

Smogtown: The Lung-Burning History of Pollution in Los Angeles

By Chip Jacobs, William J. Kelly

Named one of 2009's best environmental books by Booklist magazine; awarded co-silver medal for best non-fiction work at The Green Book Festival, co-silver medal for best environmental/ecology work at the Independent Book Publishers (IPPY) Awards and winner of the Green Prize for Sustainable Literature from Santa Monica.

The smog beast wafted into downtown Los Angeles on July 26, 1943. Nobody knew what it was. Secretaries rubbed their eyes. Traffic cops seemed to disappear in the mysterious haze. Were Japanese saboteurs responsible? A reckless factory? The truth was much worse--it came from within, from Southern California's burgeoning car-addicted, suburban lifestyle.

Smogtown is the story of pollution, progress, and how an optimistic people confronted the epic struggle against airborne poisons barraging their hometowns. With wit, verve, and a fresh look at history, California based journalists Chip Jacobs and William J. Kelly highlight the bold personalities involved, the corporate-tainted science, the terrifying health costs, the attempts at cleanup, and how the smog battle helped mold the modern-day culture of Los Angeles. There are scofflaws aplenty and dirty deals, plus murders, suicides, spiritual despair, and an ever-present paranoia about mass disaster.

Brimming with historic photographs, forgotten anecdotes, and new revelations about our environmentally precarious present, Smogtown is a journalistic classic for the modern age.

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