

# Rowse Reviews

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included. The cumulative issue for year 2001 as  
well as back issues for the year 2000 are posted  
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## Comment

We continue to receive bushels of books in the  
new age spiritual guidance and personal mem-  
oir category. Most don't get reviewed. Our nar-  
cissism tolerance level is pretty low. And while  
most of these efforts are earnest and well in-  
tended the content level of bovine fertilizer is  
quite high. There may be a market for such effu-  
sions, but not here.

In our view people should not contemplate their  
navel in print, nor offer mawkish maunderings  
and pretend they constitute sound advice.

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## Fiction

### Crime Holy Orders

William Redding

Writers Club Press (Imprint of IUniverse) 2000

Paperback 6 x 8 5/8 inches, 427 pp, \$19.95

ISBN 0595001602

☆☆☆☆

The police procedural is a tough book to write. Former cop William Redding has come up with a four star jim dandy his first time in print. The characters are real, the atmosphere authentic, and the writing crisp. Redding is right now ready to be ranked with the masters of the genre. Not a lurid as Ed McBain, he nevertheless holds the reader from the first corpse to the last wise-crack. There is some sex, a little gore, a fair amount of scandal and a plot that is deceptively straightforward. Forget about the imprint; Redding carries his credentials in his prose and his characterizations. We want to see his next book.



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### CULLETON EDITORIAL SERVICES



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### Exposé In the Name of Help

Diane Klein

Laguna Coast Books 2000

Paperback 5 1/4 x 8 inches 325 pp. \$13.00

Laguna Coast Books  
P. O. Box 2086  
Laguna Hills, CA 92654  
[info@lagunacoast.com](mailto:info@lagunacoast.com)  
[www.lagunacoast.com](http://www.lagunacoast.com)  
877-717-2665  
FAX 949-425-0473

ISBN 0-9678552-0-9

☆☆☆

If you view current psychiatric practice with trust and affection don't read this book. This classic exposé paints a disturbingly dark picture of current conditions. The heroine is genuinely ill, and is seriously put upon by a brutal husband, venal officials and others in a large cast of villains.

*In the Name of Help* is blessed with vigorous writing, but burdened with abrupt changes of personal viewpoint and a tendency to tell us about the story instead of telling us the story. The author needs to do a bit of work to clean up these stylistic quirks in her next effort.

This novel is also a good example of the "damsel in distress" genre. It is clearly a women's book, with the attention to detail of dress and appearance that satisfies that audience. Perhaps the heroine is a bit too beautiful, the villains too stereotypically villainous, the plot a bit too melodramatic. Nevertheless this book will find its audience. Hopefully that audience has a strong stomach. We do not suggest *In the Name of Help* for the squeamish.



**Confessions of a Dope Dealer**

Sheldon Norberg

North Mountain Publishing 2000

Paperback 5 1/4 x 8 inches 325 pp. \$13.00

North Mountain Publishing  
 P.O. Box 225265  
 San Francisco, CA 94122  
 www.northmountain.com

ISBN 0-96762312-X

★★

This is an ugly tale about an uglier topic. We debated for nearly a year before deciding to review it. However *Confessions of a Dope Dealer* makes a significant contribution to the literature documenting the West Coast drug scene during the psychedelic 70's.

And Norberg can write:

The rain in Humboldt is legendary. 60–80 mph winds are not uncommon in the mountains, with endless buckets cascading from the sky. Sitting inside the shed, facing windward, you see nothing but a sheet of water washing the windows. But outside, in the creeks and on the roads and on the hillsides torn from logging, erosion redefines the landscape. Trees fall, boulders roll, rivers flood and roads wash away, while the dedicated, the stoned, trim.

With the review copy Norberg provides a pious little *apologia* testifying to the worthy motives impelling him to write this fictionalized biography. Yeah, right. We like the Norberg of the book better — ironic, sarcastic, unregenerate and unapologetic to the end.

Norberg alleges he only indulged in soft drugs, and not the opium and cocaine derivatives he calls “dumb drugs.” Certainly his writing skill calls into question the assumption that drugs automatically and immediately fry the brain. Of course he does not admit to dealing drugs now but his alleged profession of “clairvoyant” is too obvious a leg-pull to be taken seriously.

