

vention to help girls deal with mental health issues during adolescence. According to Greenberg and Oglesby, "Young girls can learn to be strong, resilient and powerful, particularly as a result of physical activity and sport experiences."

*Reviving Ophelia* opens our eyes to the intense issues of being adolescent and female. Pipher, using the voices of the girls on the front lines, gives us a glimpse of their lives. Her insight, empathy and strong sense of caring help us understand and relate to what life must be like "in the hurricane." According to Pipher, we cannot help adolescent girls until we understand them. Pipher helps us do that and then moves us along the path of helping and change. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport Report moves us even further along that path. It provides us with an overall picture of what is known about the benefits of physical activity for girls and it makes concrete policy and research recommendations to make change. Pipher writes clearly and eloquently to help us see the cliff on the hill and to teach us how we can start building a fence at the top; the PCPFS report gives us many practical tools to strengthen that fence.

Us mothers, waiting to pick up our daughters at the gym, watch proudly as they finish up their practice, easily peeling off pull-ups and sit-ups. We know we are standing on the edge of the hurricane, trying to look in as our daughters begin their stormy journey. We are doing all we can to help them survive the storm, to help them avoid the cliff at the top of the hill. We are pleading with you, as professionals, parents and citizens, to do all you can. Build the storm shelters! Build the fence at the top of the hill!

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Jackson J. Benson. (1996). *Wallace Stegner: His life and work*. New York: Viking. ISBN #0-670-86222-3, cloth, 472 pp.

In *From these beginnings: A biographical approach to American history*, Roderick Nash tells the story of the United States through the lives of sixteen prominent individuals. It is engaging reading. From Christopher Columbus to Thomas Jefferson to Mark Twain to Jane Adams to Gifford Pinchot to Martin Luther King, Jr., among others, Nash recounts the lives of a few in a way that illuminates the lives of the many.

Jackson J. Benson's *Wallace Stegner: His life and work* had a similar effect on me. Benson, a professor of American literature at San Diego State University, set out to write an objective biography that would focus principally on Stegner's professional life, a biography that would culminate in an assessment of Stegner's place in American literature. While Benson succeeded on both counts, it was Stegner's life as synecdoche for the larger 20th Cen-

ture American experience that captured my imagination. Indeed, were Nash to revise his text, the life and work of Stegner would be a worthy addition.

For those unfamiliar with his writing, Stegner was a Pulitzer Prize-winning author (*Angle of Repose*, 1971), a critically acclaimed historian (*Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West*, 1954), a professor of writing at Stanford, and a mentor to the likes of Edward Abbey, Wendell Berry, and Ken Kesey, to name but three. On top of this, Stegner was involved throughout his adult life in conservation matters, serving on the Sierra Club's board of directors, and writing numerous articles promoting environmentalism. He was, in sum, a highly gifted writer who practiced what he preached.

Benson traces Stegner's life from his birth in Lake Mills, Iowa to his boyhood years in Eastend, Saskatchewan, Great Falls, Montana, and Salt Lake City, Utah. This is important territory to cover because Stegner's writing would eventually become testimony to the influence of place and upbringing on perspective and world view. Benson then explores Stegner's development as a university student, aspiring novelist, professor, and environmental activist. Finally, Benson places Stegner, the accomplished writer, in the company of Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and John Steinbeck among 20th Century American authors.

Prior to reading this work, I was unaware of Stegner's efforts in the 1940s to speak out against prejudice and racism. His book, *One Nation* (1945), commissioned by the editors of *Look Magazine*, was highly critical of a country divided along racial and religious lines. This early demonstration of his social commitment was a precursor to Stegner's later environmental commitment. He epitomized what Nash and others have called our expanding liberal democratic tradition, a gradual extension of ethics outward from self to others to the environment as a whole.

Benson addresses several other aspects of Stegner's life that should be of interest to readers of *The Journal of Leisure Research*. Most notable is the balancing act required of anyone who attempts to juggle writing/research, teaching, advising, civic responsibilities, and family (there were never enough hours in Stegner's day either). Similarly, the reader witnesses Stegner's navigation between the objective (non-fiction) and subjective (fiction) realms, between reporting the facts and reporting the facts as they ought to be. We also learn about the importance of aligning one's personal conduct with one's public pronouncement of what proper conduct should be. We learn, then, something about character.

Stegner was, according to Benson, falsely portrayed as a "regional" Western writer. That he was never embraced by the Eastern literary establishment may be explained, in part, by the significance he placed on the Western landscape as a force in shaping his fictional characters' conduct. Stegner understood the meaning of a "sense of place." In this regard, Benson argues convincingly that Stegner's writing, rather than confirming the myth of the rugged Western individualist, revealed the reality of interdependence and cooperation to overcome harsh physical conditions so prevalent in the Amer-

ican West. Stegner was a realist, a truth teller, a debunker of widely held but often mistaken beliefs.

What Stegner offered his readers were portrayals of people in relationship to one another and to the environment that sustained them. Exploring the nature of such relationships was at the core of his work. Indeed, *Crossing to Safety* (1987), my favorite, and Stegner's last book, recounts the fictional lives of two professors in relationship. It is wonderful reading.

Stegner died in 1993 from complications resulting from an automobile accident. He was in the twilight of a career that had been described by the literary critic Malcolm Cowley as "unequaled in this century." (Cowley, it should be noted, is credited with rescuing Faulkner from relative obscurity with a reappraisal of his work in 1946.) Stegner touched the lives of countless people through his writing and teaching, and he led quietly by example. He was a man of integrity. His life was testimony to the virtue of hard work and perseverance—to writing and rewriting. We have Jackson Benson to thank for giving those of us who never had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Stegner significant insight into his life and work.

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