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Hands Up! (Dial Books for Young Readers, 2019) Picture Book (for 4-8 year-olds)
by Breanna J. McDaniel and illustrated by Shane W. Evans
reviewed by: Nori Morganstein, Youth Services Librarian/Assistant Director

This is a fun, interactive book that will have kids putting their hands up throughout the story. The book is about various situations when kids need to put their hands up. Everything is covered, from games of Peek-a-boo, to getting dressed in the morning, to reaching a high shelf, to wanting to be picked in a game, to ballet, to needing help after a fall, to holding up a sign and marching for what you believe in.

The pictures are bright and colorful. All the people in the book are different colors. The book definitely celebrates diversity. The main character has brown skin, but the hands and arms raised throughout the book, come in all shapes, colors, and sizes. Raising hands is something we all do, something all humans have in common. And it’s something all humans understand. We know that when a kid falls off of their bicycle and raises their arms, that they want help.

The book has an almost powerful feel to it. It brings power to children, who very often feel like they don’t have any. It demonstrates that the simple gesture of raising your hands can bring you attention, love, books from the top bookshelf, help when you need it, and sometimes even the winning basketball shot. Raising your hands makes you taller (something a lot of kids would like to be).

The book ends with characters marching and holding up protest signs. I can see this leading to some deeper conversations about what people march for. However, the overall message is about positive, peaceful strength, and the power that’s in all of us.
Into the Raging Sea: Thirty-Three Mariners, One Megastorm, and the Sinking of El Faro
by Rachel Slade
reviewed by Jim Mills

In 2015 a 790 ft long American container ship, the El Faro, on the Jacksonville to Puerto Rico route sailed into the center of a major (Category 4) hurricane (Joaquin) and was lost along with its entire crew of 33. How such an event could have happened in this day of modern navigation aides and greatly improved weather forecasting is the subject of Rachel Slade’s fascinating first book, Into the Raging Sea.

The recovery of the ship’s VDR (Voice Data Recorder) in 15,000 foot deep water nearly a year after the accident allowed the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation and the author to reconstruct what happened on the ship for the 26 hours period prior to the ship’s sinking. Many factors contributed to this accident but the primary factor seemed to be the behavior of the captain. His judgement on the best course of action was based on a private weather service called BVS (Bon Voyage System) whose weather updates were sometimes 8 hours behind that of the National Hurricane Center (NHC). The BVS reports were presented in an easy to comprehend graphical displays versus the NHC dry text reports. Many of the other officers on the ship questioned the judgement of the Captain in his choice of route as the ship passed through the Bahamas with a tropical storm soon to become a hurricane approaching the area. The captain thinking that he had already passed the center of the storm disregarded his aides’ advice and continued to plow straight on into the storm’s center. The large areas of very shallow water in the Bahamas limited the choices available for the ship to veer to the west and avoid the worst of the storm. The opportunities to use the available channels through the island chain were not taken.

The author provides much fascinating background details on the history of the merchant marine and specifically the rise of container shipping in the last few decades. Commercial shipping is such a competitive activity and the companies involved are always looking for ways to cut costs. Captains, though considered to be independent in their choice of the route taken, were under pressure to not deviate from the most direct route, the one that would be the least expensive from a fuel cost perspective and that would maximize the ship’s commercial usage. Frequently this cost cutting activities mean that improvements in, or repair of, safety equipment or designs were not supported and that employees with crucial skills were dismissed. The El Faro’s only wind speed indicator (anemometer) had previously been broken and never repaired and was not available to provide crucial information during the storm. Air intake ports were so located on the ship’s sides that a ship list (roll angle) of only 15 degrees would allow sea water to enter the ship’s hold, a fact of which the captain was apparently not aware. Also there was essentially no provision for crew members who disagreed with the captain’s judgement to get a ruling from company or federal authorities to counter the captain. The loss of the El Faro was the worst American Merchant Marine disaster since World War Two.

