

Books big favorite for holiday gifts

By The Associated Press

Books don't require batteries or modems, and they don't torment the reader with pop-up ads. If you give one this holiday season, you're really giving hours of quiet pleasure:

For young readers:
 ■ "Swan Lake" (North-South Books, hardcover) is Pyotr I. Tchaikovsky's musical ballet tale beautifully retold and illustrated in print by Lisbeth Zwerger. The pictures have a dream-like quality, and the Swan Queen is shown in her finery — with the subtle touch of plumage at her skirts.

■ Another romantic classic, "Sleeping Beauty" (SeaStar Books, hardcover), is freshly retold with richly complex illustrations by Kinuko Y. Craft. The illustrator's husband, Mahlon F. Craft, wrote the new text.

■ A famed Russian folktale is retold and illustrated by Gennady Spirin in "The Tale of the Firebird" (Philomel Books, hardcover). The story, translated by Tatiana Popova, has new art that draws on the tradition of oriental book illustration, with lavish framing and decoration.

■ Once again, here comes Toad (possibly the world's earliest cartoon character) and his companions in a new edition of Kenneth Grahame's "The Wind in the Willows" (SeaStar Books, hardcover). Youngsters will relate to the rollicking tales of the irresponsible, irresponsible master of Toad Hall, who gets in and out of predicaments with the help of his loyal but exasperated friends — the Mole, the Rat, the Otter, the Badger, and others living around the River. The new illustrations are by Mary Jane Bejin.



Record-Eagle/Elizabeth Conley

Above, history is always a popular subject for holiday gift books; right, lavish new editions of old stories around this year, like "Swan Lake."

■ The latest installment about that intrepid dumptruck is here. "Dumpy and the Big Storm" (Hyperion), by Julie Andrews Edwards and Emma Walton Hamilton with illustrations by Tony Walton, tells how cooperation saves the day in a crisis.

■ "Stories from the Bible" (North-South Books, hardcover), illustrated by Lisbeth Zwerger, presents excerpts from six texts each from the Old and New Testaments. In the pictures, the characters are shown in relatively modern dress.

■ Jerry Pinkney's illustrations for "Noah's Ark" (SeaStar Books, hardcover), on the other hand, take the reader back to the time of the

original Bible story. Plants and animals are strongly represented, and readers will be fascinated by the one depicting the Ark under construction.

■ Kids interested in natural phenomena will enjoy "When the Giant Stirred" (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, hardcover), written and illustrated by Celia Godkin. This is the story of the evolution of a volcano on a Pacific island and how its eruption affected the lives of the islanders.

Books for grownups:

■ "Cowboy" (Reader's Digest Books, hardcover), by Holly George-Warren, explains that America's most enduringly heroic figure fought it out and shot it out main-



ly on the sound stages of Hollywood. Though the genre probably got its start with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and dime novels of a century ago, the cowboy legend began getting serious support from the likes of Tom Mix, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and Rex Allen of the film era into television, where Marshall Matt Dillon and the Cartwrights held forth. (This also will explain to young baseball fans the identity of that cowboy whose picture was displayed at Edison Field during the recent World Series.)

■ The historic view is taken in Page Stegner's "Winning the Wild West" (The Free Press, hardcover). Tracing the story of the American West through the 19th century, the

author recounts the epic struggle to conquer the vast territory — the surveys of Lewis and Clark, the trappers and fur traders, the pioneers trying to lay down roots, clashes with American Indians, the Gold Rush, the cattle business, and ultimate success and prosperity. Larry McMurtry offers the foreword.

■ "A Century of Triumph" (The Free Press, hardcover), by Christopher Chant, tells the story of aviation, now on the eve of its centennial. With photographs and detailed drawings by John Batchelor, the author shows how commerce, war and life changed when humans routinely took to the skies.

■ Aviation buffs also will want to check out "Flight: 100 Years of

Aviation" (DK Publishing, hardcover), produced with the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum.

