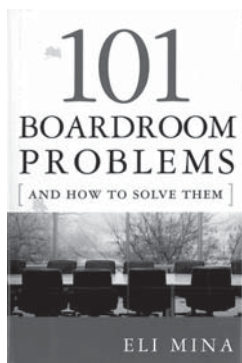


**101 Boardroom Problems and How to Solve Them**, by Eli Mina (179 pages, November 2008), offers practical and reasoned advice on maximizing the effectiveness of governing bodies,



whether corporate, governmental, or nonprofit. Mina has more than two decades of experience mentoring boards and helping them deal with complex and contentious issues. Since 2003, he has served as ALA

Parliamentarian. This handbook analyzes every conceivable dysfunctional boardroom situation, explains the potential damage, and suggests an intervention. Mina gives each problem an instantly recognizable name, such as: no disciplinary measures, culture of entitlement, last-minute agenda items, the short-tempered board member, the spineless chair, collective impatience, sleeping during a meeting, the stonewalling CEO, and speeches disguised as questions. ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels contributed the foreword. \$24.95. American Management Association. 978-0-8144-1058-5.

**A Remarkable Curiosity: Dispatches from a New York City Journalist's 1873 Railroad Trip**, by Amos Jay Cummings, edited by Jerald T. Milanich (371 pages, October 2008), reprints and annotates 19 articles from the *New York Sun* written by journalist (and later U.S. Representative) Cummings to describe his journey by train from Jersey City to San Francisco four years after the transcontinental railroad was completed. Like his contemporary Mark Twain, Cummings wrote in an ironic and colorful style, describing the wonders of gold and silver mining in Colorado, the petrified forests in the Florissant Fossil Beds, a divorce lawsuit brought by one of Brigham Young's wives, a massive herd of sheep, a practical joke played on a Wall Street bro-

ker, and a gunfight in Truckee, California. Milanich provides commentary and numerous footnotes for the articles. \$26.95. University Press of Colorado. 978-0-87081-926-1.

**Satan in the Dance Hall**, by Ralph G. Giordano (247 pages, November 2008), is an in-depth examination of the clash between morality and modernism in New York City in the 1920s. Although the focus is primarily on the long-forgotten crusade of Calvary Baptist Church preacher Rev. John Roach Straton against social dancing in public dance halls, Giordano's wide-ranging cultural survey encompasses the Spanish flu epidemic, Prohibition, the flapper image, jazz, the Scopes trial, eugenics, and the influence of the Ku Klux Klan. Unlike its flamboyant portrayal in cinema, the 1920s Jazz Age was a morally restrictive era characterized by a rise in fundamentalism. Just as Jerry Falwell blamed the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York secularism, Straton saw God's hand in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and predicted New York's doom in 1929 "like that of the wicked cities of the past unless the city mends its ways." \$49.95. Scarecrow. 978-0-8108-6146-6.

**Stat-Spotting: A Field Guide to Identifying Dubious Data**, by Joel Best (132 pages, October 2008), presents some practical guidelines for recognizing questionable statistics and illustrates each common problem with recent, real-life examples. Best, author of *Damned Lies and Statistics* (2001), explains that he wanted to take the errors he described in his earlier books and "organize them around a set of practical questions that you might ask when encountering a new statistic and considering whether it might be flawed." Perhaps the most cogent red flag is: The greater your shocked reaction to a particular factoid, the more likely it is the product of exaggeration or distortion. \$19.95. University of California. 978-0-520-25746-7.

**The Ambulance: A History**, by Ryan Corbett Bell (383 pages, October 2008), is a surprisingly fasci-

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nating history of civil emergency medical services in the United States from the end of the Civil War to the present. Although military ambulances had existed in Europe for some 70 years, it was only in America that ex-soldiers transferred the concept to peacetime, as Bell says, “carrying the wisdom of grape-shot into the vineyards of civil life.” He goes on to examine such milestones as the Bellevue Ambulance Service of New York City, which in 1869 incorporated specialty wagons, telegraphic dispatching, and medical attention on the scene; the development of all-police ambulance services; the first female ambulance surgeon, Emily Dunning; the rise and proliferation of emergency hospitals and air-ambulance services; the regulation of ambulance speed and sirens; the invention of the portable defibrillator in 1961; the creation of paramedic squads and advanced training programs in the late 1960s; the influence of the *Emergency!* television series in the 1970s; the Emergency Medical Services Act of 1973 and its later demise; and the paucity of funding and disparity in service quality of emergency facilities in the 21st century. \$55.00. McFarland. 978-0-7864-3811-2.

**The Man Who Believed He Was King of France**, by Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri (220 pages, September 2008), examines a curious medieval tale, long thought to be a literary fiction, about a Sienese merchant and forger named Giannino di Guccio. In 1357, Giannino set out to prove that he was actually John I of France, who had not died in 1316 as a five-day-old infant, but was switched with the dead son of a wet-nursing noblewoman, Marie de Cressay, who had been secretly married to a Tuscan youth named Guccio di Mino. From there, the tale becomes increasingly murky, but the author manages to sort out the facts engagingly without the modern amenities of official documentation and DNA analysis. In the process, he reveals much about 14th-century politics, medieval assumptions about identity, the structure of folktales, and the way in which history often begets a strange mix of truth and deception, factual records and fantasy, and faulty memories and subterfuge. \$25.00. University of Chicago. 978-0-226-14525-9.

**The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies**, by James Neill (470 pages, January 2009), presents an exhaustive review of the acceptance of gay and lesbian behavior in indigenous cultures, the ancient world, and medieval society in order to demonstrate that the modern condemnation of homosexuality as deviant is itself an aberration. Until recently, scholars have overlooked or avoided evidence of well-entrenched same-sex traditions in the ancient Middle East, Celtic and Germanic tribes, classical Greece and Rome, the Chinese imperial court, the Japanese shogunate, Islamic societies, and feudal Europe. Neill claims that it wasn't until the 11th century when the church began making serious efforts to enforce celibacy among its clergy, crush heresy, and eradicate sexual nonconformity that the view of heterosexuality as the sole norm became dogma. \$55.00. McFarland. 978-0-7864-3513-5.

**The University in Medieval Life, 1179–1499**, by Hunt Janin (218 pages, October 2008), offers a refreshingly clear look at what it must have been like to be a student or teacher in the great medieval universities. Janin begins with an overview of life in the Middle Ages and a general summary of academic curricula, regulations, and student life, then goes on to examine in detail the universities of Bologna, Paris, and Oxford, as well as ten other institutions. He covers the scholastic method of study and the new wave of humanism (represented by Erasmus, Thomas More, Pico della Mirandola, and others) that eventually replaced it. Six appendixes offer such gems as a 1345 inventory of a “university student’s possessions,” and John of Garland on “how students should behave” (“Do not constantly urge your horse with the spur,” “Unless you wish to be considered a fool, learn to keep your mouth shut in season”). \$35.00. McFarland. 978-0-7864-3452-6. 