you might think of this as a slightly expanded version for southwestern native Americans. Some groups (e.g., Cocopa) get as little as a sentence or two, others (e.g., Navajo) more than a full page! Accurate text and illustrations could make this a useful aid in writing high school level research papers. [W. David Laird]

Amphibians and Reptiles of Texas: With Keys, Taxonomic Synopses, Bibliography, and Distribution Maps

By James R. Dixon. Texas A&M University Press. 447 pp. Index. \$39.95.

This revised and updated version of a serious nature guide features identification keys, taxonomy, photos, and distribution maps for scholars and serious collectors. For hikers and campers, there is less information on habitat, life cycle, and habits than one might want. Texas sports an impressive array of frogs, snakes, lizards, turtles, and salamanders – and even the American alligator. [Bill Broyles]

And Hell Followed With Her: Crossing the Dark Side of the American Border

By David Niewert. Nation Books. 336 pp. Index. \$26.99.

In this carefully researched and annotated book, investigative reporter David Niewert focuses on the 2009 Arivaca, AZ murders of Raul "Junior" Flores and his nine-year-old daughter Brisenia to explore the roots and manifestations of the Minuteman movement of the early 2000's. Seeing in it racist, nativist threads leading back to the 1890's Know Nothing party, the Ku Klux Klan, and the John Birch Society, Niewert argues that the movement was an iteration of along-standing (still extant) American bigotry that was able to capitalize on the far-right media. The story he traces of Shawna Ford, the splinter Minuteman group leader who led the deadly home invasion, is a truly harrowing depiction of ignorance and delusion. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

And We Danced: More Oral Histories from Yavapai County, Arizona

By Mona Lange McCroskey. HollyBear Press. Index. .

Anyone with even a slight interest in northern Arizona's Yavapai County and its population center, Prescott, will find this large book fascinating. It is loaded with more than 800 photographs of people and events, but the real substance of this volume is the memories it contains. McCroskey interviewed old-timers, sure, but she also reached out to those somewhat younger folks with something to say about this place they love, and the old-timers they knew. A browser's delight. [W. David Laird]

Angel Baby

By Richard Lange. Mulholland Books. 304 pp. \$26.00.

Lange keeps readers perched on the edges of their seats in this jet-propelled thriller that follows a cartel boss's wife on her desperate flight from Tijuana to escape an abusive marriage and reunite with her child in L.A. Razer-sharp writing, breathless pacing, rich characters, and intricate storytelling from shifting viewpoints make for a wild ride across the Southern California desert. [Bruce Dinges]

Animal Stories: A Lifetime Collection

By Max Evans. University of Oklahoma Press. 415 pp. \$24.95.

All of the 26 stories that appear in this collection have been previously published, but fans of cowboy and western humor who remember Evans' mega-hits "Hi-Lo Country" and "The Rounders" will be delighted to have this book on their shelves. [W. David Laird]

Arizona Rocks! A Guide to Geologic Sites in the Grand Canyon State

By T. Scott Bryan. Mountain Press Publishing Company. 106 pp. Index. \$18.00.

Retired geologist/educator Bryan makes finding and enjoying more than 40 Arizona sites a pleasure. Excellent color photographs and easy to interpret maps supplement the easy-reading text (almost jargon-free). Terrific book. [W. David Laird]

Former park geologist and professor Scott Bryan knows how to excite our wonder for rocks and mountains. He takes us by paved road to 44 fascinating places like Kartchner Caverns, Meteor Crater, Apache Spring, Horseshoe Bend, and Willcox Playa. I was especially interested in his accounts of the large earth fissures, the helium field, and Tonto Bridge. With this readable book in hand, you'll need to leave time for side trips on your next drive across Arizona. [Bill Broyles]

Artists of New Mexico Traditions: The National Heritage Fellows

By Michael Pettit. Museum of New Mexico Press. 164 pp. Index. \$29.95.

Detailed history and profiles of New Mexico's Heritage Fellows, a total of 15, the most of any state. Recognized artists include tinworkers, weavers, potters, storytellers, musicians, santeros, and wood carvers. A fine tribute, handsomely illustrated in color. [W. David Laird]

At the Border of Empires: The Tohono O'odham, Gender, and Assimilation, 1880-1934

By Andrae M. Marak, Laura Tuennerman. University of Arizona Press. 209 pp. Index. \$55.00.

In more ways than one, the Tohono O'odham have been buffeted by conflicting outside forces. Their traditional homeland lies in the Sonoran Desert, so after the Gadsden Purchase, the newly forged national boundary sliced it in two. National policies toward indigenous peoples differed then, so the O'odham were treated differently in the US from Mexico. Having determined that indigenous peoples are savage and in need of "civilizing," the US government, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Presbyterian Church all set about reorganizing economic structures, gender roles, and forced assimilation in competing—and self-serving—ways. This book relates that interesting, sobering, story. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

This in-depth study of feuding missionaries and conniving Indian agents trying to educate and "civilize" Native Americans provides a gripping tale of paternalism, racism, and exploitation. That the peaceful Tohono O'odham survived and flourished is a tribute to them and their cultural strength. What sounds like dry reading actually provides a treat of insight, heroes, and enduring lessons of family, religion, culture, and politics. The authors share enough personal cases to breathe life into concepts like assimilation, rights, and gender discrimination, but they don't overlook the ironies and difficulties imposed upon good people. Probably like the O'odham themselves did, we have to shake our heads at misguided bureau programs such as employing unmarried matrons to teach the virtue of marriage to mothers and fathers already married under tribal custom and raising healthy children. [Bill Broyles]

Baja California Missions: In the Footsteps of the Padres

TOP PICK

By David Burckhalter. University of Arizona Press. 184 pp. Index. Foreword by Bernard L. Fontana. University of Arizona Southwest Center Series. \$24.95.

More than 100 excellent color photographs (by author Burckhalter and Mina Sedgwick) supplement the fine text. The authors visited all eight of the still-functioning missions, from San Borja in Baja California Norte to San Luis Gonzaga, the southernmost, near Loreto in Baja California Sur. Photographs include both interiors and exteriors and, in one case, a group photo of a crew working on restoration at Santa Rosalia. Text are straightforward historical accounts mixed with contemporary descriptions. Fine book. [W. David Laird]

Baja California Missions is part coffee table art-and-architecture book, part travel account, part guide book, and a little 17th and 18th century history. David Bruckhalter and Mina Sedgwick present the eight Spanish missions remaining on the peninsula where Roman Catholic missionaries established thirty-four missions to “conquer, congregate, and convert” Baja’s four indigenous tribes. The missions were abandoned after more than 90 percent of the population perished from European-introduced disease, but the stone buildings survive. Bruckhalter and Sedgwick’s photographs are hauntingly beautiful—from landscapes through exterior and interior architectural shots, to details of the baroque altars, statuary, and art; they capture caretakers, restorers, participants in festivals, even Sedgwick herself. The book offers maps and directions for reaching the sites by car; it invites a road trip. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Big Water, Little Boats: Moulty Fulmer and the First Grand Canyon Dory on the Last of the Wild Colorado River

By Tom Martin. Vishnu Temple Press. 240 pp. Index. \$24.95.

Finding history is almost as much fun as making history, and this book has both. Author Tom Martin skillfully tells the long-lost story of the man who revolutionized boating on the mighty Colorado and San Juan rivers with his specially designed wooden dory. The book is a delight of river adventures, personalities, lore, and color photos from the 1940s and ‘50s. To the names of river pioneers Norm Nevills, Dock Marston, Pat Reilly, and Georgie White, we can add the name of Moulty Fulmer, boat builder and river runner. [Bill Broyles]

Bone Horses

By Lesley Poling-Kempes. La Alameda Press. 353 pp. \$20.00.

Mystery and romance converge in this evocative story of a school teacher who visits the small northern New Mexico town where her grandfather unearthed fossils and where her mother met a suspicious death. Poling-Kempes beautifully captures the landscape and spirit of New Mexico’s high country, seamlessly blending mysticism and human longing to demonstrate that, indeed, home is where the heart is. [Bruce Dinges]

The title makes sense once we understand that the central character is the granddaughter of a famous archaeologist. Her visit to the small New Mexico town near the site of his discovery opens vistas to a family past she was only vaguely aware of. Poling-Kempes is an excellent writer. Readers wanting a leisurely and enjoyable tale that brings the past and the present together will find this book perfectly suited to their tastes. [W. David Laird]

Border is Burning, The

By Ito Romo. University of New Mexico Press. 104 pp. \$21.95.

Outstanding! About a dozen short pieces, not stories per se, but life, on the border. There are no innocent people, there is no “normal” life—normal is for fairytales. Enjoyable reading that is finished much too soon. [W. David Laird]

Brewing Arizona: A Century of Beer in the Grand Canyon State

By . University of Arizona Press. 360 pp. Index. \$39.95.

If there is a beer drinker on your gift-giving list this could be the perfect answer to the old what-to-buy question. Sipos provides much more than superficial historical coverage and adds to a detailed text more than 100 colorful illustrations. They show us everything from labels and people to breweries and transportation. You can browse this volume for hours while you enjoy taste-testing the latest from your favorite microbrewer. [W. David Laird]

Bringing Back the Game: Arizona Wildlife Management/1912-1962

By David E. Brown. Arizona Game and Fish Department. 96 pp. No ISBN.. \$19.95.

By All Accounts: General Stores and Community Life in Texas and Indian Territory

By Linda English. University of Oklahoma Press. 268 pp. Index. \$29.95.

Came Men on Horses: The Conquistador Expeditions of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado and Don Juan de Onate

By Stan Hoig. University Press of Colorado. 344 pp. Index. \$34.95.

This very readable history chronicles the 1541 expedition of Francisco Vásquez de Coronado up Mexico's west coast, and the 1601 trip of Don Juan de Oñate, up Mexico's interior, into Tierra Nueva—today's New Mexico—and beyond, as far as Kansas. Characterizing the conquistadors' motivation to explore as a desire for riches (gold and silver, particularly, as had been discovered by Hernan Cortés in Mexico and Francisco Pizarro in Peru), University of Central Oklahoma former Professor Emeritus Hoig presents the Spaniards' arrogance, single-mindedness, and cruelty in credible and disturbing detail. Pursuing the "City of Gold" might prove fruitless for the conquistadors, but not pursuing it and thus missing it would have been disastrous personally and professionally, even if it cost the lives of the indigenous population. Illustrations, maps with current landmarks, and comprehensive annotation provide welcome assistance to the reader. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Using a wide range of sources from original to recent, Stan Hoig engagingly retells the story of the Coronado Expedition to the Southwest in 1540. His clear narratives help us better understand the purpose and events of this failed and hurtful foray to pry wealth from the Indians of New Mexico, and he candidly adds fascinating insight into characters such as Francisco Coronado and Juan de Oñate. This book is an excellent starting point to understand the expedition and its everlasting effects. [Bill Broyles]

Camille Carries the Mail

TOP PICK FOR KIDS

By Lisa Hodgkins. Mirror Publishing . 28 pp. \$9.99.

