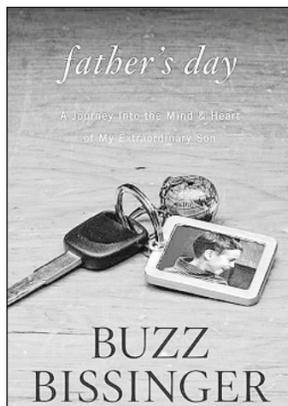


WHAT'S HOT



Father's Day: A Journey into the Mind and Heart of My Extraordinary Son by Buzz Bissinger, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 256 pp., \$26

From the author of "Friday Night Lights" comes this heart-breaking but ultimately hopeful and inspirational story of fatherhood, love, acceptance and respect. Zach, the youngest of Buzz Bissinger's twins, is born a savant, challenged by serious intellectual deficits but also blessed with other talents. This true story centers on a road trip by father and son, as they retrace their roots to all the places they have lived. Bissinger learns much about what life is like for his son, but he also learns volumes about himself. The book teaches lessons of compassion and kindness that all of us would do well to learn.

Birdseye: The Adventures of a Curious Man by Mark Kurlansky, Doubleday, 272 pp., \$25.95

This tasty tale is not just about the creation of flash freezing. It uses the word "curious" for both its meanings: Clarence Birdseye is both eager to learn and a bit of an oddball. I was delightfully surprised to learn the breadth and depth of Birdseye's inventiveness; it's not just about the fish sticks. Kurlansky has done his homework, producing a vivid picture of an intelligent man who identifies a problem or need and sets about to solve it. These quests may take an inventor years of tinkering and toil, but it only takes one great invention to change the world.

Prometheus: The Art of the Film by Mark Salisbury, Titan Books, 186 pp., \$39.95

Like the film it heralds, this brooding, muted, volume will spur much conversation. I'll give away no spoilers here, but rest assured the sumptuous art of the film is well-represented — from the new ships and machinery (and those one may already recognize) to the other "surprises," readers and fans will be enthralled at the dark imagination evidenced here. There is a limited amount of how-they-did-that special effects discussion, with the focus more on the why-they-did-that thought processes that led to the creations seen in the book and onscreen (and the differences between the two).

Events

James Grote will sign his new book "Medieval Literacy: A Compendium of Medieval Knowledge with the Guidance of C.S. Lewis" from 6-8 p.m. June 21 at A Reader's Corner Bookstore, 2044 Frankfort Ave.

Wayne Pacelle, president & CEO of The Humane Society of the United States, will discuss and sign his bestselling book "The Bond: Our Kinship with Animals, Our Call to Defend Them," at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Barnes & Noble, 801 S. Hurstbourne.

BEST-SELLERS

FICTION

1. **Fifty Shades of Grey** by E. L. James
2. **Fifty Shades Darker** by E. L. James
3. **Fifty Shades Freed** by E. L. James
4. **A Game of Thrones** by George R. R. Martin
5. **The Sense of an Ending** by Julian Barnes

NONFICTION

1. **The Cornbread Mafia** by James Higdon
 2. **The City and the Coming Inmate** by Brian Stone
 3. **In the Garden of Beasts** by Erik Larson
 4. **Solicitor General Bullitt** by Mark Davis
 5. **Logs of Candles, Plenty of Cake** by Anna Quindlen
- Based on sales of books at Carmichael's Bookstores.

Books

An ode to fathers and love

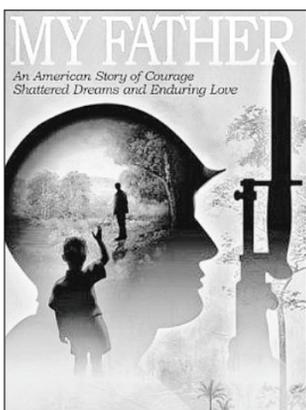
By Kevin Kavanagh
Special to the Courier-Journal

The biographical memoir "My Father" is the fulfillment of a son's promise at his father's deathbed to write and preserve the memory of the father's life.

In a testimonial to the deep love and respect the two shared, his father is viewed as having great courage and character, overcoming adversities and life challenges — albeit, many of them self-inflicted, for this is a story of a man who achieves, makes mistakes and amends, and has the courage to carry on.

The book traverses intricately detailed historical events of the past century, which will appeal to a variety of interests. Two sections stand out.

The chapters during World



My Father: An American Story of Courage, Shattered Dreams and Enduring Love

By Michael Bennett
660 pp., \$25

detailed, sometimes hourly account of this important battle, one that would impress even military historians.

The second, towards the book's end, is the father's struggle to overcome a string of hospital-acquired infections, inflicted by a health care system that they trusted and let them down. One of the most disturbing chapters details the legislative hearings and ill-motivated national politics that have prevented an effective national response, spurring the birth of the consumer advocacy movement to combat hospital-acquired infections.

