

Book reviews



"Levi's & Lace: Arizona Women Who Made History"

By Jan Cleere  
200 pages, \$14.95  
Rio Nuevo Publishers  
With excitement building and myriad events in the works for Arizona's statehood centennial this winter, the timing is right for award-winning author Jan Cleere's newest release that celebrates extraordinary women who helped shape Arizona history.

Cleere brings to life with her in-depth narratives and exceptional research skills the stories of 35 heroic Arizona women from Hispanic, African American, Native American and Anglo heritages who made their mark in the Grand Canyon state.

One set right here in the Santa Rita Mountain foothills is the remarkable tale of Larcena Pennington Page Scott. Kidnapped by Apaches in Madera Canyon in March 1860, Larcena was forced to trek on foot through the cold forestlands before her captors brutally stabbed and left her for dead on a mountain slope. Her survival, remarriage and subsequent life in territorial Tucson is amazing.

Reading once again about well-known Arizona women such as Larcena, pioneer Mary Aguirre, writer Sharlot Hall, designer and architect Mary Colter, and gifted Mexican healer Teresita Urrea is like reconnecting with old friends.

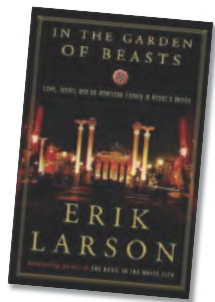
Another delight is that this book introduced me to remarkable women I hadn't read about before, including Maria Urquides, who worked to create a bilingual teaching program; Lorna

Lockwood, who paved the way for women to occupy the highest positions in law; and Grand Canyon matriarch Ada Diefendorf Bass.

Learning about the actual seven sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who walked part of the way to Tucson to start a school and, subsequently, St. Mary's Hospital gives new meaning to that modern health care center north of Green Valley.

From artists and healers teachers and entrepreneurs, women who plowed the land, and those who were instrumental in establishing laws for the new territory of Arizona, these women were known for their fortitude in the face of adversity, their confrontation of extraordinary and sometimes dangerous situations, their adventurous spirit, and their dedication to improving the lives of others.

— Karen Walenga



"In The Garden Of Beasts"

By Erik Larson  
448 pages  
Crown

Those who do not know history are bound to repeat it! Those words rang clear as I read "In the Garden Of Beasts / Love, Terror and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin," by Erik Larson.

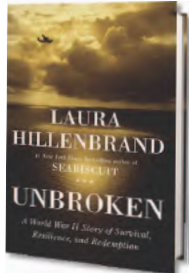
It was difficult to set aside even when I became drowsy. Intriguing! Startling! Enlightening! Frightening!

In 1933, William E. Dodd became the first U.S. Ambassador to Nazi Germany shortly after Adolf Hitler became chancellor. Dodd, a history professor at the Uni-

versity of Chicago, was a most unlikely candidate for ambassadorship. His principal mission was to emphatically encourage Hitler to pay the enormous debt owed to the U.S. Together with his wife, two adult children and his unpretentious Chevrolet automobile, Dodd became unceremoniously ensconced in Berlin. He served as ambassador until December 1937, but the book focuses on the period 1933-34. It covers the rise of the Nazi Party with Hitler at the helm as well as the intriguing dalliances of his daughter Martha. What Dodd lacked in pomp, much to the chagrin of the German hierarchy, Martha made up for in her early fascination of Nazi Germany and romantic affairs with prominent officials including the head of the Gestapo, a Russian agent and others. Dodd observed the brutal behavior of the Brown Shirts and the erratic actions of Hitler, Goring and the other henchmen.

Following the "Night of the Long Knives," Dodd warned of the stranglehold the Nazi regime held on the German people. Many bureaucrats in FDR's administration failed to heed Dodds warnings about the escalating atrocities of the Third Reich. As the saying goes, the rest is history.

— Don Severe  
Green Valley



"Unbroken"

By Laura Hillenbrand  
473 pages  
Random House

"I couldn't put it down" best describes my feeling when reading this amazing book.