Camille is a camel who delivers mail from New Mexico across Arizona to California. Part of her mail load is a special letter from an army lieutenant to his daughter, Miss Becky, in California. Unfortunately, as the camel team heads off towards California Camille is day dreaming and loses her way. She is helped out by Tommy Tortoise, Sam the rattlesnake, Harrison Hawk, and Kaya the coyote. They spot the team and help Camille get back on the trail to Miss Becky. This sweet, short picture book, based on the real history of camels brought to the southwestern desert in the 1850s, is intended for 5- and 6-year old children.

A cute picture book set in the mid 1800s in Arizona. Camille is a camel who works carrying mail across the desert. Based on true events when the government bought 75 camels for possible use for haulage and transportation. I liked the story line and the illustrations(Carlos Lemos). [Ann Dickinson]

Carrion Birds, The

By Urban Waite. William Morrow. 288 pp. \$25.99.

The wages of sin are high and redemption comes hard in this stylish noir thriller set in a decaying southeastern New Mexico oil town. Ray Lamar believes he's doing the right thing when he returns home, where years earlier drug violence cost him his wife and left his young son badly injured. Instead, he sets in motion bloody events that tumble like dominoes to a conclusion that is as dramatic as it is inescapable. Lyrical writing, sober reflections on the nature of good and evil, and a cast of characters worthy of Dashell Hammett or James Cain make for an electrifying read. [Bruce Dinges]

Chronicle of a Small Town

By Jim W. Corder. Texas A&M University Press. 175 pp. \$19.95.

Citizens Warehouse: With Select Works from the Artists

By Citizens Artist Collective . Eponymous Atelier. 128 pp. Index. \$40.00.

Any day goes better with art. In Citizens Warehouse, named for the once-abandoned building in Tucson where they now have studios, we have a couple dozen accomplished artists adding zest to our day. Nick Georgiou shows us his fascinating newsprint sculptures, Hannah Nance Partlow displays her resolute posters and installations, Dirk Arnold adds authentic architectural miniatures, Troy Neiman presents his found-metal sculptures and ceramics, and Christina Cárdenas wakes us up with Latina-themed gouache on wood. This delightful sampler reminds us that original studio-made art belongs in our homes, businesses, and public spaces. Every page grabs our attention. A limited edition signed by all the artists is available. [Bill Broyles]

Cold Deck

By H. Lee Barnes. University of Nevada Press. 201 pp. \$26.95.

Barnes, once a dealer in Vegas, draws upon that experience to spin a tale that begins with the 1980 fire that destroyed the MGM Grand. The narrator, Jude Helms, luckily survived. Now, decades later, divorced and barely making ends meet, a stunningly beautiful woman comes into his life and Jude is drawn into a scheme that will make him rich, or perhaps make him dead. Barnes' novel slowly unfolds revealing the underbelly of Las Vegas while telling a tale that will appeal especially to the legion of blackjack players. [W. David Laird]

Color Country: Touring the Colorado Plateau

By Susan M. Neider. Rainstone Press. 183 pp. \$24.95.

Conflict in Colonial Sonora: Indians, Priests, and Settlers

By David Yetman. University of New Mexico Press. 280 pp. Index. \$45.00.

This admirable book fills a chasm in our appreciation of what it was like to be an Indian, priest, settler or soldier under Spanish rule in northeastern Sonora from 1640-1770. And boy oh boy, was it complicated. Sometimes the Indians would ally with the priests against the settlers, and at other times the soldiers would work side by side with the Indians against the priest or other Indians. No one was safe from failure or exploitation, least of all the Indians. Author David Yetman enlists his wide ranging interests to breathe life into several olden manuscripts, and he smoothly weaves us an intriguing, compelling tale of frontier life under the Spanish Crown. Reliably and sympathetically

portraying the personalities, politics, and complex self-interests of sometimes noble, sometimes villainous groups, Yetman brings history to life as you probably never imagined it. It is worthy of a historical mini-series. [Bill Broyles]

Contested Waters: An Environmental History of the Colorado River

By April R. Summitt. University Press of Colorado. 286 pp. Index. \$34.95.

Not “just” an environmental history, Summitt’s observations, both historical and contemporary, provide insight into how we in the arid southwest got into the mess we are in when it comes to water. Thoroughly documented, extensive footnotes for each chapter lead to sources that will not be on every environmentalist’s reading list, but perhaps should be. An important, well-written and accessible text. [W. David Laird]

Cormac McCarthy's House: Reading McCarthy Without Walls

By Peter Josyph. University of Texas Press. 292 pp. Index. \$29.95.

In this freewheeling and exuberantly self-referential memoir, Josyph explores the boundaries of art and criticism through personal experience and conversations with fellow McCarthy enthusiasts - photographer Mark Morrow, stage director Tom Cornford, and friend and critic Marty Priola. Readers who appreciate Josyph’s depth of knowledge and breadth of interests will learn much, not only about McCarthy’s singular genius, but about the artistic temperament, from Zola to Hemingway, and the insights it provides into the human experience. [Bruce Dinges]

In Josyph’s concept, the image of Cormac McCarthy’s house is simply a free-wheeling, anything-goes place where authors of many generations reside side by side. There are no limits, i.e., “no walls”. Included here are transcriptions of interviews with people (I note they are all men) who are as enthusiastic about Cormac as is the author. Do not expect the easy-reading of a straight narrative; readers who persevere will learn much about McCarthy and his books but perhaps even more about Josyph! [W. David Laird]

Cowboy Stuntman: From Olympic Gold to the Silver Screen

By Mike Cox, Dean Smith. Texas Tech University Press. 264 pp. Index. \$29.95.

A member of the 400 meter relay team that won the gold at the Helsinki Olympics (1952), Texan Smith’s career came as a stuntman in Hollywood during those golden days of movie westerns. Now in his 80s he has a good memory for the incidents of those years: the movie stars like James Garner and John Wayne and the dozens of movies in which he worked, starting with a bit part in Quantrill’s Raiders (1957) and continuing through 2009 with a role in 4th and Goal. Hollywood and movie buffs, especially western fans, should enjoy this book. [W. David Laird]

Cowboy Up!: Ride the Navajo Rode

TOP PICK FOR KIDS

By Nancy Bo Flood. Wordsong Press. 48 pp. \$17.95.

Young Navajo ropers and riders dream of competing in the National Finals Rodeo as they practice riding, roping, and lassoing. This story is told in narrative verse with a factual description of rodeo events on the facing page. Good, clear action photographs of kids riding sheep, lariat throwing and bronco riding accompany brief verses in a child’s voice. It’s an entertaining picture book with facts on the rodeo for a school-aged audience.

Crossing Purgatory

By Gary Schanbacher. Pegasus Books. 320 pp. \$25.00.

The year is 1858. The death of his wife and children while he is away trying to get funding from his father to expand his Indiana farm overwhelms Thompson Grey. Bewildered and haunted he takes to the Santa Fe Trail, not sure what

the future might bring, or if he even cares. Schanbacher is an excellent storyteller who creates strong characters and sets them in a visible landscape faced with trials and dangers, both natural and man made. [W. David Laird]

Cultural Construction of Empire: The U.S. Army in Arizona and New Mexico

By Janne Lahti. University of Nebraska Press. 344 pp. Index. \$55.00.

A Finnish scholar takes a provocative look at the frontier army as an agent of empire in the Southwest. Steeped in postcolonial theory and drawing on a wealth of documentary sources, Lahti argues that army men and women represented a self-justifying social and cultural hierarchy, based on race and class, that swept aside indigenous people and native cultures in the name of civilization. Intended primarily for an academic audience, this thoughtful re-examination of a well-worn topic offers much food for productive discussion among military historians and students of frontier settlement. [Bruce Dinges]

Days are Gods, The

By Liz Stephens. University of Nebraska Press. 216 pp. \$18.95.

Dead Run: The Murder of a Lawman and the Greatest Manhunt of the Modern American West

By Dan Schultz. St. Martin's Press. 320 pp. \$25.99.

A veteran crime reporter recounts, in armchair-gripping detail, the 1998 ambush of a Cortez, Colorado, police officer and the subsequent manhunt that launched more than 500 lawmen on a confused, futile search in the Four Corners canyonlands for three camouflage-clad killers. Schultz's skillful use of interviews and investigative documents provides disturbing insight into the terrorist mindset of the assassins and their possible motives, as well as chilling portraits of the militia movement and radical environmentalism as the bastard stepchildren of the Wild West's anti-establishment outlaw tradition. [Bruce Dinges]

Dineji Na nitin

By Robert S. McPherson. University Press of Colorado. 287 pp. Index. \$24.95.

Disciple of Las Vegas, The

By Ian Hamilton. Picador. 340 pp. \$25.00.

Ava Lee is an accountant, a "money person" with the skills of a tough private investigator and the physical prowess of a champion of the martial arts. When 50 million dollars go missing from a client's account she begins to follow the money in a globe-trotting chase that will satisfy readers who like their page-turners to give them non-stop action. [W. David Laird]

Dragoons in Apacheland: Conquest and Resistance in Southern New Mexico, 1846-1861

By William S. Kiser. University of Oklahoma Press. 376 pp. Index. \$29.95.

In a splendid example of the "new" western military history, Kiser chronicles Anglo-Native warfare in southern New Mexico through the prism of conflicting cultures. Unable and/or unwilling to understand Apache lifeways, a succession of political and military commanders stumbled through a morass of bureaucratic pitfalls as they attempted to subdue bands of native resisters whose actions and motivations rarely conformed to their would-be conquerors' preconceptions. As a result, Kiser shows, the military situation was worse in 1861 than when the U.S. Army occupied

New Mexico in 1846. In hindsight, the inability to bridge cultures and politics represents a tragic failure of American Indian policy and military strategy. [Bruce Dinges]

Edible and Useful Plants of the Southwest: Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, Rev. Ed.

By Delena Tull. University of Texas Press. 500 pp. Index. \$29.95.

Delena Tull presents a cornucopia of wild plants that can be used for food, teas, medicines, dyes, and fabrics. She also discusses poisonous plants and tells which mushrooms are edible. From folk remedies to fun food to hobby cloth-making, there's something here for everyone, whether they live in the city or live off the land. This revised Southwest classic is now bigger and better than ever, and includes many more plants from New Mexico and Arizona. It turns out that the plants in our yards, parks, or forests are more interesting than we may have imagined. It is a nicely designed book, and the drawings and color photos add to our enjoyment. [Bill Broyles]

Emerald Mile, The: The Epic Story of the Fastest Ride in History Though the Heart of the Grand Canyon

TOP PICK

By Kevin Fedarko. Scribner. Index. \$30.00.

