

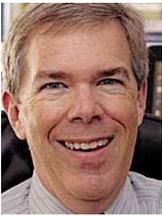


## thisweek

Readings &amp; signings on LI

## Today

**James Barron** speaks and signs copies of his book, "Piano: The Making of a Steinway Concert Grand." At 2 p.m., Quogue Library, 90 Quogue St., Quogue; 631-653-4224, quoguelibrary.org



## Wednesday

Sea Cliff author **Dan Fagin**

discusses and signs copies of his Pulitzer Prize-winning book "Toms River: A Story of Science and Salvation." At 7:30 p.m., Bryant Library, 2 Paper Mill Rd., Roslyn; 516-621-2240, bryantlibrary.org



## Thursday

**Amanda Lindhout** discusses

her memoir, "A House in the Sky," about her 460 days as a hostage in Somalia. Tickets \$45-\$75. At 7 p.m., Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center, 76 Main St., Westhampton Beach; 631-288-1500, whbpac.org



## Saturday

**Amanda Vaill** speaks and signs

copies of her book "Hotel Florida: Truth, Love, and Death in the Spanish Civil War." At 5 p.m., BookHampton, 41 Main St., East Hampton; 631-324-4939, bookhampton.com



## Next Sunday

Former ABC correspondent **Lynn Sherr** speaks and signs copies of her biography, "Sally Ride: America's First Woman in Space." At 11 a.m., BookHampton, 41 Main St., East Hampton; 631-324-4939, bookhampton.com

## reviews

## Echoes of Margaret Mead

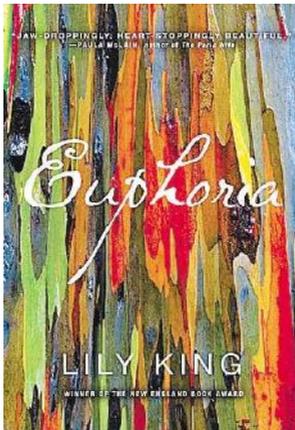
**EUPHORIA**, by Lily King. Atlantic Monthly Press, 261 pp., \$25.

BY MARION WINIK  
Special to Newsday

**T**his novel is as concentrated as orchid food, packing as much narrative power and intellectual energy into its 250 pages as novels triple its size.

Inspired by the 1933 meeting of anthropologists Margaret Mead, Reo Fortune and Gregory Bateson (Mead's second husband and her third), and interweaving many other real characters and theoretical developments, "Euphoria" is a tale of passions, discoveries, jealousy, dedication, sexual mores and violence. It is King's fourth novel, following the acclaimed and totally different "Father of the Rain."

The story is stage-managed by Andrew Bankson, a bachelor Brit who's been alone for too long with his tribe in New Guinea and his painful memories of the past. When a December suicide attempt is foiled by Kiona tribesmen, he has to accept that he's "alive for



Researchers' lives get complicated in Lily King's latest novel.

Christmas after all, so I went to spend it with the drunks at the Government Station in Angoram."

There he runs into the American Nell Stone and her Australian husband, Fen, resting on their way to Australia after abandoning their research on a tribe whose savagery Nell could no longer stomach — but which her husband found stimulating. Nell is already famous for, and Fen is already jealous of, a book whose real-life model is



years later by Nell's dearest friend and colleague. These entries reveal the truth about Nell's marriage and her feelings for Bankson — or as much of it as Nell was able to admit to herself. They also include details of her brilliant and deeply empathetic approach to her work.

After leaving Nell and Fen alone with the Tam for seven weeks, Bankson returns. His moment is chosen based on something Nell told him during their first meeting. "It's that moment about two months in, when you think you've finally got a handle on the place. Suddenly it feels within your grasp. It's a delusion — you've only been there eight weeks — and it's followed by the complete despair of ever understanding anything. But at the moment, the place feels entirely yours. It's the briefest, purest euphoria." But this euphoric moment will turn out very differently in fiction than it did in real life.

"Euphoria" made me eager to return not only to the earlier novels of Lily King, but to the life and work of Mead herself. Clearly, we all need to read more of both.

## In the deep, mean South

**NATCHEZ BURNING**, by Greg Iles. William Morrow, 791 pp., \$27.99.

BY CINDY BAGWELL  
Dallas Morning News

**I**t doesn't pay to be one of the good guys in Greg Iles' world.

Villainous or heroic, you're equally likely to meet a painful — and painfully described — end.

"Natchez Burning," the first of a trilogy and the fourth outing for Iles' protagonist, Penn Cage, begins with a warning against deifying mere mortals. Even gods have feet of clay, and in Iles' South, they're likely to have blood on their hands, too.

Cage's father, Tom, is suspected of killing his former nurse, Viola Turner,

in an assisted suicide. The saintly doctor, revered by members of the black community he cared for and well respected by his fellow upper-class whites, has preserved the secrets as well as the health of both groups.

Turner, who fled Natchez 40 years ago, after the disappearance of her brother, a musician and civil-rights activist, has terminal cancer and has come home to die. She, too, is a locked treasure chest of secrets, and local reporter Henry Sexton thinks — hopes — that finally, at the end of her life, she might be willing to set the record straight.

Penn, a former prosecutor who now is mayor of Natchez, is at first contemptuous of the murder charge — then stunned when his father refuses to offer a defense. Penn's search for a reason for

his father's actions takes him back to the 1960s, just after the murder of Medgar Evers, and uncovers a plot targeting Robert Kennedy.

His crusade to save his frail father from prison stirs up a nest of now-aged but still venomous racists and their offspring, the kind of guys who quit the Klan because it was just too wussy. Penn finally finds the spider at the center of the web.

If revisiting the awful deeds done in the cause of white supremacy in the '60s makes you shudder, this book is going to be a tough read in places. But he's not making things up: Iles credits the work of reporter Stanley Nelson, who he says covered the actual crimes that form the backdrop to "Natchez Burning." At nearly 800 pages, the book feels overwritten in some spots, but manages to



"Natchez Burning" by Greg Iles looks at white supremacy.

keep the pages flying.

One major theme of the book is disillusionment, and sure enough, nobody in it comes out clean. (Well, hardly anybody; some folks aren't alive long enough to get too dirty.) Another is family. Iles says that writing about the South, when you're from the South, is like writing about family: "You love it so much, and yet you can simultaneously hate some things about it."