professional media


In his latest work, Herring (Fool’s Gold) points out concerns that librarians should heed, lest they find themselves branded as obsolete. Academic librarians have heard students and administrators ask, given the increase in the number of ebooks and Internet access available to so many: Why fund libraries? Herring makes several valid points for why making available those two services are not the same as providing library services, with particular attention to academic libraries. He substantiates many of the claims first iterated in his 2000 American Libraries article, “10 Reasons Why the Internet Is No Substitute for a Library,” and even expands his original list using up-to-date research and examples concerning reading, literacy, the conseqeunces of Internet-based reading, and libraries’ role in assisting patrons in their transition to digital access. There is also an analysis of the current environment in which librarians will find suggested steps for keeping alive the discussion on the need for libraries. VERDICT

Librarians who wish to do more than just hope that their profession still exists in 20 years will find the articulated arguments for library service and corresponding call to action present in this work vital.—Kendra Auberry, Indian River State Coll. Lib., Port St. Lucie, FL


While many books purport to explain or evoke creativity in individuals, author and essayist Shenk (Lincoln’s Melancholy) explores the dynamics of creative pairs—how such partnerships are formed, how different types of duos collaborate, and how the relationships sometimes end. He vividly describes such well-known pairs as John Lennon and Paul McCartney, Steve Jobs and Steven Wozniak, Matt Parker and Trey Stone (the creators of South Park), and directors Ethan and Joel Coen but also includes people who are usually considered to be individual creators, such as Vincent van Gogh and his brother Theo, and choreographer George Balanchine and dancer Suzanne Farrell. Under tight deadline to finish the book, the author writes in the epilogue that he considers himself and his editor Eamon Dolan as a creative pairing, despite living on opposite sides of the country and communicating infrequently. VERDICT

This wonderful book sheds new light on an overworked topic, and the numerous anecdotes make it a pleasure to read. Anyone with any interest in psychological issues of creativity or in cultural history will tear through it. [See Prepub Alert, 2/24/14.].—Mary Ann Hughes, Shelton, WA