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Mitchell (Cumberland House Publishing, \$1.95) Hit Me With Your Best Shot By Jackie Kallen (St. Martin's Press, \$21.95)

BY HUGH GALLAGHER STAFF WRITER

GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

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THE MYTH OF ENCESPRONTS (R)

n Office opers at 4 (0 pm Minday - Friday only

Every once in a while we need to be reminded of some home truths. We need to be inspired, gonded, pushed along and reminded that life is worth living afterall, if we only take the initiative to live it fully. That's what these three books have in common. They tell us things we already know but often forget as we plow through our ordinary days.

Mort Cfrim, former news anchor at WDIV-TV, has been doing a " 9 15 BN AND OUT (PC13) 9 20

doing a daily radío daily radio
series
broadcast
over 700
stations
offering just
this kind of
positive
thinking.
His pithy
essays take
the form of

Mari Cris

saccharine and he doesn't pretend that life will always go
smoothly if we just become more
upbeat. Instead he argues that
life will be more bearable if we
don't add to our frustrations
with negative thinking. He tells
is stories with the crispness you
might expect from a seasoned TV
newsman and you're sure to find
some encouragement for you
own special challenges.
We've all promised ourselves
that we will get in shape – we
will, honest, anyday now, really...

The same of the sa

Books offer helpful hints

will, honest, a ly...

Dana
Mitchell knows all about getting a decrease people use to avoid start-1 haly bushes (eib bushes (eib

ple use to avoid starting a fitness program. She is the fitness director for the Oakland Athletic Club in Birmingham. Mitchell and her sister, Stacey Granger of Maryland, have concected an amusing book of great excuses that gently suggest that maybe it's time to get off the dime and into the gym.

The book is organized to present two good excuses everyday for avoiding exercise. For instance on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, "I'm promoting nonviolent activities today," or "Gyms smell like sweat," or, for "Cyms smell like sweat," or, for Columbus Dav. "I want to celethe form of parables on monviolent activities today," or gar and meditations on those things that fructions on those that fructions is that rather than seeing the glass half empty and the boulder in the road as an obstacle that we instead see the glass half full and the boulder as a welcome challenge.

What is nice about Crim's apprach to this is that he isn't while Granger takes our side

and suggests how we can hold back. Bill Ross complements the book with funny line drawings.

On a serious note, Mitchell gives 20 good reasons why keeping fit is important.

Jackie
Kallen is no

stranger to gyms. The former West won recogni-

Bloomitcia resident has won recognition as a successful boxing promote and manager. Her new book uses boxing as a metaphor for life, with solid suggestions for overcoming life's obstacles and becoming a "winner." The book is divided into 12 'rounds' and covers such things as the need for 'training,' "aggressiveness,' getting the right people in your corner," watching out for the low blows. You get the idea. The metaphor actually works very well as Kallen described to the state of the low blows. You get the idea was the needed of a good fift in a positive pour deal with the late of the la

Featured author shows compassion

Ughtning Song By Lewis Nordan Algonquin Books, 1997, \$18.95



No one has written so despairingly of 20th century 20th century impotence and alienation as T.S. Eliot in "The Wastender of the Wastender of t

Song." It's summertime, and for 12-year-old Leroy and his family, the livin' on their Mississippi farm promises to be easy. Leroy's dad (comically named Swami Don) raises llamas, beautiful creatures that greet each surrise with a song. His Amish-looking wife, Elsie, unturnes her children with home-cooked meals and bed-time stories. She even cares for Old Pappy, her husband's comatose father, without complaint.

Life asems perfect in this hill-billy version of the Garden of Eden. Well, almost. At 12, Leroy is getting restless. Lately, he's been snooping around the house, investigating the contents of his mother's purse and his father's pockets. The adolescent boy is searching, dimly aware that he's at the brink of something, but he doesn't know what.

