Outstanding Reference Sources: The 1993 selection of recent titles

Distinguished reference works selected by the Reference Sources Committee of ALA’s Reference and Adult Services Division.

The one thing that we can say is that there was a well-rounded selection, pulling from many subjects,” says Scott E. Kennedy of this year’s candidates for Outstanding Reference Sources. “We’re seeing in reference books a reflection of what’s going on in the world—in law, the environment, and technology.”

“During deliberations,” Kennedy says, “we had a number of publishers present who were concerned about the way we evaluate reference sources, and that was encouraging.”

Kennedy, librarian at the University of Nebraska/Lincoln’s Love Library, is chair of the 1993 Reference Sources Committee, which sifted through roughly a year’s worth of reference books, looking for the gems that are highlighted in this annual roundup.

The Reference and Adult Services Division (RASD) committee’s charge is twofold: First, it aims to provide a list of new, quality reference works that small to medium-sized public and academic libraries might want to consider acquiring. Second, it looks for examples of what constitutes good and useful reference sources.

Feretring out the noteworthy

The committee deliberated in January during ALA’s Midwinter Meeting in Denver, reaching a majority decision about which publications are especially noteworthy. These sessions lasted many hours, over three days.

The real work of the committee, however, took place over the 12 months preceding Midwinter, when each committee member reviewed new reference books in specific subject areas.

The reviewing was accomplished with the aid of standard reviewing sources, publishers’ catalogs, lists of new publications, exhibitors’ displays, approval plans, review copies, extended visits to neighborhood libraries, and friendly tips.

Of the hundreds of new reference sources published, some 80 were selected for in-depth committee review.

The 30 final selections that follow are works appearing in 1992, with four holdovers from 1991. The titles range from the topical (Toxic A to Z) to the standard (A Dictionary of American Proverbs), from the popular (The Encyclopedia of Ghosts and Spirits) to the scholarly (The Oxford Companion to the English Language)—in short, a diverse selection of reference sources.

Distinctive works

The annotations presented below with the entries were edited by Scott E. Kennedy and designed to underscore what is distinctive about each work.

The committee recognizes that omissions are perhaps inevitable in such a selection process. For the most part, titles so exhaustive as to reach beyond the committee’s purview, updates, and new volumes of previously recommended titles were not selected for inclusion.

The other members of this year’s Reference Sources Committee were Rebecca L. Johnson, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City; Dale Luchinger, Athens (Ga.) Area Technical Institute; Joyce McKnight, Akron—Summit County (Ohio) Public Library; Donald Maxwell, Stone Hills Library Network, Bloomington, Ind.; Marguerite Mroz, Baltimore County (Md.) Public Library; Razia Nanji, George A. Smathers Library, University of Florida/Gainesville; Laurie Radde, Lake Agassiz Regional Library, Moorhead, Minn.; Deborah Thomas, Ramsey Library, University of North Carolina/Asheville; and David A. Tyckoson, State University of New York/Albany.

The 1993 Outstanding Reference Sources Exhibit will be on display at the RASD booth during the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans. After the conference the display will be available for loan to interested groups. Contact the RASD office at ALA headquarters.
OUTSTANDING SOURCES

GENERAL


Think "A picture is worth a thousand words" is an ancient Chinese bit of wisdom? Think again—the phrase was coined by advertising executive Fred Barnard in a 1921 advertisement for Printer's Ink magazine. This fascinating dictionary is the first major collection of English-language proverbs based on oral, rather than written, sources and was compiled from 40 years of oral collecting by members of the American Dialect Society. Arranged by keyword, entries include variant forms, explanations, geographic distributions, related references and citations to the proverbs' first written occurrences. Unquestionably scholarly and uniquely American, this volume will be of interest to folklorists, linguists, and librarians on the trail of that elusive quotation.