Government safety rules are an effort to level the playing field in the sense that they apply to all of a nation’s ships and do not financially penalize ships that comply relative to competitors. However, with severe budgeting constraints on agencies, such as the Coast Guard and the NTSB, that supervise compliance, means that some companies can try to save money by cheating on safety issues often with impunity. The author skillfully combines the history of the merchant marine and the government’s role as a regulator with the story of the El Faro’s loss. This first effort by Rachel Slade holds great promise for future works by this author. Into the Raging Sea tells a compelling story in such a way that the reader is immersed in a tragedy that is hard to comprehend and that certainly never had to occur.
The traditional guitar, known as an acoustic guitar, was always known as a relatively quiet instrument. Early experimentation in the 1930s came up with new guitar designs that used electronic amplification to boost output. These efforts produced mixed results, one problem being audio feedback (loud acoustic squeal) at high amplification levels. Several experimenters including Leo Fender and the guitarist Les Paul realized that a contributing factor was the guitar’s hollow sounding box that had been designed to passively amplify the guitar’s output. The solution was the design of a thin solid body guitar, lighter in weight and smaller in size deriving all of its enhanced output through electronic amplification. Sound sensors mounted on the guitar’s body were fed to an external amplifier with outside speakers. This design led to a massive increase in the sound levels produced. It has been said that the efforts of these two pioneers and others in the late 1940s and early 1950s are credited (blamed?) for the rise of Rock ‘n’ Roll in the mid-1950s.

Les Paul and his wife Mary Ford became very popular musical performers in the early 1950s partly due to his pioneering use of electronics to generate electronically generated sound on sound (reverberation) recordings of his expert guitar capabilities and Mary Ford’s angelic voice. The electrician Leo Fender made a fortune from the electronic guitars that he sold beating out industry giants such as Gibson over the next decade. The new guitar became the instrument of choice for young budding musicians. The relatively low price of the guitars and the relative ease of playing meant that countless rock bands formed in high schools across the country. This all resulted in record sales of guitars and fortunes accruing to the instrument’s pioneers.

Many of the early Rock ‘n’ Roll performers came out of extreme poverty, in some case borrowing their guitar before attaining fame. Through the 1960s there was a race to increase the sound amplification to meet the performer’s desires. The performer’s efforts to boost the noise output generated burned out many amplifiers that were not up to the task. The sound levels generated in Rock concerts have reached levels much higher than any other musical form. It is curious that the initial birth of electronic amplification in the 1920s had a different effect. The amplification combined with the rise of Radio allowed relatively soft spoken singers known as “crooners” to compete with the very loud output of traditional operatic performers. Performers who benefited from this technical innovation included Bing Crosby, Perry Como, Frank Sinatra, and Mel Torme.

Another result of the Rock revolution is the relative disappearance of other musical instruments. Virtually every musical group today features the use of the guitars backed by some sort of percussion instrument. Gone from everyday music are the musical instruments such as the Trumpet, Clarinet, Trombone, Saxophone and Piano. One must go to a classical performance to hear the Violin, Oboe, Harp, Cello, Bassoon, Flute, or Piano. The Rock revolution has certainly narrowed the variety available today in musical expression. All of this resulting from the effort to boost a guitar’s output leading to success beyond the protagonists’ wildest dreams. Read The Birth of Loud to see how it all happened.
The Breakthrough: Immunotherapy and the Race to Cure Cancer  
by Charles Graeber  
reviewed by Jim Mills

Through the decades there have been many false hopes that a significant breakthrough in cancer treatment was imminent. The main thesis of The Breakthrough is that we are indeed on the verge of new treatments that will make cancer a treatable disease by either controlling it or ultimately curing it. The author points out that traditional cancer treatments involved either cutting it out, burning it or poisoning it. Initially surgery was the only treatment available. So frequently the initial success was followed by an inevitable recurrence of the disease. Radiation treatments followed the same pattern as did the later advent of Chemotherapy. These treatments did have their successes, some patients were cured and many received a temporary reprieve from the disease. The effects of some of these treatments, particularly Chemotherapy, could be devastating on the patient’s normal cells.