Take a raging river in full flood, a crumbling dam, three scofflaw river runners trying to set a speed record through the Grand Canyon, and you have the makings of one of the best Colorado River books ever. This spellbinding true story leaps from the inner workings of Glen Canyon Dam and the psyches of river guides to boat-eating whirlpools and a wooden river dory named The Emerald Mile. Kevin Fedarko's prodigious research and breathtaking narrative transcend the Southwest. It's a roaring adventure with wave after wave of spills and thrills. Let's hope Fedarko owns the movie rights. [Bill Broyles]

Fedarko, an award-winning journalist and part-time river guide, captures in all its heart-stopping twists and turns the epic 1983 speed run of three daredevil boatmen through the flood-gorged Grand Canyon. Iconoclast extraordinaire Kenton Grua occupies center stage as the mastermind behind the astonishing feat, but Fedarko's supreme accomplishment lies in his remarkable ability to place Grua and his companions within the pantheon of other great canyonland adventurers from Spanish times to the present, and in his equal respect for the engineers and dreamers whose attempts to tame the Colorado River averted disaster when put to the test. "The Emerald Mile" earns its place among the classic accounts of Grand Canyon adventure and exploration. [Bruce Dinges]

Ernest L. Blumenschein: The Life of an American Artist

By Carole B. Larson, Robert W. Larson. University of Oklahoma Press. 344 pp. Index. Bibliography = "Notes on Sources" Volume 28 in the Oklahoma Western Biographies. \$29.95.

Ernest Blumenschein first laid eyes on the Taos Valley of New Mexico in the summer of 1898 and neither he nor the art world was ever quite the same again. In their concise and informative biography, Robert Larson and the late Carole Larson trace Blumenschein's artistic odyssey from his study in Paris and his career as an illustrator to his lasting contribution as a founding member of the influential Taos artists' colony (1910s-1950s). In doing so, they provide lay readers with an insightful portrait of a major 20th-century artist, while at the same time parsing for specialists the sometimes contradictory impulses that both inspired and circumscribed Blumenschein's artistic vision. [Bruce Dinges]

One of the so-called pioneer artists of Taos, Blumenschein's art and life have been chronicled in other books (notably in Peter Hassrick's "In Contemporary Rhythm"). The Larsons have filled in details and provided a truly in-depth account with attention to his personal life as well as his art. [W. David Laird]

Every Waking Moment

By Chris Fabry. Tyndale House Publishers. 400 pp. \$14.99.

Everyday Las Vegas: Local Life in a Tourist Town

By Rex J. Rowley. University of Nevada Press. 251 pp. Index. \$39.95.

Now a professor of geography in the Midwest, Rowley grew up in and around Las Vegas, Nevada, and still thinks of it as home. The “culture” of the city was the basis of his doctoral research and although this book may be, in some sense, a rewriting of his dissertation, it is not cluttered with academic paraphernalia. It ranges widely and sympathetically across the subjects that shed light on what the city is beyond the glitter of gambling and “the Strip.” [W. David Laird]

Everyone Says That at the End of the World

By Owen Egerton. Soft Skull Press. 360 pp. \$15.95.

Everything Begins & Ends at the Kentucky Club

TOP PICK

By Benjamin Alire Sáenz. Cinco Puntos Press. 222 pp. \$16.95.

The eponymous bar of this Pen/Faulkner Award-winning collection of seven short stories is located a few blocks south of the Rio Grande. It is the nexus for the otherwise unconnected souls who drift back and forth across the border between El Paso and Juárez, searching for answers, longing for love, and sometimes just looking for trouble. Sáenz's stories, rendered elegantly and with compassion, tell of interior lives that are rich with complexities, restricted psychologically and emotionally by internal boundaries that bind and suffocate. Although we struggle as individuals, our need to break free of the borders that confine us is universal. These are stories to savor, both for their grace and for the truths they reveal. [Helene Woodhams]

The Kentucky Club of this collection of Borderland short stories is a once-elegant Juárez bar, the Tiffany dome and gleaming wood and glass of which remind one character of a church. “[I]sn't that what bars are,” he muses, “churches for people who'd lost their faith?” That sense of loss, of emotional isolation, and of the yearning to connect are common to Sáenz's seven thoughtful, sculpted stories: an aging writer doesn't know what he's missing until he gains—and then loses—a lover; the grown children of wealthy, negligent parents seek emotional connection through risky behavior; a boy raised in Juárez is dumped unwanted on his American father's doorstep and needs to negotiate his fractured world. At some point, they all pass through the Kentucky Club. And in his spare, luminous poet's voice, this one-time priest grants each a measure of redemption. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Fatal Descent

By Beth Groundwater. Midnight Ink. 279 pp. \$14.99.

An offseason river excursion on the Colorado River through Utah's Canyonlands turns ugly when one of the rafters turns up dead, possibly the victim of a grizzly bear—but more likely at the hand of a fellow vacationer. Fear, suspicion, and attitude aplenty challenge river guides Mandy and Rob, who must bring their clients safely home although the odds—both natural and human-fueled—are against them. [Helene Woodhams]

Fight to Save Juarez, The: Life in the Heart of Mexico's Drug War

By Ricardo C. Ainslie. University of Texas Press. 282 pp. Index. \$25.00.

A journalist blends personal experience with dozens of interviews in this chronicle of a tipping point of sorts during 2008-2010, when Juárez mayor Jose Reyes Ferriz ceded police power to the Mexican army and federal law enforcement in a desperate attempt to stem the tide of violence in the border city. As groaning shelves of recent books attest, there is no dearth of attention being paid to the what and why of open warfare in northern Mexico. Ainslie nonetheless provides a new perspective with his perceptive questioning of government officials, journalists,

community organizers, cartel foot soldiers, and ordinary citizens. The story is grim and the end is far from sight, but Ainslie discerns glimmers of hope in government push-back and grass-roots activism emerging through the fog of corruption and violence that grips the beleaguered community. [Bruce Dinges]

You're the mayor of a city with a million people and a drug cartel just declared war on its rival, making your streets the battleground. Thousands of people will die. Fiction? No, it really happened in Ciudad Juarez, and the story of the battles and politics make riveting reading as Ricardo Ainslie takes us behind the scenes with major players. With deep research and at grave personal risk, he interviews the mayor, a mafioso's up-from-poverty mistress, an unarmed community activist, various police leaders, and a newspaperman trapped in the crossfire. And there are heroes, as when a grieving mother bravely confronted Mexico's president to ask for justice for her son. Ainslie's account is spellbinding in its details and horror. [Bill Broyles]

From the Republic of the Rio Grande: A Personal History of the Place and the People

By Beatriz De la Garza. University of Texas Press. 225 pp. Index. \$45.00.

Relying on both archival documents and family papers, Beatriz de la Garza weaves a splendidly personal history of the short-lived Republic of the Rio Grande (1838-1840). Its events and culture influenced Southwest history.

Georgia O'Keeffe in Texas: A Guide

By John T. Becker, Paul H. Carlson. State House Press. 131 pp. Index. \$19.95.

While this short account of O'Keeffe's four years in Amarillo, Canyon, and Waring, Texas (1914 – 18) is informative and suitably documented, it's a bit oddly balanced, repetitive, and devoid of what you'd hope to see in a book on one of America's most significant female artists—photos of her art. Texas Tech History Emeritus Carlson and Librarian Becker have provided context for her Texas years, a full biography, and some discussion of the Modernist movement. They've included chapters on significant relationships in O'Keeffe's life. A long John F. Mathews essay adds an art-critical perspective to the historians' take, but his bio of her is redundant. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Focused on O'Keeffe's few years in Texas early in her life, this brief account includes short sections about key events and persons (such as Paul Strand and Leah Harris). Reprinted is a 1983 essay about the influence of the Texas Panhandle on her work. The authors have identified fewer than 30 O'Keeffe works at museums in Texas, the largest number, as might be expected, at the Amon Carter in Fort Worth. A slender, but worthwhile, addition to the huge body of literature about the person who is arguably the best known "southwestern" artist. [W. David Laird]

Get Serious: New and Selected Poems

By Jefferson Carter. Chax Press. 84 pp. \$15.00.

Filled with fun as well as thoughtful innuendo, Carter's poetry is not geographical per se but is informed (if you will) by his 60+ year residence in Tucson, Arizona. And so...we are not surprised when a poem titled "An Apology for Wannabes" begins "Not one Apache/in the audience/listening to the/bearded white man/tell stories/about Cochise." Wonderful humor, terrific images, hardly a rhyme in sight. [W. David Laird]

Ghost Medicine: An Ella Clah Novel

By Aimee Thurlo, David Thurlo. Forge Books. 320 pp. \$24.99.

The Ella Clah mysteries (this is number 17) are no longer the exciting blend of Navajo culture and police-procedural they once were. In this latest, yet another tale involving the evil spirits known to traditional Navajos as skinwalkers, Ella is joined by investigator Dan Nez as they try to sort out reality from mythology. Many "asides" about history and tradition slow the reader. [W. David Laird]

GQ GQ. Where Are You? Adventures of a Gambel's Quail

By Sharon I. Ritt. Little Five Star. 38 pp. \$14.95.

I love the soft watercolor illustrations of Nadia Komorova who studied at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, Slovakia. I didn't care for the constant repetitive verses in the story line though. Perhaps this book would make a better song than an actual book for kids. [Ann Dickinson]

Grandma's Santo On Its Head: Stories of Days Gone By in Hispanic Villages of New Mexico

By Nasario Garcia. University of New Mexico Press. 152 pp. \$24.95.

This charming bilingual collection reveals customs, traditions, superstitions, and beliefs through the stories of village people in the pre-WW II Rio Puerco Valley of north-central New Mexico. Told in the first-person, as if simply chatting with his audience, folklorist, poet and fiction writer García incorporates his own family into accounts of such events as curing the Evil Eye and ending drought by punishing a saint. He also lets various villagers tell their real-life conflicting versions of encountering La Llorona. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Great Cruelties Have Been Reported: The 1544 Investigation of the Coronado Expedition

By Richard Flint. University of New Mexico Press. 647 pp. \$60.00.

Great Texas Wind Rush, the: How George Bush, Ann Richards, and a Bunch of Tinkerers Helped the Oil and Gas State Win the Race to Wind Power

By Kate Galbraith, Asher Price. University of Texas Press. 209 pp. Index. \$24.95.

Gunpowder Tea

By , Magaret Brownley. Thomas Nelson, Inc. 336 pp. \$15.99.

Heat: Adventures in the World's Fiery Places

By Bill Streever. Little, Brown and Company. 349 pp. Index. \$26.99.

Obviously most of the world's fiery places are outside our Southwest (hard to remember in July) but Streever recounts a personal "oh, oh moment" in Death Valley and other adventures we can relate to. He supplements his personal accounts with well-selected published adventures that introduce us to volcanoes, lava flows and other natural places in addition to, you guessed it, some man-made phenomena. Well-researched and well-told, desert dwellers should enjoy both the personal aspects and the historical figures. [W. David Laird]

History Along the Way: Stories Beyond the Texas Roadside Markers

By Cynthia J. Beeman, Dan K. Utley. Texas A&M University Press. 352 pp. Index. \$25.00.

Grab your Texas roadmap then jump in your car and this book will take you to some very interesting sites all over the state of Texas explaining in some well-written detail why they are important. [W. David Laird]

Hunting Eve

By Iris Johansen. St. Martin's Press. 352 pp. \$27.99.

