



COVER TO COVER

# Monkey Business

*Sy Montgomery studies great women among the great apes.*

## Walking With the Great Apes

By Sy Montgomery '79  
280 pp. A Peter Davison Book/Houghton Mifflin Company. \$19.95.

**T**his is what you need to study apes: patience, determination, and no qualms about facing grass that can cut you, falling fruit that can kill you, nettles that can sting through two layers of clothing, and potential attacks from the very subjects who drew you into the jungle in the first place.

It is women's work.

Anthropologist Louis Leakey knew that, which is why, when he decided to put researchers in the jungles of Africa and Indonesia to study our closest living animal relatives more than 20 years ago, he chose Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Birute Galdikas.

Goodall was 26, a former waitress and secretary, when Leakey sent her to Tanzania to live among the chimpanzees. Fossey, before being chosen to study gorillas in Rwanda, was an occupational therapist who got along better with animals than with people.

Of the three, only Galdikas had a scientific background, "but that didn't matter; [Leakey] chose her on the basis of how she scored on a playing-card test he had devised," writes Sy Montgomery in *Walking With the Great Apes*, a collective biography of the three women whom Leakey referred to as his "primates."

Leakey had a reputation for eccentricity, but

his theory that "women are better observers than men" proved true in this case. Of all the people who have studied the great apes, Goodall, Fossey and Galdikas (who studies orangutans in Indonesia) have turned in the best and most comprehensive research. Had they adhered to standard scientific procedures—"science with a capital S," as Montgomery refers to them—the day-to-day lives of chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans would still be a mystery.

Goodall, Fossey, and Galdikas "began their studies by relinquishing control," Montgomery explains. "In the masculine world of Western science, where achievement is typically measured by mastery, theirs was an unusual approach. . . . Although certain men have also learned how to relinquish control, the approach seems particularly feminine."

By observing instead of intruding, the women were able to learn about the apes' family structures; how they behaved when they were happy, sad, ill, and angry; and also how they worked and played.

Montgomery, a free-lance writer who holds an SU degree in magazine journalism and French, proves as adept an

observer of Goodall, Fossey, and Galdikas as they were of their respective ape subjects. She spent months trekking through jungles, following Goodall and Galdikas, and interviewing dozens of people—those who are at the site where Fossey was murdered in 1985, and others who have worked with and studied the three scientists. She tripped over the same vines they did, stumbled through the same deep brush, and encountered many of the same apes.

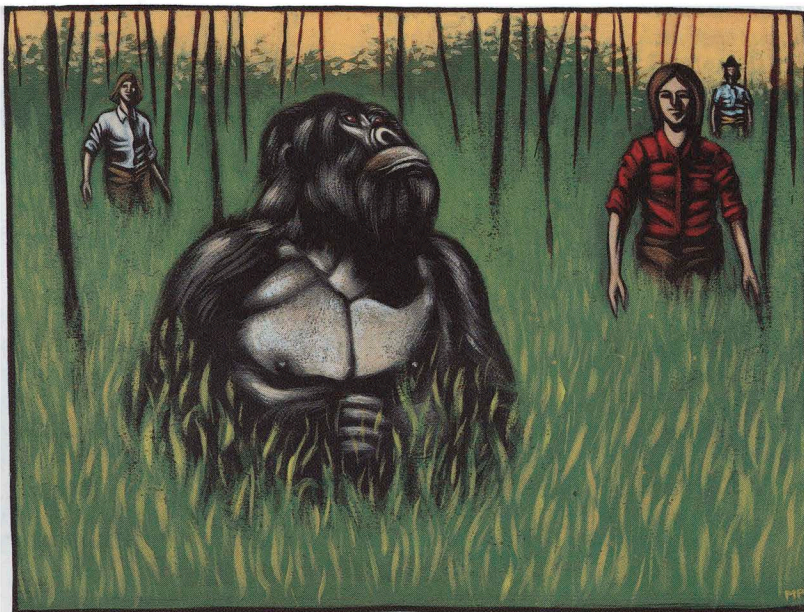
Montgomery's respect and admiration for her subjects is clear, but she doesn't whitewash the picture. Goodall emerges as the most even-tempered of the three, a proper Englishwoman who shared with her colleagues a love for animals, but whose patience and grace were unparalleled.

