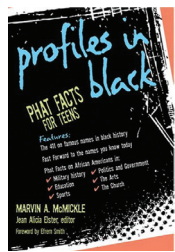


*the Tree: Creative Alternatives to a Consumer Christmas.*

*Healing Our World* received Moonbeam Children's Book Awards in two categories: Young Adult Nonfiction and Peacemaker. It was also a *ForeWord* 2007 Book of the Year Award gold winner. Short chapters, lists, and subheadings make the book accessible to readers of varying abilities. Schools with service learning programs will want to make this well-written, heartfelt look at the politically neutral work MSF does available to students. The book is a call to action, subtly urging readers to think about what they might do to join MSF as it helps heal the world. (August) *Kaavonia Hinton*



**Profiles in Black:  
Phat Facts for Teens**

**Marvin A. McMickle**  
Judson Press, Softcover  
\$22.00 (176pp)  
978-0-8170-1508-4

Phat. Dope. Tight. Awesome. No matter how you describe it, Blacks have made noteworthy contributions in all aspects of life. This new book attempts to offer a fresh approach to teaching today's young adults about Black culture and accomplishments in the areas of politics, music, education, sports, activism, and religion. The focus on hip-hop music also adds a contemporary feel to the book that might appeal to young readers new to reading about Black history. Hip-hop is "A musical genre and a cultural movement that encompasses the four pillars (DJing, MCing, Break dancing, and Tagging), as well as beat boxing, hip hop fashion, and (for many) political activism."

Each of the book's five sections focus on a time period, beginning with the 1600s when Blacks were first brought to North America, to present day. Chapters begin with a brief overview of the time period before, offering bulleted points about specific people—mainly men—and events. Appealing to the reluctant reader, the "Phat Fact," "Fast Forward," and "Did you know?" sidebars offer brief bits of information about the past and the present that readers can read quickly. "Phat Fact #7: In 1985, President Ronald Reagan signed into law a bill that designated King's birthday...as a federal holiday." Black-and-white photos with few captions show African Americans such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Daniel Hale Williams, Nannie Helen Burroughs, and Althea Gibson.

The author is the pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio, and a professor of homiletics at Ashland Theological Seminary. His honors include the 2006 Ralph Garfield Schell Presidential Award for Excellence in Ministry. He is the author of several books, including *Preaching to the Black Middle Class: Words of Challenge and Words of Hope*.

The book covers an enormous amount of ground, but it surprisingly omits some people readers might expect to read profiles about, including Oprah Winfrey, Colin Powell, Barack Obama, Condoleezza Rice, Jacob Lawrence, Ralph Ellison, and Alice Walker. The timeline seems incomplete, as some entries, such as Jena 6, are listed, but their significance is not explained. Though the book does not include a bibliography, further reading list, or source notes, its text reveals evidence of a wealth of research. (December) *Kaavonia Hinton*



**Sailor Girl**

**Sheree-Lee Olson**  
Porcupine's Quill, Softcover  
\$27.95 (288pp)  
978-0-88984-301-1

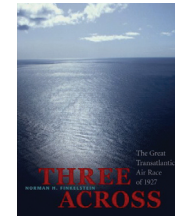
"There is always a moment when the night threatens to go aground. A closing-time moment, when the bar lights go bright and you can see who you've been drinking with, yelling your personal details to over the noise of the band. It could go either way..." So observes nineteen-year-old photography student Kate McLeod, who has signed on as a ship's porter five years after the *Edmund Fitzgerald* disaster. Working to pay her way through school and somewhat directionally adrift, Kate drinks, sows oats with a natural propensity toward losers, and struggles for respect among a cast of hardtack characters. Her moral imperfections are so intertwined with deep-seated goodwill and stifled aspirations that it's impossible not to root for her wholeheartedly.

Kate's freighters are an eighth of a mile long. They constantly motor up and down the Great Lakes, conveying material between rust ports (iron ore cargo) and dust ports (grain) in all weather. Her occasional objections to industrial development fall on unsympathetic ears. The arduous work everyone accepts; it's complications arising from loneliness and grudges which aren't as easy to take in stride.

This engrossing coming of age story has real literary merit, though frankly described sexuality has it straddling the line between a general adult audience and perhaps the most mature of young adult readers. *Sailor Girl* balances between salty action with lyrical perception, as when Kate meets the antagonist: "...he came toward her along the companionway, wearing a white tee, light from the portholes strobing across his cheekbones. She would always remember the first sight of him, like a strip of negatives, dark and light, dark and light."

The book has two minor plot flaws: a dangerous situation bubbling away in the background resolves itself in an anticlimactic confrontation, and a tension-raising home invasion is dismissed as a red herring. But those are just passing beeps

on the sonar of a fascinating larger picture of life on the water. The longtime *Toronto Globe and Mail* editor, who paid for her own education as the protagonist does, shows herself to be a talented prose stylist whose credibly complex characters refuse to follow in anyone else's wake. (June) *Todd Mercer*



**Three Across:  
The Great  
Transatlantic  
Air Race of 1927**

**Norman H. Finkelstein**  
Calkins Creek, Hardcover  
\$17.95 (136pp)  
978-1-59078-462-4

It is 1927. Three rudimentary airplanes and their pilots wait at Roosevelt Field on Long Island, vying to become the first to complete a nonstop transatlantic flight to Paris. To the winner comes immortal glory and a purse of \$25,000. The cost of failure is likely death in the unforgiving Atlantic.

All three planes are powered by the Wright brothers' fabulous new Whirlwind engine, but otherwise they are as different as their pilots. The odds-on favorite is the *Columbia*, with renowned test pilot Clarence Chamberlin at its controls and its owner Charles Levine as co-pilot. Famed Arctic explorer Richard E. Byrd captains the largest of the planes, the *America*, and its three-man crew.

The final aviator is the little known Charles A. "Slim" Lindbergh and his *Spirit of St. Louis*. He is given poor odds against the much better known pilots, and his plan of completing the flight solo, without sleep for more than thirty hours, borders on recklessness. He also seems to be an unlikely candidate for the incredible fame the completion of a successful flight will bring. Though he is handsome and photogenic, the young man is soft-spoken and shy, unlike the flamboyant Levine or unflappable Byrd.

Yet, of course, it is Lindbergh who first seizes the opportunity afforded by a break in the weather and takes to the skies in the early morning of May 20, 1927, and it is "Lucky" Lindbergh who manages to be the first to land in Paris. Much has been written over the ensuing eighty years about the aviator who became the most famous man in the world with his courageous flight, yet almost lost to the dry dust of history are the exploits of the other two planes and their crew. With this fascinating tale of the events surrounding all three of the historic flights, the author reminds a modern audience, now accustomed to the routine safety of transatlantic jets, of the incredible derring-do of these men and the worldwide acclaim they achieved.

Writing in a brisk yet wonderfully descriptive style, the author has crafted this book for young readers and adults alike to enjoy. For example, he recounts the alarming moment when the exhausted pilot of the *Columbia* was startled awake a few minutes after turning