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Print Version

Select a budget:

BC-MCT-BOOK-BJT — book editors (1450 words)

McClatchy-Tribune News Service
Book Budget for Wednesday, January 13, 2010
Updated at 8:15 a.m. EST (1315 UTC).

TOP STORIES

'Game Change': Juicy, but no clear endgame

BOOK-GAMECHANGE-REVIEW-LA—Nearly 50 years ago, the political journalist and historian Theodore H. White was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his insider's account of John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign, "The Making of the President 1960."

His success with that and subsequent campaign chronicles helped establish topical nonfiction as a distinct genre, situated somewhere between journalism and history, that later practitioners such as David Halberstam, Neil Sheehan and Bob Woodward have used to make substantial contributions to our civic conversation.

"Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime" may be the logical extension of White's project. And yet, this book by two extraordinary political journalists, New York magazine's John Heilemann and Time magazine's Mark Halperin, nonetheless achieves a kind of decadence.

This is a volume that might best be characterized as poli-porn.
1100 by Tim Rutten in Los Angeles. **MOVED**

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Tortured tales of Nordic mystery leave 'Beowulf' far behind

BOOK-SCANDINAVIAN-COMMENTARY-TB—It is a world of bleak twilights and tortured souls. A world of cold dawns and dour sleuths. A world of frozen lakes and repressed detectives.

A world of winters and losers.

Yet as grim, glum and downright depressing as a Scandinavian setting for a mystery novel can be, something remarkable is afoot: Such novels continue to be fabulously popular in the United States and internationally. In the next few months, major new whodunits set in places such as Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway and Iceland will be released, including "The Man From Beijing" (Knopf) by Swedish literary star Henning Mankell, set primarily in his native land; "Snow Angels" (Putnam) by James Thompson, an American who has lived in Finland for almost a dozen years, set near the Arctic Circle; and "The Girl who Kicked the Hornets' Nest" (Knopf), by the late Stieg Larsson, the third of his mysteries featuring the Swedish spitfire Lisbeth Salander. The initial Salander novel, "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo," first published in America in 2008, has sold more than 20 million copies in 41 countries.

Other Scandinavian mystery writers who are catching fire with readers all over the place include Norway's Karin Fossum, K.O. Dahl and Anne Holt; Sweden's Hakan Nesser, Helene Tursten and Karin Alvtogen; and Iceland's Yrsa Siguroardottir and Arnaldur Indridason.

1050 (with trims) by Julia Keller in Chicago. **MOVED**

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Fact plus feeling animates Tracy Chevalier's new novel

BOOK-CHEVALIER-PH—A woman picking at bones in the dirt ... sexy stuff for a book?

Could be ... if that woman helped midwife an entire new understanding of the history of life.

That's the warm heart of Tracy Chevalier's new book, "Remarkable Creatures."

In what is often called an era of great nonfiction, Chevalier renders true stories into truer-than-fact fiction. Her 1999 novel "Girl With a Pearl Earring" has had successful lives as book, play and film. Although often classed glibly as "historical novels" or "nonfiction novels," her books really explore the human underpinnings of history.

She says that as she writes, "I am trying to get smart on the facts — but even more, to get smart about the emotional truths behind the facts."

By phone from her home in London (American-born, Chevalier has lived in England since 1984), she says, "Once I know I'm going to write on a particular subject, it is, of course, important to get smart about it, read all I can, do my homework. But that's the same as for any novelist. When Jonathan Franzen was writing 'The Corrections,' for example, he probably had to do a lot of research about Lithuania."

But there's a point, she says, when the writer steps past the facts.

1050 (with trims) by John Timpane in Philadelphia. **MOVED**

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AUTHORS, BEST-SELLERS

Q&A with 'The First Rule' author Robert Crais

BOOK-CRAIS-FL—Robert Crais doesn't follow fads. If he did, his debut novel, "The Monkey's Raincoat," might never have been published in 1987. At the time, women authors were making great inroads into the genre with novels about hard-charging female private detectives. Mysteries about male private eyes weren't in vogue.

But Crais' Elvis Cole wasn't the typical private detective. Instead of a trench coat and cigarettes, Elvis preferred Hawaiian shirts and a Pinocchio clock. Elvis' partner, Joe Pike, spent as much time leaning against a wall, observing through his wrap-around sunglasses as he did fighting the criminals. "The Monkey's Raincoat" established Crais and set the foundation for his series — weaving broad, wise-cracking humor, a noir atmosphere and an evocative view of L.A. into a serious tightly woven plot.