■ In "Rabbis: The Many Faces of Judaism" (Universe-Rizzoli, hardcover) photographer George Kalinsky's portraits cover rabbis all over the world and across the ideological spectrum. There are 100 portraits in all, along with essays by each rabbi. The introduction is by Sen. Joseph Lieberman and the foreword by Kirk Douglas.

From big bikes to big baubles: coffee-table tomes make splash at bookstores

By JEFFREY A. TRACHTENBERG
The Wall Street Journal

This may be asking a lot of motorcycle buffs. As the holiday season approaches, AOL Time Warner Inc.'s Bulfinch Press is printing 275,000 copies of "100 Years of Harley-Davidson," a big illustrated book priced at \$65. It's a risky bet in the rarefied world of coffee-table books — and one made riskier still by the arrival of another big book about Harley-Davidson, set to hit stores in time for Christmas.

"In some ways the numbers defy all logic, but we are confident this book will sell through next year," said Jill Cohen, publisher of Bulfinch, a fine-arts publisher best known for its Ansel Adams photography books.

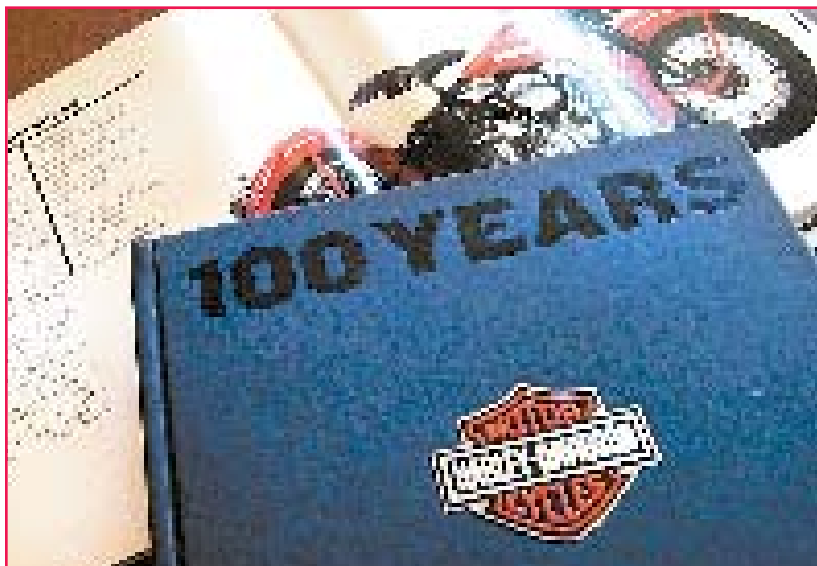
Bulfinch is joining a large number of publishers intent on making a splash this holiday season with coffee-table books — a publishing genre thought to be well past its prime. In addition to the three Harley-Davidson tomes, other high-profile entries include a look at Elizabeth Taylor's jewels from Simon & Schuster, and a TV Guide retrospective from Crown Publishers.

The mainstay subjects of these big, lavishly illustrated books — art, gardens, estates, travel destinations — are mostly played out. And buyers are price-sensitive. In the Internet era, a coffee-table book simply doesn't seem as comprehensive and necessary as it once did.

Taking their place in the market are big books about pop culture and Americana, many aimed at tugging baby boomers' heartstrings.

"A lot of what is selling today is nostalgia," said J. Alan Kahn, president of Barnes & Noble Publishing Group. "Everybody loses sight of the fact that the baby-boom generation, people in their 50s, is still driving what's going on. Now they're hitting the age when they are looking back, and it has nothing to do with Picasso."

To attract book buyers willing to spend \$50 or more, publishers are pruning their lists and embracing tie-ins. But even that strategy may



not work.

Hyperion printed 726,000 copies of Peter Jennings' "In Search of America," hoping to ride the success of his earlier illustrated book, "The Century." The new book was published in early September to coincide with a TV program by the same name broadcast on Disney's ABC network. The series aired for five nights starting Sept. 3, reaching on average 5.3 million viewers each night, according to VNU Inc.'s Nielsen Media Research — a potential book-buying audience most authors can only dream about.