A major puzzle to the cancer story was why our immune system does not treat the cancer cells as a foreign invasion and destroy those cells as effectively as it does the many microbes that cause infectious diseases. Through the years there have been reports of “miracle” cures of individuals with a fatal cancer. Some of these cures occurred when the cancer patient contracted a serious infectious disease. It seemed that the body’s immune defenses that were marshaled to defeat the infection also somehow managed to recognize and defeat the invasive cancer cells. Through the last half century scientists have learned much about our immune system and some of the answers to these questions have emerged. A major player in this story is the T-cell, a lymphocyte that generates disease fighting antibodies so called since they are created in our Thymus gland. The challenge to our immune system is to identify a foreign invasion of our bodies and to destroy the invaders. The other challenges is to not destroy our normal cells or the cells of a developing embryo. When this happens we have what is called an auto-immune disease such as lupus, Crohn’s disease, rheumatoid arthritis or multiple sclerosis. The immune system, in order to keep us healthy, must tread the narrow path of providing effective disease control while not destroying our bodies in the process.

Recent medical research has identified several “switches” on the T-cells that govern whether the cells will attack any cell in the body that they encounter or not. Cancer cells have developed the ability to hit the stop switch on the T-cells and prevent an immune response. So the new immunotherapy drugs that are coming on the market do not attack the cancer cells directly but allow our immune system to do its job of eliminating the cancer cells by preventing the cancer from turning off the T-cell attack. Most of us are aware of the recent news that former president Jimmy Carter has been cured of what appeared to be a fatal brain tumor, a promising example of the effectiveness of some of these new treatments. The problem using these new immunological drugs is to direct the immune attack at the particular cancer cell in question and avoid any major attack on the body’s normal cells.

At present the cost of these new treatments is high due to the adjustments required to deal with a particular type of cancer cell. As the technology matures the treatment costs will hopefully drop. The prospect of developing a cure for most cancers during our lifetime looks better than it ever has. This accumulating success follows decades and decades of painstaking medical research that will hopefully bear fruit in the next decade. The author has taken a complex topic and explained the issues involved in a very understandable way. This book is an excellent guide, discussing the history of cancer treatments and the prospects of future advances for the interested reader.

Charles Graeber
Falling Upward: How We Took to the Air *
by Richard Holmes
reviewed by Jim Mills

The title, *Falling Upward*, is a very good description of just what lighter than air balloons do. Richard Holmes provides a fascinating review of the history of ballooning going back to that famous 1783 first Parisian ascent by the Montgolfier Brothers. While this first balloon ascension was made with a hot air balloon most of *Falling Upward* deals with balloons, developed at the same time, inflated by lighter than air gases such as hydrogen, coal gas (hydrogen, methane mixture) and, later on, helium. One of the major problems with ballooning, prior to the development of blimps and dirigibles, is the lack of control over just where the balloon is taking you. Some element of control can be provided by changing altitude to find a wind blowing in the direction that you would like to go. But this is chancy. One balloonist leaving Cincinnati, Ohio for Washington, D.C. on the eve of the Civil War ended up in the heart of South Carolina and barely avoided incarceration or execution as a spy.

The use of Balloons in wartime is described for both the American Civil War and the 1870 Franco-Prussian War. The latter war went quickly against the French with Paris undergoing a four month siege by the Germans. Telegraphic contact with the French Capital was broken and Paris was isolated from the rest of France and the World. During the siege over sixty balloons successfully overflew the German lines taking out documents, mail, carrier pigeons (for return messages) and individuals. The wayward winds were more successful in interfering with this operation than hostile German fire. One balloon landed in Norway and three were lost at sea.

Most of *Falling Upward* deals with the scientific exploration of the upper atmosphere and the adventurous exploits of those seeking to extend the limits of balloon performance with respect to altitude, range and the ability to achieve directional control. Most of these ballooning adventures took place in France, Great Britain and in the US. Early on these adventurers were attempted to set altitude records. Unfortunately, the altitude capabilities of these balloons greatly exceeded the limits that declining oxygen levels placed on the passengers. That limit was essentially in the 20 to 25,000 foot levels. Some of these explorers passed out and a few died when their balloons exceeded 30,000 feet. The distances covered approached 1,000 miles but usually not in the desired directions. As scientific knowledge improved some balloonists were even able to return to their launch point by selecting favorable wind currents at different altitudes. This basic limitation of balloons hindered their use and would not be overcome until the development of powered dirigibles and blimps in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The major use of the balloon for exploration was made by the ill-fated 1897 Andrè expedition’s attempt to reach the North Pole. Due to unfavorable winds and the unexpected performance of equipment the expedition came down on the arctic ice far short of the pole and all three of the explorers ultimately perished. This outcome was not definitely known until the remains of the expedition were found on tiny White Island in 1930.