Laura Hillenbrand, au-

thor of "Seabiscuit," captured the essence of the remarkable Louie Zamperini. Written during seven years of thorough research, this story was told in a manner that had me feel as though I knew Louie, et al.

Born of immigrant parents, Louie was raised in Torrance, Calif. He was an incorrigible adolescent, stealing pies from neighbors' window sills, etc., but then discovered a talent for running in track and field events. In 1936, he competed in the Berlin Olympics, setting him on a path to fame and fortune.

Fatefully, the 1940 Tokyo Olympics were cancelled because of World War II and Louie became an Army Air Forces bombardier. His military odyssey involved intrigue, stamina and an unbroken spirit carrying him through unbelievable hardships. On May 27, 1943, as a crew member on a dilapidated B-24 bomber that crashed in the Pacific Ocean, Louie and two other survivors were set adrift in shark-infested waters for 47 days. The worst was yet to come.

One of the crew members died and the raft carrying the two survivors drifted onto the Japanese island of Kwajalein, known to airmen as "Execution Island." Louie and Phil, the pilot (his best friend), were shipped to separate Japanese POW camps where they survived unmerciful treatment for the remainder of the war.

As POW survivors, the story following WWII was remarkable, as well.

— Don Severe  
Green Valley

"A Brothers Blood"

By Michael C. White  
323 pages  
Cliff Street Books (Harper)

Here is a Green Valley find, especially if you lived near one of the POW camps that dotted the country during WWII. I grew up on an Army base in the North-



east and remember a camp on one of the bases.

This is a novel, set in modern times, when the brother of a POW camp prisoner who died in a March 1945 escape attempt visits the town to find the facts of his brother's death.

The POW camp was near the village so the prisoners could work in the forests cutting trees to supply pulp for a local paper mill. Many of the villagers worked alongside the prisoners, and the relationships were mostly amiable.

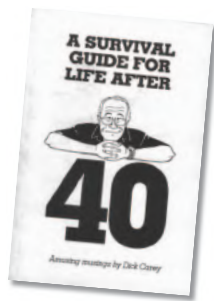
Libby Pelletier, whose deceased father ran the logging operation for the mill, is a 61-year-old lifetime town resident who spends much of her life nursing her alcoholic brother. It's mostly a lost cause. She also runs a small diner/store in the heart of town. When the German visitor shows up at the diner, many of the town's older generation begin to get nervous.

Libby receives anonymous phone calls warning her to not talk to the German. Her brother is also getting mysterious calls and he is soon found dead. The story that the prisoner drowned in his escape attempt begins to look thin.

The climax is a surprise. The author, Michael White, cleverly moves the story between past and present in a smooth style that keeps you interested in both what happened at the camp and what's likely to happen in the present.

This is a well-crafted first novel from a talented author and I enjoyed it immensely.

Ed Lord  
Sneakaboard Press



"A Survival Guide for Life After 40"

By Dick Carey  
Self-published  
Do you like dry humor, and I mean bone dry?

Meet Dick Carey. Dick's one of you; he and his angel-of-a-wife, Beverly, have lived in Green Valley a few years. Dick's also a thinker. Always thinking. About 25 years ago, he decided to put down some of his thoughts about life — everything from finances to vacations to relationships to the little things most of us overlook but shouldn't.

Then he published them in a book titled "A Survival Guide for Life After 40."

Then Dick got older, and maybe a little wiser.

So he decided he needed to update his survival guide. And the updates, written almost as asides at the end of the short chapters, are just as entertaining as the original entries.

Dick has a way with words and a lifetime of experiences he's willing to share. My kids all read the book as teenagers and loved it. Forty years from now, they'll love it just as much, though it'll speak to them in different ways, guaranteed.

Dick has learned a lot from life, and in turn has — with a fine turn of a phrase — become quite a teacher.

You won't find this one on the internet, but you can get it at The Book Shop at Green Valley Village, or email Dick directly at rcarey7@cox.net.

Dan Shearer

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