

Reference Books

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Editor

Berkshire Encyclopedia of Extreme Sports. Ed. by Douglas Booth and Holly Thorpe. Great Barrington, Mass.: Berkshire, 2007. 404p. alkaline \$125 (ISBN 978-0-9770159-5-5).

As noted by editors Douglas Booth and Holly Thorpe, extreme sports are about more than risk taking, rule breaking, or having fun. Extreme sports “are also a major cultural, commercial, and media phenomenon” (ix) of increasing global interest. Booth and Thorpe, both professors in the Department of Sport and Leisure Studies at the University of Waikato, New Zealand, and avid surfers and snowboarders, provide the first serious survey of extreme sports. An outgrowth of the *Berkshire Encyclopedia of World Sport* (2005), *Berkshire Encyclopedia of Extreme Sports* offers multifaceted coverage of its topic, reporting on the sports and athletes on the surface of extreme sports (including such practical information as the “Rules of Mountain Bike Racing”), and also delving into underlying concepts and issues, such as history, philosophy, psychology and sociology. For example, the volume contains a lengthy essay on the *Agon Motif*, tracing the concept of competitive struggle from its origins in ancient Greece to its role in contemporary education.

Comprising 114 signed, alphabetically arranged entries by sports experts, the encyclopedia covers fifty types of extreme sports, provides biographies of thirty notable athletes, profiles nine sporting venues, and discusses many relevant social issues. The sports covered range from the less extreme (“Ballooning” and “Scuba Diving”) to the very extreme (“Extreme Ironing” and “Ultimate Fighting”). The entries are comprehensive, as exemplified by the entry for BASE jumping, which includes sections on technical issues, history, community, legal issues, jumping locations and events, and the future direction of the sport. The biographies are brief and less comprehensive, introducing and highlighting the achievements of extreme sports athletes, many of whom are likely unknown to the average reader, although most would recognize daredevil Evel Kneivel and snow/skate boarder Shaun White. Among the venues discussed, the ESPN-produced X Games receives substantial coverage for its role in bringing extreme sports to the attention of a large mainstream audience. The volume also provides essays on several intriguing social issues. Among these are essays on “Whiteness and Extreme Sports” (most extreme athletes are white) and “Initiation/Hazing” (includes a photograph of a man participating in the common initiation ritual of “shotgunning” a beer). Sidebars are used throughout to highlight related concepts, such as extreme tourism, and to point out statistics, such as avalanche fatalities. Entries conclude with sometimes-lengthy lists of references for further reading that also include works cited within the entries. Some entries also have cross-references.

The volume includes several finding aids: a detailed and useful index, an alphabetical list of entries, and a less useful “Reader’s Guide,” which would have served as a topical index if page numbers had been included. The editors state that the design of their book “reflects the unpredictability and daring” (xii) of their subject, but their design for the most part is tame, with black-and-white photographs appearing throughout. The use of mirrored page numbers on odd numbered pages comes off as more unsettling than extreme.

Like a telecast of an extreme sporting event, the encyclopedia opens with a disclaimer warning that without proper training the activities described within can be dangerous. The disclaimer is warranted, as the *Berkshire Encyclopedia of Extreme Sports* is likely to appeal as much to prospective extreme sport athletes as it will to students and scholars. Characterizing the complex, multivariate experience of extreme sports, this work is a welcome addition to the reference literature, bringing together comprehensive information about a new and developing genre of sports and speaking to the needs and interests of a wide range of readers. This title is recommended for high school, public, and academic libraries, especially for those with significant sports collections.—Kenneth Burhanna, Head, Instructional Services, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

British Film Noir Guide. By Michael F. Keaney. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2008. 269p. alkaline \$55 (ISBN 978-0-7864-3805-1).

It is well-known that the term *film noir* originated with French critics who used it to describe certain Hollywood films of the 1940s and early 1950s—films that are characterized stylistically by dark tones and night scenes and thematically by ambivalent protagonists and a sense of fatalism. The so-called film noir bible, Alain Silver’s and Elizabeth Ward’s *Film Noir: An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style* (Overlook, 1979) claims that film noir is “an indigenous American form” and that it is a “unique example of a wholly American film style” (1). Since that book’s publication in 1979, other critics have argued for a more expansive noir canon that includes many European influences (in particular, gothic horror and German Expressionism) that are important precursors to the “classic” film noir style. Michael Keaney, author of *Film Noir Guide: 745 Films of the Classic Era, 1940–1959* (McFarland, 2003), agrees that film noir is not exclusively a product of the U.S. film industry and his work adds to the growing literature in support of this claim. Audiences familiar with the quintessential noir films such as *Out of the Past* or *The Maltese Falcon* might be surprised at Keaney’s inclusion of such a film as the lush Technicolor production of *Black Narcissus* (which was given a rating of 4½ stars out of 5), but if two of the primary characteristics of the film noir genre are the cynical, pessimistic hero and the femme fatale, then the entry is certainly justified.