The author shares the excitement of the early balloon adventures seeing the lights on the ground at night during the early gas light period. The unpowered balloon allowed experiences no longer available to the flying public. The absolute quiet as you drift effortlessly with the wind. The balloon hanging in space as the Earth slowly moves below. The faint sounds, dogs, barnyard animals, conversations, and music drifting up from far below. The various smells as the balloon flew over cities, forest, marshes, and farmland. The author brings back this romance of flight from an era long ago. Ballooning came back as a sporting and tourist activity in the 1960s with the availability of light weight tanks of propane revived the popularity of hot air balloons. The manned use of lighter than air gases in balloons is still available today on a very limited basis with the powered blimps primarily used for advertising and as an eye in the sky for sporting events. This reviewer found *Falling Upward* to be a very rewarding reading experience and recommends the book to those interested in the subject.

* This review first appeared in the February 2014 BLL Book Reviews.
David McCullough is no mystery to any serious student of American history. He’s already won two Pulitzers (John Adams and Truman), two National Book Awards, and the nation’s highest civilian award the Medal of Freedom. However, his latest book, The Greater Journey, Americans in Paris will surprise even the most unflappable.

The 456 pages of text and another 81 of sources and notes, all rendered in McCullough’s beautiful writing style, and supported by 39 pages of exquisite, full color reproductions and facsimiles of the subjects covered in this wonderful patch work quilt of fragments of American history will make this book one of the most unique on anyone’s American history shelf.

Mr. McCullough has long worried about Americans’ historical illiteracy and, particularly, about the errors, omissions, and political correctness that pass today as authentic American history in so many of our public school classrooms. The Greater Journey, Americans In Paris is a delightful effort to address one of the more important and least understood parts of this problem: the overseas adventures of some of our most interesting young men and women, who decided to finish their professional educations in Paris France, between the years of 1830 and 1900, and to bring home the best of what they had learned to shape the foundations of science, art and literature in the United States.

Opening with a graphic account of what an Atlantic crossing was like, between the United States and France, under sail and largely on commercial freighters, these young Americans put their lives on the line, endured terrible storms and bouts of seasickness, and constant misery on most trips. Once there, many were quite disappointed with their first glimpse of Paris, but the majority for a variety of reasons quickly fell under its spell. Only then in “the city of lights”, for those McCullough chooses to tell us about, did “The Greater Journey Begin”.

McCullough opens by introducing the reader to Samuel B. Morse and his magnificent painting, “Gallery of the Louvre”. We imagine him once more, crouching on high scaffolding copying the paintings in the Louvre’s collection with his dear friend James Fennimore Cooper, who came each afternoon to cheer him on, sitting on a chair beneath. Morse returned to his native land not at all convinced of his gifts as an artist or that his chief work of art would later be called a masterpiece, but with the germ of an idea that would eventually develop into the trans-Alantic cable, the Morse code, and the telegraph.

France was the center of modern medicine in the 19th century and Paris was where the best of the science was taking place. The greatest surgeons in the world daily lectured there, with clinical demonstrations before hundreds of would be physicians, in a day before anesthesia and antibiotics, amidst the screams of those undergoing the surgery. But Elizabeth Blackwell who earned the first M.D. ever granted a woman in France, came home and opened the field of medicine to tens of thousands of other American women. Oliver Wendell Holmes was one of a legion of young men who likewise came to Paris to finish their professional educations and then to come home and shape modern medicine in the United States.

Many of the 19th century’s greatest American writers, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Henry James, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, joined James Fenimore Cooper in spending extended periods of time in Paris, polished their skills and brought home the best of their findings in novels, works of philosophy and social justice that became American classics.