I Fought a Good Fight: A History of the Lipan Apaches

By Sherry Robinson. University of North Texas Press. 495 pp. Index. \$32.95.

In this exhaustively researched and intensely detailed study, Robinson chronicles five centuries of survival as this often-misidentified and frequently misunderstood people waged warfare and diplomacy with Spaniards, Mexicans, Anglo-Americans, and other native groups across the broad expanse of West Texas, New Mexico, and northern Mexico. Apart from the sheer mass of information Robinson has compiled, her use of oral tradition and assembling of rare photographs make this by far the most comprehensive and sympathetic history of one of the Southwest's most unfairly overlooked tribal entities. [Bruce Dinges]

Imagining Geronimo: An Apache Icon in Popular Culture

By William M. Clements. University of New Mexico Press. 305 pp. Index. \$39.95.

This in-depth survey looks at the ways in which Geronimo has become not just an important historical figure but a symbolic figure. The concluding three chapters look at his image/face, the literature about him, and the movies his story has created. A serious, scholarly work that will be an important text in the Geronimo canon for the foreseeable future. [W. David Laird]

In the Shadow of Billy the Kid: Susan McSween and the Lincoln County War

By Kathleen P. Chamberlain. University of New Mexico Press. 312 pp. Index. \$27.95.

Chamberlain brings a new perspective to the Southwest's most celebrated eruption of outlawry in this thoughtful and exhaustively researched biography of the strong-willed protagonist who achieved legendary status of her own as the Cattle Queen of New Mexico. In doing so, Chamberlain not only dispels the negative stereotypes that dogged McSween during her lifetime, and that still tarnish her image among twenty-first-century historians, but provides welcome insights into Victorian gender roles on the western frontier. Historians and general readers, alike, will appreciate this important and entertaining story of a formidable woman making her way in a cutthroat world. [Bruce Dinges]

Eastern Michigan University Professor of Indian History Chamberlain has meticulously documented Susan McSween Barber's participation in the events surrounding the five-day July, 1878 "Lincoln County War," and her life in its aftermath. In the "War," in which two factions gun-battled over who would own the mercantile rights in this area of southeastern New Mexico, young Henry McCartney (Billy the Kid) fought on the side of Susan and Alexander McSween. McSween was killed on July 19, but Susan would go on to be a successful rancher in her own right. The biography provides considerable, interesting evidence that corrupt politicians, lawmen, businessmen, and lawyers are not a new phenomenon. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Indian Resilience and Rebuilding: Indigenous Nations in the Modern American West

By Donald L. Fixico. University of Arizona Press. 284 pp. Index. \$24.96.

Despite lingering problems on Indian reservations, many tribes are showing strength and resilience as they rebuild their homelands and cultures. Author Donald Fixico is not only a scholar of the past but a visionary for the future.

Informal and Underground Economy of the South Texas Border, The

By Michael J. Pisani, Chad Richardson. University of Texas Press. 335 pp. Index. \$55.00.

If you have even a casual acquaintance with the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, you've seen the sidewalk vendors, the backyard mechanic shops, the maids and nannies at the bus stop, and the shady character who sports gold jewelry but has no apparent job. They are part of a surprisingly robust but largely unseen economy that bends or ignores laws on both sides of the line. In an exceptionally lucid and informative book, Chad Richardson and Michael Pisani put faces and numbers on this multi-billion-dollar informal and underground labor force. Although Richardson and Pisani focus on South Texas, you'll see your own border communities in a whole new light. The undocumented maids and janitors working in the U.S. average \$4.92 an hour and field workers and ranch hands \$3.85, while the hourly average for persons working in underground, largely criminal activities on one side of the line is \$74.41 but for those willing to cross the line the average is \$121.70 per hour. The authors of this splendid study give us a clear-eyed economic and sociological look at how poor people survive, how complex regulations are navigated by street savvy workers, and how this hidden economy actually buoys the region and complements the visible workforce. There are surprises at every turn. A book as fascinating as it is timely! [Bill Broyles]

Jane's Window: My Spirited Life in West Texas and Austin

By Jane Dunn Sibley. Texas A&M University Press. 375 pp. Index. \$35.00.

It's hard, reading this autobiography of an Austin patroness of the arts, to avoid thinking of Wallis Simpson's "you can never be too rich or too thin...."

Jane Dunn Sibley was born in Fort Stockton, Texas, in 1924, the only child of a couple with roots back to the Comanche-raiding days. When she married a physician whose family had a little property in the area, they settled down to raise their family there. When, however, that land proved to contain a wealth of natural gas, Dr. Sibley no longer needed to practice medicine, and the family moved to the city. In Austin, Jane Sibley immersed herself in charitable activity, and eventually serving as president of the Austin Symphony, and initiating architectural restoration in the city. This book recounts her experiences as a young, wife, mother, hostess, and patroness. Her friends will enjoy it. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

John Gaw Meem at Acoma: The Restoration of San Esteban Del Rey Mission

By Kate Wingert-Playdon. University of New Mexico Press. 276 pp. Index. \$40.00.

This carefully detailed historical analysis reveals not only Meem's role in the restoration of Acoma but his interaction with the many others who played a part. [W. David Laird]

Lady at the O.K. Corral: The True Story of Josephine Marcus Earp

By Ann Kirschner. Harper. 289 pp. Index. \$27.99.

Kirschner performs an amazing feat of historical sleuthing as she separates fact from fiction in this first detailed biography of the Jewish actress who won the heart of one of the Old West's iconic lawmen. Readers are in for a treat as she paints a vibrant portrait of the vivacious Josephine and chronicles the adventures she shared with her common-law husband in frontier boomtowns, the Alaska goldfields, and Hollywood backlots. More than just a story of ambition and romance, "Lady at the O.K. Corral" is a riveting tale of lives lived large and of how legends are made. [Bruce Dinges]

In this engaging recreation of the life of Wyatt Earp's mistress of nearly fifty years, once Victorian literature scholar, now university dean, Ann Kirschner does more than sketch a biography; she draws a full, rich portrait of life in the wild and treasure-hungry West. Kirschner injects a personal, lively voice into her narrative. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Las Sombras/The Shadows

By Kate Breakey. University of Texas Press. 168 pp. \$75.00.

Tucson-based photographer Kate Breakey has an unusual approach to photography. She finds dead animals and poses them on large sheets of film for contact prints, or “photograms.” Though this sounds a bit ghoulish, the images reveal shadows of their former selves, so to speak. The result is memorable. Here we have 99 full-page plates of birds, lizards, a coyote and an armadillo, cottontails, a tarantula, and other Southwest animals that now “live on” in a book. [Bill Broyles]

Lawless Breed, A: John Wesley Hardin, Texas Reconstruction, and Violence in the Wild West

By Norman Wayne Brown, Chuck Parsons. University of North Texas Press. 490 pp. \$29.95.

It what might best be described as a researcher's delight, the authors cull through a mound of sources, old and new, to separate fact from fiction in the life and legend of one of the Old West's most notorious gunmen, who was himself gunned down in a El Paso saloon in 1895. Serious lawman and outlaw enthusiasts, in particular, will applaud the meticulous attention to detail and relish the dozens of rare photographs depicting Hardin's family, friends, and enemies. [Bruce Dinges]

Leaving Tinkertown

By Tanya Ward Goodman. University of New Mexico Press. 232 pp. \$19.95.

The Tinkertown Museum beckons travelers from its perch on the Sandia Mountains outside of Albuquerque to come marvel at the memorabilia, miniatures, and folk-art oddities that were created and gathered by carnival painter Ross Ward over the course of 40 years. Ward is the subject of this memoir, lovingly written by daughter Tanya Ward Goodman who cared for him from the time he was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's at age 55 until his death six years later. Her no-holds-barred account paints a vivid portrait of a free-spirited artist-- eccentric, unpredictable, and non-conforming to his core, simultaneously a stubborn man and an affectionate father. Goodman, who grew up in the unconventional surroundings of Tinkertown, is a graceful writer and she exhibits a clear-sightedness and humor (unexpected in an Alzheimer's memoir) that nuances--but in no way diminishes--the daily frustrations and underlying tragedy that are the portion of a family caring for a patient with dementia. [Helene Woodhams]

Legend of Ponciano Gutierrez and the Mountain Thieves, The

TOP PICK FOR KIDS

By A. Gabriel Melendez. University of New Mexico Press. 40 pp. \$18.95.

This bilingual New Mexican folktale tells the story of a farmer named Ponciano Gutiérrez who heads to Santa Fe on his horse through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. He comes across Vicente Silva's robber gang who can't decide whether to kill him or hold him hostage. Ponciano thinks he can outwit the bandits at their own game, so he offers to compete with them in pickpocket skills, rope tricks, and sharpshooting. The story ends with Ponciano outsmarting the bandits, tying them all up and leading them down the mountain to the sheriff in Santa Fe. Illustrated in folk art style by artist Any Córdova.

A story taken from a New Mexican legend of the Silva gang in the 1880s-1890s. Ponciano is a farmer who meets up with a gang in the Sangre de Cristo mountains while on his way to the bank in Santa Fe. He out-tricks the gang and ends up leading all of them to the sheriff's office. Told in English and Spanish with wood block style illustrations. I liked the story and I usually don't go much for folk tales. I recommend this one! [Ann Dickinson]

Love By Drowning

By . El Leon Literary Arts. 396 pp. \$24.95.

Make It, Take It

By Rus Bradburd. Cinco Puntos Press. 188 pp. \$14.95.

Bradburd was a college basketball coach in the Southwest for a decade and a half before earning an MFA and switching to teaching. Putting those years of experience to literary use he provides a fast-paced tale of the dark side of college basketball recruiting and coaching, setting his tale at a small fictitious university in southern Arizona. [W. David Laird]

Mapping Wonderlands: Illustrated Cartography of Arizona, 1912-1962

By Dori Griffin. University of Arizona Press. 218 pp. Index. \$55.00.

There has been little scholarship on the methods used to package Arizona and promote it as a tourist destination in the first half of the twentieth century, but now "Mapping Wonderlands" provides an insightful look at the role cartography played in luring tourists to a little-understood state. Eye-catching illustrated maps that painted an Arizona rich in culture and natural wonders established it as a tourist mecca in the minds of the traveling public. Enhancing the state's vacation appeal was the goal, even when it led cartographers to include a highway or two that were yet to be built, or to fudge the distance between attractions. Author Dori Griffin gives historical context to the themes employed by the mapmakers (natural landscape, man-made environment, indigenous culture) and seals her case for the importance of cartography in picturing Arizona as a vacationer's wonderland with the inclusion of sixty-six well-explicated maps that, had they been presented in color, would have increased reader appeal, but are no less intriguing for the lack of it. This fine book has important things to say about how the way Arizona told its story in the past impacts the way Arizonans, and the rest of the world, perceive the state today. [Helene Woodhams]

Mapping Wonderlands is an enjoyable "show and tell" of Arizona's early illustrated road maps, the kind that show cartoonish Indians weaving rugs, sombreroed Mexicans sleeping under giant cactus, and pallid tourists basking in the sun or riding horses at a dude ranch. Author Dori Griffin has fun with it all as takes us on a tour of the state's natural wonders, historic places, and growing cities. Romanticized vacations and prosperity were the messages, and these art-filled maps strived to depict "civilized places rather than empty spaces" so that outsiders would want to come here. You'll recognize the work of artists like George Avey and Norton Allen, and you'll marvel at the how these maps – part navigation, part invitation -- "sold" the state to travelers, tourists, and businesses. The book is important because it helps explain how Arizona got to be the Arizona we imagine it to be. [Bill Broyles]

Miera y Pacheco: A Renaissance Spaniard in Eighteenth-Century New Mexico

By John L. Kessell. University of Oklahoma Press. 232 pp. Index. \$29.95.

