

Book Reviews

Well-chosen books make fine Christmas gifts

There aren't many shopping days left. But, as Mr. Micawber would say, nil desperandum - never despair.

The one gift that is always acceptable, and nearly always easy to find, is a well chosen new book.

Here are observations on some recently published books that might strike the right chord with the people whose names remain on your list.

-Masterpieces of Canadian Art from the National Gallery of Canada, by David Burnett (Hurtig; 230 pages; \$49.95). Covering 200 years, this is an outstanding compilation of 113 full-color illustrations of works by some 90 artists, drawn from the much larger collection of Canadian works on display at the two-year-old gallery in Ottawa. The wealth of choice must have made Burnett's task difficult, but he explains his decisions in a brief essay on each artist.

-The Kingdom: Wildlife in North America (Douglas and McIntyre; 204 page; \$49.50). With more than 100 color photographs by Art Wolfe, and insightful narrative by Douglas Chadwick, this large-format volume constitutes a remarkable look at the animals we share this continent with - and rarely see.

-Portraits of the Rainforest, by Adrian Forsyth (Firefly Books; 155 pages; \$29.95). Dr. Forsyth, a biologist on the faculty of Queen's University in Kingston, writes passionately about the im-

portance and the ecological richness of the rainforests he has explored and studied in Costa Rica. Michael and Patricia Fogden's many color photographs add an extra measure of immediacy.

-Book of North American Birds, edited by James Cassidy and others (Reader's Digest Association of Canada; 576 pages; \$39.95). Produced with the care and attention to detail that is characteristic of this publisher, this handsome volume is an introduction to almost 600 winged creatures, with meticulously crafted paintings by a variety of wildlife artists and commentaries by noted nature writers.

The species are grouped by size, habitat and lifestyle, with one section focusing on rarities such as the arctic tern and the spruce grouse. A final section is a traveller's guide to the best birding sites throughout North America, arranged by province and state.

-Totem Poles, by Hilary Stewart (Douglas and McIntyre; 192 pages; \$29.95). Travellers to coastal British Columbia and Alaska are inevitably drawn to the numerous totem poles, each carved from a tall cedar, and each depicting a legend of the local native culture. The author explains, in popular terms, the meaning and purpose of the poles, illustrating her explanation with drawings and photographs of notable totem



Vince Egan

poles and the houses sometimes associated with them. Barbara Hodgson's design gives the book an exceptionally clean, clear appearance.

-Magnetic North, by David Halsey with Diane Landau (Douglas and McIntyre; 252 pages; \$24.95). At age 20, Halsey won the backing of the National Geographic Society for an unprecedented trek by foot, dogsled and canoe across a wilderness route from Vancouver to Tadoussac at the mouth of Quebec's Saguenay River. His quixotic expedition lasted from 1977 to 1979 and, as his gripping narrative shows, was fraught with bitter disappointments and extreme danger. Halsey died in 1983, an apparent suicide.

-My Father's Business: A Biography of G. Emmett Cardinal Carter, by Michael Higgins and Douglas Letson (Macmillan of Canada; 272 pages; \$29.95). A

well rounded and highly readable account of the first 78 years in the life of the recently retired archbishop of Toronto, from his working-class beginnings in Montreal to his eminence as a top churchman.

-The Mennonites: A Pictorial History of Their Lives in Canada, by Andreas Schroeder (Douglas and McIntyre; 181 pages; \$34.95). Canada is home to nearly one million Mennonites, a religious sect that was launched in Switzerland in 1527 and that takes its name from its early leader, Menno Simon (1496-1561). Yet most Canadians, perhaps, associate the Mennonites only with the Old Order members in their distinctive black clothing, glimpsed at farmers' markets or in horse-drawn buggies on back roads. Schroeder, a Vancouver-area author, has written an easily readable history of his co-religionists who make their home in Canada, fully illustrated with 150 black-and-white photographs, both historical and contemporary.

-Around the World in 80 Days, by Jules Verne (Sterling; 222 pages; \$34.95). Verne wrote his "imaginary journey" in 1872, and each succeeding generation has been intrigued by the travel adventures of British aristocrat Phileas Fogg and his French valet, Passepartout, as they circumnavigate the globe, west to east, in the incredibly short period of 80 days - to win a wager.

