The Known is finite, the unknown infinite; intellectually we stand on an island in the middle of an illimitable ocean of inexplicability. Our business in every generation is to reclaim a little more land, to add some-
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Only rarely does a work of non-fiction engage and entertain its readership with the ascendancy and fascination of good fiction. Self-styled "a history of man's search to know his world and himself," The Discoverers is the best non-fiction since Gladfier, Easter and Bush by Douglas Hofstadter. The Discoverers is a survey of history from the very origins of Man to the end of the nineteenth century. But it is not the standard history of battles and politics; rather, it is a history of Man the Discoverer. It is com-
piled of four "books," each of which deals not with a single epoch but a single idea. The first book discusses the evolution of the concept of time, while the others exami-
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What makes The Discoverers work is not just the enthralling subject matter or its unfolds. What makes it work is Boorstin's erudite style and talent. He pulls together countless details from hun-
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Boorstin's credentials are impressive. Presently Librarian of Congress, he has served as director of the National Museum of History and Technology and some his-	orians of the Smithsonian Institution. He has taught at almost a dozen univer-
sities including Oxford and Harvard. He has won the Pulitzer Prize. It is not surprising that this book is so fascinating. Boorstin addresses questions that most historians would not attempt to answer. Why didn't the Chinese discover America? Why were people so slavish to the idea that Earth revolves around the sun? Why didn't the Arabs communicate Africa be-
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The Discoverers presents no thesis to the reader. It has no point of view, no no-
point of view. The only theme is that man is a
able and adventorous animal capable of boundless creativity — if he is not trapped by his tendency to narrow-mindedness.
For this reason the end of The Discoverers is a bit of a letdown. The original book tends to drag. In his attempt to be thor-
ough, Boorstin is perhaps a bit long-wind-
ded. The Discoverers is a hefty 475 pages. I cannot see what omissions would have been justified. With detailed reference notes, and a thorough index, The Discoverers is a valuable reference tool. Better to have it all.
This book is great summer reading. While not yet in paperback, it will work well the investment and will make a handsomely useful addition to your
library.
Scott L. Chase

Politics, TV, and the News

The Spot: The Rise of Political Advertising on Television. By Edwin Diamond and

Freedom of speech was instituted in America to safeguard the people's liberty. An informed public was a prerequisite to
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The Discoverers. By Daniel J. Boorstin, Random House. 552 pages. Presidents
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For example, the history of medical science is considered in detail, beginning with the great works of Galen. The story of Paracelsus (1493-1541), the first practitioner of "modern" medicine, is its central focus. He fought the "tyranny of Galen" and preferred to actually do experiments or study the results of his treatments rather than rely on Latin translations of Galen's works. The implications of Paracelsus' work are followed up to the equally revolutionary work of Ignaz Semmelweis and William Harvey in the mid-seventeenth century. But Boorstin never completes the history of medicine. And he has laid down the elements of modern medicine, he moves on to something else equally interesting. The Discoverers is a history of beginnings. Many aspects of life that we take for granted are followed from their arcane beginnings in early Greece or Rome to — but not through — their emergence as modern ideas. For the aficionado of science history, this book is a fascinating examination of works and ideas of towering figures in the history of science are discussed. We learn about their motivations for their work, and their effects on a world that was not always pleased to hear what they had to say. Revolutionary discoveries (father of botany), Roger Bacon, George Louis Buffon, Sir Isaac Newton, and Princeton Navigator are but of few of the fascinating personalities revealed in The Discoverers.
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