Venerable Southwest scholar John Kessell brings to life one of New Mexico's first map makers, Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, who lived in El Paso and then Santa Fe until his death in 1785. Miera was a farmer and businessman who eventually became a local official and advisor to the governor. He is best remembered for drawing state maps as early as 1749 and later accompanying and mapping the 1776 Dominguez-Escalante Expedition and Anza's campaign in 1779. He traveled widely among the Native American nations within and bordering New Mexico. He also made religious artwork, and his family life reveals much about the lifestyles and politics of early Santa Fe and El Paso. Kessell brings him to life, and shares illustrations of Miera's fascinating maps and art. [Bill Broyles]

Miss Illegal Alien Beauty Pageant

By Frank De La Cruz. . 124 pp. .

An over-the-top spoof of a pageant set in Tucson, Arizona, in which the narrator (who was also the announcer/moderator of the pageant) drifts verbally downward until he is finally faced with an audience that wants only to see the end. [W. David Laird]

Moon Saw It All, The

TOP PICK FOR KIDS

By Nancy L. Young. Little Five Star . 39 pp. \$11.95.

This poem/picture book, beautifully illustrated by Nadia Komorova, is set in a desert creek bed after sunset. "Owls hooted with cheer when the bright moon appeared – and the moon saw it all." All of the desert critters—coyotes, desert deer, kangaroo rats, frogs, minnows, ringtails, bighorn sheep and even the skunk—join in for dancing and singing. "As dark became dawn, the critters moved on – and the shindig came to an end." Early readers will enjoy this lively, melodious story. The author lives near Arizona's Aravaipa Canyon which inspired her to write this imaginative and entertaining tale.

Another beautifully illustrated picture book written by Nancy L. Young and art work by Nadia Komorova. This story is set in a desert creek bed at night with all of the desert critters joining in for dancing and singing. 'Porcupines whistled with quails all abristle, roadrunners tap-danced in-between.' is one page showing us roadrunners poised to tap dance. Delightful. [Ann Dickinson]

Mountain Trees of Southern Arizona: A Field Guide

By Frank S. Rose. Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Press. 104 pp. Index. \$19.95.

I confess to swooning over guidebooks, especially useful ones about nature. With detailed color photos and clear descriptions, this is one of the handiest tree guides imaginable. Forty-one Southwest trees are included, ranging from blue elderberry through the pines, oaks, and willows to western soapberry. This is a companion to the author's Mountain Wildflowers of Southern Arizona, and with both books you should be able to identify almost any of the plants you see in the Sky Island mountains of southeastern Arizona or southwestern New Mexico. [Bill Broyles]

Native American Placenames of the Southwest: A Handbook for Travelers

By William Bright. University of Oklahoma Press. 143 pp. \$19.95.

Editors Alice Anderton and Sean O'Neill have identified nearly 1500 terms/words from the late William Bright's massive Native American Placenames of the United States which are located in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma. There are a few errors and omissions, for example the substantial Pima community of Sacaton, Arizona, is not listed, but for the traveler or anyone with casual interest this handy volume will do the job. [W. David Laird]

From A to Z this book of Indian place names at once entertains and surprises. Cold Spring, Arizona, translates from the Navajo words for "cold water flows up and out." Texas is from a Caddo word meaning "friend" or "ally." Narbona Pass in New Mexico was named for a Navajo leader. Oklahoma was a word coined from the Delaware words for "red people." Tijuana, Baja California, was named for a Diegueño village called Tiajuan. Bright was a linguist and anthropologist who compiled a massive collection of place names, and experts Alice Anderton and Sean O'Neill not only improved his Southwest entries but added new ones. [Bill Broyles]

Natural History of the Santa Catalina Mountains, Arizona, A

TOP PICK

By Richard C. Brusca, Wendy Moore. Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Press. 232 pp. Index. \$24.95.

Rockhounds, naturalists, and sightseers visiting the Santa Catalina Mountains now have an exceptionally fine guide to help them appreciate a unique Southern Arizona destination. One of the Madrean Sky Islands that connect the northern end of the Sierra Madre Occidental and the southern Colorado Plateau, the iconic Santa Catalinas rise straight up from the desert floor and transition rapidly through a series of biomes that are rich in biodiversity and geologic history. It's a lot of information to sort out, but authors Brusca and Moore have sorted it brilliantly, beginning with the big picture (the significance of sky islands) and then moving on to the geologic, natural, and even the cultural history of the Santa Catalinas. This lavishly-illustrated volume provides maps, pictorial guides to flora and fauna, and profiles of people and events that have impacted the area. All the information is presented in easy-to-understand language and so is accessible to the most casual visitor, and travelers on the Mount Lemmon Highway will appreciate the landmark map. If you're heading for the hills, don't leave home without this excellent book. [Helene Woodhams]

This spectacular book has many qualities and characteristics that make it outstanding, not the least of which is a text that describes the mountains north of Tucson in terms we can all understand. Side bars give us special insight into such things as tree rings and grasslands. The illustrations are in fine color. And the entire book is printed on heavy "slick" paper and bound with metal spiral "rings" for easy opening and many years of use. [W. David Laird]

New Mexico's Reptiles & Amphibians: A Field Guide

By Patricia P. Bartlett, R. D. Bartlett. University of New Mexico Press. 312 pp. \$24.95.

With its color pictures and clear descriptions, this portable field guide should prove quite useful in identifying and enjoying New Mexico's lizards, turtles, salamanders, frogs, and snakes. Maps indicate the ranges of 165 species, and sections describe habitat, size, and similar species. The Bartlett's have written more than 50 books on reptiles and amphibians, and this one should appeal to a wide range of ages. [Bill Broyles]

New Mexico's Spanish Livestock Heritage: Four Centuries of Animals, Land, and People

By William W. Dunmire. University of New Mexico Press. 233 pp. Index. \$34.95.

Building on a lifetime of research and personal experience which produced books such as "Wild Plants of the Pueblo Province" and "New Mexico's Living Landscape" Dunmire shows how herding had a major impact on the history of the Southwest. [W. David Laird]

New Mexico: A History

By Art Gomez, Joseph P. Sanchez, Robert L. Spude. University of Oklahoma Press. 384 pp. Index. \$26.99.

This very readable history of New Mexico salutes the state's diverse ethnic groups and portrays New Mexico in a global context. Intriguing stories abound and historical characters come alive.

Nightzone: A Posadas County Mystery

By Steven F. Havill. Poisoned Pen Press. 301 pp. \$14.95.

With two dozen mysteries published, all with New Mexico and southwestern settings, Havill keeps us turning pages! There is no Posadas County, NM, but his books have created it, peopled it, and tracked murderers through it. Mystery fans who want to visualize the settings for the stories they read will find this, and all of Havill's stories, exactly to their taste. Once again retired sheriff Gastner gets pulled into a murder investigation and, as always, his thoughtful approach leads the reader to discoveries we can understand and appreciate. [W. David Laird]

Norton Trilogy, The

By Jack L. August, Jr.. Texas Christian University Press. 224 pp. Index. \$37.95.

Old Man's Love Story, The

By Rudolfo Anaya. University of Oklahoma Press. 170 pp. \$19.95.

Fiction-, play-, and children-book author Rudolfo Anaya has sometimes drawn from his own experience for his work. This latest novella, which he acknowledges to be a response to the 2010 death of his wife, is a meditation on grief, love, and aging. Opening with the line "There was an old man who dwelt in the land of New Mexico, and he lost his wife," it is stylistically fable-like. The language is simple, the characters are abstracted, and at some points the action morphs into a realm of magical realism. Much of what passes for action takes places in the old man's mind: he talks to his wife (and she actually periodically appears as a point of view character); in his effort to hold onto her, he muses on such subjects as the natures of love, memory, God, time, place, the imagination, the shamanic role of the writer.

Lyrical and affecting, it's a must-read for anyone who loved Bless Me, Ultima. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Photographing Big Bend National Park: A Friendly Guide to Great Images

By Kathy Adams Clark. Texas A&M University Press. 126 pp. Index. \$19.95.

As if we need another excuse to visit Big Bend National Park, Kathy Clark takes us there to become better photographers. She reminds us that taking pictures is fun and fulfilling. She uses the park as both a classroom and a subject and offers a series of suggestions on where to shoot and how to get more out of our camera. Though the book emphasizes digital SLRs, her advice can help any shutterbug. And she helps us see the park in new ways. [Bill Broyles]

This "friendly guide" is also very practical. The color photographs provided as samples are in small format but well printed. Clark, a photographer who is also a teacher of photography, frequently shows multiple images of a single scene allowing her to comment on such things as color, time-of-day, framing, even season of the year. Although she is a Texan and all the samples here are from Texas, Clark's advice and suggestions would apply to nature photography anywhere. [W. David Laird]

Pidge, Texas Ranger

By Chuck Parsons. Texas A&M University Press. 200 pp. Index. \$29.95.

Parsons reprises his 1985 collection of some two dozen letters and poems published in two Austin, Texas, newspapers in 1874-75, while the author, T.C. "Pidge" Robinson, was a lieutenant in McNelly's Texas Rangers during the Taylor-Sutton feud in south-central Texas and the Cortina War along the Rio Grande. Robinson's witty correspondence, peppered with Shakespearean references and quotations from the Romantic bards, provides a unique and entertaining glimpse into frontier law enforcement. This new edition benefits from additional research that further illuminates the events "Pidge" describes, as well as his tragic death. [Bruce Dinges]

You know the subject of this Texas Ranger biography is not going to make it through the last chapter (or to his 30th birthday) alive, but the more you read, the more you want to step in, shake him, and save him from himself. In 1874, young Thomas C. Robinson fled Virginia for Texas to escape some unpleasantness with a neighbor over his sister. Joining the Texas Rangers, Robinson quickly rose to lieutenant and served through three significant campaigns, but his talents lay in recording what he experienced and witnessed. Under the penname "Pidge," he sent regular dispatches—reports, poems, parodies, articles laced with Shakespearean, poetic, Biblical, and contemporary references—to Texas newspapers. Clever, lively, often self-deprecating, they reveal a gifted wit. Unfortunately, wit couldn't trump reckless; on leave, in a fit of misbegotten chivalry, Robinson returned to confront the Virginia

neighbor, who unfortunately shot first. Historian Chuck Parson has provided excellent literary, linguistic and historic notes to support his smart, entertaining text. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Pitching for the Stars: My Seasons Across the Color Line

By Jerry Craft, Kathleen Sullivan. Texas Tech University Press. Index. \$18.95.

