Reference Books

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The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Stars. By James B. Kaler. New York: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2006. 324p. $60 (ISBN 978-0-521-810803-2).

This handsome, large-format (9" by 11") book contains nearly all you ever wanted to know about stars, including what is known and what is not known. Although called an encyclopedia, it has a nontraditional, nonalphabetical format that consists of fourteen sectioned chapters, each of which begins with a short explanation that touches on the history, importance, and placement of the chapter subject matter in the overall study of stars. Each chapter's logical progression treats one aspect of stellar astronomy and, with backward and forward references, stands alone. The book contains beautiful color images and clear, informative graphs and charts. The first chart is a four-page list of information about the known constellations.

The book begins with star knowledge of ancient times and proceeds through constellations, star names, location, magnitude, distance, spectra, types of stars, and stellar evolution. Background and peripheral material is placed throughout the text in blocked sidebars. The appendix contains the Messier Catalog, lists of brightest and nearest stars, and chemical composition of the sun.

This encyclopedia is authored, not edited, by Kaler, professor emeritus of astronomy at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Throughout his career, Kaler has been awarded medals and fellowships, and has had an asteroid named after him for his outreach work. He has written several books on astronomy and has a long-standing interest in science education. Based on the author's expertise, a page of further reading substitutes for a bibliography, followed by an extensive index.

Its uniqueness as well as its quality make this a useful reference book. There exist numerous dictionaries and encyclopedias on astronomy, but no recent one of stars alone. The more recent encyclopedias include Patrick Moore's *Astronomy Encyclopedia* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 2002), Joseph Angelo's *Encyclopedia of Space and Astronomy* (Facts On File, 2006), and Paul Murdin's four-volume *Encyclopedia of Astronomy and Astrophysics* (Institute of Physics, 2001). All have the usual alphabetical format. There also are a few encyclopedias targeted toward secondary schools, but none that resemble this work.

The preface to *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Stars* does not specifically target an audience except to declare that there is useful material for both beginners and the more advanced. There are parts that can be enjoyed by the layperson or the beginner. However, this is a complicated subject that can be made available to the casual reader only up to a point. Then a knowledge of mathematics and physics becomes essential. 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*

The Encyclopedia of American Law Enforcement. By Michael Newton. New York: Facts On File, 2007. 432p. alkaline $75 (ISBN 978-0-8160-6290-4).

"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-