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**The American Museum of Natural History's Book of Dinosaurs and Other Ancient Creatures** — Joseph Wallace. In celebration of the museum's opening of its renovated vertebrate paleontology halls, this volume offers a behind-the-scenes look at the collection, which now features more than 800 specimens. The book profiles some of the fossil hunters whose finds are housed at the museum, including Charles Sternberg and Roy Chapman, in addition to details of their excavations and the assembly of those remains. Concluding chapters point out the highlights of the new halls and provide brief synopses and color illustrations of the dinosaurs on display. S&S, 1994, 144 p., color and b&w photos and illus., hardcover, \$25.00.

**An Equation that Changed the World: Newton, Einstein, and the Theory of Relativity** — Harald Fritzsch. This introduction to classical physics and modern relativity is written in the form of an imaginary dialogue between Sir Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, and a fictitious physics professor, Adrian Haller, who introduces recent developments into the "conversation." Special emphasis is placed upon the connection between mass and energy, the structure of matter, and the importance of the mass-energy equation in understanding the physical world. U Ch Pr, 1994, 279 p., b&w photos and illus., hardcover, \$29.95.

**Aurora: The Mysterious Northern Lights** — Candace Savage. These rays of light permanently affixed above the poles and only occasionally glimpsed in between are at the center of a great deal of folklore and scientific awe. Savage unravels much of the mystery surrounding the lights and accompanies her text with beautiful photographs. Sierra, 1994, 144 p., color photos and b&w illus., hardcover, \$25.00.

**Into Africa** — Craig Packer. A field biologist takes his readers along on his 16th visit to Africa. This chronicle of Packer's trip illuminates the information-gathering methods he and other scientists use. Specifically, Packer goes to Tanzania's Serengeti and Gombe National Parks and to the Ngorongoro Crater to seek data on the socialization of lions, chimpanzees, and baboons. He investigates the level of cooperation among the baboons and chimpanzees that Jane Goodall studies and the social life of the lions of the Serengeti. U Ch Pr, 1994, 277 p., color plates, hardcover, \$24.95.

**Naturalist** — Edward O. Wilson. In these pages, Wilson retraces his personal history from his earliest years in Florida and Alabama to his current position as one of the world's leading biologists and thinkers. Early chapters focus on the things that inspired him and eventually led him to Harvard University, where he became one of the first researchers to study chemical communication in ants and other social insects. Further along, he documents the controversy over his evolutionary approach to biology. The ensuing strife around the new science of sociobiology, whose name he coined, is also recaptured here. Island Pr, 1994, 380 p., b&w plates, hardcover, \$24.95.

**The Science of Desire: The Search for the Gay Gene and the Biology of Behavior** — Dean Hamer and Peter Copeland. After overcoming numerous hurdles in his quest for funding and support and then embarking on an extensive research effort, Hamer reported in the journal *SCIENCE* in 1993 that he had linked homosexuality to a gene marker. With the help of Copeland, a journalist, Hamer makes a solid argument for the importance of this kind of research. In very accessible language, he details his methods of showing this genetic link, looks at how a gay gene might work, and discusses some of the scientific, social, and ethical implications of his finding. S&S, 1994, 272 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$23.00.

**The Weather Revolution: Innovations and Imminent Breakthroughs in Accurate Forecasting** — Jack Fishman and Robert Kalish. Inaccurate weather forecasts will soon be a rare occurrence, claim the authors of this overview of meteorological trends. After explaining how weather is "made" and providing a thorough history of the field, they look into recent meteorology. The most intriguing elements of this treatise can be found in the chapters detailing current technologies, such as Doppler radar, and future advances. These, say the authors, will include accurately predicting the weather several months in advance and detecting sudden phenomena, such as wind shear, before they create hazards. Plenum, 1994, 276 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$27.95.

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People have always been curious about the plants and animals with which they coexist. Primitive cultures identified edible and poisonous plants by a process of trial and error, and then began to exploit the toxic materials for hunting, euthanasia, executions, and murder. Other plants were found to have stimulatory or hallucinogenic effects: these not only formed the basis of magico-religious rites, they also encouraged experimentation which led to the identification of plants with useful medicinal properties.

This absorbing account of the evolution of modern medicine from its roots in folk medicine will entertain and inform both scientist and general reader alike. It explains the chemical basis of modern pharmacology, and provides a fascinating description of how the use and abuse of natural

products in various societies throughout the ages has led to the development of many of the drugs we now take for granted. Many plant and animal species remain undiscovered, and much native folk medicine has yet to be investigated. Given the present wholesale destruction of many of the Earth's wild places, this book is particularly timely: these potential sources of agents for murder, magic, and — in particular — medicine, could soon be lost forever.

—Oxford Univ. Press

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