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Chaos in the Cosmos: The Stunning Complexity of the Universe—Barry Parker. Chaos may be the missing link crucial to unraveling many mysteries that lurk in and around the stars, planets, and black holes. Parker imparts a lively history of the rise and implications of chaos, which holds that simple changes in initial conditions have a significant effect on the outcome of systems, producing unorganized behavior. He then considers the role of chaos in determining the movement of the planets, the swirling migration of the great red spot of Jupiter, and the explosive mechanics of pulsating stars, among other phenomena. Plenum, 1996, 307 p., b&w photos and illus., hardcover, $28.95.

Einstein: A Life—Denis Brian. This biography makes use of recently released archives of Einstein's life, which add a more human dimension to a man previously portrayed as somewhat saintly. Some of these documents confirm Einstein's shabby dealings with his children and his dismissive treatment of his wives. Brian's treatise is evenhanded, however, keeping in perspective Einstein's many achievements both as a scientist and humanitarian in spite of some personal failings and scientific shortcomings, such as his unsuccessful quest for a "unified field theory." Additionally, a number of interviews help provide a clearer sense of what kind of person Einstein was. Wiley, 1996, 509 p., b&w plates, hardcover, $30.00.

The Flight of the Red Knot: A Natural History Account of a Small Bird's Annual Migration from the Arctic Circle to the Tip of South America and Back—Brian Harrington and Charles Flowers. Flying at 30 to 40 miles per hour for up to 2,500 miles at a stretch, the tiny red knot travels more than 18,000 miles a year on its migratory route. Along the way, it stops for abundant feedings at what seem to be predetermined locations, which are seasonally primed for the birds' arrival. The journey of these shorebirds is tracked chronologically through the year in this beautifully illustrated and heartily written account of the behavior and flight patterns of birds like these. Norton, 1996, 192 p., color photos and b&w illus., hardcover, $29.95.

Insects Through the Seasons—Gilbert Waldbauer. The cecropia moth is the star of this entomological exposé, but birds with a predisposition to kleptomania and mosquitoes with seductive buzzes are among those that supply a fascinating supporting cast in this chronological look at the year in the life of insects. Noting that only two percent of insects are detrimental to humans, Waldbauer illuminates their indispensable role as pollinators and scavengers crucial to the ecosystems that supply the world's food and organic products. By showing the mechanisms by which insects obtain food, mate, and survive the perils of their habitat and predators, he also shows how they have maintained their strong evolutionary path. HUP, 1996, 289 p., b&w illus., hardcover, $24.95.

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Multi-media: The Complete Guide—Anthony Whitehorn, ed. Just how is a CD-ROM made? What will be the benefits of interactive television? What will future homes look like when outfitted in multimedia products? This survey of the burgeoning field describes the history and future of the hardware and software of multimedia products through a wealth of detailed photographs and descriptive text. It is beneficial for the novice consumer or a young person. Dorling Kindersley, 1996, 192 p., color photos and illus., hardcover, $24.95.

The Rammed Earth House—David Easton. Although this building technique is thousands of years old, it is experiencing a resurgence among architects and builders such as Easton, who have successfully implemented the use of earth, water, and small amounts of cement to create durable, energy-efficient structures. Easton takes the reader from the planning to the building stages, including enhancements that can be made upon completion of the structure. Chelsea Green Pub, 1996, 272 p., color plates and b&w photos and illus., paperback, $30.00.

Our Molecular Nature: The Body's Motors, Machines, and Messages—David S. Goodsell. The human body is composed of thousands of molecules, which, among other activities, capture energy to power motion and orchestrate the inner world of the brain. Goodsell, focuses on those 150 or so molecules about which scientists are most knowledgeable. Grouping them by function, he outlines how they are built for the roles they play within the body, whether in digestion or in the construction of fingernails and hair. Copernicus, 1996, 183 p., b&w illus., hardcover, $25.00.