Symbols are difficult to organize into a standard format, for the graphic nature of the medium does not fit the pattern of a typical reference work. The Dictionary of Symbols overcomes this problem by grouping the icons according to their graphical style rather than their meaning. For example, all symbols based upon the cross are included in one chapter, those based upon the triangle in another, and those based upon the circle in yet another. Each symbol is succinctly defined and a source of origin (if known) is given. To enhance access, both name and form indexes are provided. This work will certainly become one of the key sources for tracing symbols and their meanings.


Beliefs and lore about ghosts and spirits abound in every culture of the world. This informative compendium of the supernatural documents the fascinating world of ghosts, goblins, and spirits. In over 400 alphabetical entries, the author provides descriptions of and explanations for strange spiritual phenomena, apparitions, and other ghostly events, including both those based in folk traditions and those investigated by scientific method. The Greenbrier Ghost, the Amityville Horror, and folkloric phenomena such as the "radiant boys" and the "gray ladies" are among representative entries in this work. In addition, the work also provides numerous biographical sketches of persons involved in the reporting or debunking of ghosts and psychological research. Some entries are illustrated and each entry ends with a short bibliography for further study.


Anu, Ishtar, Tikokura, Zeus: Since the beginning of human life, wherever societies have emerged, religious and cultural landscapes have been populated by these and countless other deities. Guide to the Gods acts as a "finding list" that identifies and classifies over 20,000 gods and goddesses, making it the most complete reference guide on the topic to date. In a unique anthropological approach, these many thousand beings are arranged, on the basis of their religious functions and personal attributes, under eight major headings—Celestial, Atmospheric, Terrestrial, and so forth—and within these broad headings into 53 sub-groupings such as love, war, fertility, and justice. Each entry specifies the deity's function and attributes and indicates its cultural and geographic origin. An extensive bibliography, to which all entries refer, and an exhaustive name index assure this reference tool a welcome place in any large academic or public library.

BIography


Cowabunga, dudes—check it out! Have we got a deal for you. If you feel lower than a snake's belly in a wagon rut when you get a quotation question, then this book will take you home to mama. The word on the street is that it's the best thing since sliced bread. From soup to nuts, everything you need to know about clichés is in this book. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that this book has got it all. This work is the genuine article and you'll look your Sunday best as you give your patrons a piece of the action. It will be a cold day in hell when this one bites the dust. We'll bet the farm that your satisfaction will be guaranteed. So reference librarians, come on down! Operators are standing by.

Our language is filled with odd terms and turn of phrase that are so often and so widely used they are, superficially at least, familiar to just about everyone. These commonly used, but often misunderstood, expressions have been compiled into a single dictionary. For each entry, the author provides a definition, a linguistic history, and examples of usage. Many contemporary clichés date from the writings of ancient Greece and Rome, the Bible, or Shakespeare. Readers of this work will enjoy discovering the original meanings and original sources of these familiar phrases, and they may be surprised to find that many of the hippest expressions of the MTV generation date back several centuries. A welcome addition to our ever-expanding collection of linguistic reference sources.

Author and political activist Alice Dunbar-Nelson is among 500 biographies in Notable Black American Women (Gale).
covers exploration from ancient times to the present and includes such notable moderns as Jacques Cousteau and Edmund Hillary. The entries range in length from half a column to a few pages. Each begins by listing the nationality of the subject, birth and death dates, and the territory explored; many are supplemented by a short bibliography of suggested readings. An extensive index, a glossary of terms highlighted in the text of the articles, and a listing of the explorers featured by country of origin and country of exploration add to the usefulness of the work. Illustrations and 50 original maps give visual appeal to this readable volume, appropriate for students and general readers alike.

Richard Evelyn Byrd, called the world's "last great exploring hero," in World Explorers and Discoverers (Macmillan).

