

**Electric and Hybrid Cars: A History**, by Curtis D. Anderson and Judy Anderson (189 pages, November 2004), demonstrates that alternate forms of automobile propulsion are not a purely modern obsession. The Andersons note that there were six electric cars at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and they bring readers right up to the 21st century with the Corbin Sparrow, the Honda Insight, and the Toyota RAV4 EV. Full discussions of the technologies involved and their impact on the environment are provided, along with many historical advertisements and illustrations. \$45.00. McFarland. ISBN 0-7864-1872-9.

**The First Crusade: A New History**, by Thomas Asbridge (408 pages, August 2004), tells the story of Europe's successful retaking of Jerusalem from the Muslims at the end of the 11th century and explains the forces that impelled thousands of knights, nobles, and peasants to make a perilous journey to the Holy Land. Asbridge has written a vivid account that makes this remarkable armed pilgrimage understandable to modern readers. \$35.00. Oxford University. ISBN 0-19-517823-8.

**The Gordon File: A Screenwriter Recalls Twenty Years of FBI Surveillance**, by Bernard Gordon (344 pages, October 2004), reveals what it was like to be on the Hollywood blacklist in the 1950s. Gordon, who joined the Communist Party for a few years during World War II and was subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1953, was put under FBI surveillance from 1944 to 1970, as shown by the 145 pages of redacted FBI files reprinted here (only half of the total number released to him under the Freedom of Information Act). Despite the blacklisting, Gordon turned out

eight movie screenplays, among them *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* and *Hellcats of the Navy*. A chilling memoir. \$29.95. University of Texas. ISBN 0-292-72843-3.

**The Hunt for the Dawn Monkey**, by Chris Beard (348 pages, December 2004), explores the remote past of human origins, beginning with the author's discovery in China of a fossil that he contends is the common ancestor of modern monkeys, apes, and humans. Beard's arguments that *Eosimias* is part of the anthropoid lineage puts him at odds with the long-standing theory that Africa was the birthplace of the higher primates, but he skillfully interweaves personal anecdotes about fossil discoveries and the history of evolutionary theories with necessary descriptions of primate teeth and postcranial bones. \$27.50. University of California. ISBN 0-520-23369-7.

**Pop Culture Arab World!: Media, Arts, and Lifestyle**, by Andrew Hammond (376 pages, December 2004), offers a fascinating overview of politics and culture in the post-colonial Middle East. Anyone who wants to understand the complexities of Arab societies or better serve the needs of Arab students would do well to consult this book, which has sections on media (including game shows, reality TV, and tabloids), cinema, music (especially Arabpop), theater, popular religion (with excellent discussions on the belief in jinn, spiritual healing, TV evangelists, and strict Wahhabism), belly dancing, consumer culture, sports, and Arabic language and literature (including Quran scholarship). Each chapter concludes with a description of key people and terms. \$85.00. ABC-CLIO. ISBN 1-85109-449-0.

**Strange Angel: The Otherworldly Life of Rocket Scientist John Whiteside Parsons**, by George Pendle (350 pages, January 2005), recounts the odd life of maverick rock-

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to his service at MSU, Besant was director of the Linda Hall Library, assistant director for public service at the Ohio State University library, and assistant director for technical service at the University of Houston library. Besant has been active in state and national organizations, having served as the president of the Kentucky chapter of SLA twice, and chaired the State Assisted Academic Library Council of Kentucky from 1989-1990 and 1997-2000.

**Charles T. Cullen**, president and librarian of the Newberry Library in Chicago, has retired. Cullen has been president of the Newberry

Library since 1986, forging an era of financial stability, academic accomplishment, and public access. During his tenure, the Newberry Library has seen its endowment increased from \$27 million to \$63 million, which has ensured support for active acquisition, emerging scholarship, the strengthening of staff positions and resources, and technological advancement. Under Cullen's stewardship, the Newberry was an early adopter of new technology, becoming one of the first independent research libraries to have a Web site and to network via a state-of-the-art intranet. The Newberry Library is an independent humanities library that is free and open to the public. *~*

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*("Grants and Acquisitions" continued from page 241)*

including Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri. The shop files include diagrams and schematics (including painting diagrams)

for a broad range of railroad equipment from railroad cars to tools and fittings. Other materials donated include Frisco maps, stationary, labor agreements, and publications. *~*

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*("New Publications" continued from page 239)*

et-fuel pioneer and occultist Jack Parsons, whose research at Caltech led to the development of military ballistic missiles. Pendle successfully weaves together the threads of Parsons's relatively unknown career—his interest in space travel and science fiction, his immersion in thelemic magick based on the writings of the notorious Aleister Crowley, and his untimely death in a chemical explosion at his home in 1952. Much better written than John Carter's *Sex and Rockets* (Feral House, 2000), Pendle's biography also provides a glimpse of the southern California culture in the 1930s and 1940s that allowed such a free thinker to flourish. \$25.00. Harcourt. ISBN 0-15-100997-X.

bird that tried to carry off a 10-year-old boy in Lawndale, witnessed by two adults. Hall has assembled an intriguing list of cases and traditions that are difficult to explain. \$15.95. Paraview. ISBN 1-93104-497-X.

**Thunderbirds: America's Living Legends of Giant Birds**, by Mark A. Hall (204 pages, December 2004), examines Indian legends and modern sightings of big birds with wingspans of up to 20 feet. The most interesting instance of the latter was a flap (one might say) of reports in southern Illinois in the summer of 1977, one of which involved a large

**Vanishing Point**, by Richard J. Tofel (216 pages, August 2004), reexamines the unexplained disappearance of New York Supreme Court Judge Joseph Crater in August 1930, an event that made him the most famous missing person until Jimmy Hoffa. As part of his inquiry, Tofel looks at political corruption in New York City and the decline of the Tammany Hall political machine that Crater was involved with. Over time, speculation on the case has ranged from his outright murder by thugs enforcing a showgirl's blackmail scheme to Crater taking it on the lam to escape a corruption investigation. Tofel suspects Crater died suddenly at the brothel of notorious madam Polly Adler, who used her underworld connections to make the corpse disappear. \$24.95. Ivan R. Dee. ISBN 1-56663-605-1. *~*