

# Beach Reading

## Louis Armstrong's life story is as inspiring as his music

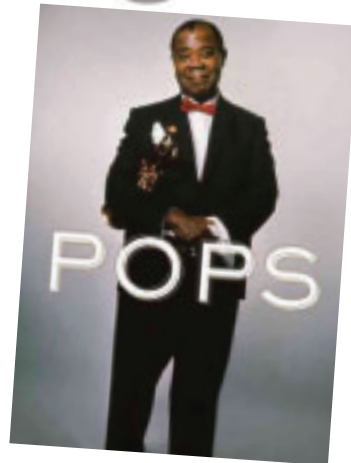
To say that Louis Armstrong had an impact on American music is a little like stating that Picasso dabbled in art.

Armstrong, one of the greatest musicians ever, was born in New Orleans just before the turn of the last century. He learned to play the cornet in an orphan's home. He left the Crescent City during the early 1920s and settled in Chicago, where he joined King Oliver's band. It was his inventiveness that set him apart, and eventually established him as an international star.

In a highly readable new biography, author and Wall

Street Journal drama critic Terry Teachout draws on a cache of important new sources — unavailable to previous biographers — to bring Armstrong, the man behind the legend, into sharp focus, perhaps for the first time.

What gives this biography legs is its almost sweeping narrative that squarely places both Armstrong and his music in context. Some of the more fascinating aspects of this book detail how he came close to being rubbed out by the Chicago mob, the real reason why he broke ranks with President Dwight Eisenhower, and the facts behind his marijuana



**"Pops: A Life of Louis Armstrong" by Terry Teachout (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$30) Reviewed by Larry Cox**

arrest in 1930. Teachout also manages to delicately sort out Armstrong's complicated private life.

This is a first-rate biography, and fitting because Armstrong deserves nothing less. Like his music, Armstrong's life story is inspiring and an absolute joy. (c) 2010 King Features Synd., Inc.



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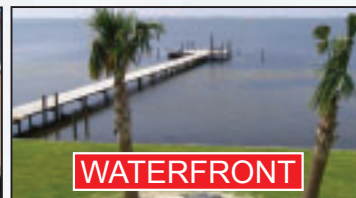
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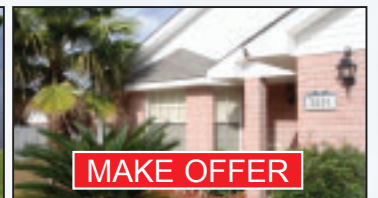
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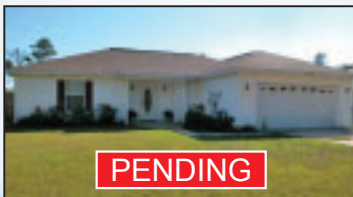
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