This biographical encyclopedia documents the achievements of 500 African-American women who have made significant contributions to American culture from the colonial era to the present. Selected by an advisory board of prominent African Americans, subjects include women active in all fields of endeavor, from education, science, and the arts, to business, law and politics. Many articles are accompanied by a portrait; all articles are signed, supplemented by select bibliographies, and a note on the location, When known, of the subject's personal papers. The encyclopedia includes a detailed index as well as a generic listing of all entries by occupation or field of endeavor. Authoritative and entertaining at the same time, these sketches are appropriate for high school and college students as well as the general reader.


Over 300 explorers and discoverers are featured in this attractive compilation that

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE


This compilation gathers together and reprints a generous selection of the critical commentary devoted to the most highly respected black writers of the past 200 years. Maya Angelou, Desmond Tutu, Frederick Douglass, James Baldwin, Cyprian Ekwensi, Malcolm X, and Mongo Beti are among the 125 North American, African, and Latin American authors represented. Arranged alphabetically, each entry includes a biographical introduction, a listing of the author's principal works, and excerpts of the more insightful criticism, both positive and negative. Three indexes—name, nationality, and title—contribute to the overall usefulness of the set. This is an important resource for students seeking critical information on major black writers.


Do you need a source that explains half-rhyme, silent "h" or binomial nomenclature? How about those inquiries on plain English or standard dialect? This Oxford companion—part dictionary, part usage guide, part linguistic encyclopedia—offers the broadest range of reference information to be found in any single source. Included are entries on grammar, prosody, language acquisition, and sexist language, on every nation where English is widely spoken, and on writers and lexicographers whose works have significantly affected the development of the language—about 5,000 entries all told. As entertaining as it is informative, The Oxford Companion to the English Language will captivate just about anyone who opens its cover.


The Random House Word Menu is exactly that—a menu of words. Under seven general subject headings (Nature, Science and Technology, Domestic Life, Institutions, Arts and Leisure, Language, and the Human Condition) that have been subdivided into 134 categories (e.g., Anthropology), and further subdivided into 300 subcategories (e.g., Ages, Species, and Races of Humankind), over 65,000 words have been arranged into very inclusive family groupings. This work is not another thesaurus in disguise, but an exciting and truly innovative way of approaching linguistic definition and meaning. A detailed table of categories and a superb index serve to make this unique source an excellent addition to the language shelf.


This title provides a crisp and clear introduction to the entire domain of reference works that deal with perhaps the most exciting of modern literature genres. Every type of reference source known, from personal bibliography to awards lists, atlases, and character dictionaries, is succinctly described and intelligently evaluated. Included is a very practical "Core Collections" listing that recommends individual works appropriate for libraries, ranging in scope from the academic research to the small public and even personal library. This reference book is now the standard guide to the field.

MUSIC


Contemporary composers are that very
OUTSTANDING SOURCES

CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION


This encyclopedia takes a comprehensive look at U.S. history and culture from the context of Jewish experience. Long and short signed essays cover a wide variety of topics: individuals, movements, literature, religion, and history from the colonial period to modern-day America. A useful classification of the articles under 15 major headings begins the volume. A brief bibliography follows each entry and an extensive index is included at the end of the volume. With an impressive advisory board and list of academic contributors, this authoritative work celebrates Jewish-Americanism in an interesting, perceptive, and informative manner.

RELIGION

The Anchor Bible Dictionary, edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols., approx. 1,200p. each. New York: Doubleday, 1992 (0-385-19351-3; 19360-2; 19361-0; 19362-9; 19363-7; 19363-X), $360.