Hyperion didn't expect so many books related to Sept. 11 to win so much attention. As a result, sales of "In Search of America" had a slow start. The company increased its discount to booksellers, so that the title can now be found for as little \$29.95.

Publishers are launching many of these books this year because they can be highly profitable. Two years ago, Chronicle Books published "The Beatles Anthology," priced at \$60. The San Francisco company says it has sold a million copies in the U.S., and another million overseas. For Christmas, Chronicle is publishing 400,000 paperback copies of the anthology, selling for \$35 each.

Other publishers are focusing on works that will grab media attention and that tend to recall brighter times. Simon & Schuster recently published a tome on the last old-

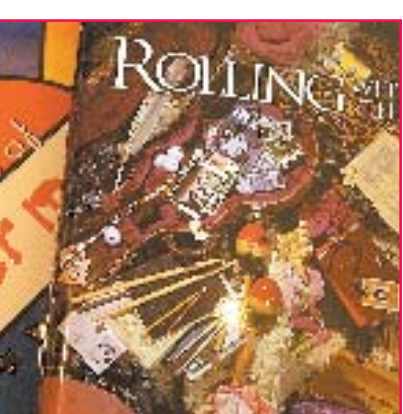
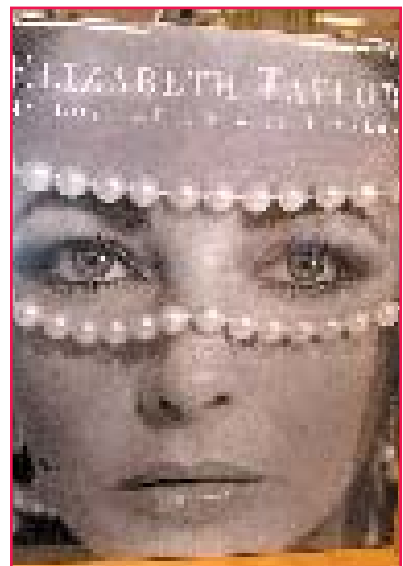
style movie star: "Elizabeth Taylor: My Love Affair With Jewelry." Her editors figure that Hollywood royalty Taylor and her fabled jewelry collection is the ideal subject for a coffee-table book. New full-page shots of the gems are mixed with snapshots of Liz sporting the baubles, along with reminiscences about acquiring them by Taylor.

"She was 12-feet tall in the dark onscreen when you were a kid — something you can't say about TV stars," said David Rosenthal, Simon & Schuster publisher.

Publishers say sales of large-format 9/11 books have slowed but they expect retailers will keep carrying some titles that sold well. One title is "Above Hallowed Ground: A Photographic Record of September 11, 2001."

Few publishers have more riding on the coming holiday season than Bulfinch, which is backing its motorcycle book with a \$500,000 marketing campaign. One plus: Harley-Davidson Inc. has agreed to buy 50,000 copies of the book.

Bulfinch's "100 Years of Harley-Davidson" is written by Willie G. Davidson, a motor cycle designer



and grandson of one of the company's founders. The author recently visited Macy's Herald Square store to promote his book and drew a line of fans, mostly men in their 40s or older.

The book faces competition from Motorbooks International, which has shipped 90,000 copies of its \$29.95 picture book, "Harley-Davidson 100 Years: Celebration of a Legend." The same publisher also issued 25,000 copies of a holiday Harley book, "The Harley-Davidson Century," priced at \$50 and backed by a \$75,000 promotion budget.

Robert Wietrak, vice president, merchandising for Barnes & Noble, thinks both Harley-Davidson holiday books will sell and both will be displayed on the retailer's Christmas gift table. "The true Harley-Davidson fan," he said, "wants everything."

Record-Eagle/Elizabeth Conley
From left, baby boomer nostalgia is a hot topic for coffee table books, ranging from Harleys, to Liz Taylor to the 60s.

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