

this multidimensional topic—and make the book easier to digest. The maxims cover “the technical difficulties of the subject of intelligence, to some unhelpful psychological predispositions stemming from the oddities of formal logic, and the practicalities of computer model building.”

Each chapter explores what ideas like scientific process, data collection, language, AI, and more have to say about intelligence—not to mention the conundrum of using a human mind to study the human mind. These topics are perplexing, but the book is not a frustrating dead end; the author appears to find joy in the challenge and be invigorated by the impossibility of the question. The author’s computer science background shines through in his knowledge of the intricacies and limitations of artificial intelligence.

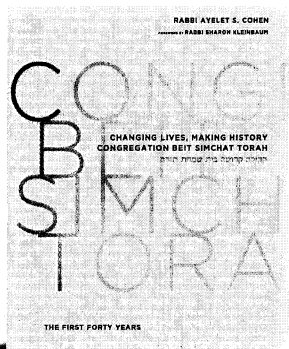
On the denser end of the popular-science genre, this book is ideal for the intellectually nimble who are not intimidated by scientific vocabulary. Partridge’s respect for his audience sets this book apart. He engages readers as experts—who knows the ins and outs of human intelligence better than humans? While Partridge shares a wealth of research information, he simply presents it then observes it alongside his reader. This peer-focused mutuality makes it feel like you’re sitting next to the author, assembling the puzzle, piece by piece, together.

The book is filled with insightful diagrams (though some are a bit too small to see well), and each chapter has generous endnotes that will satisfy and enlighten inquisitive people and academics alike. The cover image is apt and enticing, highlighting one of the key questions of the book: If humans are so similar to chimpanzees, then how are we so different?

This clever book spurs both awe and understanding of the complexities of human intelligence.

MELISSA WUSKE

SOCIAL SCIENCES



Changing Lives, Making History: Congregation Beit Simchat Torah

Rabbi Ayelet S. Cohen
Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, contributor
Congregation Beit Simchat Torah

Hardcover \$50.00 (320pp)
978-0-9794009-1-9

Anecdotes of the LGBT Jewish experience bring emotion into how people perceive their religious community and identity.

Since it was founded in 1973, the New York-based Congregation Beit Simchat Torah (CBST) has served as a progressive temple for LGBT Jews and allies. To celebrate its first forty years, the synagogue has compiled *Changing Lives, Making History*, a tome of stories and photos that tell the history of this congregation and the people who formed its membership.

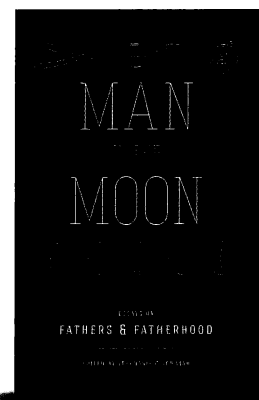
Changing Lives, Making History strikes the right balance of institutional history, personal stories, and scrapbook mementos to create something members should value.

The primary text is straightforward but informative, describing how the temple began as a way to serve a need in the gay Jewish community, and how it evolved through embracing multiple Jewish traditions, bringing in new members, and organizing holiday celebrations. One chapter deals with the AIDS crisis, with touching tributes to members lost to the disease and a discussion about the temple’s attempts to raise awareness and promote safety. Another describes the dedication of the congregation’s Torah, which was rescued during the Holocaust. The book also makes excellent use of sidebars, with memorial tributes to the deceased, longtime members telling the stories of how they joined, and anecdotes that simply talk about an aspect of the gay Jewish experience. The first-person essays about different aspects of the congregation are a definite strength, bringing emotion and warm nostalgia to this story and demonstrating how members feel about their religious community.

Changing Lives, Making History is also enhanced with lots of interesting visual elements. Photos and documents appear throughout the book, capturing the changing times just as effectively as the text. From notable guest speakers to members marching in parades, to two-page spreads of holiday events, the photos alone make for a solid collectible work. Seeing the congregation’s fliers through the years or the pictures from similar celebrations decades apart gives a sense of CBST as an enduring institution with history worth remembering and a future built on those experiences.

JEFF FLEISCHER

*The temple began
as a way to serve
a need in the gay
Jewish community.*



Man in the Moon: Essays on Fathers and Fatherhood

Stephanie G'Schwind, editor
The Center for Literary Publishing
Softcover \$19.95 (256pp)
978-1-885635-35-8

Humor, sincerity, and a variety of experiences reveal the bond between father and kin.

Man in the Moon: Essays on Fathers and Fatherhood is a compilation of work already published in literary journals and publications. Every entry—each exploring the relationship between fathers and children—is equally strong, and picking the best is a fruitless endeavor.

Certainly, Bill Capossere’s “Man in the Moon,” a touching tale based on a love for astronomy he shared with his father, was chosen as the title essay for good reason. But finding the true capstone of the collection has more to do with the reader’s own perspective.

Have you dealt with dementia? Gina Frangello’s “The Lion and the Mouse” will make your heart skip with lines like this: “He is on a journey across the white barren land, inside himself, from us. We stand on the periphery and watch him ride away.” Death? Donna George Storey’s “Thirteen Views of Grief” grabs you by the hand and leads you right back down the path.

Though many of the tales are painful, there’s some merriment to go with the melancholy. Dinty W. Moore’s “Son of Mr. Green Jeans” is a relatively lighthearted, A-to-Z recap of fatherhood. C, for example, is dedicated to the Japanese carp that protects his babies by sucking them into his mouth.

Editor Stephanie G'Schwind does an admirable job of mixing the emotional intensity of seventeen disparate works. Read cover-to-cover, the essays are arranged in a way that breaks up the most heartbreaking tales by interspersing easier reads between them.

