

book review

Paul Schullery, who has worked in Yellowstone NP as a ranger-naturalist, a park historian, a research consultant, and a technical writer, is represented on the new books shelves of the nation by three new publications: *Yellowstone Bear-Tales*, (Roberts Rinehart, Inc., 1991), *Pregnant Bears and Crawdad Eyes*, (published by The Mountaineers, Seattle, WA, 1991, 176 pp), and *The National Park Service: A 75th Anniversary Album* (Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1991, 120 pp).

The Yellowstone bear book is a collection of bear observations and encounters beginning with one by Philetus Norris, who served as second superintendent of Yellowstone from 1877 to 1882, and wandering through notebooks, newspaper accounts, and research papers up to the 1950 piece by then Chief Park Naturalist David de L. Condon on "The Size of Grizzly Bear," enlivened and given continuity by Schullery's introductions and commentaries.

Pregnant Bears, "a book of processes" that explores why and how other life forms act as they do, was reviewed in *The Washington Post Book World*, Where Dennis Drabelle noted:

"Schullery's gift is for probing matters that most of us skip right over: the coordinated movements of wild flocks; swimming deer; predators that hang around backyard bird feeders; the attraction of wildlife to roadsides. In *Pregnant Bears & Crawdad Eyes*, he develops these and a score of other topics into essays of high polish over solid substance."

And finally, the NPS 75th Anniversary Album is a delightfully "dated," authentic photographic history that portrays the people and places that have comprised what Wallace Stegner has called "the best idea we ever had" – the national parks. This handsome, cloth-bound book is an outstanding addition to the 75th anniversary celebration of the National Park Service. The quality of the old photographs speaks to the mastery of the picture-takers; the clarity of the pictures is startling to the modern viewer, and testifies to the air quality in those bygone days.

All three books are present now in most bookstores across the nation, although *Yellowstone Bear Tales* may be easier to find in and around Montana.

For this reviewer, a few additional words about *Pregnant Bears & Crawdad Eyes* are necessary: Paul Schullery is an adult expression of that most charming of all childhood stages – the walking question mark. His writing skills are as sharply honed as those of Lewis Thomas (his words carry meaning modestly without calling attention to themselves), and the overall effect is more a general paean in praise of curiosity than a dissertation on any particular subject. He exudes childlike delight in the pursuit of knowledge. Instead of throwing facts at us from some lofty perch of erudition, he takes us cozily by the hand and suggests that we agree about how lucky we are to be peeking, poking, prying creatures, with the whole delightful Earth to ask questions of.

I lay this book aside and wonder if perhaps human evolution might be taking us toward the day when all of us will see our world/s – those "other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time" – as worthy of our curiosity, our respect, and our loving carefulness. Paul Schullery, just for a magic moment, makes it seem possible.

Jean Matthews