Included in this work are 369 British films produced between 1937 and 1964. The guide is arranged in alphabetical order by the original British title, and each entry includes the

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U.S. release title (if different), followed by the production company, director, cinematographer, screenwriter, and main actors. Each entry is enhanced by a memorable quote from the film, a rating based on the five-star system, and a brief synopsis of the film with author commentary.

Researchers will also find useful appendixes categorizing films by rating, release date, director, and cinematographer, as well as a selected bibliography and index. As there is no treatment this extensive for exclusively British films in this genre, this work is recommended for public and academic libraries supporting a film studies collection.—*Robin Imhof, Reference Librarian, University of the Pacific, Stockton, California*

Career Opportunities in the Internet, Video Games, and Multimedia. By Allan Taylor and James R. Parish. New York: Ferguson, 2008. 384p. acid free \$49.50 (ISBN 978-0-8160-6314-7).

The bible for basic career planning has long been the U.S. Bureau of Labor's annual *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (available in print and free online). The *Handbook* provides information on qualifications needed for particular jobs, the future outlook for those jobs, and expected salaries. It deals with broad job categories, such as computer programmer, and not subsets, such as specific types of programmers. That's where this volume comes in. This reference book provides career opportunity data for eighty-two positions in multimedia, the Internet, and the video-gaming world.

The book is divided into four main sections: The Internet and the Web; Video Games; Multimedia and Consumer Electronics; and Multimedia and Education. Each of these four sections is then further arranged by a variety of applicable subsections, such as programming, sales, audio, design, management, and production. Each entry is headed by a brief career profile that abstracts the key information from the full entry. The entry text itself is broken down into consistent categories: position description; salaries; advancement prospects; education and training; experience, skills and personality traits; unions and associations; and tips for entry.

As noted above, the structure is very similar to *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, but here the approach is a bit more personable and the job listings are more precise. For example, the reader will find video games animator, video games composer, game tester, e-commerce strategy manager, Web security manager, and even media specialist librarian. By the way, the media specialist librarian has fair to good job prospects but poor to fair advancement and a wide salary range (\$29,000–\$70,000).

Four appendixes list educational institutions with related programs, pertinent directories and periodicals, professional organizations, and useful websites. The book also includes a glossary, a bibliography, and an index.

The authors gathered their information from their own experiences in the business; interviews with professionals; and facts, surveys, and reports from job data banks and federal and educational sources. The book is obviously aimed

at high school and college students trying to imagine working in a world like the one they already know from their daily lives. It is clear, concise, detailed, and authoritative. The only caveat would be whether it will be updated in the future. Recommended for all school and public libraries.—*John Maxymuk, Reference Librarian, Rutgers University, Camden, New Jersey*

Debt Information for Teens. Ed. by Karen Bellenir. Teen Finance Series. Detroit, Michigan: Omnigraphics, 2008. 413p. alkaline \$58 (ISBN 978-0-7808-0989-5).

As a part of the Teen Finance Series, this book provides information to young adults on the responsible use of debt as a financial tool. It begins with a look at the way our country's economic policies affect our society in general and teens in particular. Next is an in-depth look at the use and abuse of credit and methods for preventing and resolving credit problems. The volume concludes with supplementary material on credit statistics, a list of financial literacy resources, and a bibliography of additional reading.

In a similar manner with the other volumes in this series, this title includes inserted materials—"Quick Tips" and "It's a Fact!"—and is a compilation of straightforward information previously published by a variety of sources, including the U.S. Department of Education, the Federal Trade Commission, the National Consumers League, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The format of the text makes it easy for readers to find answers to specific questions related to debt and credit as well as to see the larger context of the situation.

Many fine books dealing with financial matters for young people are available. Some speak directly to teens while others address parents and include tips for raising fiscally responsible children. Most, however, are an overview of finances in general. The title under review is specific to the areas of debt and credit.

Money: Getting It, Using It, and Avoiding the Traps: The Ultimate Teen Guide by Robin F. Brancato (Scarecrow, 2007) is an example of an appealing book written for teens. Its goal is to help teens use their money well, and it contains pertinent anecdotes and photographs.

Another title aimed at teen readers is *SpendRight . . . The Smart Start for Students* by Craig and Lisa Feeley (CMK, 2005). Its motivational approach advises that young adults have the choice to be financially fit and that being smart about money is fun. The workbook sections provide reader interaction.

Smart Money: How to Manage Your Cash by Danielle Denega (Franklin Watts, 2008) is part of the Scholastic Choices Series and provides teens with brief and very accessible advice on spending, saving, and debt, described in a case study format.

There are a good number of books aimed at parents of teenagers. *Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How Not to be Your Child's ATM* by Nathan Dungan (Wiley, 2003) emphasizes the effects of mass marketing on children and teens while helping