



SOUTHWEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR 2014

2014's top Southwestern books

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Lovers of Southwest literature need look no further than the local library for a list of 2014's Must-Read titles. That's where you'll find Southwest Books of the Year 2014, Pima County Public Library's (PCPL) annual review of the best in regional reading.

(3) More Photos

These books were identified as the year's best by the Southwest Books of the Year panel of reviewers, librarians and subject specialists who collect, read and discuss titles all year long. The reviewers are **Bill Broyles**, author, retired teacher and research associate at the University of Arizona's Southwest Center; **Bruce Dinges**, Arizona Historical Society Director of Publications; **Vicki Ann Duraine**, a librarian for PCPL; **Christine Wald-Hopkins**, lecturer in the University of Arizona Writing Program and book writer for the Tucson Weekly; and **Helene Woodhams**, PCPL librarian and coordinator of Southwest Books of the Year. Children's books are reviewed by **Ann Dickinson**, retired children's book selector and PCPL librarian.

Books considered for Southwest Books of the Year are set in the Southwest (in the case of fiction) or focus on a Southwestern subject or personality. This year eight titles — both fiction and nonfiction — rose to the top. Here they are, with descriptions from the panelists who recommended them:

AMONG UNKNOWN TRIBES: REDISCOVERING THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF EXPLORER CARL LUMHOLTZ

By Bill Broyles, Ann Christine Eek, Phyllis La Farge, Richard Laugharn, and Eugenia Macías Guzmán. University of Texas Press

Banish the notion of the icy Norseman: the life, writings and photographs of Victorian-era Norwegian Carl Lumholtz reveal a man enlivened by challenging travel, spectacular nature and

indigenous cultures. This intriguing volume, product of a collaboration of five writers from museum archivist to scholars (including Tucsonan Bill Broyles), presents newly discovered photographs from trips Lumholtz made over the turn of the 20th century. Setting out to document “exotic” cultures, Lumholtz made excursions into Borneo, then to North America, where he lived among and documented the lives and culture of little-known Tarahumara, Cora, Tepehuan, Huichol, Southern Pima and Tohono O’odham tribes. Lumholtz captured extraordinary images: Tarahumara families in cave dwellings, Huichol sacred spaces and ceremonies, O’odham daily life. The authors have addressed ethnographic issues sensitively: while Lumholtz clearly brought a Eurocentric attitude to his explorations, they present him as respectful and appreciative of native cultures. And the portraits they feature demonstrate transcendent human dignity, power and intelligence, along with exuberance and creativity.

— *Christine Wald-Hopkins (Also selected by Bruce Dinges)*

CAPTURE THE MAGIC: TRAIN YOUR EYE, IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

By Jack Dykinga. Rocky Nook

“Photography is a marvelous language.” So says Pulitzer Prize-winning environmental photographer and journalist Jack Dykinga, and it’s a language he speaks with grace and fluency. In “Capture the Magic,” Dykinga shares his techniques for producing breathtaking photos — design, illusion, framing, light and much more — and illustrates them with examples of his own work, primarily from the Southwest, that are guaranteed to inspire creativity. He generously shares the circumstances that drew him to a given subject and his own response to it, and goes on to demonstrate how a bad photo can be made better and a good photo, fabulous. An index provides notes on every photograph, including location, date and the equipment he used to capture the image. Aficionados will appreciate the minute, technical details and directions, and nature lovers will revel in this memorable collection of spectacular environmental art, even if their own photographic output is limited to whatever their smartphones can produce.

— *Helene Woodhams (Also selected by Bill Broyles)*

FETCH THE DEVIL: THE

SIERRA DIABLO MURDERS AND NAZI ESPIONAGE IN AMERICA

By Clint Richmond. ForeEdge

In this tale of intrigue, blackmail, espionage and murder, Richmond recounts events surrounding the 1938 murder of two socialites found semi-nude and battered in the desert east of El Paso. The murder became national news because of the victims’ social prominence and their grisly deaths. Law enforcement, including the Texas Rangers and FBI, descended on the desert. Though all signs pointed to a methodical execution, many declared it a botched robbery—except for El Paso sheriff Chris Fox, who knew otherwise. Handsome, charismatic and progressive, he was not intimidated by rank or social status and followed evidence, leads and hunches to California and Mexico. Ultimately, Fox never solved the murders, in part due to regulations, arrogance and lack of communication from participating enforcement agencies. A former reporter, Richmond unearthed cold-case and declassified FBI files and provides a convincing conspiracy theory in a compulsively readable true-life whodunit.

