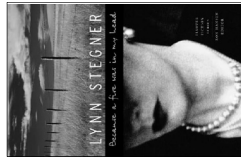


May 2007 Notables

BOOK SENSE

F I C T I O N



BECAUSE A FIRE WAS IN MY HEAD, by Lynn Stegner (University of Nebraska, \$24.95, 9780803211391/0803211392)

"What a melancholy tune plays throughout Kate Riley's life! Stegner's novel is both interesting and disturbing as it shows the effects of Riley's decisions on her future—as each ray of hope is somehow extinguished as a consequence of her actions."—Pam White, Skyland Books, West Jefferson, NC



BLUEBIRD, OR THE INVENTION OF HAPPINESS, by Sheila Kohler (Other, \$24.95, 9781590512623/1590512626)

"This is a touching and inspirational novel based on the true story of a French noblewoman who saved her family from the terror following the French Revolution. Flowing fluently from Versailles to a farm in the Hudson River Valley, the heroine never loses her charm or her love of life."—Amanda Thoms, Reading & Rhythm, Bad Axe, MI



BOOMSDAY, by Christopher Buckley (Twelve, \$24.99, 9780446579810/0446579815) "Buckley's novel of how a 'modest proposal' regarding how Boomers might voluntarily 'transition' out of society is the funniest book that I've read in a long, long time!"—Mary Cowen, Anderson's Bookshop, Naperville, IL



THE ENTITLED: A Tale of Modern Baseball, by Frank Deford (Sourcebooks Landmark, \$24.95, 9781402208966/1402208960)

"Reading this story of a grizzled manager and his relationships with his star player, his family, and baseball itself you will feel that you have spent a year with the team. Deford has hit a home run with this great summer read."—Mary McHale, Fox Tale Books, New Durham, NH



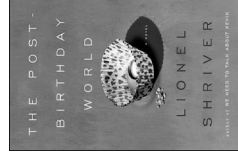
ONE BIG DAMN PUZZLER, by John Harding (Harper Perennial, \$14.95 paper, 9780061132186/0061132187)

"Take one copy of *The Complete Shakespeare*, add one wise and comical patois-speaking sorcerer, a misguided American lawyer with OCD, and a hallucinogenic drug that allows islanders to communicate with departed loved ones. You'll have the beginnings of *One Big Damn Puzzle*, a story of colliding cultures that manages to poke fun while exposing serious truths about our modern culture."—Sandy Scott, The Galaxy Bookshop, Hardwick, VT

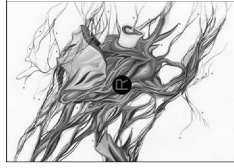


THE PENNY TREE, by Holly Kennedy (NAL, \$14 paper, 9780451220554/0451220552)

"Kennedy has done a wonderful job in weaving the details of single mom Annie Hillman and her family into a spellbinding tale of life. An engrossing read that you never want to end."—Marianne Diltman, Bestsellers Cafe, Medford, MA



THE POST-BIRTHDAY WORLD, by Lionel Shriver (HarperCollins, \$25.95, 9780061187841/0061187844) "In *The Post-Birthday World*, Lionel Shriver alternates chapters—what happens if Irina and Ramsey kiss after his birthday dinner, and what happens if she demurs. Years of her life—one with Ramsey and one with Lawrence, the longtime partner she may have chosen to betray—play out, each as credible as the other. Readers will hope for her happiness with both scenarios, then reverse their emotions."—Cheryl McKeon, Third Place Books, Lake Forest Park, WA



RANT: An Oral Biography of Buster Casey, by Chuck Palahniuk (Doubleday, \$24.95, 9780385517874/0385517874) "Mixing horror, generally appealing disgust, ingenuity, and a little bit of science fiction, Chuck Palahniuk creates a jaw-dropping and surprisingly thought-provoking story with *Rant*, the tale of a rabies infested chick who just might be the new Jesus."—Mike Carey, Harry W. Schwartz Bookshop, Milwaukee, WI



THE ROPE WALK, by Carrie Brown (Pantheon, \$24, 9780375424632/0375424636) "In this superb, warm, and insightful book, the author gets right into the head of 10-year-old Alice and unfolds all the sights, smells, and emotions of a young girl's formative summer, including finding a new and unlikely friend and becoming a lifeline for an elderly neighbor who is ill."—Karen M. Frank, Northshire Bookstore, Manchester Center, VT



SALMON FISHING IN THE YEMEN, by Paul Torday (Harcourt, \$24, 9780151012763/0151012768) "A book tackling a British fisheries scientist trying to fulfill a rich sheik's dream of bringing a salmon run to Yemen does not seem the most promising of narratives, but Torday manages to craft a stunning narrative of faith and self-discovery, as he treads a thin line between political awareness, satire, and out-and-out absurdist fiasco while crafting a story that excels at all three."—Drew Williams, Little Professor Book Center, Homewood, AL

May 2007 **BOOK** Notables

SENSE

FICTION (continued)



SHEER ABANDON, by Penny Vincenzi (Doubleday, \$24.95, 9780385519885/0385519885) "Penny Vincenzi's *Sheer Abandon*, a story of the intersecting lives of three women, is full of drama, a story that reads more and more quickly as you become more and more involved in the characters' lives—and you come to care more about them."—**Becky Callaway, Davis-Kidd Booksellers, Nashville, TN**

