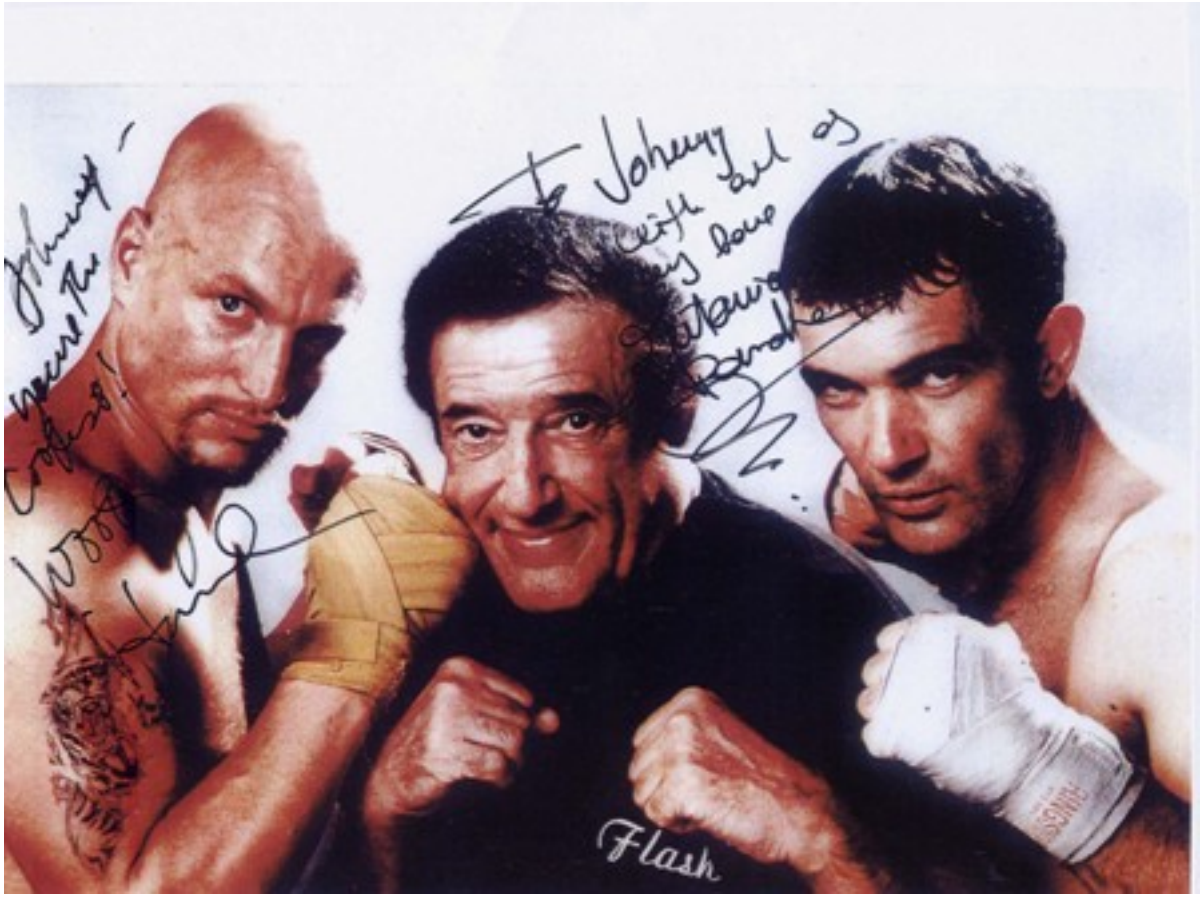

Not much time is left before Christmas Day or the other holidays. For boxing fans or friends and spouses of boxing fans here are some suggestions of interest:

My Life Among the Icons

If you're a boxing fan living in the West Coast than you should know who Johnny "Flash" Ortiz is and why he's important in the sport of boxing.

Ortiz is best known for being the last owner of the world famous Main Street Gym in Los Angeles where hundreds of the best prizefighters to ever lace up gloves ventured into at one time or another. Think of any great Hall of Fame fighters in the last 90 years and they probably walked into the upstairs gym located on Main Street and Second Street. Fighters like Jack Johnson, Sugar Ray Robinson, Roberto Duran and Muhammad Ali were often seen hitting bags or each other in the now torn down facility.

The stories of those who boxed there would be enough, but Ortiz has plenty more to say.
Born and raised in Los Angeles, Ortiz is a virtual walking encyclopedia of the streets and sights of L.A. from the 1950s to the present. Throughout the book he paints a picture of what L.A. was like including its icons like gangster Mickey Cohen, actresses Dorothy Lamour and Lynda Carter and his days as a barkeep and actor. Ortiz met all of these people and has some interesting

things to say.

Ortiz later worked as a boxing columnist on radio as recent as seven years ago and interviewed many of the best boxers from the 90s and early 2000s.

As an actor he appeared in the movie “Play It To the Bone” that featured Woody Harrelson and Antonio Banderas. Very few people know L.A. like Ortiz. And very few people are as well liked as Ortiz who has been a familiar face on the boxing scene for many decades.

