To his credit, the author does not attempt to dumb down the subject matter, but rather challenges the reader to delve deeper. Exploring the author’s STARS Web site (www.astro.uiuc.edu/~kaler/sow/sowlist.html) is one way to do this.

This outstanding and unique star encyclopedia is a reference work that should be a part of every academic library. It would be a rich addition to public and secondary school libraries as well.—Nancy F. Carter, Math/Physics Librarian Emeritus, University Libraries, University of Colorado, Boulder


“Numbers running.” Law enforcement agencies, officers, practices, programs, failures, and successes are briefly described in Newton’s The Encyclopedia of American Law Enforcement. This work contains “profiles of 149 law enforcement agencies, short biographies of 362 significant individuals, 20 descriptions of famous or notorious incidents, and 119 essays on general subjects” (vi).

“To serve and protect.” The 654 entries range in length from a paragraph to two pages. They are factual, well-written, and arranged alphabetically by name or topic. No topic is addressed extensively in a single entry. The two-page Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) item only scratches the surface. Fortunately, the index brings together all FBI references and does the same for other entities and topics.

“Internal affairs.” Black-and-white photographs and illustrations—many from the author’s collection—are scattered throughout the volume. A state-by-state directory of police academies and a list of federal, state, and selected local police department Web sites serve as appendixes. The five-page bibliography identifies more than 250 books, including ten of Newton’s own works.

“Just the facts, ma’am.” Topics do not stray far from the real world. Dick Tracy, Andy Taylor, Sgt. Joe Friday, Cagney and Lacey, and their colleagues from Hawaii Five-O, NYPD Blue, The Streets of San Francisco, and the like are The Unmentionables.

“Repeat offender.” Newton is a prolific author. His encyclopedic knowledge of crime has produced encyclopedias on conspiracies, FBI, high-tech crime, kidnapping, the Ku Klux Klan, serial killers, and unsolved crimes published by Checkmark Books, Facts On File, Garland, McFarland, Writer’s Digest Books, and others. He also writes true crime books, action adventure novels, and westerns.

“Book ‘em, Danno!” The absence of subject-specific sources limits this encyclopedia’s use as a reference work in larger academic and specialized collections. Broader coverage, greater depth, and scholarly treatment by a wide range of experts and educators are found in Joshua Dressler’s Encyclopedia of Crime & Justice, 2d ed. (Macmillan Reference USA, 2002) and The Encyclopedia of Police Science (Routledge, 2007).

“Cut to the chase.” The Encyclopedia of American Law Enforcement delivers concise information on key and lesser-