The book is also about the author, whose life is both helped and hindered by his father's life decisions. Dads are only human, and they make mistakes, but the author embraces the Jewish faith and the tenet to honor one's father and mother, a credo which transcends all disagreements.

The one conclusion readers will reach is that the decade-long, grueling research it took to write this book was the ultimate demonstration of love for the author's father. This book is one a son should give his father, and certainly a book fathers should give their sons, to demonstrate the respect fathers so lovingly deserve.

The reviewer is a physician from Somerset.

Author's wine essays read like a fine bouquet

By Susan Reigler
Special to The Courier-Journal

Readers who follow contemporary fiction will know Jay McInerney from "Bright Lights, Big City" and other acclaimed novels populated by self-destructive and materialistic characters. Unless they are also regular readers of his column in The Wall Street Journal, these readers may have missed McInerney's other literary talent: as a writer about wine.

"The Juice: Vinous Veritas" brings together more than 50 of McInerney's entertaining and informative essays on the pleasures and people and places of the grape, most from The Journal, but others from publications as different as House & Garden and The New Yorker.

What makes his wine writing so much fun to read is that his education as a fiction writer and as a wine lover were virtually simultaneous. He explains in the book's introduction:

"...[O]ne of the reasons we read books in our youth, particularly books by Hemingway and Kerouac and Lawrence Durrell: to find out how to live

and how to pose and where to travel and what to eat and drink and smoke along the way."

Hemingway's romanticized characters were wine drinkers, which McInerney found to be far more interesting than his martini-and-Manhattan-swilling parents and their friends. (He confesses to taking much longer to warm up to John Cheever's stories with their gin and bourbon imbibers. They reminded him too much of the dull

adults he knew.)

Of course, if you are an avid reader, you also absorb the rhythm and cadence of prose, which is the first step to finding your own writing voice. Good writers also know how to employ good metaphors, an essential skill in food and wine writing because simply declaring something "delicious" or "bad" conveys little information about how something tastes.

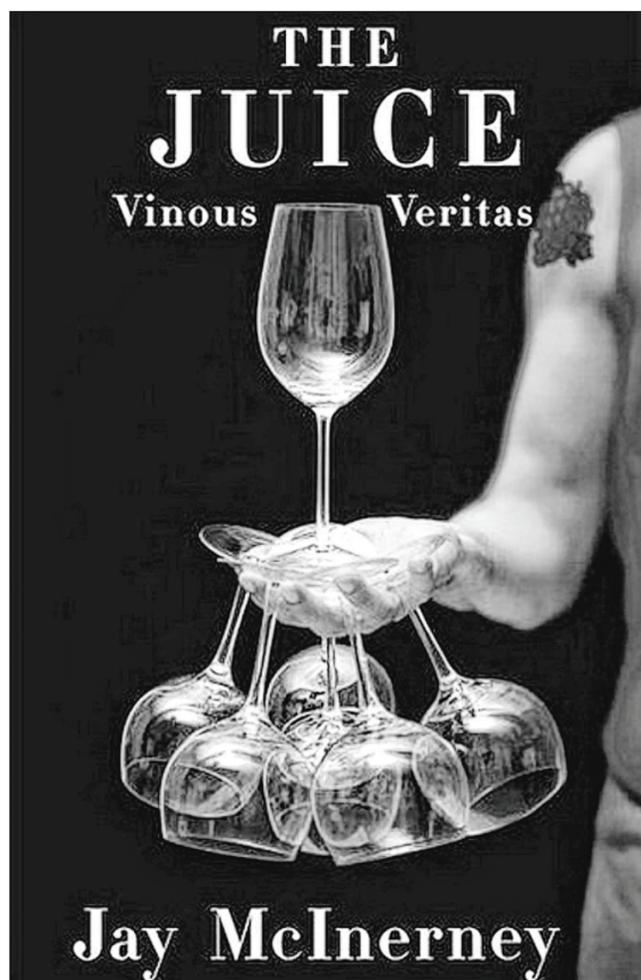
Wine writers, especially, will all too often resort to tortuous metaphors that make a wine lover cringe. (An especially silly example I recall reading once was "a bouquet of hot tar.")

But McInerney engages in no such fluff. For example, he succinctly sums up the elegant and complex character of a white Burgundy as "a Grace Kelly of a wine," a comparison that could inspire a reader to don her best linen dress and pearls, book a table at the nearest French restaurant, and order a bottle with dinner.

McInerney also delights in the geography of the grape, describing the places where wine is made, from various regions of California and Australia to Europe and South Africa and his encounters with the people passionately engaged in winemaking in those places.