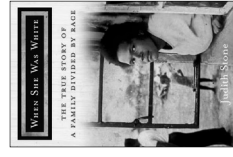


THE SUN OVER BREDÁ, by Arturo Pérez-Reverte (Putnam, \$24.95, 9780399153839/0399153837) "Arturo Pérez-Reverte perfectly encapsulates the world of 17th-century Europe in the last-gasp clutches of the Spanish Empire in this, the third novel featuring the mercenary Captain Diego Alatriste. Here, the reader is thrust into the war between Spain and Holland as patriotism and pride drive soldiers to battle and victory at any cost. A vastly entertaining, swashbuckling affair of the lost era of the Empire of Spain."—**Seth Marko, Warwick's, La Jolla, CA**



THE WEDDING OFFICER: A Novel of Culinary Seduction, by Anthony Capella (Bantam, \$22, 9780553805475/0553805479) "Set in Italy, near Mount Vesuvius, during the latter part of World War II, this sensuous novel is full of humor, compassion, and empathy for those whose lives are changed by the circumstances of conflict—the civilians, the occupying forces, black marketeers, and resistance fighters. It is both a love story and a war story and is compelling reading, right to the very last page."—**Louise Blake, The Vermont Book Shop, Middlebury, VT**

NONFICTION



WHEN SHE WAS WHITE: The True Story of a Family Divided by Race, by Judith Stone (Miramax, \$23.95, 9780786868988/0786868988) "Imagine being a child born to white parents in apartheid South Africa. Now imagine that you do not look white, but, rather, like a biracial child. That is what happened to Sandra Laing. Judith Stone writes about Laing's experiences with racial classification, having white parents, and, eventually, living as a 'Coloured' woman. Stone does a good job of letting the reader understand the harsh realities of apartheid by deftly weaving South Africa's history with Laing's."—**Tiffany Dow, A Shade of Gray Bookstore, Indianapolis, IN**



FLORENCE BROADHURST: Her Secret & Extraordinary Lives, by Helen O'Neill (Chronicle, \$24.95, 9780811859370/0811859371) "Born in remote corner of Australia in 1899, as a young woman Florence Broadhurst joined a traveling singing troupe in Asia, reinvented herself as the French Madame Pellerin in England, and, finally, became a renowned wallpaper designer in Australia. In the 1970s, she was brutally murdered, a crime that is still unsolved. This is a gorgeous book (filled with fabulous pictures of her unconventional designs) about a very mysterious woman who was ahead of her time."—**Sherri Gallentine, Vroman's Bookstore, Pasadena, CA**



SAVAGE PEACE: Hope and Fear in America, 1919, by Ann Hagedorn (Simon & Schuster, \$30, 9780743243711/0743243714) "Broadly researched and beautifully written, *Savage Peace* reminds us of a time in history that is hauntingly reminiscent of our world today."—**Sarah Weisner, The Written Word, Ripley, OH**

SISTER SALTY, SISTER SWEET: A Memoir of Sibling Rivalry, by Shannon Kring Biro and Natalie Kring (Running Press, \$19.95, 9780762429226/0762429224) "The complexities of sibling rivalry are often hard to explain—and much harder to understand. Natalie and Shannon's account of their childhood gives dimension to this phenomenon. I couldn't put this book down."—**Monica Robinson, Monica's Market, Marshfield, MO**

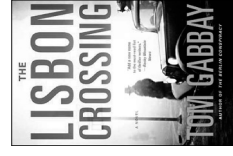


DISHWASHER: One Man's Quest to Wash Dishes in All 50 States, by Pete Jordan (Harper Perennial, \$13.95 paper, 9780060896423/0060896426) "Jordan's journey from 'a guy looking for a job he can walk away from' to acolyte for the bottom rung is long, sudsy, and hilarious. Washing dishes in all 50 states is his goal, one he keeps striving for despite life's constant interruptions. The surprise is the audience he gathers as he goes."—**Russ Harvey, Cody's Books, Berkeley, CA**



SOARING WITH FIDEL: An Osprey Odyssey from Cape Cod to Cuba and Beyond, by David Gessner (Beacon, \$25.95, 9780807085783/0807085782) "*Soaring With Fidel* is a wild ride from Cape Cod to Cuba and Venezuela, and back again. But it is also a meditation on how humans adapt to their own migrations. By concentrating on the osprey's journey south from Cape Cod, Gessner shares his adventures and the many friends he makes on his journey—all of which will remind readers that it's not too late to pack your bags and go to the still-wild places of the world."—**Karen Vail, Armchair Bookstore, Dennis, MA**

MYSTERY/SUSPENSE



THE LISBON CROSSING, by Tom Gabbay (Morrow, \$24.95, 9780061188435/0061188433) "Written as a reminiscence this is a wonderful espionage thriller (featuring a wisecracking Hollywood detective, a beautiful German double agent, and the very odd Duke and Duchess of Windsor) set in pre-World War II Lisbon, with the action moving from Hollywood to Lisbon to Nazi-occupied Paris. I couldn't put this one down."—**Joan Kolp, The River's End Bookstore, Oswego, NY**