

# No mulligans required

## This year's round of golf books is up to par

BY MARTIN BRADY

Golf's popularity continues to soar, with the count of weekend warriors ever increasing, especially as women take up the game with an enduring passion. Golf books are in solid supply, too. This latest sampling captures snippets of golf history while also focusing on some of the more colorful personalities in the game today.

He was christened Vincent Damon Furnier, but the world knows him as the original shock-rocker Alice Cooper, whose big '70s hits "I'm Eighteen" and "School's Out" launched a decades-long music career. **Alice Cooper, Golf Monster: A Rock 'n' Roller's 12 Steps to Becoming a Golf Addict** (Crown, \$24.95, 272 pages, ISBN 9780307382658) is essentially an autobiography, charting Cooper's journey from Michigan to Arizona to California and through his eventful showbiz life. But the memoir is equally Cooper's account of his struggles with alcohol addiction and how a newfound passion for golf came to supplant his attraction to booze. Cooper has proudly been off the sauce for years, thus saving his personal life, but his affinity for golf may be even more obsessive. He plays hundreds of golf

rounds a year, spending every available moment on the course, the result of which is sobriety—and also an amazing six-handicap. He's become one of the finest amateur golfers around, and he's found a way to keep his still-shoulder-length hair out of harm's way. Cooper's book is a quirky but inspiring effort, filled with humor and sincerity.

The U.S. of the 1950s has traditionally been viewed as wholesome and peaceful, dominated by the sober presidency of Dwight Eisenhower. Ike's recreational penchant contributed mightily to that image, since he completed more than 800 rounds of golf during his eight years in the White House. Catherine M. Lewis' **Don't Ask What I Shot: How Eisenhower's Love of Golf Helped Shape 1950's America** (McGraw-Hill, \$24.95, 320 pages, ISBN 9780071485708) makes interesting

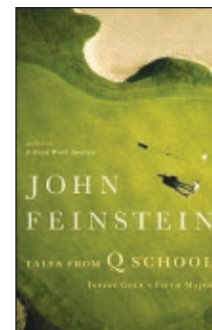
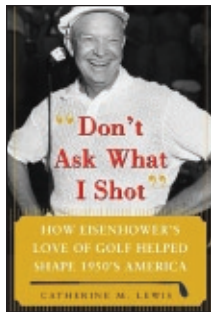
contributions both to golf lore and to sociopolitical history. In eminently readable prose, Lewis profiles Eisenhower the man, the key events during his terms in office and the general cultural landscape, which encompassed a nation transitioning from an era of white male dominance to a more pluralistic society. The serious analysis of Ike's presidential conduct—including his conflicts with Southern politicians over school integration—is balanced nicely with a sense of America's broadening golf fanaticism, typified by Ike's

ongoing affiliations with celebrities and pro athletes such as Bob Hope, Arnold Palmer and Bobby Jones. We also learn plenty about Ike's golf game: He was lucky to break 90, he took many a mulligan, and he was not averse to sending Secret Service agents out into the rough in search of his errant tee shots. The book's title is a quote from Ike himself, indicating that the Prez had no illusions about his struggles on the fairway.

Former golf pro Steve Eubanks' **Golf Freak: One Man's Quest to Play as Many Rounds of Golf as Possible. For Free** (Crown, \$23.95, 288 pages, ISBN 9780307337436) offers a marvelous series of adventures in which the author, trading on his connections, set out to play rounds of golf either on courses new to his experience or with amazing golf personages. Eubanks' travels take him from the foothills of the Himalayas to Zurich, Switzerland, from the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Alabama to the Yatera Seca Golf Course near the Guantánamo naval base in Cuba. Typified by sharp wit and indelible good will, Eubanks' Everyman-style memoir serves up keen reflections about the game but, more importantly, delivers ripe tales of fascinating folks, such as blind golfer David Meader, Korean female golfer Jeong Jang, retired pro Al Geiberger and the irrepressible Leo Luken, an 88-year-old legend who has shot his age

more than 500 times. A poignant family encounter involving Eubanks' dad and his Marine recruit son concludes the text, and helps humanize what is otherwise a delightful busman's holiday of a book.