Here is an authoritative Bible dictionary for the current generation of researchers. The 6,000 separate subject entries reflect many of the changes that have taken place in biblical research over the last 30 years: these include recent developments in archaeological research and Near Eastern Studies, as well as a greater concern with sociological, cultural, and anthropological topics. The dictionary also incorporates recent methodological developments such as feminist interpretations, form criticism, and structuralism. There are individual entries for all the different books of the Bible, major figures, places, names, and biblical terms. Substantial bibliographies and numerous cross references enhance the usefulness of this as a reference source. The Anchor Bible Dictionary provides the scholarly world and the general public with an intelligent and comprehensive treatment of bibli-
major interest to library users, the terms and concepts used to describe it are not commonly understood. Drawing on experts from both finance and economics, The New Palgrave Dictionary of Money and Finance provides a comprehensive encyclopedia of the forces, tools, and events that shape our economic lives. From the stock market, to prime interest rates, to the global financial marketplace, readers will find detailed descriptions of the economic factors that to a great extent define and determine our everyday work. Although many of the entries use high-level mathematics to illustrate their respective concepts, they also include descriptive material approachable to the nonspecialist. It is interesting to note that the inclusion of both economic and financial theories sometimes results in lively and contrasting viewpoints, rather than dry speculation. While directed to the professional, this work is accessible to anyone interested in the theory of money and finance.

LAW


Can a râºche be displayed in a city park at Christmas time? What does our Constitution say about the relation between church and state in America? How has the Supreme Court interpreted this issue over the years? The Evolving Constitution explains these and other constitutional controversies in over 1,000 alphabetically arranged entries. This is a true laypersons' guide, presenting a topical, pragmatic, and concise approach. The legal concepts are set forth clearly, and the cases that brought them forward make interesting reading. Many of us may know, for instance, about Ernesto Miranda, whose case gave us Miranda rights; but not many will recall Michael Vignera, Roy Stewart, or Carl Westover, whose cases testing the validity of confession during interrogation, were all heard during the 1965-66 Supreme Court session. This book's straightforward style and absence of legal jargon make it a particularly good choice for public and undergraduate libraries. (Miranda himself, by the way, came to a no-good end. He was convicted, served four years, and was eventually stabbed to death in a skid-row bar in Phoenix during an argument over a card game.)


4430-4), $125.

When leading patrons to court reporters, librarians would do well to give them this useful compendium as well. These 170 essays on landmark court cases range from the Salem witchcraft trials to the 1990 Supreme Court decision on flag burning. While most of the cases discussed are Supreme Court decisions, a small number of key cases decided in state and federal courts are also included. The essays are arranged in six sections: crime, governmental organization, economics, gender and ethnicity, civil liberties, and law in critical periods of American history. Each essay gives the legal citation, summarizes the case and places it in historical context, discusses the case's legal issues and significance, and concludes with a short bibliography. This timely and well-written volume will be welcome in both public and academic libraries.


SOCIAL SCIENCES


Employees, supervisors, career counselors, high school and college students alike can all make use of this valuable encyclopedia. Whether you are choosing a career or job hunting, coping with job-related harassment or discrimination, worried about work hazards, or planning your retirement, you will find this useful source of information. Signed articles on approximately 160 career and work-related issues have been written by 151 experts in the field. Each article provides a discussion of the topic, practical suggestions, and recommendations for more in-depth study. No other reference work covers as broad a spectrum of contemporary work-related issues as does The Encyclopedia of Career Change and Work Issues.


No previous work has ever attempted such a comprehensive study of the field of sociology. This set contains 370 lengthy, signed articles written by more than 300 national and international sociologists. The encyclopedia covers not just the traditional issues, concepts, and theories of sociology, but also the newer aspects of social research, including such topics as homelessness, computer applications to social research, comparable worth, drug abuse, human ecology and the environment, terrorism, and technological risks to societies. The encyclopedia is attractively bound, well researched, and extensively indexed. This is a major publication in the field of sociology and will be an important reference tool for many years to come.

The encyclopedia is the winner of the 1993 Dartmouth Medal, presented annually by RASD "to honor achievement in creating reference works outstanding in quality and significance."
OUTSTANDING SOURCES

Roger W. Barbour

$45.