Fossey, whose life was the focus of the 1988 movie *Gorillas in the Mist*, established working relationships with several families of gorillas. Away from the gorillas, though, she was a deeply unhappy woman whose research staff alternately feared and hated her.

Galdikas, a Canadian now married to a member of the Indonesian Dayak tribe, receives mixed reviews. Some peers consider her a wonderful researcher and person, others see her as a demagogue. Montgomery provides evidence to support both theories.

Part psychology text, anthropological study, biography, and adventure story, *Walking With the Great Apes* describes in great detail three women, many animals, and a way of life that, while at first unfamiliar, is quickly made both accessible and irresistible.

—DEBORAH J. WALDMAN



MICHAEL PRINZO

DEBORAH J. WALDMAN '82 is a visiting assistant professor of English at St. Lawrence University.



### Three Blind Mice: How the Networks Lost Their Way

By Ken Auletta G'77

656 pp. Random House. \$25.

With the influence of cable, independent TV, and VCRs, network television has seen enormous changes of late. This highly publicized book takes a behind-the-scenes look at ABC, CBS, and NBC during recent turbulence.

Auletta has had the privilege of being a "proverbial fly on the wall" at the networks. With inside access to the executives in charge, he has watched them confront the declining industry, professional crises, and corporate takeovers. Auletta analyzes the situation and makes interesting predictions for the networks' future, as the executives try to cope with the imminent challenges.

### Beyond News of the Weird

By Chuck Shepard, John J. Kohut, and Roland Sweet G'84

117 pp. Plume Paperback Original. \$7.95.

Taking real news stories from America's daily newspapers, the authors have once again proved that "fact is indeed stranger than fiction." More than 500 odd news shorts, bizarre facts, and unbelievable events are compiled in this paperback, the third in a series.

### The Four Season Guide to New England

By Michael Schuman '75

320 pp. Yankee Books. \$14.95.

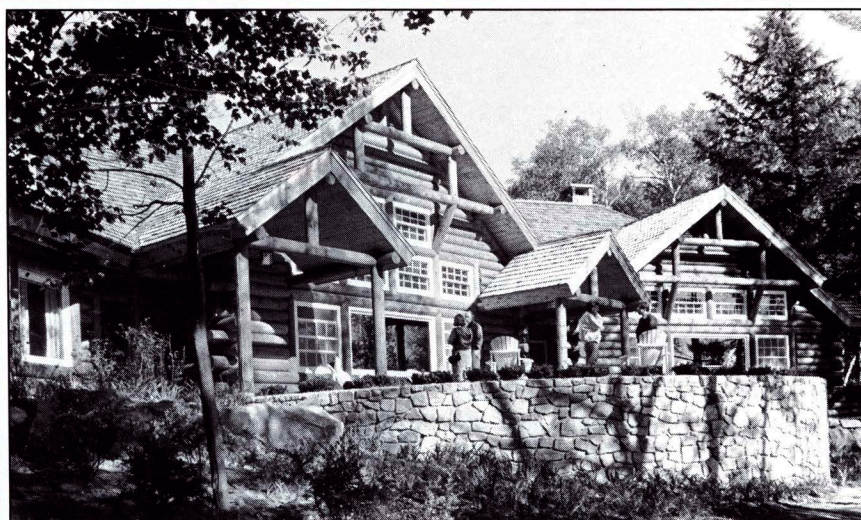
In this New England travel guide, Michael Schuman presents an array of year-round vacation ideas, facts, and advice. The book features pages filled with practical information and a detailed mix of attractions for everyone. Special sections are even included on summertime in ski towns, Native American powwows, and the art of snowshoeing.

### How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents

By Julia Alvarez G'75

303 pp. Algonquin Books. \$16.95.

This story collection depicts the assimilation of a well-born Hispanic family from the Dominican Republic to their new status as Hispanic immigrants. As *Kirkus Reviews* explains, "Alvarez manages to bring to attention many of the issues—serious and light—that immigrant families face, portraying with sensitivity and, at times, an enjoyable, mischievous sense."



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