

# BOOK REVIEWS



**NORMAN BECKER, DDS, EDITOR EMERITUS**

## **FATAL GAMBLE: A NOVEL** **J. P. O'DONNELL**

*iUniverse*

The character of private eye Daniel Gallagher is the vehicle by which MDS member Dr. Joe O'Donnell shows that his creative talents lie not only in dentistry. While there are 77 chapters in this 227-page novel, don't let those numbers scare you.



This novel, in which Gallagher attempts to track down the murderer of three doctors from a small town in Massachusetts, came as a holiday gift. It took me a while to thank the sender because I needed to catch up on my sleep. I started to read it at bedtime, with the intent of reading only one or two chapters and then, lights out. The author sidetracked that plan. His imaginative storytelling was so vivid, it became quickly "Just one more chapter . . ." Each of the chapters had its way of promising more to come, and, as the plot thickened, I was never disappointed with the expanded reading time.

Joe, tell me ahead of time when Gallagher is coming back so that I can store some premeditated sleep time.

## **DENTIST'S GUIDE TO MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND COMPLICATIONS** **KANCHAN GANDA, MD**

*Wiley-Blackwell*



"The integration of medicine in the dental curriculum has become a necessity, and this integration must begin with the freshman class for the students to gain maximum benefit and for the chance to also gain credibility." With this introduction, Dr. Ganda practices what she preaches. Do not be deceived into thinking that this is a text aimed only at dental students. The experienced clinician will also benefit from the teachings presented within the book.

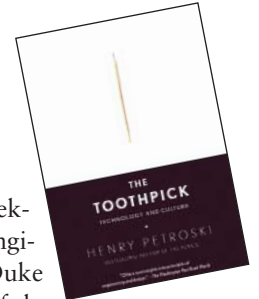
While reading the contents, I often felt that I was back in the classroom being taught by a well-organized and knowledgeable instructor. In all cases, the lessons are well-organized, straightforward, and thorough. During my review of the text, I was forced to realize that much that I had taken as rote and routine needed to be rethought and updated. This text does that.

It is a book all dental students and dental practitioners will appreciate for its chairside value. It covers information on epidemiology, physiology, pathophysiology, laboratory test evaluation, pharmacology, and dental alerts, as well as possible deviations in the use of anesthetics, analgesics, and antibiotics.

When a relatively recent graduate saw the author's name, he noted to me how much his class had appreciated and learned from her lectures. After studying the organization of the material within the text, I have to say that I agree with his praise.

## **THE TOOTHPICK— TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE** **HENRY PETROSKI**

*Vantage Press*



The credentials of the author, the Aleksander S. Vesic Professor of Civil Engineering and a professor of history at Duke University, more than hint at the quality of the contents of this book. Still, its reading is light enough so as not to bog you down.

The story of "the earliest currently known nonlithic tool used by hominids" does not begin with "The toothpick was first used in the United States at the Union Oyster House. Enterprising Charles Forster of Maine first imported the picks from South America. To promote his new business, he hired Harvard boys to dine at the Union Oyster House and ask for toothpicks." (From "The History of the Union Oyster House," available from [www.unionoysterhouse.com](http://www.unionoysterhouse.com).)

Professor Petroski tells the international story of the toothpick, with chapters set in prehistoric Africa, ancient Greece and Rome, medieval Portugal and modern Brazil, China, Japan, Sweden, and the United States. "The story of the toothpick is the story of Everyone and Everything at Everytime," he writes. The chapters describe the toothpick's functions and applications from use as a substitute for tongues, fingers, grass stalks, wood splinters, or even animal parts.

When discussing artifacts of toilet sets made of silver, copper, or bronze, which contained toothpicks, tweezers, ear-spoons, and even some tongue scrapers, in use as early as 3500 BC, Petroski points out that the earliest dental hygienists may have been the Roman slaves who specialized in cleaning the noblemen's teeth using these devices. In addition, he describes the jewelry and artifacts made from toothpicks that have become archaeological treasures.

In some instances, the manufacture of toothpicks was so secretive that visitors were not allowed into the factories. Forster's challenge went beyond manufacturing and into distribution: the "making of millions of toothpicks by machine was one thing; selling them by the box to individuals was another."

This was a fun book to read, and I was surprised and pleased by the many historical facts pointed out by an author who has written other books about everyday objects we take for granted. ■

### **Take Advantage of the MDS Discount**

Based on the combined buying power of its membership, the MDS has secured a variety of business discounts for its members.

A full list of MDS business services is available at [www.massdental.org](http://www.massdental.org).