Then Uncle Harris drops by Boisterous and full of fun, he adds spice to the wholesome but bland life of the Dearman family. Onco-quiet, after-dinner evenings auddenly become lively cocktail parties; something as simple as reading the newspaper turns into a series of vicarious. Adventures. Even serious, hardworking Swami Don begins to lighten up. Little does he realize, however, that his brother's metaphor, attracted a lighting storm that targets the family bome in all its majesty and fury and leaves its members transformed.

Soon Leroy discovers sex in his succle's stack of Playboys and a voluptuous baton-twirler. Elsie seeks love in alcohol and stolen kisses behind the refrigerator. Both think they've found the magic of romance, but as one of

Compassion

Nordan's short-story characters warns, "Magic is the same as sentimental. Seratch the surface of sentimental and you know what you find? - Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. Seratch magic, Sugar, and you're looking for death.

Unlike Eliot, Nordan helps his characters - and us - to find the true path to fulfillment and the world of the imagination. In language that sings and soars, Swami Don exclaims, "We're blessed, Elist, choncy, blessed, Leroy, all of us, no matter the pain, no matter the pain, no matter the pain, no matter the pain, of love is worth it if you're blessed, with what we have, through ourselves, our san, all our children.

The Mississippi native who currently teaches Creative Writing at the University of Pitts-burgh makes you smile - benevolently - at the same time that he makes you think. His characters fumble and fall, but they seldom fall. Unlike Eliot's monumental despair, Nordan wunds compassion and faith in human potential. In 'Lightning Song,' the Mississippi native counted the myth of the moders and the myth of the moders of the matter and enduring loos.

Lewis Nordan will appear at the Community House 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 13, at Admission is complimentary, For reservations, call (248) 644-5832.

Esther Littmann is a resident of Bloomifeld Township. She is

Esther Littmann is a resident of Bloomfield Tounship. She as a private tutor with Una Duorkin and Associates. You can leave her a message from a touch-tone phone at (313) 953-2047, mailbax number 1893. Hor fax number is (810) 644-1314.

BOOK HAPPENINGS

Book Happenings features various happenings at suburben bookstores. Send news leads to Hugh Callagher, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc., 30251 Schooleraft, Livonia, Mt 48150, or fix them to (313) 591-7279.

BORDERS (BIRMINGHAM, SOUTHFIELD ROAD)
Photogrophor Prilt Vestind discusses his book 'Notlond Congraphic On Assignments USA.' 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 4; Jon Falls present his book '50 years of Sportswriting.' 7 p.m. Wednesdey, Nov. 5; thes of starting a non-profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations of the profit organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensations organization 7 p.m. Tursday, Nov. 6; Berlitz dispensat Book Happenings features vari-

cussos language 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 7; African American History and Culture Day, 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8; Richard Goree reads from "Goree Island: Island of No Return," 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8 at the store 31150 Southfield Road, Birmingham (248)644

6484. BORDERS (ROCHESTER HILLS) Storytime with Ms Frizzle 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 8 at the store, 1122 South Rochester Road, at

1122 South Nochester Hood, at: Winchester Mail. (248) 855-7179.

BARRES & NOBLE BOOKSELLERS (WEST BLOOMFIELD)

Jackie Kallen signs her book "Hit Me With Your Bost Shot," 2 p.m. Monday, Nov. 2; Susan Codish discusses modern orthodoxy 7

p.m. Monday Nov. 3; fiction group discusses "Birdsong." 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 6, at the store, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. (248) 626-6804. BALDWIN LIBRARY

BALDWIN LIBRARY

Books at Lunch features librarian
Toni Grow discussing "Little
Gems," a collection of short
books noon Wednesday, Nov. 5 at
the library 300 West Merrill,
Birmindham, at Communications Birmingham; at Community House, 380 Bates St.,

Birmingham. BOOKS CONNECTION

Three romance writers sign their latest books, Anno Eames, Ruth Langan and Marian Edwards noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8 at the store 19043 Middlebelt, Livonia.



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