

Sampling latest book selections

YOU SIMPLY can't beat books when it comes to gift giving. They're affordable, easy-to-find (bookstores are everywhere these days) — they're even a snap to wrap.

But best of all, the right book for that special friend or relative can bring pleasure and joy not just on Christmas or Hanukkah but for a lifetime. What more can you ask?

Finding the just-right book, though, is very important in all this. Not to worry, however.

This season, the search will only add to the fun, since there's no shortage of real winners for everybody on your list.

Here's a sampling of the best of the best and some of the hottest of the hot sellers as the 1991 season approaches:

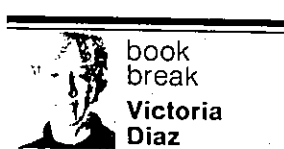
• **"PrairieEarth,"** William Least Heat-Moon (Houghton-Mifflin, \$24.95). A book like no other, this is part travel journal, part history, part philosophy, part nature study, part friendly conversation. Heat-Moon of "Blue Highways" tracks on foot across Chase County, Kan., approximately the geographical center of the contiguous United States, taking notes and sharing some fascinating, nitty-gritty observations about America, past and present. He writes about everything from a heartland ranch run mostly by women, to the sad fate of the Kansas Indians to the lifestyles of pack rats.

• **"Deadline: Our Times and the New York Times,"** James Reston (Random, \$25). Former reporter, executive editor and columnist Reston remembers his half-century with one of the world's great newspapers. "Deadline" offers a veteran journalist's up-close look at 10 presidents, other historical figures and various Times personalities, plus a peek at what goes on behind the scenes at the Times.

• **"Riverhead: Tales From the Assembly Line,"** Ben Hamper (Warner, \$19.95). Flint native Hamper paints an arresting picture of his life on the line during the '70s and '80s, tinged as it was with alcohol, drugs, boredom, anger and gallows humor. Though his job was tedious, his written accounts of it most definitely are not. His source of experience: a General Motors plant in Flint. Now living in Fenton, he's left the line behind.

• **"St. Maybe,"** Anne Tyler (Knopf, \$22). Nobody writes of the slightly eccentric, family-next-door like Tyler. Early on in this bestselling novel, a young man commits suicide, leaving his younger brother to wonder if a "secret" he divulged motivated his brother's death. In spite of its serious subject, this is a story radiant with hope.

• **"Needful Things,"** Stephen King (Viking, \$24.95). According to Publishers Weekly, this latest work by the horror master "ranks with King's best." Leland Gaunt opens up a new store in town, soon the folks in Castle



Rock, Maine is town familiar to all King fans is lining up for the "Burgains" he offers.

• **"Maximum Bob,"** Elmore Leonard (Delacorte, \$20). Another "Dutch" treat, Leonard's latest crime caper is set in and around Palm Beach County. Maximum Bob is the nickname of Bob Isom Gibbs, the original throb, the book judge and the embodiment of the old maxim, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Hungry alligators, psychics and Leonard's snappy dialogue spark the action. Sunny Florida at its darkest.

OTHER GOOD bets to round out your gift list: Tom Clancy's blockbuster, "The Sum of All Fears" (Putnam, \$24.95); Amy Tan's new best seller, "The Kitchen God's Wife" (Putnam, \$22.95); Robert Dallek's LBJ biography, "Lone Star Rising" (Oxford University, \$30); Katharine Hepburn's "Me" (Knopf, \$25); Rosamond Bernier's lusciously illustrated "Matisse, Picasso, Miro: As I Knew Them" (Knopf, \$50).

And, of course, need I mention Alexandra Ripley's "Scarlett" (Warner, \$25), the much-heralded sequel to Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind." Food for thought: Some readers on your list might prefer "Southern Daughter: The Life of Margaret Mitchell" by Darden Ashby Paxon (Oxford University, \$29.95).

Don't forget that great gifts often come in paperback.

Among the choices this year are the acclaimed nautical-adventure tale, "Desolation Island" by Patrick O'Brien (Norton, \$9.95); "Writers on Writing: A Bread Loaf Anthology," edited by Robert Pack and Jay Parini (Middlebury University Press of New England, \$14.95); "Ticket to Latvia: A Journey from Berlin to the Baltic," by Marcus Tanner (Holt/Owl, \$10.95); and "New Mysteries of Paris," by Harry Gifford (Clark City Press, \$11.95), offbeat short stories brought to life by offbeat characters.

Victoria Diaz of Livonia tracks the books industry

Seasonal insights

Holiday tidbits collected by Copley News Service

According to American Greetings, boxed card sets reflect the taste of the sender whereas individually purchased cards are chosen with the recipient in mind.

Thursday, November 28, 1991

GIFT GUIDE I

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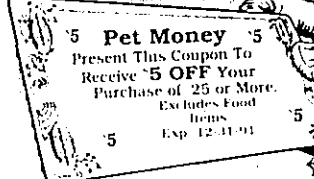
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