Like all registered Californians, Norberg has

found a spiritual new-age Oriental philosophy to replace (?) getting high. There is enough of the old reprobate to compensate for occasional flights of social commentary and moralizing.

*Confessions* is recommended for mature adults only.

**Thriller****Business to Kill for**

Mike Brogan

Lighthouse Publishing, 2001

Hardcover 6 x 9 inches 343 pp, \$19.95

Alliance House Distributors  
 20 Ferris Avenue, Suite 201  
 White Plains, NY 10603  
 914-328-5456  
 888-285-2710  
 FAX 914-946-1929

ISBN 0-615-11570-5

★★★

Brogan never misses a beat in this stylish and fast-paced thriller. Set in the high-octane world of big advertising (a milieu he knows well) the author displays a sense of style and mastery of his *genre*. Brogan moves his lead character through crisis after crisis, but never overdoes it, a nice touch.

Priced like a paperback, the book is presented in a handsome hardcover edition. Put *Business to Kill for* on your reading list, and your buy for a friend list. It is destined to do well.

*Quotable—*

When a new building is contemplated  
 beware the executive with an “edifice”  
 complex.

—Ronald Bowers

**Voices**

Edward Bonadio

Writers Club Press 2001  
(Imprint of iUniverse.com, Inc.)

Paperback 5 7/8 x 8 7/8 inches 293 pp. \$16.95

iUniverse.com, Inc.

ISBN 0-595-18430-8

\*\*\*

The current fascination with demonology has spread from the network to the bookshelves. "Voices" is a thriller, a gothic, call it what you will. The principal villain is known only as "the Entity" and he/she/it is a scary character indeed. In such a work there is always the danger of overkill, of horrific themes becoming unintentionally comic.

Fortunately new author Edward Bonadio knows how to put words together and tell a story. The writing is crisp, the characters believable, the detail realistic, the plotline absorbing. His former mentors at Baltimore's Calvert Hall College may not like his subject, but at least he learned how to write.

To paraphrase Coach Vincent Lombardi, good writing isn't the most important thing — it is the only thing. Bonadio is a talent worth watching. And, if you can handle the subject matter, "Voices" is definitely worth reading.

\*\*\*

**Change of Heart**

Jack Allen

Burping Frog Publishing, 2001

5 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches 318 pp, \$16.00 soft \$25.00 hard

Burping Frog Publishing

6654 Harding

Taylor MI 48180

313-383-6768

888-795-4274 (Xlibris)

ISBN 0-7388-6730-6 (soft) 0-7388-6729-2 (hard)

\*\*

The spy novel is a durable genre and Jack Allen's first book is a worthy example. The action is non-stop from the first page onward. The hero can outshoot any six thugs wielding Uzis, but in this aspect the book remains faithful to the best Bondian tradition. There is a *femme fatale* of course and frequent changes of scene and villains. It's worth a read.

\*\*\*

**Western**  
**Dixon's Edge**  
 Dennis O'Keefe

Parintel Books 2001

Paperback 6 x 9 inches 303 pp. \$15.00

Parintel Publishing Co.  
 4195 Valley Fair Street #104  
 Simi Valley, CA 93063

ISBN 0-9702160-0-9

\*\*\*

Today's Western, whether set in the 1860's or the 1960's, owes much to Larry McMurtry. Dennis O'Keefe in his second novel proves himself a worthy practitioner of the McMurtry style. Gritty and realistic, *Dixon's Edge* gives us a detailed and compelling view into the Old West as it really was. The detail is authentic, the characters real, the plotting expert. This is not a cheerful book. It begins with sorrow and ends in tragedy for the young hero. We give it three stars despite its dark beginning and darker end.



*Quotable—*

Never underestimate the venality, the shortsightedness or the essential stupidity of top management. However bad you think them to be, they are worse than that.

—Anon.

## Nonfiction

### Activities for Children

#### Playing Smart

Susan K. Perry, Ph.D

Free Spirit Publishing 2001

Paperback 7 1/4 x 9 217pp. indexed \$16.95

Free Spirit Publishing  
 217 Fifth Avenue North Suite 200

Minneapolis MN 55401

help4kids@freespirit.com

www.freespirit.com

612-338-2068

FAX 612-337-5050

ISBN 1-57542-095-3

\*\*\*

In a world filled with fancy gadgets, expensive toys and elaborate "structured" activities this guide is a breath of fresh air. It is indeed possible to occupy the attention of both parent and child in a thousand innovative ways — and Susan Perry will tell you all about them. There are plenty of references to further readings on the many projects discussed. Innovative, practical ideas fairly leap out of every page. Perry offers us a timely update of a very useful book. We recommend it without reservation.