The essays I probably enjoyed the most were collected under the heading "Grape Nuts," in which he describes several colorful characters, present and past, from the world of viniculture. "The Wild Wizard of the Loire," "The Retro Dudes of Napa" and "The Modigliani of Healdsburg" capture the spirits of the diverse personalities drawn to winemaking.

My favorite among these pro-



The Juice: Vinous Veritas

By Jay McInerney, Alfred A. Knopf, 284 pp./\$26.95

files was "Founding Wine Geek." In a few hundred words, McInerney deftly conveys Thomas Jefferson's personality as well as his accomplishments by focusing on the third president as an oenophile. In doing so, McInerney illustrates wine's near-universal appeal:

"It's hard to imagine any aspect of contemporary life that Jefferson would recognize if he were to suddenly reappear among us, with one exception: he would be very comfortable navigating the wine list of a three-star restaurant in

Paris."

Beginning and longtime wine drinkers alike will find much to enjoy between the covers of "The Juice," preferably while sipping a favorite red, white or rosé.

Former Courier-Journal restaurant critic and beverage columnist Susan Reigler teaches biology at Indiana University Southeast. Her most recent books are *The Complete Guide to Kentucky State Parks and The Kentucky Bourbon Cocktail Book*.

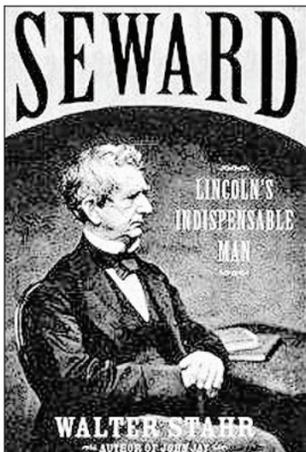
Seward a loyal Lincoln cabinet member

Reviewed by Ric Manning
Special to The Courier-Journal

Try to name a U.S. secretary of state other than Hillary Clinton or Henry Kissinger and there's a good chance you'll come up with William Henry Seward. Every school child knows that it was Secretary Seward who arranged for the United States to buy Alaska from Russia, a deal that was supposedly ridiculed in the press and has been known evermore as "Seward's Folly."

If you saw the movie "The Conspirator," you also know that Seward was one of the targets of John Wilkes Booth's plot to murder Abraham Lincoln along with other top government officials. Why kill the Secretary of State? It was assumed that Booth picked Seward because he would be next in line to be president after Lincoln and Vice President Andrew Johnson were gone. But in his new biography of Seward, Walter Stahr suggests that Booth may have viewed Seward as someone whose power went well beyond the status of his office.

Booth, he says, was a Shakespearean actor who saw Lincoln as "a tyrant like Caesar, and saw



Seward: Lincoln's Indispensable Man

By Walter Stahr
Simon & Schuster; 608 pp.; \$32.50

Seward as a co-tyrant like Marc Antony." Although Brutus killed Caesar, he failed to restore the Roman republic because he didn't kill Antony. Booth "was determined that his version of the play would have a different ending: he would kill both tyrants."

Yet Stahr paints Seward as far more conciliatory than tyrannical. A former governor of New York, Seward was widely expected to be nominated for president by the new Republican Party in 1860 and to go on to win the election. But after being outmaneuvered by Lincoln, he accepted Lincoln's invitation to be his secretary of state and he became Lincoln's most loyal Cabinet member. With Seward, there was none of the self-interested double-dealing that marked some of the others on what Doris Kearns Goodwin would call Lincoln's team of rivals.

Early in the Civil War, it was Seward's job to keep Britain and France from recognizing or supporting the new nation of Confederate states. His success in that effort was as important to the war effort as anything the Union generals were doing on the battlefield, which often wasn't much.

Stahr notes that Seward was not enthusiastic about Lincoln's emancipation plan but gave it his full support once Lincoln made his determination clear. And he quietly made other moves that helped the Negro cause. Seward reversed the State Department policy against issuing passports to

blacks, he supported freeing slaves in the District of Columbia and backed granting recognition to the new nations of Haiti and Liberia that were populated by former slaves. Those were the sorts of actions that could have earned Seward a place on Booth's hit list.

Despite suffering brutal injuries in the assassination attempt and the death of his wife, Seward remained in the Johnson cabinet, where he lobbied to carry out Lincoln's plans for reconciliation with the Southern states and where he found time to go shopping for new territories, including St. Thomas and St. John in the Virgin Islands as well as what was then known as Russian America.

And about that Alaska deal, Stahr writes that Seward was not roundly criticized in the press for buying "a polar bear garden." On the contrary, he said most newspapers supported the acquisition, with one calling it "the greatest diplomatic achievement of the age."

Ric Manning is a former editor and reporter for The Courier-Journal. He blogs about the Civil War in Kentucky at CivilWarKY.com.