Since then, Crais has published 13 novels about Elvis and Joe, three stand-alone novels and taken home just about every award in the mystery genre. Elvis remains the series' perennial hero, but Crais' newest novel "The First Rule" is his second to

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focus on Joe Pike.

75 by Oline H. Cogdill in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. MOVED

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Elvis may be the king, but this time Joe Pike rules

[BOOK-FIRSTRULE-REVIEW:FL](#)—"The First Rule" by Robert Crais.

350 by Oline H. Cogdill. MOVED

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Boater's dramatic tale told in book

[BOOK-MIRACLELANDING:HK](#)—When US Airways Flight 1549 splashed down on a frigid Hudson River last year with 150 passengers on board, Scott Koen of Rutherford, N.J., sprang into action.

Heralded as one of the first rescuers to reach the airliner that January day, Koen gives a firsthand account in a new book, "Brace for Impact," and writes about how the "Miracle on the Hudson" affected him in the year that followed.

Unveiling that impact was the focus of the book's authors, Dorothy Firman and Kevin Quirk, who see the stories told by Koen and 24 others as a source of inspiration.

We asked Koen about that day and the book, which will be released Friday, the one-year anniversary of the event.

700 by Nick Clunn in Hackensack, N.J. MOVED

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[BOOK-BEST:MCT](#)—Best-selling books from Publishers Weekly. 500. (Moving Thursday afternoon)

NON-FICTION REVIEWS

In bed with Warren Beatty

[BOOK-BEATTY-REVIEW:ND](#)—"Star: How Warren Beatty Seduced America" by Peter Biskind.

800 by Daniel Bubbeo. MOVED

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Discovering father, by way of history

[BOOK-BONUSMARCH-REVIEW:PH](#)—"My Father's Bonus March" by Adam Langer.

700 by David Cohen. MOVED

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Feminist icon stretched her story to feed an ideology, yet the story still matters

[BOOK-TILLIEOLSEN-REVIEW:KC](#)—"Tillie Olsen: One Woman, Many Riddles," by Panthea Reid.

650 by Carl Rollyson. MOVED

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FICTION REVIEWS

God, drugs and characters adrift in worlds of their own creation

[BOOK-PROBLEMS-REVIEW:LA](#)—"Fun With Problems: Stories" by Robert Stone.

1050 by David L. Ulin. MOVED

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Amy Bloom's third story collection delves into family, friends and human frailty

[BOOK-AMYBLOOM-REVIEW:MI](#)—"Where the God of Love Hangs Out" by Amy Bloom.

750 by Connie Ogle. MOVED

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A miscellaneous collection of Alice Munro's work

[BOOK-MUNRO-REVIEW:SE](#)—"Too Much Happiness" by Alice Munro.

600 by Michael Upchurch. MOVED

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Sci-fi writer paints a portrait of Galileo's curiosity

[BOOK-GALILEO-REVIEW:MW](#)—"Galileo's Dream" by Kim Stanley Robinson.

600 by Jim Higgins. MOVED

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heroine's a plain Jane

[BOOK-JANE EYRE-REVIEW:ND](#)—"Becoming Jane Eyre" by Sheila Kohler.

500 by Tom Beer. MOVED

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'Silencer' true to form for author Hall

[BOOK-SILENCER-REVIEW:FL](#)—"Silencer" by James W. Hall.

450 by Oline H. Cogdill. MOVED

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GRAPHIC NOVELS

Nightmare view from an 'Island'

[BOOK-SHUTTERISLAND-REVIEW:LA](#)—"Shutter Island: Based on the Novel by Dennis Lehane," Graphic Novel
Adaptation by Christian de Metter.

550 by Geoff Boucher. MOVED

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ROUND-UPS

Reviews of new audio-book releases

[BOOK-AUDIOBOOKS:ND](#)—"The Help" by Kathryn Stockett; "Wolf Hall" by Hilary Mantel.

800 by Erica Marcus. MOVED

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ROMANCE BOOKS

BOOK-ROMANCE:CS—The Romance Reader.
By Lezlie Patterson. (Moving later.)

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