

Sights and Sounds

By Pat Spanjer

Me, Hailey!

By **Sheri Plucker** ('92 BA, recreation management), Jason & Nordic Publishers

In a stirring alchemy of the heart, author Sheri Plucker has turned a family challenge into inspiration. Born with Down Syndrome, Plucker's daughter, Hailey, is the heroine of this nonfiction children's picture book (for ages 4-8). In *Me, Hailey!*, the adventure begins on Hailey's first morning of kindergarten. The day blossoms with Hailey riding the bus to school, making new friends, teaching sign language to her classmates, learning about recess, helping others and relying on others. Hailey may look and learn differently than her classmates, but her friends — and the children who read this book — discover she is special, just like them.

"We are truly blessed," says Plucker of her 6-year-old daughter. "Hailey battled through two open heart surgeries before her first birthday. Now she runs like the wind, rides her bike and shares her contagious smile, laughter and love with every person she encounters."



The Solitude of the Open Sea

By **Gregory Smith** ('02, BM, MFA), Seaworthy Publications, Inc.

Ever feel like slipping the yoke and running off to sea?

While few actually indulge the notion for more than the time it takes to soak in a bubble bath, Gregory Smith did the deed for real, and not just for a week or two but for months on end.

In a collection of essays, *The Solitude of the Open Sea* traces Smith's journey around the world aboard his sailboat, *Atlantean*. The expert seaman shares his observations and adventures with weather, the sea and other creatures (including humans), touching upon moments of calm, joy and sheer terror.

Solitude itself was a lure to the author. Even when he traveled with companion sailors, Smith felt alone in his struggles against the vicissitudes of the ocean. Still, he sought out social contact in a desire to learn about others, to affirm his accomplishments, to find friendship and to savor exotic cultures.

No need to be interested in sailing to enjoy this book. Smith's gift for storytelling indulges any reader's longing to comprehend the human condition.

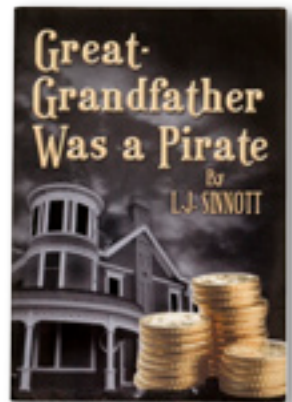


Great-Grandfather Was a Pirate

By **Larry "L.J." Sinnott** ('92, MA, English; English as a Second Language faculty, '89-'93), PublishAmerica

When the Masters family inherits an old house in Everett, Wash., from a family patriarch, 12-year-old Billy and his sister are dying to uncover the proverbial skeletons in the closet. Town rumor has it that Great-grandfather was a pirate. What secrets will the house reveal to the preteen detectives?

This fictitious tale for young people is a dream come true for its author, L.J. Sinnott, who has spent most of his life gripped by the yen to pen a novel. The Lynnwood, Wash., resident drew liberally from his own childhood memories of many hours spent exploring the nooks and crannies of his own grandfather's Victorian-style home in Everett.



The Blight Way

By **Patrick F. McManus** (Eastern journalism faculty, '59-'83), Simon & Schuster

Life in Blight, Idaho, tends toward the bucolic, with little action outside of the usual barroom brawls, domestic violence and the occasional land dispute. So imagine the consternation of Sheriff Bo Tully when the body of a stranger is discovered on the rural landscape with no explanation in sight.

This fast-paced murder mystery is a first for McManus, who is best known for the humor writing that *People* magazine says "brings to mind Mark Twain, Art Buchwald, and Garrison Keillor."

McManus so enjoyed writing *The Blight Way* that he is busy working on the next installment in the Sheriff Bo Tully Mystery series. Readers will find the sheriff's travails peppered with McManus' signature comedy.



If you are an Eastern or Cheney Normal School alum or faculty member and have written a general interest book or have a music CD on the market (no self-published works, please) and would like to have it considered for inclusion in *Eastern* magazine's Sights and Sounds section, please send it (along with your contact information) to: *Eastern* magazine, 300 Showalter Hall, Cheney, WA 99004-2445.