Painters and sculptors, most of the very best of America’s 19th century artists, either had their beginnings or perfected their genius under the direction of the European masters, both those still alive and those memorialized in the great galleries and parks of Paris. Scores of them are remembered in The Greater Journey, Americans In Paris usually with fascinating details of their experiences in “the city of lights”.

Then there was Charles Sumner who came to Paris as a young man and, for the first time ever, saw Africans studying alongside Caucasians at the Sorbonne, which convinced him that the segregationist belief of racial superiority had no basis in fact. He went home to the USA a radical abolitionist. (continued on the next page)
Twenty years later on May 22, 1851, Senator Sumner was at his desk in an almost empty Senate chamber when an incensed Congressman from South Carolina named Preston S. Brooks slipped up behind him and almost beat him to death with a heavy wooden cane. Sumner recovered and became an instant hero in the North and in Europe and one of the strongest voices for the abolitionist movement that, nine years later, brought on the American Civil War.

Finally there is Elhu Washburne, the courageous U.S. Ambassador to France who remained at his post, at considerable risk of his life, through the terrible siege of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War and the even more frightful nightmare of the Commune. Washburne’s diary, certainly one of the most important ever written by an American, was the basis of McCullough’s discussion of these events, which had such a lasting impression on French and to a lesser extent American history.

To this reviewer these events were the most unforgettable in David McCullough’s *The Greater Journey, Americans In Paris*. However they are far from the only reason for reading this book. If you would have a better understanding, not simply of American history, but also of the deep currents of the often invisible culture that shaped it, here is one of the better places to begin your search.

* This review first appeared in the August 2011 issue of the BLL Book Reviews.

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**Natural Causes: an Epidemic of Wellness, the Certainty of Dying, and Killing Ourselves to Live Longer**

*By Barbara Ehrenreich*

reviewed by Jim Mills

In *Natural Causes* Barbara Ehrenreich comments on the aging process, our health care system and how we respond with efforts to enhance our physical and mental conditioning trying to postpone death. One aspect of health care in America that the author looked on with a jaundiced eye is the battery of tests that many of us must endure to verify that we are well or are a victim of some disease. She points out that frequently these tests are scheduled even though there is no other indication of ill health and that false positive results can lead to unnecessary and potentially dangerous procedures. She is of the opinion that all of this expensive testing does little to enhance overall health and reduce mortality.

Another aspect of modern life is the extent that many individuals will go to maintain physical fitness to improve their wellbeing and to avoid early death. She does point out a few instances of physical fitness proponents who did die early such as the running guru, James Fixx dying at the age of 52. Of course individual examples do not prove any rule and in Fixx’s case there was a family history of early death. The author just demonstrates the extent that many will go with dietary restrictions and intensive workouts to maintain a healthy life. Certainly there is a tradeoff between quality of life and the prospect of extending it.

Ehrenreich covers many different topics in this in this relatively short (209 p) book. She goes into the functioning of the body’s immune system stating that for older people the immune system can actually promote the spreading of cancer (metastasizing). She viewed this as mechanism to cull older people who are beyond reproduction age. Another topic covered are religious beliefs and its effect on views of aging and death. The author takes many strong views of her topics and the reader should use his or her judgement as to the validity of her opinions.

One reviewer’s comment. Most of our wellbeing and extended lives has come from public health measures (sanitation, clean air, etc) and changing lifestyles (no smoking, increased exercise, improved diet) rather than medical efforts once we have become diseased. Efforts to aid us after we come down with the plague are less important than the fact that we don’t get the plague in the first place.
The Path Between the Seas – The Creation of the Panama Canal 1870 to 1914 *  
by David McCullough  
reviewed by Don Boink

The creation of the Panama Canal was a monumental achievement. David McCullough’s book is an equally epic achievement. It begins with some discussion about the Suez Canal and its creator Ferdinand de Lesseps. For that accomplishment de Lesseps was a popular French hero. When the idea of a canal across the Isthmus of Panama occurred he was the logical person to go to.

*The Path Between the Seas* recounts the vast French enterprise that attempted the feat beginning in 1870. De Lesseps had conquered seemingly overwhelming obstacles in creating the Suez Canal so he, as well as everyone else, had confidence that he could do the same in Panama. The French defeat was due to the combined effects of deadly diseases, yellow fever, malaria, and typhoid, and the jungle covered terrain of Panama with its torrential rains and intense heat.