Many of the books we review show the marks of the novice author and the self-publisher. In contrast this book is professionally turned out by a mature and successful publishing enterprise.



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**Anthropology**  
**People from the Dawn**

W. E. H. Stanner and John Hilary Martin

Solas Press 2001

Paperback 5 3/8 x 83/8 inches 170 pp. Gloss. Index \$24.95

Solas Press  
 4627 Shetland Way P. O. Box 4066  
 Antioch, CA 94531-4066  
 info@solaspress.com  
 www.solaspress.com  
 925-978-9781 888-40-SOLAS  
 FAX 925-978-9782

ISBN 1-893426-98-X

☆☆☆

Few people on earth are as fascinating as the Aboriginal people of Australia, and perhaps no anthropologist on the planet had better credentials for their study than the late W. E. H. Stanner. *People from the Dawn* is therefore a welcome addition to the literature on the subject. John Hilary Martin has done a nice job with extended introductions to the three Stanner papers contained therein. The three topics — “Aboriginal Religion”, “Aboriginal Lands” and “The Concept of Privacy” promise learned insights into this people that we are just beginning to know. Parallels with the Native American peoples are

obvious, except that the cycle of public awareness comes a half century later.

The first essay is the most difficult from the standpoint of the general reader. It consists mainly of a lengthy and well-reasoned argument for Stanner’s methodology as opposed to that practiced by other noted anthropologists such as Durkheim. There are intriguing details, but obviously more is left unsaid than explained about his actual observations. But there is gold to be found interspersed with the methodological dross even in this first essay.

The remaining two are more substantive, and are written so clearly and elegantly that both casual reader and specialist will find merit therein.

There is a very useful Glossary, and an unfortunate index that cries out for a specialist’s ministrations. From three to 37 pages are listed for each of the (meager) 28 entries in the index. Division into subtopics and the use of page ranges are just two of the improvements needed. Indexing is frankly not something worth doing badly. This index does not reflect the scholarship found in the rest of the work.

These criticisms aside, “People from the Dawn” is a worthy introduction to the work of a pioneer and a crusader on behalf of the much misunderstood Aborigines of Australia.



**Cookbooks**  
**Reality Bites!**  
 T. R. Hader

Fat Cat Innovations November 2000  
 Spiral bound, 8 1/2 x 11 172 pp indexed \$23.95  
 Fat Cat Innovations  
 P. O. Box 534  
 Derby, KS 67037  
 316-788-1383  
 FAX 316-788-5324

ISBN 0-9676884-0

☆☆☆

Our submission guidelines state clearly “no cookbooks.” So how did this item wriggle past the barricade? Well, we were always a sucker for a pretty face. *Reality Bites* is a visual triumph — a gorgeous book. And frankly the full color photos illustrating every recipe make us salivate as we thumb through it.

The recipes have a strong streak of the practical and are helpfully labelled with respect to their difficulty. There are footnotes that indicate variations to be tried. And yes Virginia, there is an honest to Pete index.

If you buy a copy for a friend, chances are you won't be able to part with it. So be prepared to buy two. Friend spouse has already laid dibs on our review copy.

◆◆◆

**Finance**  
**Active Retirement for . . . Workaholics**  
 Peter Silton

N.P. Financial Publishing 2001

Paperback, 6 x 9 inches indexed 183 pp. \$19.95

N. P. Financial Publishing  
 P. O. Box 49891  
 Los Angeles, CA 90049  
 npfinancial@earthlink.net  
 310-471-1353 (also FAX #)

ISBN 1-882758-07-2

☆☆

The title describes the content. “Active Retirement for Affluent Workaholics” is a worthy book very badly presented. The author has done much research and quite apparently has personal experience as a “retired, affluent workaholic.” Silton has interesting things to say on a variety of topics for those recently retired, affluent or not.

Unfortunately he has not had the services of either a good editor or a professional typesetter. Silton has had a very successful career in the software business. It passes understanding why computer professionals who can deal with the arcane syntax of programming languages and operating system commands cannot avoid sentence fragments and comma splices in ordinary prose.

