Local authors tackle diverse subjects
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St. Louis writers and presses produced a bumper crop of new titles this year, many of them showcasing beloved hometown attractions — Forest Park and The Muny, for starters — sports, food and travel.

Here's a sampling of some of the notable nonfiction titles, including several published by Post-Dispatch writers:

St. Louis

Forest Park

"Forest Park: Jewel of St. Louis" by Sally J. Atman and Richard H. Weiss (St. Louis Post-Dispatch Books, $34.95) offers, in photos and text, a history of the park from its founding to the present. Among the highlights are the 1904 World's Fair, the construction of the Zoo, the Art Museum and Steinberg Rink, plus aspects of the park that may surprise even frequent visitors.

The Muny

Another hometown favorite gets the star treatment in "The Muny: Songs of St. Louis Summers," written by Post-Dispatch theater critic — and lifelong Muny-goer — Judith Newmark (St. Louis Post-Dispatch Books, $34.95). It's a delightful scrapbook of photos from the Post-Dispatch and the Muny's own archives, focusing on the productions past and the Muny itself.

Lafayette Square

One of St. Louis' oldest and most architecturally significant neighborhoods gets its due in "Lafayette Square: St. Louis" by John Albury Bryan with Wardell Buckner, Philip Cotton Jr. and Mary M. Stritz (Reedy Press, $19.95).

Central West End

The colorful history of another area of the city is celebrated in Jeff Fister's "The Days and Nights of the Central West End" (Virginia Publishing, $17.95). The book celebrates the 35th anniversary of the West End Word newspaper.

Sports

Hall of Famer Rick Hummel, inducted into Cooperstown this year, caps a 30-year career covering the Cards for the Post-Dispatch with "Commish & the Cardinals" (St. Louis Post-Dispatch Books, $21.95). The book is a selection of Hummel's essays about the most memorable games he's witnessed.

Another P-D sportswriter, Bryan Burwell, weighs in with "The Best St. Louis Sports Arguments" (Sourcebooks, $14.95) possessing puzzlers about the best St. Louis sports teams, the worst trades and other matters that, one hopes, will stop as many bar fights as they will cause.

Not to be outdone, the P-D's Dan O'Neil looks back at "Sportsman's Park: The Players, the Fans and the Game" (Monograph Publishing, $34.95), a fond remembrance of the historic ballpark and the legends who played there.

Holy cow! Harry Caray, the famed broadcaster for the Cardinals (and, OK, the Cubs and White Sox, too) is paid tribute in "Harry Caray: Voice of the Fans by Pat Hughes" (Sourcebooks, $21.95). The book includes a CD of some of Caray's most famous calls.

St. Louis' history as a pro basketball town is often overlooked, a situation Greg Marecek's "The St. Louis Hawks: A Gallery of Images and Memorabilia" (Reedy Press, $39.95) seeks to remedy. The coffee table book is full of photos and facts about a team that flew the coop too soon.

Food

St. Louisans' passion for good food is well-documented — on the bookshelves as well as our waistlines. Loosen your belt loops another notch and head to the bookstore for these titles:

"Special Requests: 100 Favorite Restaurant Recipes from the Pages of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch" by Judith Evans (St. Louis Post-Dispatch Books, $24.95) serves up gorgeous photos and reveals local chefs' secret recipes for favorite dishes.

"Dining in with Show Me St. Louis" (KSDK-TV, $24.95) is a selection of recipes from the local...
Dorothy P. Firestone, longtime food columnist for the St. Louis Jewish Light, brings together food, talk and family stories in “Table Talk: A Cookbook and Memoir” (self-published, $18).

Italian cooking is in the spotlight in another self-published offering, "Rosalie Serving Italian" by Rosalie Fiorino Harpole ($24.95).

Who knew that bread fed the spirit as well as the body? Apparently, Father Dominic Garramone did, and offers his thoughts on holiday baking and spirituality in "'Tis the Season to be Baking: Christmas Reflections and Bread Recipes” (Reedy Press, $12).

Kids

The St. Louis Science Center is one of the area's premier educational attractions. "Bringing Science to Life: A Guide from the Saint Louis Science Center," by Patricia Corrigan (Virginia Publishing/Reedy Press, $16) is a visit to the Science Center you can hold in your hands, with information on popular exhibits and attractions, plus games, quizzes and experiments.


For preschool and beginning readers, there's "Don't Forget to Take Your Umbrella, by Dale Rohman" (Dale Rohman ALS Foundation, $19.95) a story about love and friendship in a large format, lavishly illustrated volume.

"The Perils of the Peanut Butter Kid" by Cynthia Kagan Frohlichstein (self-published, $17), tells the humorous tale of a boy and his favorite food.


Local History and Travel

You think a place that calls itself the Show-Me state can keep a few secrets? If it could, they're all exposed now, thanks to Ann M. Hazelwood's "100 Best Kept Secrets in Missouri" (Virginia Publishing, $12.95).

Everyone knows that things sometimes work out as planned, but not always. "St. Louis Plans: The Ideal and the Real St. Louis" by Mark Tranel (Missouri Historical Society Press, $22.95) examines both sides of that coin concerning public, nonprofit and civic plans for the metropolitan area.

The history of the St. Louis area is told from the perspective of some of its most prominent citizens in "Centuries of St. Louis" by William Barnaby Faherty.

A more specialized history, "Unyielding Spirit" by NiNi Harris (St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish, $19.95) chronicles the history of the Polish people of St. Louis. "Show Me ... Natural Wonders: A Guide to Scenic Treasures in the Missouri Region" by Don Corrigan, with illustrations by E.J. Thias (Reedy Press, $18), covers in words and sketches the beauty of Missouri's natural environment.

"Hermann's Haunts: The Wines and Spirits of Hermann, Missouri" by Holly Drago and Jill Phillips (Virginia Publishing, $15.95) focuses on Missouri's wine capital and the spirits of a decidedly different sort that inhabit the area.

Business

Among the local press titles on business are local businessman and civic leader Jerry Clinton's "Accept the Challenge: The Memoirs of Jerry Clinton," written with Rob Rains (Reedy Press, $24.95), and "Business Success Secrets: 10 Keys to Start, Build and Sell Your Company" by Donald R. Kornbliet (Business Success Press, $24.95).

MEMORI

Jack Orchard was a successful entrepreneur before his diagnosis with Lou Gehrig's disease in 2001 at age 34. Instead of giving up, he founded a pair of charities to help others and fund ALS research. "Extra Hands: Grasping for a meaningful life" is his story. (Self-published, $17.95).

NATIONAL AND WORLD AFFAIRS

Some books with local connections look at the wider world. Webster University started a new press this year. Its first book is "Encountering Florence," by Susan Hacker Stang, professor of photography. The book of photographs is 56 pages ($35). Among other new titles are "Vienna's Conscience: Close-ups and Conversations After Hitler" by William Winter and Susan Winter Baik (Reedy Press, $27), "The Cuban American Experience: Issues Perceptions and Realities" by Guarione M. Diaz" (Reedy Press, $25); "Seven Years Seven Ways: Surviving Your Teen and Preteen Years" (Starrider Books, $12.95) by Chad E. Bladow; and "My Men Are My Heroes: The Brad Kasal Story" by Brad Kasal and Nathaniel R. Helms (Meredith Books, $24.95). "State of the Unions" by Philip M. Dine, a reporter in the Washington Bureau of the Post-Dispatch, (McGraw Hill, $27.95) chronicles the history of organized labor in America and discusses how it can still play a key role in politics.