When Theodore Roosevelt became president after the assassination of McKinley in 1901 he was intent on having the US build the canal. Just where it would be best to build it was a very controversial issue. Like most political issues. The strongest sentiment favored Nicaragua as the location. Several expeditions had studied various schemes. Ferdinand de Lesseps insisted a water level canal, such as Suez, was the best design and strove gallantly to bring it about, but to no avail. From an engineering standpoint, it seemed preferable to employ a system of locks instead of attempting to level so much diverse terrain. McCullough’s description of the intense political wrangling is quite detailed and fascinating. The final outcome was indeed unexpected.

The personalities of those charged with the undertaking were diverse, and directly affected the progress of events. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was given responsibility for doing the job. The first problem was the law passed by the Congress known as the Spooner Act, which required a commission of 14 members. To ensure that there be no corruption and graft in the immense undertaking every decision on a requisition had to be okayed by the individual commissioners. This red tape proved to be extremely cumbersome.

Roosevelt was impatient with such nonsense and soon reduced the commission to three members. Eventually he decided there must be one person in charge so the two others were told that if they didn’t agree with the headman they were to write up their thoughts and when submitted that would also be their resignation.

The essential problem to be corrected was yellow fever and malaria. The French were never able to figure out the cause. An Army doctor called Gorgas felt strongly that the mosquito transmitted the disease. The account of his studies and bureaucratic battles are well described. His results were spectacular and provided a quantum advance in medicine.

Organization was key to managing the large number of people involved, from engineers to laborers. Once that was worked out things began to progress. The sheer enormity of acquiring the needed equipment and employing it most advantageously is also described very well. *The Path Between the Seas* is really three books. The page count, including notes and index, gets close to 700. There are many interesting illustrations including maps and photographs. Supplemental information and photos are available on the Internet by Googling “Panama Canal” or the Archives of the Army Signal Corps.

All aspects of the book are very well researched and the writing is superb. One gets a very real sense of the grandeur of the overall complexity and excellence of the work done between 1904 and 1914. Incorporated in the telling is McCullough’s account of how Panama was able to secede from Columbia albeit with the collusion of the US and a bit of gunboat negotiations. A neat bloodless revolution.

Recognition must be given the building of the canal. It was a world altering event whose benefits continue to this day. Time is catching up with it however, and competition looms on the near horizon. Additional canals, and the Northwest passage are near reality. Most of us have known of the Panama Canal for years. This book however brings the subject to life in its several dimensions and is entirely enjoyable. My wife Lynn and I have booked a cruise to visit the Canal in March.

* First reviewed in the February 2013 issue of the BLL Book Reviews.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born in 1906, the youngest of four sons in a family that included the eight children of Dr. Karl Bonhoeffer, the most eminent psychiatrist in Germany and Paula von Hase Bonhoeffer a devoted teacher and his wife. Both of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s parents were from extremely wealthy, aristocratic families, whose lives stretched across the last three decades of the 19th century, two World Wars and some distance beyond.

Eric Metaxas’ monumental 500 page biography, Bonhoeffer, pastor Martyr, prophet, spy opens with an account of young Dietrich’s extremely comfortable upper class German childhood and university years played out against the last years of the Weimar Republic, the ruinous burden of World War One reparations, and the unforgiving stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles. He entered in upon his maturity just as the awful evil of Adolph Hitler’s national socialism was beginning to take over his homeland.

His distress over what Hitler was doing to his homeland and the soul of the country he loved led Dietrich Bonhoeffer into the Christian ministry, both as a pastor and teacher in the German Lutheran Church. He very soon became completely disgusted with what he found there. The German Church in all its parts was supported by the state, and for generations had cultivated the dangerous gift of getting along with the central government. So by the middle of the 1930s the German Lutheran Church, in order to continue its state stipend, had already begun its tragic slide into Nazi control.