Comprehensive, well-organized, and authoritative, this new companion does an outstanding job of chronicling and interpreting the work of the Court and its effect on American life. Some 400 of the 1,000 entries discuss specific court cases and include U.S. Reports citations, dates argued and decided, as well as an explanation of the significance of the Court’s ruling. Other entries detail the biographies of justices and eminent lawyers; define terms, concepts, and issues; or provide interesting information relating to the Court and its history. The straight alphabetical arrangement of this handbook not only makes for easy subject access but also for good browsing. For example, turning to the letter “S” we can learn the identities of the figures in the sculptured friezes in the Great Hall (with Divine Inspiration the lone female), read a description of the Court Seamstress’s Room, or peruse an explanation of the Search Warrant Rule. A subject index, case table, and extensive appendices complete the volume. This is the definitive new work on the Supreme Court and an essential purchase for all libraries.

NATURE


As the first comprehensive book on North American venomous reptiles in 30 years, Carl Ernst’s work fills the need for up-to-date information on these reptiles and their status in the habitat. In his introduction, Ernst describes how habitat destruction and overcollecting have caused many venomous reptiles to become threatened or endangered and urges their protection. In articles ranging from four to 20 pages, each of the 20 snakes and one lizard is given a detailed portrait including fossil record, karyotype, distribution, habitat, behavior, reproduction, food, venom and bite, predators, defense, and population. There is also a range map for each reptile. Illustrating the text are 55 color plates and 61 black-and-white photographs and drawings. The extensive 50-page bibliography describing over 1,000 sources includes items as current as 1990 as well as standards from the distant past. From the 10-year-old fascinated by the sight of snakes to the professional herpetologist, this title will educate and inform a broad range of naturalists.

ENVIRONMENT


Words, phrases, acronyms, and jargon from the new interdisciplinary field of environmental science are covered in this handy dictionary. Containing more than 3,000 entries, this book presents concise, easy-to-understand explanations of organizations, processes, legislation, and other terminology, such as Club of Rome, wipe test, PYAR (person-years-at-risk), and herding agent. Appendixes include abbreviations, acronyms, unit equivalents, and concentrations. Essential for students, teachers, researchers, politicians, business people—anyone interested in comprehending the language of environmental science.


On 100% recycled paper comes the first edition of the Information Please Environmental Almanac. With essays such as the “State of the Planet,” environmental highlights of 1991, as well as surveys of major issues—food, energy, water, waste, forests, wetlands, air—the almanac provides an up-to-date compendium of environmental facts and data. In charts and graphs covering energy use and production, waste, pollutant releases, and environmental policies, the almanac supplies environmental portraits of 146 individual countries, each of the U.S. states and Canadian provinces, and 64 major U.S. cities. Here is a welcome compilation of data on industrial pollution, land deregulation, deforestation, wildlife preser-
viation, and endangered species—all in a single handy source.


More and more these days we hear about chemical accidents, toxic leaks, and industrial mishaps that have endangered people's lives. And increasingly, in our workaday world, we are surrounded by industrial products which, if improperly handled, may cause illness or even death. This guide provides

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY


With over 133,000 entries, this title provides current, concise definitions of the specialized vocabulary used in 124 designated fields from acoustical engineering to zoology. The dictionary contains single words, compound words, abbreviations, acronyms, proper names, and geographic terms in a single alphabetical list arranged letter by letter without regard to spacing, hyphenation, or punctuation. The biographical entries include birth and death dates, country of origin, and a very brief description of the person's notable contributions. More than 2,000 illustrations and photographs, including 24 pages of color plates, enhance the volume. A "window" essay written by a leading scientist in each of the 124 designated fields provides a practical introduction to each discipline. Following the usual appendixes of symbols and units, physical constants, and atomic weights, there are some helpful charts including a geological timetable and a chronology of modern science from 1403 to 1992. This authoritative, attractive dictionary will be useful to anyone seeking to understand the language of science and technology.


