

Shore things

We pick the best books of the summer

By MICHAEL GILTZ

Glittery romances, literary fiction, tearful confessionals and edge-of-your-seat thrillers — they all have their place on summer reading lists.

But with so many new books on the warm-weather horizon, how can you know which shore thing will be right for you?

Worry not. We've compiled a guide to the finest choices in every genre.

ROMANCE

Sexy potboilers aren't written only by women anymore. E. Lynn Harris gives the girls a run for their money with July's "Any Way the Wind Blows" (Doubleday, \$24.95), another in his entertaining series centered on lady- and man-killer John Basil Henderson.

And Jude Deveraux's romance "The Summerhouse" (Pocket, \$24.95) should shape up to be her 27th bestseller.

But the two premiere picks in this category are "Hollywood Wives — The New Generation" (Simon & Schuster, \$26), Jackie Collins' sequel to her scandalous bestseller, and Danielle Steel's "Leap of Faith" (Delacorte, \$19.95), out in June.

SPORTS

This summer's got a strong sports lineup. June's "The Wildest Ride" (Simon & Schuster, \$24) is Joe Menzer's inside look at how a bunch of good ol' boys turned NASCAR into



"Natasha: The Biography of Natalie Wood" (inset) features classic photos of the tragic star.

big business; and August's "Venus Envy" (Harper-Collins, \$25) is L. Jon Wertheim's expose of a year on the women's tennis circuit.

But the kicker has to be Terry Bradshaw's memoir, "It's Only a Game" (Pocket, \$24.95), out in August. It has the hammy Fox host of "NFL Sunday" dishing stories about his life as a country and gospel singer, talk-show host, inspirational speaker and, of course, Super Bowl-winning quarterback.

WAR AND HISTORY

War and the American

century continue to fascinate. NBC anchor Tom Brokaw has the book on the latter, "An Album of Memories" (Random House, \$29.95).

Dan Rather's slightly staid "The American Dream" (William Morrow, \$25) takes a snapshot of ordinary Americans today.

Meanwhile, best-selling historian Stephen Ambrose's book for younger readers — "The Good Fight" (Atheneum, \$19.95) — tells the story of World War II in easy-to-swallow two-page chronicles of key battles.

David McCullough, who triumphed with "Truman,"

has now turned his sharp biographical talents to "John Adams" (Simon & Schuster, \$35), due out next month.

Our pick for a sleeper success is "War Letters" (Scribner, \$28), Andrew Carroll's compulsively readable collection of missives written by the famous and the unknown during conflicts ranging from the Civil War to Desert Storm.

MYSTERIES, THRILLERS

This summer's whodunit highlights include Faye Kellerman's "The Forgotten" (William Morrow, \$25), out in August; James Lee Burke's crime-solving lawyer, Billy Bob Holland, in the July release of "Bitterroot" (Simon & Schuster, \$26); and Margaret Truman's "Murder in Havana" (Random House, \$24.95), also due in July.

Dominick Dunne's "Justice" (Crown, \$24) is a compilation of his reporting on the trials of Claus von Bulow, O.J., the Menendez brothers and — most memorably — the killer of his own daughter.

Also fiddling with the scales of justice is John Saul, with July's "The Manhattan Hunt Club" (Ballantine, \$25.95), and Robert K. Tanenbaum, with "Enemy Within" (Pocket, \$24.95), in August.

And the two sisters writing under the *nom de plume* Peri O'Shaughnessy can expect their latest novel,



David McCullough (left) looks back with "John Adams," as does NFL star Terry Bradshaw (right) in his memoir, "It's Only a Game."

"Writ of Execution" (Delacorte, \$24.95) — starring legal eagle Nina Reilly — to slay.

HISTORICAL FICTION

Jeff Shesara's **"Rise to Rebellion"** (Ballantine, \$26.95) charts the American Revolution through the eyes of its major figures.

Bernard Cornwell's **"Sharpe's Trafalgar"** (HarperCollins, \$25) is the latest adventure of rough-and-tumble soldier Richard Sharpe to hit the U.S. A smash hit everywhere else in the world, it's perfect for Patrick O'Brian fans.

