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A Bedside Nature: Genius and Eccentricity in Science 1869-1953—Walter Gratzer, ed. This collection of actual excerpts from *NATURE* presents not only an entertaining retrospective of the journal, but also of science as a whole. Beginning with a piece entitled "The Dulness of Science" [sic] by T.H. Huxley and ending with the stimulating paper by Watson and Crick on "The Structure of DNA," each section is prefaced with a blurb outlining the current events of the time, thus lending context to the articles. Freeman, 1998, 266 p., illus., hardcover, \$27.95.

Before the Big Bang: The Origins of the Universe—Ernest J. Sternglass. This idiosyncratic treatise is likely to cause many cosmologists' heads to spin as Sternglass breaks from the "standard model" of the origins of the universe to argue that not only does the Earth spin on an axis but our solar system, the Milky Way, and the universe itself spin as well—creating a stable state for the cosmos. Sternglass, whose family fled Europe just before World War II, recounts his education, career, and contacts with Einstein, Bohr, and other greats as he explains the origin of his unique view of physics. Calling on the work of Kant, Gödel, and Einstein, he claims that the universe began with a single positron and electron which rotated close to the speed of light and contained the entire mass of the cosmos. Four Walls Eight Windows, 1997, 294 p., illus., hardcover, \$24.95.

Complete Guide to Prescription and Non-prescription Drugs: 1998 Edition—H. Winter Griffith. Brand names, uses, dosage information, overdoses, side effects, warnings, and drug interactions are detailed for more than 700 types of medications. More than 5,000 brand names are also charted. Body Press, 1997, 1078 p., paperback, \$16.95.

The Joy of π —David Blatner. Whimsically formatted, this little book is a treasure trove of facts, folklore, quotes, uses, puzzles, and even the first 1 million digits of pi. Perhaps it is the infinite nature of this number or the ubiquity of circles in nature that fascinates mathematicians. In an effort to establish the reasoning of people obsessed with pi, Blatner introduces those who build computers for the sole purpose of calculating pi and individuals who memorize pi to thousands of digits. The rich history of this ratio is never boring, as anecdotes and weird trivia pop up throughout. Walker, 1997, 129 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$18.00.

Lifelines: Biology Beyond Determinism—Steven Rose. Richard Dawkins, take cover. Steven Rose assaults the popular Ultra-Darwinism of Dawkins and his counterparts as he argues against such a reductionist approach. Rose urges us to embrace the organism and its lifeline: the trajectory it takes through time and space. Advances in genetics and developmental biology help Rose formulate his debate as he explores new ideas of biological complexity. The new data lead him to conclude that organisms are active players in their own fate, not the playthings of gods, nature, or gene-driven natural selection. OUP, 1997, 335 p., b&w photos/illus., hardcover, \$30.00.

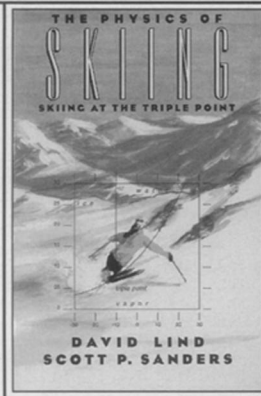
Secret Mesa: Inside Los Alamos National Laboratory—Jo Ann Shroyer. "Our job is to scare little children into behaving," says Shroyer's tour guide upon "going behind the fence." While the Berlin Wall and the fences of Los Alamos have tumbled, scientists continue their work inside the lab. Their budget is no longer guaranteed, and because pervasive distrust among the general populace cannot be ignored, these individuals have had to become savvy spin doctors. Shroyer's observations of and interviews with members of this small community provide insight into the lab's possible role in the future and offer a glimpse of the work being done in robotics and cancer research, as well as weapons research. The unique characteristics of the town itself include the highest concentration of PhDs in the United States and children who leave their parents' occupation line blank on forms. Wiley, 1998, 230 p., hardcover, \$24.95.

Why Things Are the Way They Are—B.S. Chandrasekhar. We know that a pin is a pin, metals conduct heat, and rubies are red, but the physics involved in the construction of such things often overwhelms the curious. Using just the basics of algebra, Chandrasekhar explains the physics of condensed matter that determines the properties of materials. His analogies and simple illustrations are easily understood, although the book is sometimes dry. Cambridge U Pr, 1998, 254 p., b&w photos/illus., paperback, \$24.95.

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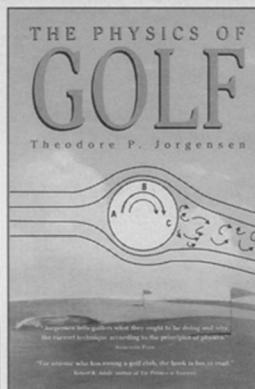
In many sports, the properties of the playing field are relatively fixed and unchanging, and they remain so during the course of play. That is definitely not true in skiing. In fact, skiing can only be done on a playing field whose basic physical properties *change*. Thus the concept of skiing at triple point—where the three possible states of water (solid, liquid, and vapor) coexist—is key to this book.

The Physics of Skiing examines the many forces and properties that come together in this sport to give us the rush of carving a smooth, parallel turn on fresh-powder snow. The authors focus on the three principal classes of skiing—alpine, Nordic, and adventure—and examine all aspects of ski equipment and its relation to snow in these circumstances. Drag, friction, aerodynamics, and how these physical principles affect balance, edging, and wedging all come into play as Lind and Sanders analyze each aspect of the sport. —from AIP Press



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The Physics of Golf features an introductory chapter that traces the historical development of golf clubs and balls. It also presents an eye-opening chapter on golf legend Harry Vardon, revealing how his swing yielded such exceptional results. —from AIP Press

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