This handbook is really two reference works in one. First, in articles covering astronomy and space, chemistry, earth science, the environment, life science (excluding medicine), mathematics, physics, and technology, it presents facts and analysis on recent scientific discoveries and theories. In this way it is similar to the yearbooks that supplement many encyclopedia sets. The work also proves an excellent source for basic science and technology reference. Especially useful are the 85 tables, charts, and lists of scientific data such as Nobel Prize winners in the sciences, taxonomy of living organisms, basic laws of physics, active volcanoes, earthquakes, manned space flights, and major indoor air pollutants. A detailed index makes the material easily accessible. Well written, this work serves as a handy source for both the layperson and student.

ACSLA publishes checklist of reference sources

Checklist of Reference Sources for Libraries has been published by ALA's Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA). The publication is a version of the fourth edition of the Checklist of Reference Sources for Oklahoma Libraries (1992) adapted by Virginia L. Dietrich for the Oklahoma Department of Libraries for a wider audience.

The publication is geared to libraries with small reference collections and limited expertise in choosing appropriate books. It notes fundamental reference books useful in public libraries. Checklist is limited to books listed in the current Books in Print (1991-92) and currently available for purchase. Brief annotations have been provided for most books.

"For years libraries in Oklahoma have been able to maximize their reference budgets through using editions of the Checklist of Reference Sources for Oklahoma Libraries," said Bill Crowley, chair, ASCLA Publications Committee. "Now, with the publication of the Checklist of Reference Sources for Libraries, a national readership can gain similar benefits."

Checklist of Reference Sources for Libraries (ISBN 08389-7657-6) is $24 ($22.50 for ASCLA members) and is available from the ALA Order Department, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

readers with factual, understandable information about our chemical environment. Part I, entitled "All About Toxics," presents a broad overview of the various types of toxics we are exposed to, examines the medical aspects of the problem, and discusses the various ways of handling and regulating toxics. Part II discusses the 100 most commonly encountered toxics in greater detail, including how one is exposed to the toxic, what the health hazards are, how to protect oneself from or prevent exposure to hazardous substances, and sources for further information. Toxics A to Z covers a vital topic and will be heavily used in all libraries.

HEALTH AND MEDICINE


When cancer is the subject of discussion, unfamiliar clinical words and phrases tend
to leave us often confused and sometimes frightened. Clear, reliable definitions always help. Intended for the nonspecialist, the Cancer Dictionary contains virtually every term the cancer patient is likely to encounter in the course of investigation, diagnosis, and treatment. Ranging from a few sentences to several paragraphs in length, the 2,500 entries define for the layperson types of cancer, symptoms, tests, therapies, and surgical procedures. A classified subject index and numerous cross references provide excellent navigational cues. This dictionary is a solid practical tool that supplements the standard cancer handbooks with detail, depth, and precision.

What You Need to Know about Psychiatric Drugs, by Stuart C. Yudofsky, M.D., Robert E. Hales, M.D., and Tom Ferguson, M.D. 647p. Washington: American Psychiatric Press, 1991 (0-8021-1281-1), $35. Prozac, Ritalin, Xanax—many of us know someone who is taking or considering taking one of the new psychiatric drugs. Do they cure or do they compound the illness? These often controversial drugs have needed such a handbook of pertinent information: side effects, interaction, chances of addiction. Discussed are antidepressants, tranquilizers, sleeping pills, and sedatives, as well as drugs for panic disorders, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and Alzheimer's disease. More than a hundred of the most commonly used drugs are listed, along with benefits, risks, and guidelines for use. Balanced and reliable, this up-to-date information is needed in libraries of any size in the reference and circulating collections.

Gathered for selection of the 1993 Outstanding Reference Sources are (back row, from left) Joyce McKnight, Donald Maxwell, Dale Luchsinger, David Tyckoson; (center, from left) Rebecca Johnson, Laurie Radde, Marguerite Mroz; and (front, from left) Razia Nanji, chair Scott Kennedy, and Deborah Thomas.