The publishers of this attractive new edition of the classic have captured the feel of the High Victorian age of travel with 19th-

century typeface and layout, and with more than 200 paintings, drawings, photographs and engravings from the period in which the story is set. A treat for anyone who enjoys travel, even the armchair variety.

-The Saturday Night Traveller, by George Galt (Harper Collins; 211 pages; \$16.95). A collection of 20 interesting, unusual and highly literate travel essays that have been published in Saturday Night within the past two years. Two of the 20 essays (one on Bordeaux, one on Corsica) are by Galt himself. He is an associate editor of the magazine.

-Historical Atlas of Canada, Volume III, edited by Donald Kerr and Deryck Holdsworth (University of Toronto Press; 196 pages; \$95). Subtitled Addressing the Twentieth Century, this extraordinary combination of Canadian history and geography covers the period from 1891 to 1961 in two parts, with 1929 as the dividing line. It contains the contributions of more than 50 scholars and was designed by cartographer Geoffrey J. Matthews.

-Greatest Hockey Stories, by Dick Beddoes (Macmillan of Canada; 194 pages; \$24.95). At 64, sports writer Beddoes has acquired an abundance of anecdotes about "the world's fastest game" and its people, and here he relates scores of them in his distinctive style.

Vincent Egan is a Toronto-based travel columnist and book reviewer.

-Thomson News Service.

Computers

Affordable computer gifts

Not too many of us can afford a new computer this year, but there are affordable gifts you might consider for the computer buffs on your Christmas list. Here's a few ideas:

First of all, how about a magazine subscription? Most book stores carry a few magazines dedicated to computer enthusiasts. For a greater selection, try the World's Biggest Bookstore or Lichtman's, in Toronto; they both have outstanding selections of computer magazines. In choosing a magazine, it will help if you know what kind of computer your friend has. For instance, users of IBM or IBM-compatible systems would find PC Magazine or PC World useful. Owners of Apple Macintosh's might enjoy MacWorld. Other computer systems have dedicated magazines as well; ask for assistance at the book store. There's also general interest computer magazines - like Byte for a fairly technical reader, or Computing Now for those with lighter interest.

Computer books are another good bet, although sometimes it's hard to choose one for another person. But if you know someone has just bought a copy of WordPerfect, for instance, you might buy a book on getting the most out of WordPerfect. There are also a number of introductory



Scott Williams
COMPUTER
CHIPS

books that give a good overview of computer systems, that would probably most interest a novice. The World's Biggest Bookstore has one of the best selections of computer books in the area.

If you don't think books or magazines are your thing, you might try one of a number of computer accessories. If you have enough to spend - up to say \$100 - you might think of a Mouse. Just make sure to buy one that says it is compatible with a Microsoft Mouse, and you'll be fine. If \$10 is more your style, consider a mouse pad (if your friend has a mouse already). These come in all sorts of different colours and styles, so you can choose one to match the recipient's personality.

Blank diskettes may not be an

exciting gift, but they're always welcomed by any computer hobbyist I've ever known. The best buys in diskettes are not in computer stores though; the best deals are at stores like Bi-Way or Towers. At these stores, a box of 10 5 1/4" diskettes will cost you only five or six dollars, and the quality is just fine (that tends to be where I buy mine!).

If you're purchasing for someone that uses a computer at home, a computer game might be in order. It's sometimes tough to choose from the descriptions on the box, so ask the staff in the store if anyone has played it, or if you can see the game running. Some computer games can be played by more than one person at once - so keep that in mind too when you make your selection. I've found that the best selection of games is in stores like Radio Shack or Compucentre - stores that cater more to the home audience rather than to businesses.

And if all else fails - if none of the above appeal to you - there's always a gift certificate. Get one from a reputable computer store, and let your friend or loved one make the choice themselves. A gift certificate is always appreciated, and you'll be sure that the purchase will be something the recipient really wants!

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Refuse normally picked up on Christmas Day, Tuesday, December 25, 1990 will be picked up on **MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1990**. Refuse normally collected on Boxing Day, Wednesday, December 26, 1990 will be collected on **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1990**. Thursday's normal route will remain the same.
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