John Feinstein's latest, **Tales from Q School: Inside Golf's Fifth Major** (Little, Brown, \$26.99, 368 pages, ISBN 9780316014304), finds the noted sportswriter in characteristic investigative mode. The PGA Tour Qualifying Tournament ("Q School") is a grueling annual event in which both aspiring and erstwhile pro golfers compete for precious few available slots on the PGA Tour. Feinstein covers the 2005 Q School in a narrative rich with round-by-round reportage and engaging stories about the participants—from fresh-faced guys right out of college to former champs like Larry Mize, who won the 1987 Masters but, now in his late 40s, willingly suffers the somewhat ignominious Q School regimen in order to return to the greens of his past glory. Feinstein's general theme is that, in its own way, Q School is more inherently dramatic than any major tournament, mainly because, for these players, there is no tomorrow. Serious fans of the pro game will find this an engrossing read. ♡



## MEMOIR

### A search for fellow travelers

BY ANGELA LEEPER

After hiding in the bathroom to escape reading aloud in elementary school, dropping out of sixth grade for a while because of severe dyslexia and ADHD, and harboring a plan for suicide by the age of 12, Jonathan Mooney overcame his disabilities to graduate from Brown University with an honors degree in English. He imagined his resilient life as an after-school television special, but he bought a short bus instead, and traveled across the United States interviewing others with various disabilities, collecting their stories in the sometimes painful, sometimes irreverent and ever hopeful *The Short Bus*.

Mooney chooses the special education transport because of its oppressive symbolism to those who ride it to school, as he did as a child. Along his 35,000-mile route, he meets such disabled and "different" individuals as Ashley, a deaf and blind eight-year-old who curses her teachers in sign language; Katie, a young woman with Down syndrome who dreams of marrying and working in a DNA lab; and Jeff, a 40-something with Asperger's syndrome who obsessively measures his life with his calculator. Together they lead the author to question the concepts of normalcy, intelligence, community and a meaningful life. Interspersed among these poignant stories are brief discussions about the history and culture of learning disabilities.

Throughout the journey, the author reflects upon his struggles to be "normal," his own prejudices about the disabled and his eventual self-acceptance. Mooney helps us see that humanity is as much about our differences as it is our common traits. ♡

Angela Leeper is an educational consultant and writer in Wake Forest, North Carolina.



### The Short Bus

By Jonathan Mooney

Holt, \$25, 288 pages  
ISBN 9780805074277

## REFERENCE

### Are you ready for summer?

If you're looking for tips on packing the perfect picnic basket or a refresher on how to play croquet, you're in luck. Need to repair wicker furniture or perhaps build a lean-to? You're all set: Suzanne Brown's **Summer: A User's Guide** (Artisan, \$19.95, 224 pages, ISBN 9781579653163) lives up to its name. Brown has created a go-to book that surely will delight domestic divas, as well as hapless sorts who fantasize about creating the Perfect Summer Experience but aren't sure how to go about it. The author's voice is a friendly one; for the most part, she pulls off delivering suggestions and instructions without sounding patronizing, though the text does get a bit precious here and there (margaritas are "sunshine in a glass" and Reefs are the "Rolls Royce of flip-flops"). Overall, though, Brown seems earnest in her mission: She's summered at lovely spots up and down the East Coast, and she wants readers to have as much fun—and create as many delightful memories—as she has.

**Summer** features page after page of color photos of enticing summer foods, wholesome activities and idyllic scenes. In addition, the how-to sections use helpful step-by-step line drawings to aid in identifying animal tracks or making a beach-towel pillow. No detail goes unshared: there are recipes for food and drink, music and movie playlists, and gardening tips. Essays offering a historical perspective on everything from baseball to toasting marshmallows are enlivened by the author's personal musings—and ensure that the book can be enjoyed as a cover-to-cover read as well as a reference guide. ♡

—LINDA M. CASTELLITTO