An interesting true story about a young white teen who was asked by the Wichita Falls/Graham Stars, an all black team to be their pitcher due to his outstanding pitching skills. Does not fit the geographic limits for a SWBY (Southwest Books of the Year) choice though. [Ann Dickinson]

Plant Life of a Desert Archipelago: Flora of the Sonoran Islands in the Gulf of California

By Richard Stephen Felger, Benjamin Theodore Wilder. University of Arizona Press. 584 pp. Index. \$65.00.

Tiburón, Nolasco, San Esteban, Mártir: these midriff islands of the Gulf of California are mysterious and alluring with stories of weird plants and seldom visited canyons. Botanists Richard Felger and Ben Wilder take us up those wild canyons as they catalogue the amazing variety of plants. It is a beautiful book, including a color folio, and full of interesting information about plants as well as Seri lore and places. With its plant keys and many photos, it can be used as an identification guide. It is now the botanical benchmark for these islands. [Bill Broyles]

Polish and Russian Arabians of Ed Tween's Brusally Ranch, The

By Tobi Lopez Taylor. Screenfold Press. 212 pp. Index. \$39.95.

From 1950 into the 1980s this Scottsdale ranch imported, bred and trained thoroughbreds. Taylor includes more than 200 photos of family, horses (of course), awards, and events. A roomful of ribbons and trophies attests to the success of the Brusally program. Each of the more than 25 award-winning horses is given a biographical sketch. [W. David Laird]

Postcards from the Río Bravo Border: Picturing the Place, Placing the Picture, 1900s-1950s

By Daniel D. Arreola. University of Texas Press. 244 pp. Index. \$40.00.

Make no mistake: although this book is about life along the Lower Rio Grande from Del Rio, Texas, to the Gulf, it could be the history of any border town along the northern Mexican line. The author, a professor at Arizona State University, has an enormous understanding of the information portrayed in period post cards, and he clearly blends the visual scenes of plazas, gateways, commercial streets, neighborhoods, and recreational attractions with an appreciation of the underlying culture and the background history. Postcards helped form public perceptions of a people and a region. I enjoyed seeing the details of clothing, autos, and signs through the decades. [Bill Broyles]

Pueblo Indians and Spanish Colonial Authority In Eighteenth-Century New Mexico

By Tracy L. Brown. University of Arizona Press. 248 pp. Index. \$55.00.

Using new evidence and fresh perspectives Tracy Brown takes a richly detailed look at how various Pueblo Indian villages responded to Spanish colonists. Her conclusions are sure to stimulate discussion.

Rage Against the Dying

By Becky Masterman. Minotaur Books. 307 pp. \$24.99.

Masterman gets the Tucson, and Southern Arizona, setting just right as her female narrator, a retired FBI agent and former undercover operative, cannot resist the chance to identify the serial killer who eluded her while she was still on active duty. As good as police procedurals get! [W. David Laird]

So, who'd have thought an acquisitions editor for medical and forensics' examiners' textbooks could write a successful thriller on her first try? On a whim (and to keep her retired husband busy), Tucsonan Masterman and said husband each pounded out a novel within a month. The character she created, a retired female FBI agent with attitude, and martial—but few domestic—arts, is called back into service to help solve a serial rapist/murderer case. She puts herself in danger and lies about it to keep peace at home, but escalating threats and perpetuating lies threaten her, others, and her marriage. With an engaging voice (the character's, in first person), lean, disciplined prose; and unflagging action, it's an impressive debut. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Railroad Avenue

By Phyllis de la Garza. Silk Label Books. 205 pp. \$14.99.

Author of more than a dozen books set in and around Willcox in southeastern Arizona where she lives, de la Garza is a fine storyteller. Her heroes are often heroines (you know what I mean), as here—at the turn of the 20th century, who face stiff challenges in a world of tough, usually mean men. Railroad Avenue runs through the heart of Willcox a town divided by the train tracks that are the very reason for the avenue's, and the town's, existence. An enjoyable story with lots of local color and some real historical figures. [W. David Laird]

Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond, Volume 1, 2nd Edition:

Guiding Principles to Welcome Rain into Your Life and Landscape

By Brad Lancaster. Rainsource Press. 304 pp. Index. \$29.95.

Brad Lancaster's enthusiasm for harvesting rainwater to use around your home is contagious. This greatly revised edition -- over 100 pages of new information, 120 new illustrations, updated case studies, new features like a harvest calendar and new charts -- will replace your dog-eared copy of its predecessor, and will expand your vision for new and better ways to make your home or business more habitable while using less precious tap water. This is a do-it-yourself book on catching and storing rooftop, household, and curbside runoff to grow shade trees and gardens. Lancaster's message has already inspired many to join the spirited conservation of water in the arid Southwest. The book is now available in Spanish and Arabic. [Bill Broyles]

Reconstructing the View: The Grand Canyon Photographs of Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe

By Stephen Pyne, Rebecca Senf. University of California Press. 208 pp. \$75.00.

The Grand Canyon? Been there, seen that." You may have thought you had, but one look at this extraordinary book will change your mind. Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe fire off photos like skyrockets on the Fourth of July, with each one drawing more "ooh"s and "ah"s than the last. Using a blend of old and new photographs, Klett and Wolfe show us the canyon as never before. Exploring the limits of camera technology, they passionately lead viewers to discovery amid dozens of reworked photos of the world famous canyon. Klett and Wolfe extend the range of what's possible and compel us to see anew. My favorites are many but "One hundred setting suns at the Grand Canyon arranged by hue" (title page), "\$1.00 worth of scenery" (pp. 12-13), and "Reconstructing the view from El Tovar to Yavapai Point using nineteen postcards" (Plate 50) are tops on my list, but it's all good. Bring your imagination and sense of humor, as well

as your awe. Essays by Rebecca Senf and Stephen Pyne add insight into both the photographers and the project, which was an exhibit at the Phoenix Art Museum -- it must have been a dandy. [Bill Broyles]

Red-Inked Retablos

By Rigoberto Gonzalez. University of Arizona Press. 140 pp. \$19.95.

Essays and pieces of memoir by an openly gay man growing up in New Mexico. An excellent writer, his observations reveal both the traditional and more modern views of the culture he grew up in and learned to live with. [W. David Laird]

Reflections of Fran Stone

By David E. Bates. Logozon Publishing, LLC. 373 pp. \$15.99.

Riding Lucifer's Line: Ranger Deaths Along the Texas-Mexico Border

By Bob Alexander. University of North Texas Press. 404 pp. Index. \$29.95.

Alexander, Bob. *Riding Lucifer's Line: Ranger Deaths along the Texas-Mexico Border*. Foreword by Byron A. Johnson, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum. Hardcover with period photographs; with extensive end-notes and bibliography. 404 pages.

Veteran lawman Bob Alexander (former special agent for the U.S Treasury Dept.) has compiled the stories of the "ultimate sacrifice" of twenty-five Texas Rangers in this book. Dividing it into two periods—the Frontier Battalion Era (1874 – 1901) and the Ranger Force Era (1901 – 1935), he devotes a chapter to the early life and then the circumstances surrounding the death of each Ranger.

Ranger Hall of Fame/ Museum Executive Director Johnson provides some historical context for the deaths' narratives, the photographs are interesting, and Alexander acknowledges the sometimes tarnished reputation of the lawmen. He seems to challenge other historians' ("mealy-mouthed") attitude toward the institution and its role in taming the borderlands (... "a bona fide frontier...between constrained civility and unchecked chaos."). Alexander writes in what the book jacket calls a "characteristic storytelling style," but could also be called cliché-ridden, and metaphor-burdened. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Right Side of Wrong, The: A Red River Mystery

By Reavis Z. Wortham. Poisoned Pen Press. 250 pp. \$14.95.

River Notes: A Natural and Human History of the Colorado

By Wade Davis. Island Press. 162 pp. Index. \$22.95.

This very well-written account is "history" in both highlights and personal experience, not in detailed, lengthy retelling of events. A pleasure to read, Davis' account would be a great introduction for anyone contemplating a trip down "our" great river of the West. [W. David Laird]

In a firsthand look at the Southwest's once mighty Colorado River, Wade Davis invokes the names of John Wesley Powell, Aldo Leopold, and Ed Abbey to plea for wild rivers and a healthy river delta. "For nearly a hundred years we have sacrificed the Colorado River on the altar of our prosperity. Surely it is time to shatter this way of thinking and recognize that the river's well-being is our prosperity." It is heartfelt reading. [Bill Broyles]

Road to Nowhere and Other New Stories from the Southwest

By Brett Garcia Myhren. University of New Mexico Press . 296 pp. \$16.96.

Put aside what you thought you knew for sure about Southwest stories and get ready for an all-new and updated view of the way we live now. Cowboys and cattle drives are so last-century for the notable authors of this fine short story collection—including Ron Carlson, Dagoberto Gilb, Paula McLain and Ron Savage-- who have replaced them with the symbols and signs of the current culture in 20 short stories, all written between 2007 and 2011. The landscape is eternal—hot, breathless, by turns serene and menacing--but it is a living backdrop that speaks to a 21st-century Southwest literary tradition and provides us with a fresh way of understanding ourselves and our shared experience. [Helene Woodhams]

Robert Newton Baskin and the Making of Modern Utah

By John Gary Maxwell. Arthur H. Clark Company. 408 pp. Index. \$45.00.

Robert Baskin was an important business and politician in pioneer Utah, even though he was not a Mormon. His controversial life is detailed in this 37th volume of the Western Frontiersmen Series.

Rules of Wolfe, The: A Border Noir

TOP PICK

By James Carlos Blake. Mysterious Press. 240 pp. \$17.92.

Readers who like mysteries that have a good “sense of place” will applaud Blake’s handling of scenes that range across the border from Mexico into Texas. But fans of action will be equally pleased as the graphic scenes of mayhem, high-speed auto chases, and a fast-moving plot keep us turning the pages at a rapid clip. [W. David Laird]

Master creator of the sympathetic outlaw, James Carlos Blake has cast another good bad boy in this “border noir.” When nineteen-year-old Eddie Gato Wolfe, a hot-headed and ambitious junior member of the Texas Wolfe crime family, tries to jump the line to promotion by joining a Mexican cartel in Sonora, he manages to defend the wrong girl, and the two have to flee north. The cartel pulls out all the stops to capture them, so Eddie and the girl are forced on foot into the desert. Blake’s narrative is drum tight: the action never flags, his signature violence is creative (consider the efficacy of punishing tipping employees by preserving them naked—and dead-- in a glass-topped vat of rum), and he includes the harsh realities of the undocumented attempting to trek across the border. A killer read. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Sagrado: A Photopoetics Across the Chicano Homeland

By Spencer R. Herrera, Levi Romero. University of New Mexico Press. 160 pp. Notes on photographs included.. \$29.95.