Particularly after 1933 when the so-called “Aryan Paragraph” went into force and Hitler ordered all Christian clergy of Jewish blood to be thrown out of their parishes, preaching against the Nazi heresy no longer was enough. Bonhoeffer joined a courageous minority of Germany’s pastors and priests who formed the Confessing Church, an underground alternative to the Nazi supported German Church. He soon became one of its leaders.

During his university years, Bonhoeffer had gradually settled into the radical understanding of Christian faith espoused by Karl Barth that required an unquestioning obedience to the biblical understanding of the absolute authority of God and an unshakable commitment to following in the footsteps of the “suffering servant” Jesus of Nazareth, even should it lead to a cross. So on top of the German Church’s abandonment of anything approaching a creditable faith in God, what Bonhoeffer saw happening to the Jews compelled him to act. Therefore in 1940 he joined the already forming plot to assassinate Hitler as a double agent and spy. In 1943 his luck ran out. After the first of two failed assassination attempts, Bonhoeffer was arrested for assisting the Jews and subverting Nazi policies. Two years later, in 1945, after the full extent of his involvement in the conspiracy to kill Hitler became known, and just as the allied Armies were on the verge of liberating the concentration camp in which he was being held, he was transferred to the Flossenburg concentration camp in Bavaria where, along with several other conspirators, he was hanged.

Eric Metaxas describes all of this and a great deal more, drawing upon never before published correspondence and diaries, countless personal interviews with those who were there, and surviving official records. The length and detail of this marvelous book may put off some, but anyone who is interested in learning, from the inside, what really happened not only to the Jews and the Church but also to the German people during the rise and fall of Hitler’s Third Reich will never find a better opportunity than Eric Metaxas offers here.

* First reviewed in the August 2010 issue of the BLL Book Reviews.
Anyone stunned by the victory of Donald Trump should read Arlie Hochschild’s *Strangers In Their Own Land*. Hochschild, a professor of sociology at Cal-Berkeley, sets out to find out what makes the political right so angry. She chooses to walk a mile in the shoes of those who view the world differently from her, to cross the empathy divide. What she finds, and writes, is insightful. At times her writing reminds this reviewer of Studs Terkel. Not surprisingly, she finds much hostility to northern, coastal liberals who are viewed as imposing their views, particularly through the federal government, on Southern society (she does her research in Louisiana). These Southerners see the liberals and the Feds (the two are intertwined) as aiding and abetting the "line cutters" (welfare recipients, illegal immigrants, Muslims, Syrians) while they, the Southerners, described as white and hard working, patiently wait their turn to achieve the American Dream. Added to the grievances is the view that the taxes these hard working people pay are financing the line cutting.

The lens through which Hochschild looks at this divide is environmental degradation. Louisiana has one of the highest concentrations of oil and chemical factories in the country. Not surprisingly, it has some of the worst pollution as well. With this background, one might expect Louisianans to be among the most vigilant and outspoken about what is happening to their beloved countryside. That they are not is a central paradox and the driving force of her story.

Hochschild writes sympathetically about the people she has met and interviewed. While she may not have come around to the prevailing views of her interviewees, she nonetheless treats them with empathy and respect. In return, she finds that she is treated with similar respect and warmth. It helps that, despite their clashing views, everyone seems to be good humored and courteous, eschewing the anger that seemed to boil up at Trump rallies.

There is a glue that holds Lake Charles, Louisiana society together. That glue is family, church, and Fox News. It is strong faith, often apocalyptically expressed, that allows individuals to live with cancer endemic to their lives. It is family and community that allow what would seem to be paradoxical views to co-exist; it is Fox News that seems to provide a coherent worldview.

One should, out of respect for Hochschild the sociologist, read the appendices as well as the main story. In three appendices, she lays out the research agenda, the background sources on pollutants in the environment, and fact checks of opinions held. While *Strangers In Their Own Land* may not change political opinions or views about how American society should function, and for whom it should function, it seems, to this reviewer, to be required reading for anyone not in close daily touch with the people described in this book. Arlie Hochschild has sympathetically crossed the political divide. In doing so, she has provided an excellent window into one side of that divide and a mirror of how the other side, her side, is viewed.

* First reviewed in the February 2017 issue of the BLL Book Reviews.