

**C4**<sup>3</sup>(∃)

## BOOKS Author pieces together literary collage of 'Extraordinary People'

The Bullfighter Checks Her Makeup: My Encounters With Extraordinary People By Susan Orlean (Random House, \$24.55) Once upon a time — in the

closing days of the 20th century,

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Conce upon a time — in the closing days of the 20th century, the be exact — there lived in the Bronx, New York, a king who drove a taxi for a living. His name was New ab 6 a a Oppong and, as ne sign of his yoral status, a throne status, a throne sign of his yoral status, a throne are an in his living in America grow distracted by his many respons-bilities, his 4-year-old sen would climb up into the royal chair, set-ted down with a box of Cheerios and watch television.

#### Lively profiles

Lively profiles Oppaga is only one of Orlean's Extraordinary People' in this collection of lively profiles, most of which originally appeared in *The New Yorker*, where she is a staff writer. Though the University of Michigan alum says she can't remember a time when she did-remember a time when she did-rit want to be a writer, she stresses she was never interest-ed in running down hard news stories. Neither did she have "polemics to air or sociological theories to spin out." Instand, she wanted to focus on people and places, although net on 'famous people simply because they were famous (or) charming little things that were self-consciously charming and little."

little." The matador of the title piece is Cristina Sanchez, the first woman to have taken her debut

■ Usually, part of Susan Orlean's modus operandi involves 'hanging out' with a subject for weeks or even months. Sometimes, this means a kind of fly-on-the-wall approach; at other times, it can mean intense, one-on-one sessions with the sublect.

bows as a full matador in Spain. • Here, in a dozen pages or so, we not only meet the former beautician and typist who still lives with her parents in a dusty little town south of Madrid, but we get a behind-the-scenes look at the world of bullfighting. Sometimes, we find it gory and gritty; sometimes, we find it sur-prisingly mundane. Here are the torero's pink stockings, lying in a heap of

Britisty mundane. How are how nor roots pink stockings, lying in a heap of how laundry, alongside hor white undershirt. Here is an assistant scrubing blood from the fabulously expensive "suit outbrows. Hore is the norw wealthy forsiant, obling around town in probe. Here she is one afternoon, suffering a stomach ache and not lean at the source of the sub-tor of the suit how will have the sub- sub- source star-suffering a stomach ache and not lean at the sub-tor of the sub-star at the day's corride. The sub- sub- source star-source of the sub-source of th

rank Notable Other notable pieces in this lit-erary collago: "The American Man, Ago Ten," a profile of 10-herros, bagy T-shirts, Wyoming ranches, pizza, and his Universi-ty of Michigan baseball eap; "Show Dog," which illustrates that Orlean can not only capture people on paper, but fancy canines as well, and "Figures in a Mall," a look at ice skater Tonya Harding through the eyes of her folksy, hometown neigh-bors. Notable

Tonya Harding through the eyes of her folks, hometown neigh-bors. Usually, part of Orlean's modus operandi involves 'hang-ing out' with a subject for weeks or even months. Sometimes, this means a kind of fly-on-the-wall approach; at other times, it can mean intense, one-on-one see-sions with the subject. What has resulted here are not sketchy profiles, but pieces that are more like sharply focused word-photographa, offering depth and true colors, punctual-ed by light, shadow and endless-by fascinating, revealing detail. Victoria Diaz is a Livonia rei-dent'otho writes' about booki, movies and theater for the Observer & Eccentric Newspa-pers.

**Bridging worlds** 

# Discover your family history YOLU' JULY JULY SAUGHTUNG SAUGHTU "These titles help round out an already-strong collection of genealogy how-to, record source, and historical background publi-cations," adds Brummer.

Stamp collecting is taking a licking as genealogy is fast becoming one of the most popu-lar hobbies in the United States. More than 14 million users have gone online to research family genealogy within the past 30 days, according to plan, Inc., a Web site tracking service. In traditional bookstores, and on the Internet, family history enthusiants and professional genealogists alike are seeking resources to uncover those miss-ing links in heritage, says Andre Brummer, general manager of Ancestry.com, an online source for tracing family history. Tyme.tested methods

#### Time-tested methods

Time-tested methods of fami-vertime-tested methods of fami-ly history research are invalu-nable: Ancestry.com wants to help each person uncover more family history, more accurately and in a shorter amount of time than has ever been possible before, says Brummer. Brummer recommends these current book releases from the Ancestry cathler.

current book releases from the Ancestry catalog: ■ Ellis Island: Tracing Your Family History Through Ameri-ca's Gateway, by Loretto Dennis Szucs, Almost half of all Ameri-Szucs, Almost hall of all Ameri-cans have at least one ancestor who ontered the United States through Ellis Island. Learn how you can find out if your relatives were among the millions who were processed at this historic landmark.

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set Store in Troy for a book sign-ing, 2 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22. **EXPLOSES SCOSE W** Farmington Hills store, 30995 Orchard Lako Road, (248) 737-0110 - Writer & Mix: Drop-In Workshop, 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20. Informal workshop led by Iris Underwood, Share your writing samples, or current pro-ject. Metropolitan Single Profes-sionals Book Group meeta 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 21 to dis-cus Chocolar by Joanne Harris. Bill Manafield presents a finan-cial planing seminar, 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 25.

1993 to Nashville, where he rubs elbows with local yokels; and Idi-tarod champ Susan Butcher, not surprisingly a loner of the first

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