In addition some clever work has been done in the layout and design of the volume. Why then put up with lines of type that are gap-toothed? The index is useful but cursed with typesetting and indexing irregularities that grate on our nerves.

The unique content and the breezy (if occasionally ungrammatical) writing style make this a book worth reading. We hope to see for a revised edition where the defects described above have been cleaned up. We would like to hang another star on our rating.

◆◆◆

**Gift Book****Love is - - -**

Norm Caldwell

My Mother's Publishing House 2001

Paperback, 6 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches 101 pp. \$8.95

My Mother's Publishing House  
 23649 Eureka Road  
 Taylor, MI 48180  
 www.achievenowinstitute.com  
 734-287-2930

ISBN 1-56273-246-3

★★

This engaging little cupcake of a book consists of pages with cute sayings along the lines of "Love is . . . Not running over the cat when backing out of the driveway."

There is a sidebar to each page repeating the saying, but rotated 90 degrees. The idea is: the owner can cut out the sidebar or even the whole page and give it to someone. The reverse (even) side of each page is mostly blank leaving room for a personal message.

The book is longer than high and comes with a little silvery stand. A series of such books is planned, with seasonal themes.

The cost is modest and there are quantity discounts.

Can't figure out what to buy for Aunt Susie? Here is a contender. It is guaranteed that she has never seen anything quite like it.

❖❖❖

**Memoir****The Gringo's Hawk**

Jon Marañón

Kenneth Group Publishing July 2001

Hardcover, 6 x 9 inches 311 pp. \$24.95

Kenneth Group Publishing  
 115 West 8th Avenue Suite 370  
 Eugene OR 97401  
 www.kennethgroup.com  
 roxanne@kennethgroup.com  
 541-465-1071  
 FAX 541-465-1742

★★★★

A young American, affluent, idealistic, but not particularly scholarly, decides to live in an obscure hamlet in Costa Rica as a kind of combination naturalist and anthropologist without portfolio. After three decades he leaves having won some battles but ultimately having lost his gentle war to preserve both the natural and the human ecosystems from the inroads of the bulldozer and of slash and burn agriculture. And then he writes a beautiful book.

*The Gringo's Hawk* is not a book to be devoured at a sitting. Like wine it is best sipped and savored a little at a time. Jon Marañón writes with a grace and fluidity that is seldom experienced in this era. It is indeed a pity that he has but one story to tell. In the process of telling it he reveals himself as a gentle but gallant warrior, a Don Quixote of the rainforest, the beach and the reef.

If there is justice in the world of books then Jon Marañón's *the Gringo's Hawk* will become a sleeper — an unexpected best seller. The more we read in it the better we like it. It wears well.

❖❖❖

*Quotable—*

Shakespeare's plays were not written by committee, nor reviewed by an inter-departmental work group.

—John Culleton

**Recreation****Golf for the Fun of It**

Michael Holstein and Scott English

Madrone Press, 2001

Hard cover 7 x 10 inches 202 pp. indexed bibliography \$29.95

Madrone Press  
228 West Street  
Ashland OR 97520

ISBN 0970409168

★★★★

A disclaimer is in order. Able Indexers, another facet of the WexfordPress operation, indexed this book. So we are not unbiased. But we were certainly not expected to review it. Our contract was for indexing. We could have passed it by. Instead we are impelled by its excellence to praise this book with a four star rating. It is quite simply a pleasure to read and admire.

This is first of all a visually stunning book. There are illustrations, boxed quotes, woodcuts, photos all superbly arranged. Every page is a work of art. Designer and typesetter Shannon Bodie has pulled out all the stops. We are in that business too, and our designer/typesetter hat is off to her.

*Golf for the Fun of It* is also a joy to read. It is first and foremost a paean to the pleasures of recreational golf. The authors won't tell you much about improving your swing. But their book will increase your enjoyment of the game enormously. The book is nothing less than a major attitude adjustment for any of us who have ever swung a club — and ended up in the rough. Packed with anecdotes, words of wisdom and quotes it is a book that you can read starting on any page and enjoy fully.

Michael Holstein and Scott English must be good guys to have in your foursome. They have written one of the great books on golf. Our clubs haven't been touched in years, but with Mike and Scott as our unseen mentors we just might take a few swings this Spring, and enjoy every minute.

