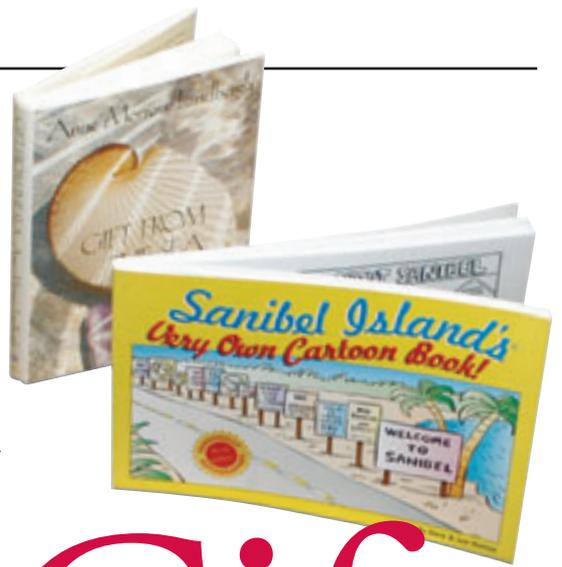
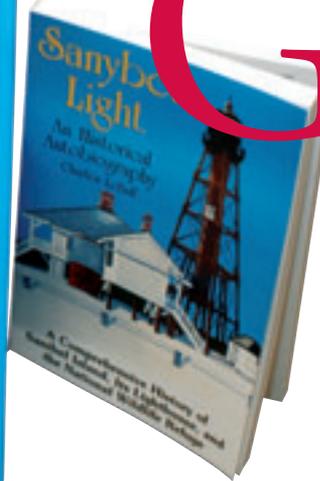
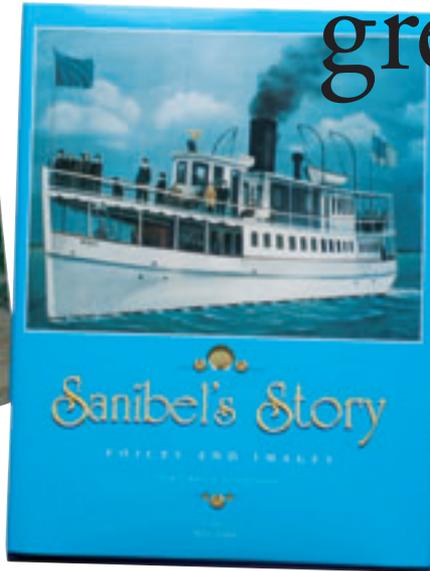


by Julie Clay

a good
Read is a
 great **Gift**



PHOTOS BY KATHLEEN BLASE

With themes ranging from history to humor, there are books about the islands to suit just about any taste.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD BOOK, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S A GIFT. IT CAN HOLD A SPECIAL PLACE IN A RECIPIENT'S HEART AS IT MAKES ITS WAY INTO HIS OR HER LIFE AND ONTO THE BOOKSHELF (OR COFFEE TABLE). WE'VE FOUND A FEW GOOD EXAMPLES, SO AS YOU GO ABOUT YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER THESE GEMS FOR THAT LASTING IMPRESSION.

The Island Life

It's no surprise that Sanibel and Captiva islands inspire many a writer to capture the island lifestyle. **The Island Book Nook** conveniently carries several titles pertaining to Southwest Florida's islands. Store owner Joan Simonds recommended several, including *The Other Side of the Bridge* by the late Ted Levering and Anne Winterbotham. Based on events that took place on Captiva in the late 1940s and early '50s, Levering uses artistic license to encapsulate them all within a year's time. James D. Newton's *Uncommon Friends* describes the friendship of part-time residents Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh, and other famous folk. A particular favorite of Simonds's is a hardcover edition of Anne Morrow Lindbergh's classic, *Gift from the Sea*, inspired by a visit to Captiva. *Sanibel's Story: Voices and Images from Calusa to Incorporation*, by island historian Betty Anholt, makes a lovely coffee table addition and is chock-full of pictures and snippets of Sanibel and Captiva history. In *Sanybel Light: An Historical Autobiography*, long-time Sanibel resident Charles LeBuff recounts his singular knowledge of the island, the lighthouse, and the national wildlife refuge. And for a humorous look, check out *Sanibel Island's Very Own Cartoon Book* by Dave and Lee Horton. 2330 Palm Ridge Road, Sanibel, 239/472-6777.

One (or Two) for the Kids

We had a sneaking suspicion that great book gift ideas could be found in places other than bookstores, and **Valhalla** proved us correct. A charming collection of hardcover children's books based on the ocean and its creatures are sure to please young ones. Illustrated in vibrant colors, they offer a delightful way to learn. Try *The Icky Bug Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta, *Sunny Numbers*, *A Florida Counting Book* by Carol Crane, *Hello Ocean* by Pam Munoz Ryan, or *Sally Goes to the Beach* by Stephen Huneck. Kids and kids at heart will enjoy the seaside presentation of the alphabet and numbers. Even famous people get in on the educational fun; Valhalla also carries actor John Lithgow's *I'm a Manatee*. Illustrated by Ard Hoyt, it comes with a CD and score to accompany the tale of a boy who dreams he is a manatee. 2075 Periwinkle Place, #21, Sanibel, 239/472-2795



Kind Thoughts

Sandra Magsamen is a critically acclaimed artist whose Maryland-based company, Table Tiles, Inc., expanded into a multimillion-dollar gift business in less than five years. She's also authored a touching collection of books called Gestures of Kindness, which can be found at **Island Style**. *Thank You for Planting Knowledge* is an ode to teachers from students. Thoughts on marriage are contained within *And They Lived Happily Ever After*. Various family members get tributes as well, from *Grandmother is Another Word for Love*, to *Dear Mom, Thank You with All My Heart*, and *Sisters Understand Each Other Because They Share the Same Roots*. These small hardcover books are beautifully illustrated, and the black-and-white striped spines are easily identifiable. 2075 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, 239/472-6657, www.islandstylegallery.com.