Where do you feel truly at home? Among family and friends, or in a certain place? Who are you? These quests arise as a condition of being human, and in this book we follow an essayist, a poet, and a photographer as they search for their homelands in Old and New Mexico. They visit with chile pickers, families, horseback charros at a funeral, descendents of Comanche captives called Genízaros, centuries-old churches, graveyards, and a Yaqui poet at a historic mission. Among the common and worldly, they find sagrado – the sacred – wherever “two or more people gather in the name of community.” The blend of poems, essays, and photographs is a compelling swirl of color, laments of lives “going upward on a downhill road,” vatos locos, and faith in tomorrow, and the result confirms Hispanic pride and roots. Que viva! [Bill Broyles]

Scratchgravel Road

By Tricia Fields. Minotaur Books. 308 pp. \$24.99.

A body in the desert, a decommissioned nuclear weapons plant, torrential rain, and two endangered women are just a few of the problems confronting small-town police chief Josie Gray. Fields, whose debut novel "The Territory" won the Tony Hillerman Prize, stretches her wings in this nifty police procedural set in the West Texas borderlands. Fans of Nevada Barr and J.A. Jance will welcome Gray to the sorority of tough, smart, and empathetic female detectives. [Bruce Dinges]

Things are getting hot for small town police chief Josie Grey, and it's not because of the oppressive summer heat in the tiny Texas town of Artemis. A dead body scarred with mysterious lesions, a heat stroke victim who won't—or can't--- say why she was out wandering in the desert, and a nuclear power plant clean-up company with a hidden agenda are all adding up to something beyond business as usual—and when the torrential rains threaten to unleash decades of nuclear waste stored at the old power plant, things really get interesting. Tricia Fields delivers a very readable yarn with plenty of plot twists in this second outing for Chief Josie Grey, first introduced in the Hillerman Award-winner "The Territory." [Helene Woodhams]

Searchers, The: The Making of an American Legend

By Glenn Frankel. Bloomsbury USA. 416 pp. Index. \$28.00.

Frankel tosses a broad loop as he describes how history, art, and popular culture intersect in the iconic 1956 John Ford motion picture based on the captivity of Cynthia Ann Parker and filmed in Monument Valley. The result is mesmerizing and instructive as Frankel sets the historical stage, examines the Alan LeMay novel adapted for the screen, describes the complex relationship between director Ford and actor John Wayne, follows the course of filming in Navajo country, provides an appraisal of the movie that consistently ranks among the top five Hollywood westerns, and firmly fixes its place in the American psyche. This is both a masterpiece of film criticism and a thoughtful examination of how legends are made. [Bruce Dinges]

Simple Dreams: A Musical Memoir

TOP PICK

By Linda Ronstadt. Simon & Schuster. 256 pp. Index. \$26.00.

So, apparently there's more to getting to Carnegie Hall...or Madison Square Garden than "practice, practice, practice." That girl from Tucson who became a huge rock star did the practice thing, but she was also smart and consideredxx about the route she took through her career. In addition to tracing her own career trajectory, Ronstadt celebrates the work of other musicians and discusses the nature of music in this memoir.

To her credit, Ronstadt wrote the book herself-- her prose very accessible--tumbling, descriptive, sometimes politically tinged, very like her speaking voice. She writes of her childhood in Tucson, of the music traditions of her Mexican-American family, the roots in performing in local venues; of her move to LA instead of going to the UA; of the heady musical environment of the sixties, and of how she went from being part of a band to solo girl singer...and then versatile star, as she crossed genres, and ventured out of rock into musical theater, American standards, opera, and mariachi. She doesn't dish (well, aside from one unattractive portrayal of a drunken Jim Morrison), doesn't take us into her famous romantic partnerships, but the memoir reveals a musician appreciative of other musicians, and a serious student of musical styles, forms, and expressions. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Sister Rabbit's Tricks

By Emmett "Shkeme" Garcia. University of New Mexico Press. 40 pp. \$18.95.

This trickster tale is inspired by one of the many rabbit stories of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico. While I enjoyed the story, I was put off by the amateur illustrations so will not pick it as a SWBY. [Ann Dickinson]

Smoke Signals: Native Cinema Rising

By Joanna Hearne. University of Nebraska Press. 242 pp. Index. \$30.00.

Building a strong case for the strength of new movies starring and/or produced by Native Americans, Hearne builds her arguments around the 1998 hit "Smoke Signals". [W. David Laird]

Son of a Gun: A Memoir

TOP PICK

By Justin St. Germain. Random House. 242 pp. Memoir. \$26.00.

In the late summer of 2001, Debbie St. Germain was brutally murdered by her fifth husband in their trailer outside Tombstone, Arizona. In his soul-searching memoir, Debbie's son sifts through the shards of his mother's tragic life for clues to her death and to make sense out of his own fractured childhood. More than just another meditation on personal loss, this stubbornly unsentimental book, spun out against the backdrop of Tombstone's glorification of Wyatt Earp and the O.K. Corral gunfight, is a sobering commentary on unmoored personalities and the violent mythology of the Old West. [Bruce Dinges]

Ten years after his mother was shot to death by her unstable fifth husband in the desert outside of Tombstone, Justin St. Germain returned to the Southwest to try and make sense of the tragedy. No apologist for her unconventional lifestyle or her penchant for unsuitable and sometimes violent men, St. Germain instead ponders how his mother's life (and his own dysfunctional childhood, by extension) might have been different had she made other choices. Most tellingly, would she have escaped death at the hand of an angry man had she not opted to live in a town that celebrates its culture of gunplay, anger and violence? Rather than allowing her passing to be dismissed as "...a real old Wild West murder," as it was characterized by the local news affiliate, the author offers a clear-eyed portrait of a woman who tried to be tougher than her surroundings. With deft prose and the even-handedness born of a decade of retrospection, St. Germain makes an interesting case for the way the mythology we allow to define us as a community can impact the way we live and, tragically for some, the way we die. [Helene Woodhams]

Son, The

By Philipp Meyer. Ecco/HarperCollins Publisher. 561 pp. \$27.99.

Eli McCullough, born in the year of Texas independence, learns a fundamental lesson from the people who killed his family and took him captive as a child: "It had become clear to me that the lives of the rich and famous were not so different from the lives of the Comanches: you did what you pleased and answered to no one." In this breathtakingly original novel, Meyer explodes our cherished myths of frontier settlement as Eli amasses a fortune in cattle and oil, leaving a finely crafted cast of McCullough descendants to deal with the consequences of an old man's obsession. With humor and pathos, Meyer challenges the American dream of wealth and power and assesses the cost of success for the winners and losers. [Bruce Dinges]

Philipp Meyer takes history by the horns this epic saga of the McCulloughs, a family dynasty descended from the first white male born in the newly-established Republic of Texas. Through the simultaneously-told accounts of patriarch Eli, his grandson, Peter, and his great-great-granddaughter, Jeanne, the mythology of the American West is parsed to reveal the resilience and determination of the players, but also (and more importantly) the unfathomable greed, racism and awful violence that marked the struggle for dominance. Kidnapped by Comanches as a boy, pragmatic Eli

knows no particular loyalty, raiding with his native captors as freely as with the Rangers. By contrast, Peter is handicapped by his own humanity and rendered a family outcast, and Jeanne eschews fulfilling relationships in her dogged pursuit of recognition in a business world blind to women. Guggenheim Award-winner Meyer delivers an account that is as mesmerizing as it is harrowing. [Helene Woodhams]

Southwest Aquatic Habitats: On the Trail of Fish in a Desert

By Daniel Shaw. University of New Mexico Press. 112 pp. Index. Barbara Guth Worlds of Wonder Science Series for Young Readers. \$34.95.

It has been many moons since I was a young reader, but I confess to enjoying books with larger print and happy stories. So please make no complaint that I had fun reading this book about youngsters discovering fish, doing chemistry, and paddling rafts in Southwest ponds and streams. The experiments and concepts provide a good foundation for rookies of any age. I hope I'm never too old to learn about isopods, gar fish, streamflow, mayflies, and indicator species. Even know-it-alls will find a good review of the basics here. [Bill Broyles]

Spider Woman's Daughter

By , Anne Hillerman. HarperCollins. 320 pp. \$25.99.

Picking up where her late father Tony left off, Hillerman gives us a new episode in the Leaphorn and Chee stories. Her first novel (she has published several other books) starts with a bang, literally, as Officer Bernadette Manuelito (now Mrs. Jim Chee) watches helplessly through a restaurant window as Lieutenant Leaphorn is gunned down in a parking lot. Hillerman has room for improvement to become the magnificent storyteller her father was, but this is a good start in that development. [W. David Laird]

Strong Rain Falling

By Jon Land. Forge Books. 368 pp. A Caitlin Strong novel.. \$25.99.

Sunland

By Don Waters. University of Nevada Press. 208 pp. \$25.95.

He's unemployed and broken-hearted, but Sid Dulaney's no criminal and he certainly didn't set out to be a drug runner when he left Massachusetts and his two-timing girlfriend and came back to Tucson to care for his Grandma. But the rent for his beloved Grandma's assisted living won't pay itself, so to keep her in comfort he makes regular forays into Mexico to smuggle out cut-rate medications for her quirky neighbors in the retirement village. Sid is an anti-hero for our times, flying beneath the Border Patrol' radar in an un-air conditioned Honda Civic while dodging a decidedly off-beat Mexican drug lord, all for the most compassionate of reasons. Dan Waters, winner of the Iowa Short Fiction Award, offers a first novel rich in quirky characters and gentle humor, and it's a charming and very readable take on filial love triumphant. [Helene Woodhams]

Tainted Mountain

By Shannon Baker. Midnight Ink. 345 pp. \$14.99.

Readers of romance-fiction who want their heroines tough, their heroes ruggedly handsome and their geographical settings accurate will enjoy Baker's tale of a ski lift in northern Arizona that is in serious trouble; too little snow, too much interference from in-laws and too much hostility from the nearby Hopi tribe. [W. David Laird]

Telling Border Life Stories

By Donna M. Kabalen de Bichara. Texas A&M University Press. 238 pp. Index. \$60.

Humanities professor Donna M. Kabalen De Bichara shares with us a detailed discussion of four female autobiographers – Jovita González, Cleofas Jaramillo, Eva Antonio Wilbur-Cruce, and Mary Helen Ponce – who were rooted in the Southwest borderlands. She argues that they “merit a deep analysis of purpose and perspective,” as well as applause for using autobiography, a genre that traditionally excluded women. Bonus discussions involve literary criticism and the form of autobiography. The book is the latest in the Rio Grande/Río Grande Borderlands Culture and Traditions series. [Bill Broyles]

Texas Chili? Oh My!

By Patricia Vermillion. Texas Christian University Press. 40 pp. \$21.95.