MEMOIRS

Rick Bragg's **"Ava's Man"** (\$25, Knopf), due in August, tells of his mother's childhood during the Great Depression. And Andrew Solomon plunges into his personal trials with depression in **"The Noonday Demon"** (Scribner, \$28), which has already garnered numerous articles and great reviews in Great Britain.

Albert DeMeo's father was a ruthless member of the Gambino family. In June's **"For the Sins of My Father"** (Broadway, \$24.95), DeMeo describes his life on Long Island as the son of a mob dad.

Ninety-one-year-old Susan Travers remains the only woman to ever have served in the French Foreign Legion. Her robust memoir — **"Tomorrow to Be Brave"** (Free Press, \$25) — debuts in June.

But perhaps the oddest memoir is Joanna Burger's **"The Parrot Who Owns Me"** (Villard, \$23.95), the story of this renowned ornithologist's friendship with a 30-year-old parrot named Tiko.

SHOWBIZ

This season, there's quite a stellar array of celeb fare. Rocker Melissa Etheridge bares her soul in **"The Truth Is ... My Life in Love and Music"** (\$24.95; Villard), which hits stores in June.

David Hadji's **"Positively 4th Street"** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$25), also out in June, chronicles the lives of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Mimi Baez and

Richard Farina as they made love and music in Greenwich Village in the '60s.

And in **"Natasha: The Biography of Natalie Wood"** (Harmony, \$25), Suzanne Finstad tackles Wood's childhood and, of course, that mysterious drowning. Finstad has tied the book into a TV movie she's executive producing for ABC next January.

But the ringer might be **"Miranda Rites"** (Cliff Street, \$25), the apparently true story of Miranda, a social worker from the South who claims to have struck up gossipy, sexy phone friendships with the likes of Robert Duvall, Quincy Jones, Sting and Warren Beatty.

HUMOR

Britain offers two would-be successors to Nick Hornby and Helen Fielding. John O'Farrell's **"The Best a Man Can Get"** (Broadway, \$19.95) recounts every parent's fantasy: a double life in which a business trip is really just an excuse to get away with your friends. And Jane Green offers up a modern romantic comedy in **"Mr. Maybe"** (Broadway, \$19.95).

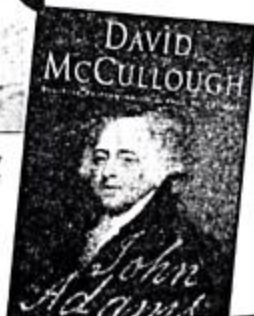
But our money is on the first collection of humor pieces by David Rakoff. A contributor to NPR's "This American Life," Rakoff covers fellow NPR alum David Sedaris' territory — searching for elves in Finland, a bid for fame by acting in a soap — with his own funny style in **"Fraud"** (Doubleday, \$21.95).

LITERARY FICTION

John Irving is proof that literary fiction doesn't have to be ponderous.

His 10th novel, **"The Fourth Hand"** (Random House, \$25.95), due out in July, is the story of a journalist who has his hand bitten off by a lion while reporting in India. A woman in Wisconsin offers her husband's left hand for the transplant operation, even though her husband's not quite done with it yet.

Other bright lights include Stephen



McCauley's with **"True Enough"** (Simon & Schuster, \$24) in June; Elizabeth McCracken's, **"Niagara Falls All Over Again"** (Dial Press, \$23.95) in August; and, from Southern storyteller Albin Gurganus, **"The Practical Heart"** (Knopf, \$25), also in stores in August.