G'Schwind is the editor of *Colorado Review* and director of the Center for Literary Publishing at Colorado State University.

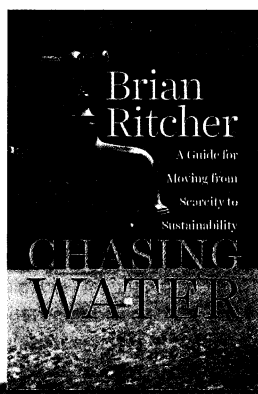
In the introduction, G'Schwind reveals her impetus for the compilation: Her father died when she was twenty-two, the point in life where she and her father were “about to be two adults who might have, over so many more years, come

to know each other not as adult and child, but as father and daughter." Now, she notes, "that distance between us [is] forever fixed."

For readers—fathers, sons, and daughters alike—the size of that personal distance of which G'Schwind speaks will impact how *Man in the Moon* is internalized. But whether that gap is a canyon, a fissure, or completely closed, these seventeen essays as a collective piece will help cement what you know—or will never know—about the intimate relationship between father and child.

RICH REZLER

SUSTAINABLE LIVING



Chasing Water: A Guide for Moving from Scarcity to Sustainability

Brian Richter

Island Press

Softcover \$25.00 (192pp)

978-1-61091-538-0

This is a book of balance—delivered with appreciated measures of integrity and clarity.

Brian Richter finds the right balance of urgency and optimism in dealing with the global issue of water management in the accessible and intelligent *Chasing Water*. Through in-depth case analysis and by applying malleable strategies for governments and citizens, Richter empowers readers to think and act with purpose for the benefit of all who rely on depleted water resources. This book illustrates the interlocking and interdependent effect water has on economics, politics, and survival.

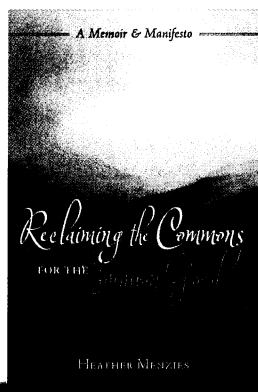
While most of the book's content seems targeted to policy makers, local and state governments, and manufacturing and agricultural businesses, Richter has made a deliberate attempt to include the average concerned citizen in the conversation. He begins by outlining the problem in his first chapter, "Running out of Water," which provides a concise global historical context for the current crisis. Instead of sensationalizing the impact water scarcity has on human survival, he introduces a metaphor for water resources as a "household budget." Just as there are options for budgeting expenses in a bank account, there are

options for budgeting resources that are either continually replenished through precipitation or become "overdrawn" and are no longer viable. It is an obvious metaphor but one that helps make complicated ecological systems easier to understand. Richter also reveals the types of water use and percentages of "consumption" and "return," which is a helpful overview.

As several chapters focus on who is responsible and what can be done, Richter's voice remains informative and academic, which muffles what may have been intended as a call to action. There are several succinct and interesting stories about partnerships, legislative acts, and acts of activism that have led to positive outcomes for water sustainability. However, there is a sense that water sustainability is low-hanging fruit that governments and businesses need only choose to focus on in order to achieve. Buried in an earlier chapter is the small mention of political and economic corruption and monetary gain, which could pervert concepts like trading water entitlements and capping or repricing commodities.

Readers who feel the scarcity of water or who are generally concerned with the environmental impact humans are having on existing ecosystems and resources will find a lot of valuable and useful information in this book. Elected officials, civil engineers, students, and educators should feel obligated to read it.

SARA BUDZIK



Reclaiming the Commons for the Common Good: A Memoir and Manifesto

Heather Menzies

New Society Publishers

Softcover \$17.95 (240pp)

978-0-86571-758-9

Both a personal and a political manifesto, this book analyzes the use of natural resources, with thorough citation.

In *Reclaiming the Commons for the Common Good*, Canadian author and activist Heather Menzies examines the idea of commons, the traditional ways of communities sharing land and other goods for collective benefit. The book is divided into two sections: reflections on how a trip to her ancestral land of Scotland (and other

experiences) made the author consider the idea of commons, and a manifesto for how people can act locally to bring the value of commons back into their own lives.

Menzies effectively describes how the idea of commons has changed, not only in the sense of communal land being taken away but in the ways technology and globalization divide people from one another. She argues that the increasingly disconnected societies that have developed over time are unnatural, contrasting them with the collective approach of her family's Scotch ancestors as well as First Nations collectives in Canada and social movements throughout the world. In the second half of the book, Menzies talks about how global problems that affect everyone—from climate change to the fair use of natural resources—could be mitigated by a more commons-focused approach by nations and global movements.

At times, the book has a tendency to tell rather than show, with the prose often citing other important works or organizations (or in some cases, the author's previous work) without providing much information beyond a citation. This sometimes makes the *Reclaiming the Commons* feel like an academic work, even though its message is more important for a general audience. The book works best when it considers specifics, looking at examples of organizations or groups of people that correctly approach the idea of commons—whether developing community gardens to feed the disadvantaged or enforcing ethical-production policies when purchasing goods and services to keep those practices sustainable.

The author also talks about the commons-focused organizations to which she belongs, and about how they operate. When she details her firsthand experiences, Menzies has a poetic writing style that reinforces the simple beauty of the approach she advocates and shows how everyday experiences can demonstrate its advantages. A more sustainable world is a noble goal, and this book does a nice job of looking at how many ways the world has moved away from that important idea.

JEFF FLEISCHER

TECHNOLOGY