— *Vicki Ann Duraine (Also selected by Christine Wald-Hopkins)*

THE KING AND QUEEN OF COMEZÓN

By Denise Chávez. University of Oklahoma Press

“Comezón: 1) an itch or longing; 2) the anxiety of mind produced by a long-standing desire; ... 4) a small town on the U.S./Mexico border....” Denise Chávez’s novel embodies the word. Opening with family patriarch Arnulfo Olivárez, trussed up and sweating in his best mariachi suit, emceeding the annual Cinco de Mayo celebration, the book finishes with Arnulfo Olivárez, trussed up and sweating in his second best (charro) suit, emceeding the 16th of September celebration. In the interim a lot of longings will remain unfulfilled, but a few itches will be scratched — those of Arnulfo; of his neglected wife, Emilia, of his daughters, rebellious Lucinda and beautiful, crippled Juliana; of their bitter maid; of people of the town — the arrogant Spanish priest, the witchy white woman, the bar owner; even of Arnulfo’s hairless Mexican dog. They all seek something elusive, and their tales intertwine over the background of scorching heat and scouring wind. There’s humor in Chávez’s characterizations; some Spanish dialog; some underlying themes of gender inequality and cultural tension. And a fair amount of perspiration.

— *Christine Wald Hopkins (Also selected by Helene Woodhams)*

THE QUIET STREETS OF WINSLOW

By Judy Troy. Counterpoint

The discovery of a young woman’s body in a wash outside Black Canyon City, north of Phoenix, sends Yavapai County investigator Sam Rush to Flagstaff, Winslow, Holbrook and the Navajo Reservation in search of clues to the killer’s identity and a motive for the murder. Troy is a stellar writer and this is much more than your everyday whodunit. Told from multiple perspectives, her deftly crafted novel explores the hidden nooks and crannies of the human soul, raising deep and sometimes disturbing questions about how we see ourselves, how we view those around us and the deceptions we practice that blur the lines between wanting and knowing. Achingly honest characters, a deft sense of setting (parts of this book were written at Winslow’s historic La Posada hotel) and sharp, crisp writing make this a memorable, even haunting, read.

— *Bruce Dinges (Also selected by Vicki Ann Duraine and Helene Woodhams)*

RIDING BEHIND THE PADRE: HORSEBACK VIEWS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER

By Richard Collins. Wheatmark

It’s hard to fathom saintly Father Kino as a hardy cowboy, but, as Sonoita rancher Richard Collins attests, even saddle-tested modern vaqueros would be hard-pressed to keep pace with him. In this account, Collins chronicles annual trail rides — cabalgatas — he took with a group from Mexico and the U.S., to honor Jesuit Father Eusebio Francisco Kino. From 1687 until his death in 1711, Kino roamed thousands of miles over the Pimería Alta —present-day Southern Arizona and Northern Sonora — converting indigenous peoples and establishing mission churches. In some ways, “Riding Behind the Padre” is a tribute to Collins’s neighbors (and former Tucsonans) Lea and Oscar Ward, who shared with many their enthusiasm for the border region and the Kino missions in particular. But it’s mostly other things: a series of riding adventures, a history of the area, a thoughtful examination of border issues—a realistic, sympathetic examination of migration; an unflinching look at the drug trade and associated violence. And much of it from the perspective of a man trotting along routes laid by an intrepid 17th-century priest.

— *Christine Wald-Hopkins (Also selected by Bill Broyles)*

TOM HORN IN LIFE AND LEGEND

By Larry D. Ball. University of Oklahoma Press

Asked how he earned his living, Tom Horn is supposed to have replied: "I kill men." It's just one example of the kind of braggadocio that got Horn hanged in 1903 for murdering a 14-year-old boy and left historians scratching their heads ever since. In this meticulous biography, Ball carefully sifts through mounds of primary documents and published sources, including Horn's own widely popular (and frequently fanciful) "Life of Tom Horn," to tell the full story of the Arizona scout, packer, cowboy and lawman turned ruthless range detective during Wyoming's bloody cattle wars. When all is said and done, the enigma of Tom Horn remains but, thanks to Ball's dogged research and careful weighing of the historical evidence, we at last have a clear and honest portrait of one of the Old West's most fascinating characters.

— *Bruce Dinges (Also selected by Vicki Ann Duraine)*

THE WIVES OF LOS ALAMOS

By TaraShea Nesbit. Bloomsbury USA

"We're moving to the desert," their physicist husbands told them. Explanations were thin on the ground, but still the young wives said goodbye to loved ones they would not be permitted to see again for years and traveled to the stark New Mexico outpost that was their new home. They would raise their young families in unfinished houses surrounded by barbed wire, where the water ran cold when it ran at all. Their clothes were all wrong, their heels were too high and they were not prepared for the harsh turn their lives had taken. Even less were they prepared for the horrendous reveal of their husbands' "project." This mesmerizing fictional account of how the wives adapt, survive and thrive—or not — is a great untold story of World War II. Fans of Julia Otsuka's "The Buddha in the Attic" will enjoy the choral nature of Nesbit's narrative, delivered in the first person plural voice, as much poetry as it is prose. It speaks eloquently to the shared experience of a community of women born of hardship and fueled by determination.

— *Helene Woodhams (Also selected by Vicki Ann Duraine, Christine Wald-Hopkins and Bruce Dinges)*

Southwest Books of the Year 2014 is available as a brochure at all Pima County Public Libraries and select book stores. It is produced with support from the Friends of Pima County Public Library; the Arizona State Library funds statewide distribution, making Southwest Books of the Year available in public, academic, and tribal libraries all over Arizona. To find out more about Southwest Books of the Year or to reserve titles found in the publication, visit PCPL's website at www.library.pima.gov