SCI-FI, FANTASY, HORROR

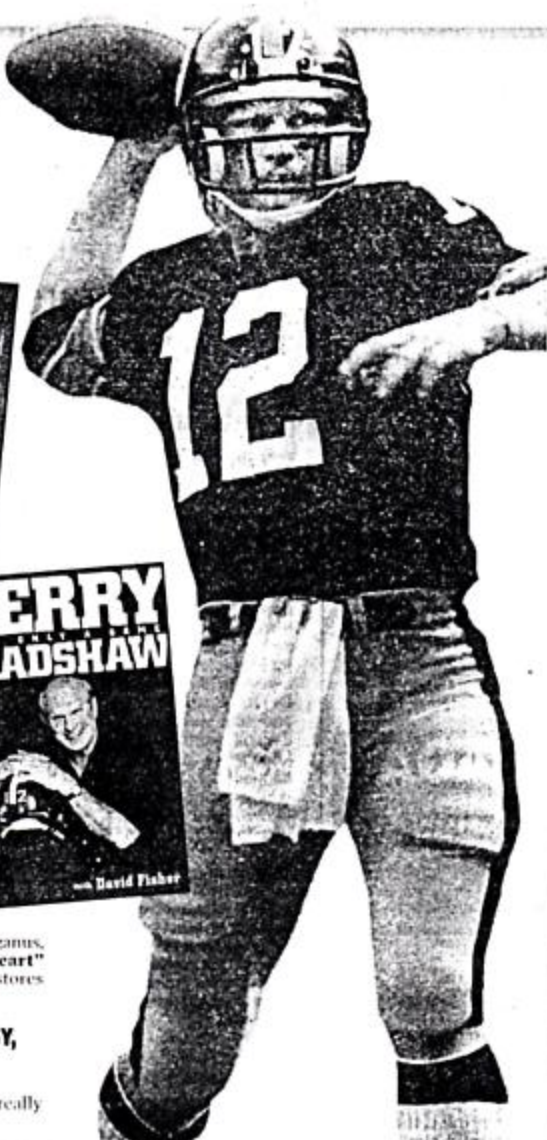
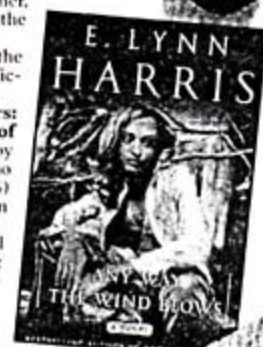
But for those who really want to get away this summer, nothing beats the other-worldly thrills of the pulpiest of fictions.

"Star Wars: Cloaks of Deception" by James Luceno (Del Rey, \$26) touches down on May 29.

The sequel to cult-classic movie "The Hunger," Whitley Strieber's **"The Last Vampire"** (Pocket, \$24.95) darkens doors in August.

And Neil Gaiman (the man behind the classic graphic novel "Sandman") enters Stephen King territory in July with **"American Gods"** (William Morrow, \$26).

But our pick for the perfect summer fantasy read is decades old. **"The Lord of the Rings"** (Houghton Mifflin, \$20) will unspool in movie theaters this December, so now is the perfect time to reread this classic tale.



E. Lynn Harris latest is the breezy "Any Way the Wind Blows"

Hardcover Bestsellers

Compiled from sales at Manhattan Barnes & Noble stores between May 13 and May 19.

FICTION

- Chosen Prey** by John Sandford (Putnam)
- Death in Holy Orders** by P.D. James (Knopf)
- Back When We Were Grownups** by Anne Tyler (Knopf)
- On the Street Where You Live** by Mary Higgins Clark (Simon & Schuster)
- The Last Time They Met** by Anita Shreve (Little, Brown)
- The Dying Animal** by Philip Roth (Houghton Mifflin)
- The Bonesetter's Daughter** by Amy Tan (Putnam)
- The Cold Six Thousand** by James Ellroy (Knopf)
- The Amazing Adventures of Cavalier and Clay** by Michael Chabon (Random House)
- 1st to Die** by James Patterson (Little, Brown)

NONFICTION

- The Prayer of Jabez** by Bruce Wilkinson (Multnomah)
- Who Moved My Cheese?** by Spencer Johnson (Putnam)
- Napalm & Silly Putty** by George Carlin (Hyperion)
- Seabiscuit** by Laura Hillenbrand (Random House)
- Comfort Me With Apples** by Ruth Reichl (Random House)
- Brand Warfare** by David F. D'Alessandro (McGraw-Hill)
- French Lessons** by Peter Mayle (Knopf)
- Nickel and Dime: Or Not Getting By in America** by Barbara Ehrenreich (Henry Holt)
- Life Makeovers** by Cheryl Richardson (Broadway Books)
- Fraud** by David Rakoff (Doubleday)