

LIFE

Put Texas books about everything under the sun under tree

If you're looking for a last-minute Christmas gift for someone who has lived in Abilene a long time, let me recommend "A Rush of Memories," a collection of Abilene Reporter-News columns by the late Dick Tarpley.

The 160-page paperback book (\$12.95), edited by Larry Zelisko, includes more than 60 pieces written by Tarpley from 1986-97, many having to do with Abilene history and lore.

Zelisko worked closely with the Tarpley family in publishing the book. Dick's wife, Beverly, wrote the introduction.

Tarpley retired as editor of the Reporter-News in 1985 but continued to write a Sunday column for the next 12 years. I was editor during those years, and I learned a lot of Abilene history from reading Dick's columns. I also enjoyed his observations on politics, travel, art, writing and other topics, and

Dear Abby: Our 7-year-old grandson has been a handful since he was able to walk. He has been sneaky and has told lies for as long as any of us can remember. He has been suspended from school more than 10 times for various things. He stole several hundred dollars from his



GLENN DROMGOOLE

TEXAS READS

I cherished his friendship and counsel.

In "A Rush of Memories," readers are treated to excellent essays on a variety of topics, beginning with a humorous but moving piece on his daughter's wedding. Tarpley admitted that when it came time for the father to give the bride away, he blew it, making an uncharacteristic grammatical blunder.

Looking back on 2013, here are some other notable Texas books of the year:

"Calling Me Home," the first novel by Hardin-Simmons grad Julie Kibler, is probably the best book I read all year. It tells the story of an 89-year-old

white woman who asks her hairdresser, a black single mother, to drop what she's doing and drive her from Arlington, Texas, to Cincinnati for a funeral. Their stories unfold along the way. Warner has picked up movie rights.

"The Son" by Philipp Meyer weaves the story of six generations of the McCullough ranching and oil dynasty through Texas history. It is a raw and gritty novel not for the fainthearted, but it probably was the year's biggest blockbuster Texas novel.

Two of my favorite Texas writers produced new novels in their ongoing series in 2013: Diane Kelly's sassy "Death and Taxes" mysteries featuring IRS agent Tara Holloway, and Jodi Thomas's "Harmony" series taking place in a fictional small town in the Texas Panhandle.

I'm a big fan of the three-man mystery writing team that goes by the

pen name of Miles Arce-neaux, and their second novel was published this year, "La Salle's Ghost."

Abilene minister David Ray's first novel, "Lost Under the Lion's Shadow," a Christian romantic thriller, is a good, clean, fast-paced read.

"The Elk Hunt" by Lubbock author S. J. Dahlstrom is the first book in a new series of stories for boys featuring 12-year-old Wilder Good. The second novel should be out early in 2014, and I think this series has a promising future.

Turning to nonfiction, I have to admit to a significant bias here in that I was one of the three editors of "Abilene Stories, From Then to Now" with Jay Moore and Joe Specht. But the book stands on its own merits, I think, as a collection of about 100 stories by 70 writers capturing the flavor of Abilene history and culture through the years.

Another local favorite is

Sharon Riley's cookbook, "Yum! Yum! An Abilene Tradition." And Loretta Fulton touched on some little-known Abilene history in her book on early Abilene women pilots, "Off They Went."

History comes alive in "The Texas Forts Trail" coffee table book that came out last month. The compelling color photographs and crisp, concise text make me want to hit the trail and see the forts for myself.

Barbecue blogger Daniel Vaughn traveled 10,000 miles and ate at 200 barbecue joints in producing "Prophets of Smoked Meat: A Journey Through Texas Barbecue," certainly the year's most gastronomical literary effort.

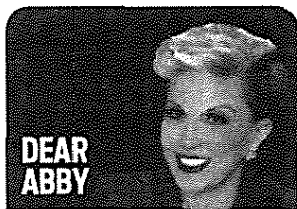
Two football books that deserve mention are "Texas High School Football Dynasties" by Rick Sherrod and the biography of Baylor's football coach, "Art Briles: Looking Up" by Nick Eatman.

I enjoyed Dean Smith's Hollywood memoir, "Cowboy Stuntman: From Olympic Gold to the Silver Screen," and had a lot of fun perusing "Texas Redneck Road Trips" by Allan C. Kimball, covering some of the more unusual attractions in the state.

Veteran photographer Laurence Parent produced a gorgeous and very reasonably priced (\$19.99 hardcover) coffee-table portfolio of varied Texas scenes and landscapes — from beaches and forests to deserts, canyons and mountains — in his 112-page tribute, "Texas: Portrait of a State."

Well, I've run out of space before I've run out of favorite books. I look forward to more good Texas reading in 2014.

Glenn Dromgoole, author of West Texas Christmas Stories, writes about Texas books and authors. Contact him at g.dromgoole@suddenlink.net.



DEAR ABBY

nude photographs to my boyfriend. An adult co-

Nana may leave, but she's never really gone

When you are little and the world seems so big, it's hard to understand why someone you love is here one day and gone the next.

Actually, that can be hard to understand at any age. I've been

is almost a year old. Wiley doesn't care how long I'm gone. I can't prove it, but I think he likes the UPS guy better.

Their cousin Henry and his parents live only a few miles away

to terms with it.

"When someone loves you," she said, "you don't have to be in the same room to know you are loved. Love stays forever, even when they're out of sight."

I remembered those words years