The Texas version of 'The Three Little Pigs'. Trickster Coyote is the villain and three little armadillos as the three pigs.

I like the bright yellow textured end papers in the book and I liked the story line but didn't care for the illustrations. Too cartoonish. Not recommended. [Ann Dickinson]

The Night Detectives: A David Mapstone Mystery

By Jon Talton. Poisoned Pen Press. 250 pp. \$14.95.

Historian-turned-sleuth David Mapstone and his partner, former Maricopa County sheriff Mike Peralta, hit the shimmering Phoenix freeways in an adrenaline-fueled hunt for the killers of a high-priced call girl. Talton, a former Arizona Republic columnist, knows the urban desert terrain and delivers scathing commentary on twenty-first century Phoenix in this tightly plotted thriller delivered in lean, muscular prose. A side-trip to San Diego allows Talton to make some biting comparisons. Fans of this popular series will not be disappointed. [Bruce Dinges]

They Call Me a Hero: A Memoir of My Youth

By Daniel Hernandez. Simon & Schuster. 224 pp. \$17.99.

Daniel Hernandez, the young political intern who provided first aid to Congressional Representative Gabrielle Giffords after her shooting, steps forward to tell his story.

Written with a teen audience in mind but would be appreciated by adults as well. [Ann Dickinson]

Time and Time Again: History, Rephotography, and Preservation in the Chaco World

By Peter Goin, Lucy R. Lippard. Museum of New Mexico Press. 224 pp. Index. \$39.95.

The Ancient Puebloan culture of the larger Chaco World, including Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde, provides a fascinating look at both ancient history and living people and places. In this book writer Lucy Lippard and photographer Peter Goin discuss the meaning of time, the purpose of repeat photography, and the advisability of preservation and restoration of archaeological sites such as Chaco and Mesa Verde. The final chapter is titled “No Conclusions.” [Bill Broyles]

Time of Change, A

By Aimee Thurlo, David Thurlo. Forge Books. 352 pp. \$24.99.

The Thurlo team's novels, more than 30 published so far, but who's counting, are set in Navajo country. Over the years the storylines have shifted from what we might call "straight mysteries" (e.g., the Sister Agatha series) to mysteries that also qualify as romances. In this latest, a soldier comes home for his murdered father's funeral and finds himself working with an old flame who has been his father's best employee. When the police seem less than interested in finding the killer, these two try to do what the cops don't care about, and there's that old attraction too! Slick writing make this a page-turner. [W. David Laird]

Tracking the Texas Rangers: The Twentieth Century

By Harold J., Jr. Weiss. University of North Texas Press. 320 pp. Index. \$29.95.

Tracks and Shadows: Field Biology as Art

By Harry W. Greene. University of California Press. 296 pp. Index. \$29.95.

If for one moment you have been intrigued by the lizards and snakes of our Southwest, then you'll be fascinated by Harry Greene's book on the joys of being a field biologist. With affable humor and abiding curiosity, he takes us on collecting trips, wisely explains the latest theories, and asks how we can not only co-exist with wild animals but appreciate them as neighbors. Part memoir, part classroom, part adventure, Tracks and Shadows takes us from detailed looks at the habits of reptiles to enticing discussions of predator and prey, nature and loss, science and discovery. Billed as an "eccentric meditation on natural history," this is a rousing and satisfying tribute to wild things. [Bill Broyles]

Un-Common Raven, The: One Smart Bird

By Diane Phelps Budden. Red Rock Mountain Press LLC. 32 pp. \$11.95.

A well researched and well written children's book about ravens. This book includes facts about where ravens live - the Sonoran desert, their flight patterns, intelligence, curiosity. We learn about raven's characteristics including; they are toolmakers, scavengers, they mate for life, etc.

Written for school age children and includes index, glossary, and bibliography. Excellent choice for student research and grade school homework assignments. [Ann Dickinson]

Under the Eagle: Samuel Holiday, Navajo Code Talker

By Samuel Holiday, Robert S. McPherson. University of Oklahoma Press. 288 pp. \$19.95.

Awareness of the contributions of the Navajo Code Talkers has greatly increased in recent years thanks to films and books about their heroic wartime achievements. This book-length oral history by one of the last surviving Code Talkers is unique in that the author presents, in his own words, considerations of the cultural implications that combat, and life in the aftermath of the Second World War, held for Navajo soldiers.

Unflinching Courage: Pioneering Women Who Shaped Texas

By Kay Bailey Hutchison. HarperCollins. 384 pp. Index. \$27.99.

It's interesting to learn as one reads Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison's history of Texas women that Texas is "a country that became the greatest state in America"; that its character has been shaped by rising up "against the Mexican dictator Santa Anna," and that "a combination of military action and peace policies ... encouraged the Indians to abandon their nomadic ways of life and move onto reservations," freeing the land for Anglo settlement. In fact, Jane Long is considered the "mother of Texas," because, in following her husband to Texas to "free it from Spain," she gave birth to the first white baby born in the newly declared independent republic.

Hutchison's book presumes a sort of Lone Star manifest destiny with which some readers might find themselves at odds. Nonetheless, she does present a readable book. It's logically organized, it provides historical context for its twenty-five individual life stories, and it includes the kind of detail that can bring historic characters to life. [Christine Wald-Hopkins]

Utah's Canyon Country Place Names (2 vols)

By Steve Allen. Canyon Country Press. 474 pp. Index. \$99.95.

From Abajo Mountains to Zion and Zwahlen Wash, follow Steve Allen through 4,000 place names of Utah's canyon country, including Zion, Bryce, Arches, Glen Canyon, Escalante, Canyonlands, and some in Arizona. He has explored many of these places on foot or by car. This beautiful 2-volume set is an armchair explorer's delight and fascinating invitation to find those secret places named by Native Americans, explorers, pioneers, cowboys, and prospectors. It isn't much of a plot but it is a whale of a read. Pick a page, any page, and enjoy the fruit of Allen's 40-year labor. You'll find new reasons to visit – and love – canyon country. [Bill Broyles]

Victor, the Reluctant Vulture

TOP PICK FOR KIDS

By Jonathan Hanson. Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Press. 35 pp. \$16.95.

Victor and Vinnie are vulture brothers who don't like the 'barf food' that the rest of the birds find dead on the road, so Victor tries to hunt like the red-tailed hawks instead—but he crashes. He tries to hunt like a falcon but he flies out of control, and then he tries to hunt like a Harris hawk but collides with his vulture friends. His mother and the other raptors help the young turkey vulture learn that he plays an important role in nature by cleaning up carrion and dead creatures from roadsides, and Victor slowly changes his mind about what he is willing to eat. This book includes extensive end notes describing southwestern wildlife and a glossary. It is also available in Spanish as *Victor, el Zopilote Renuente*.

A beautifully illustrated picture book written for older children about Victor, a southwestern vulture who has some doubts about his role in life. He doesn't really want to be a vulture and would rather fly as a raptor, eagle or hawk. He tries hunting and keeps on crashing and colliding with other bird friends.

After a nightmare about stench filled carcasses and a visit from raptor bird friends who thank him for his job cleaning up carrion, Victor feels better and gets to work eating roadkill. [Ann Dickinson]

Viva Tequila!: Cocktails, Cooking, and Other Agave Adventures

By , Lucinda Hutson. University of Texas Press. Index. Includes Internet Resources. \$34.95.

Walk Around the Horizon, A: Discovering New Mexico's Mountains of the Four Directions

By Tom Harmer. University of New Mexico Press . 216 pp. \$24.95.

When the Devil Doesn't Show

By Christine Barber. Minotaur Books. 288 pp. \$24.99.

Barber packs a lot of Santa Fe and northern New Mexico scenery and history into this murder mystery. Three men are dead, killed before their house was torched, and Detective Gil Montoya follows leads to that still top-secret place, the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Mystery fans who like a regional flavor will be delighted with this one. [W. David Laird]

The sights, sounds, smells, and taste of northern New Mexico flavor this crisp police procedural set during the festivities leading up to Christmas. When three bound and mutilated bodies turn up in a house fire, Santa Fe police detective Gil Montoya at first suspects a hate crime until the evidence leads him to Los Alamos National Laboratory and something more sinister. A cast of likeable characters and Barber's obvious love of native and Hispanic history and folklore make for an enjoyable read. [Bruce Dinges]

Where They Bury You

By Steven W. Kohlhagen. Sunstone Press. 344 pp. \$32.95 hardcover; 24.95 paperback.

The Civil War in the Southwest, Kit Carson's Navajo Campaign, and the mysterious death of Maj. Joseph Cummings provide the charged backdrop for this fast-paced novel of fraud and murder on the turbulent western frontier. Kohlhagen knows his history and concocts a plausible story about a gang of con artists, tied to Arizona politician and mine owner Sylvester Mowry, who infiltrate the Union high command during the Confederate invasion of New Mexico and Arizona. A reader's guide poses discussion points for better understanding historical issues and their relation to the fictional world he has created. [Bruce Dinges]

Kohlhagen has touched many of the bases that connect Arizona to the Civil War in this page-turner of a novel. And although it is his first published long fiction, he demonstrates remarkable skill with both description and dialog, letting the latter tell most of the story as the words come from Kit Carson, Major General Edward Canby and even Apache leader Cochise when they speak for themselves. [W. David Laird]

Winter of the Metal People: The Untold Story of America's First Indian War

By Dennis Herrick. Sunbury Press. 244 pp. \$16.95.

A fictionalized retelling of the Coronado expedition into the Southwest. [W. David Laird]

Witches of Ruidoso, The

By John Sandoval. Pinata Books. 107 pp. \$12.95.

Wraiths of the Broken Land

By S. Craig Zahler. Raw Dog Screaming Press. 256 pp. \$14.95.

The setting: the southern border of frontier-era New Mexico. The storyline: a small group of tough men sets out to find two stolen girls. The descriptions: brutal, with graphic violence. Zahler's background includes work as a cinematographer and this book, with characters sporting names like Patch Up and Deep Lakes, seems to be aimed at becoming the basis for a movie script. This tale is for readers with a taste for blood and guts. [W. David Laird]

Wrath of Cochise, The: The Bascom Affair and the Origins of the Apache Wars

By Terry Mort. Pegasus Books. 322 pp. Index. \$27.95.

Wyatt Earp: A Vigilante Life

By Andrew Isenberg. Hill and Wang. 320 pp. Index. \$30.00.

Isenberg, a history professor at Temple University, brings a facile pen and a scholar's critical sensibility to this portrait of the iconic western lawman as frontier rounder with a keen eye for the main chance and a boundless talent for reinvention. What separates this book from the thundering herd of Earp biographies is Isenberg's ability to frame his subject within the context of nineteenth-century notions of honor, masculinity, class, social mobility, and emerging media culture. [Bruce Dinges]

Books by, for and about the West. An incredible selection of books, maps, activities and keepsakes for all ages. The atmosphere is very kid friendly and my three year old is at home on the carpet or the little table in the back looking at books while I peruse titles with my nine year old. This is a great place for birthday presents or to just browse and find your next favorite read. [See More.](#)