To purchase a copy of Johnny Ortiz book My Life Among the Icons, priced at $34.95, go to www.Amazon.com

Extraordinary Women of the Ring

It features loads of photos and stories compiled by Mary Ann Lurie Owen a photographer based in Las Vegas. For decades Owen has perched ringside taking photos of hundreds of big time boxing and mixed martial arts cards.

She knows the business of prizefighting.

One business that few know is the world of female professional boxing. No one else in recent times has tabulated anything similar to this book

All of the best known and best quality female prizefighters are in this book. From Laila Ali to Vaia Zaganas you’ll find photos of them in this soft cover book of 270 pages filled with large photos of various boxers.

Owen also interviewed most of the women. My favorite quote comes from Amazing Layla McCarter who said “Boxing is not just a sport…it’s a way of life.”

Nothing could be truer.

The book has a lot of great facts and anecdotes including records of the many fighters she talks about. Fighters from the 1970s to the present fill the book with a lot of unknown facts. If you think you know boxing then take a look at this book and you’ll discover a whole new world.

Women’s boxing has been virtually underground but for those who’ve actually seen several female prize fights, it’s a sport that can actually hook a fan more readily than any other female sport. One thing that separates female boxing from the other sports is the intensity they battle. Most times they fight more savagely than the guys. This is not exaggeration.

This book is not exaggeration. It’s a must buy at $34.95. To purchase a copy of this must read book go to www.kiroed.com

Gentleman of the Ring: The Bert Colima Story

Unless you're a serious boxing buff the name Bert Colima may sound familiar but would not register any bells. It's understandable because the boxer from Whittier, California fought from 1919 to 1933 in a total of 200 professional bouts. Yes you read that correctly.

Colima, a middleweight, was one of the early Mexican-American attractions to bring fans to the arenas like Vernon Arena, Hollywood Legion Stadium and Olympic Auditorium. In those fight venues he clashed with fights like Mickey Walker, Kid Mexico, and Ace Hudkins.

The book was written by Colima's son Bert Colima Jr. who grew up meeting many of the boxing people while tagging along with his father. The son, who is now in his 70s, performed some impressive research digging into library vaults and archives to investigate the boxing past of his father.

How popular was Colima Sr. as a fighter?

Colima sold out arenas on his name alone and not only in Los Angeles, but in Tucson, Oakland and Mexico City.

Though few people remain who actually saw Colima fight, I did track down one many who saw the Whittier boxer ply his trade.

"He was a fancy Dan," said Leonard Castillon, 95, who saw him fight while a youngster at the Hollywood Legion. "Lots of people liked to see him fight. Lots of movie stars liked him."

Colima drew crowds wherever he fought and not simply for is abundant skill, but also because he was one of the most beloved boxers in the Los Angeles area. Even after he fought people remembered Colima fondly.

Another fact few know about Colima was that it was not his actual name. His real name was Epifanio Romero. A relative of his is named Ralph Romero and is the founder of the very popular and important amateur tournaments called the Desert Showdown that's held annually in Coachella.

Boxing runs deep in the Romero family.

Recently Colima Jr. was awarded Historian of the Year by the WBC Legends of Boxing Museum.

The paperback book is priced at $14.06 and can be purchased at:
www.Amazon.com

Toy Tiger (DVD)

Outside of the Southwest few ever saw Art Hafey also known as "Toy Tiger." Its not because he fought primarily in California but also because the Irish-Scottish fighter was actually Canadian.

Brad Little's documentary was voted Best Documentary of the San Diego Indiefest and it's one of those nuggets you don't often find especially in sports. Once you slip the DVD in and play it you won't want to stop it for anything.

Hafey was a pint-sized featherweight with a middleweight punch who fought in the featherweight wars of California when other pocket destroyers roamed the landscape like Ruben Olivares, Bobby Chacon and Danny "Little Red" Lopez were tearing up the less talented pugilists.

The film has wonderful clips of some of those fights and the knockouts recorded were spectacular jump out of your seat variety.

Though very, very talented, Hafey is another one of those captivating prizefighters who never got a shot at being a world champion. Footage of the fighter shows him recently as he discusses his plight as a former prizefighter and his honest approach to life.

Overall the documentary is wonderfully made and extremely accurate on the California fight scene. There are several fights recorded of the muscular Hafey who was built for power. If you like watching knockouts then you'll love the examples of what one man's punch can do when gifted like the Toy Tiger.

The film runs about 70 minutes and cost $19.95. To purchase a copy go to: www.toytigermovie.com

I've seen it three times and loved it each viewing.

The Last Boxing Fan

As you read Pedro Reyna's book you get the idea that it began as a complaint about something that just got under his skin so he began to write a little something on it. Little by little it got longer and longer. Until the moment came when he decided to that it could be a book. And here we are.

It's very well organized and pieces together all of his gripes about the sport and how he feels the true era of boxing happened a couple of decades ago. One thing that does come across is he has a definite love for the sport. Reyna has an obsession for pro boxing and who can blame him.

His Northern California family all has a great love for boxing and Reyna is not ashamed to talk about it. Like many boxing fans sometimes spouses wonder who comes first? The sport and the wife? Or maybe the husband in the case of women?

It's a good read and boxing fans will find they agree with most everything. They should. It's written by a real boxing fan.

The price is $14.95 for the paperback and it's available by going to: www.amazon.com

Happy holidays and Merry Christm

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