

Library loose leaf

by Esther Taylor
Have you ever lost a beloved pet? Or found a stray pooch or feline? John Keane, tracer of missing pets is your kind of writer. His book Sherlock Bones will strike a responsive chord in most animal lovers, for its warmth, humor, compassion and down-to-earth judgments. Keane tells of his experiences as a newcomer to the business of sleuthing cases of lost animals. Fed up with selling insurance, the author quit his job and began haunting employment agencies in search of something different and unique. While still at loose ends, he acquired his first pet, an English sheepdog pup, whom he named Paco.

Keane confesses when growing up in "The Archie Bunker section of Queens, New York, pets were creatures of other families had." With this background, he was an unlikely candidate for the role of Sherlock Bones into which he had to grow—a harrowing process at first. At the end of his chronicles, Paco's master gives a chapter of advice to owners entitled: How to find your missing pet. The advice is timely and very sound. For this chapter alone, Sherlock Bones is a rewarding read.

Local fans of James Herriot, best-selling Yorkshire author-veterinarian are delighted with the TV series All Things Bright and Beautiful based on his popular books. To quote one reader this week, taking out three Herriot stories for rereading: "The characters are perfect just as one visualizes them in print. My husband doesn't usually waste his time on television shows, but he makes sure he sees this series. Myself, I wouldn't miss it!"

Anne Combs, author of Helter Shelter, does not consider housework an occupation. In her opinion, it's a sentence. She would rather spackle a wall, install roofing or wrestle with (expletive deleted) plumbing. A good thing, too, as Mrs. Combs had plenty of opportunity to learn building skills after she and her husband Joe bought a large dilapidated house on Bainbridge Island in Puget Sound, across from Seattle. The parents of six exuberant children each an individualist, wanted space for their growing family. They found it on Bainbridge Island, setting of their childhood summers. It took six years and countless misadventures to remodel the house, with mom and dad doing much of the work.

Here's author Helen Van Slyke's reaction to Helter Shelter: "There's just no way to read this book without grins, chuckles and a delicious feeling of warmth." Ideal holiday reading.

For gardeners or would-be gardeners, A.R. Buckley's Canadian Garden Perennials is a mine of information, and because of its color photos, a delight to scan whether or not the reader has a green thumb. According to one patron, "Perennials are the answer to a lazy maiden's prayer. You pop them in the first year, and leave the rest up to the Lord." Buckley, however is more explicit, even to listing the botanical names of familiar perennials. For example the common primrose appears as Primula vulgaris. An unwieldy name for a lovely flower.

The Country Dairy of an Edwardian Lady was written by Edith Holden in 1906. This is a delightful book to study at leisure, full of nature notes, sketches and seasonal poetry. For the month of August, Mrs. Holden chose the poem August by Canadian nature poet Bliss Carman. She observes in her August notes: "There has been almost continuous rain in Scotland this month, although in England it has been one of the sunniest months on record."

Library patrons have been watching a Mom Mallard with a white neck, ferrying her seven ducklings up and down the school creek. She's an unusually intelligent bird, keeping wonderful control of her brood, who obey every cluck.

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