

Lots of new and interesting books found at library

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It seemed like a good idea at the time when I first mentioned to Jane Muller that *The Champion* should have a column dedicated to what's new and interesting at Milton Public Library. But when faced with 57,000 books, I, the slowest reader in the world, wondered if I hadn't bitten off more than I could chew.

Ms Bookmark, my delegated book connection, has been a member of the library staff since 1975, so I figured she would know a noteworthy book when she saw one.

The first time I met with Ms Bookmark, she plunked 14 books down on the table in front of me. My mouth fell open, but bravely, I took a deep breath, packed the books into three plastic bags and headed for home.

I can assure you that I did not read the books cover to cover, although I did read the jackets and bits and pieces of them just to get a feel for their content.

Ms Bookmark's specialty is fiction, but for our first collection she chose only one novel, entitled *Refining Felicity* by Marion Chesney. Apparently, Regency novels are enjoying a lot of popularity these days. The plot sounds like a real hoot as two spinsters set out to refine a wild, unruly, undisciplined and unwilling Felicity and make her marriageable.

I haven't caught the genealogy bug yet, but if that topic fascinates you, you might like to borrow the Chinese version of *Roots*. In *Ancestors*, author Frank Ching traces his family back 34 generations to the poet Qin Guan who lived 900 years ago and who founded the Ching clan. The political, military, social and cultural history of China unfolds through the lives of Frank Chin's ancestors.

"Let the sorcery of scent embrace your sensuality; let the magic of touch embrace you with its healing powers." That's what's in store for you when you read Judith Jackson's

Bookmark

with ESTHER CALDWELL

Sensual Touch and follow the step-to-step instructions for aromatherapy, this ancient science that uses essential oils and herbs to relax and restore your body, mind and inner self.

Are you wondering where to spend your next vacation? Why not treat your body to one of the 100 worldwide spas listed in *The Best Spas* by Theodore B. Van Itallie, M.D., and Leila Hadley. The authors provide information on the personal attention you'll receive, the diet, exercise programs, beauty services, location, and fees. You can choose from exciting resort spas, gently indulgent spas (I like the sound of those), behaviour-modification programs, and no-frills, budget spas.

Ms Bookmark couldn't resist including one of her favourites - *De Gustibus* by Marion Burros. This book is an eccentric yet informative collection of food lore, favourite

recipes and culinary controversies. Should mashed potatoes be lumpy? How do you eat, drink and engage in clever chitchat while standing at a social event? What is the best method for making a meatloaf?

You may agree or disagree with Robert K. Logan's suggestion in *The Alphabet Effect* that the phonetic alphabet caused Western civilization to evolve along rational, scientific and monotheistic lines while Eastern civilization with its pictographic writing developed holistic, intuitive and polytheistic characteristics. Logan also believes that the new electronic literacy requires holistic thinking which will in time lead to the fusion of Western and Eastern thought.

Illiteracy is a big issue these days, but how much do we know about innumeracy, the inability to deal with the fundamental notions of number? What are the consequences of this widespread affliction? According to John Allen Paulos in *Innumeracy*, people fall prey to stock scams, diet and medical claims, sports records, elections, and lotteries, to name a few. The author assures the reader that his approach is "gently mathematical". Perhaps there is hope for those people who can't balance

their cheque books.

Until I browsed through Joel Makower's *Woodstock*, I had never appreciated how momentous an event Woodstock had been, when half a million people gathered one August weekend in 1969 in upstate New York to celebrate music and peace. The author has put together a history of Woodstock through interviews he conducted in 1988 with the people who made Woodstock happen: producers, performers, doctors, police officers, neighbours, shopkeepers, carpenters, electricians, lawyers, journalists, and filmmakers.

As a parent, I sometimes need all the help I can get. Dr. Debora Phillips, a behaviour therapist, believes the most valuable asset we can give our children is a positive self-image. In *How to Give Your Child a Great Self-Image*, Dr. Phillips simplifies her approach through anecdotes and she shows how to identify issues and set specific goals.

Darrell Sifford wrote *The Only Child* and his subtitle says it all: "being one, loving one, understanding one, raising one". As one critic says, Sifford "gives the only child a fair shake". He shows that child as a person with unique strengths who can overcome

the disadvantages and build on the assets of being an only child.

Thomas A. Shannon deals with a controversial issue in *Surrogate Motherhood - The Ethics of Using Human Beings*. In presenting the medical, moral, social and legal implications of surrogacy, Shannon builds a case against this practice.

Among Schoolchildren by Tracy Kidder takes the reader through a year in the life of a Grade 5 class and their teacher. Approached from the point of view of the teacher, this book reveals the personalities and problems of the pupils.

Brown Bear Summer by Thomas Bledsoe is observation of a wilder nature. The author spent several summers in Alaska studying the habits of the brown bear. Photographs and sketches accompany the text.

To finish on a lighter vein, Ms Bookmark selected *Pick of Punch* which contains 198 mirth-filled pages of cartoons and outrageous commentary. Read an exclusive expose on Michael Jackson or the words for the swearing-in ceremony for becoming an Australian citizen. And can you imagine Arnold Schwarzenegger playing the role of Shylock in *The Macho Merchant of Venice*?

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