

# BOOKLIST

## May 1, 2013

can leaders guessing where their opponents would land in the deeply incised coastline of the bay. One such was James Monroe, who suspended his duties as secretary of state to scout the enemy on horseback. Also in the saddle, President James Madison personally inspected defense lines, fleeing their collapse in the Battle of Bladensburg and ensuing incineration of Washington. After inflicting this humiliation, British admiral Cockburn and general Ross decided to visit a conflagration on Baltimore, whose defiance of this fate an eyewitness expressed in a militant composition. Vogel, a *Washington Post* reporter, superbly dramatizes a campaign whose legacy is "The Star-Spangled Banner," both the anthem and the flag for which it stands, today displayed in Washington. —Gilbert Taylor

### **Trailblazer: A Biography of Jerry Brown.** By Chuck McFadden.

May 2013. 249p. illus. Univ. of California, \$29.95 (9780520275638). 979.4.

In 2011, at age 72 and nearly four decades after his first inauguration, Brown made an incredible comeback to be elected the thirty-ninth governor of California. With a reputation as a visionary and a fiscal conservative, could Brown work with an acrimonious state legislature to turn around the state's abysmal credit rating, high unem-

**HD**

**HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** A new book from the Pulitzer Prize-winning Caputo, famed for his soldier's memoir of the Vietnam conflict, *A Rumor of War* (1977), is always an event.

### ★ **The Longest Road: Overland in Search of America, from Key West to the Arctic Ocean.** By Phillip Caputo.

July 2013. 320p. Holt, \$28 (9780805094466). 973.93.

**M**iles traveled: 8,314. Vistas condemned: wind turbine farms. Vistas endorsed: the Natchez Trace and the Alaska Highway. Lesson learned: don't drive a trailer where you can't get it out. Such were Caputo's concrete experiences on a 2011 road trip in search of answers to a more ethereal question, What unifies America? That query, if already asked by literary roadsters like Jack Kerouac and John Steinbeck, bears repeating by writers of any stature, whether unknown or, like Caputo, renowned. Looking at age 70, Caputo felt a bucket-list impetus

to drive the furthest border-to-border route in America: Key West, Florida, to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. With his pickup truck towing a symbol of highway wanderlust, an Airstream trailer, Caputo convinced his two dogs and, perhaps less quickly, his wife to climb aboard. Vowing to avoid interstates and motels, he loosely followed the historic route of Lewis and Clark. Injecting misadventures into the narrative, Caputo recounts an overland voyage that emphasizes the people he meets: Christian evangelicals; volunteers helping tornado-struck Tuscaloosa, Alabama; a Missouri farmer; residents of Pine Ridge Indian Reservation; and an assortment of Alaskan eccentrics. Pithily capturing their characters and opinions about the state of America, Caputo snares reading devotees of a classic American theme, the road trip. —Gilbert Taylor



look at a paradoxical political figure in the nation's most populous and politically influential state. —Vanessa Bush

### **The War Below: The Story of Three Submarines That Battled Japan.** By James Scott.

May 2013. 480p. illus. Simon & Schuster, \$28