

2007 Readers' Choices for Grades 9 ~ 12
compliments of Windham County Reads

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Speak*. 1999. A traumatic event near the end of the summer has a devastating effect on Melinda's freshman year in high school.

Barakat, Ibtisam. *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood*. 2007. This groundbreaking and powerful memoir captures what it's like to be a child whose world is shattered by war. Rather than succumbing to despair, Barakat fell in love with Alef, the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, and books saved her life. Come see Barakat at the Brattleboro Literary Festival in September!

Beah, Ismael. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. 2007. What does war look like through the eyes of a child soldier? How does one become a killer? Beah, now twenty-five years old, tells a riveting story: how at the age of twelve he fled attacking rebels and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. Soon he was picked up by the government army, and Beah, at heart a gentle boy, found that he was capable of truly terrible acts.

Brashares, Ann. *Forever in Blue: The Fourth Summer of the Sisterhood*. 2007. As their lives take them in different directions, Lena, Tibby, Carmen and Bridget discover many more things about themselves and the importance of their relationship with one another.

Edwards, Kim. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*. 2006. Forced to deliver his own twins during a snowstorm in 1964 with only a nurse to help him, Dr. David Henry makes a decision that has far-reaching effects on his family when he orders the nurse to take one baby to an institution.

Freedom Writers. *The Freedom Writer's Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them*. 1999. Erin Gruwell, a first-year high school English teacher with several classes of "unteachables," helped many students find their own voices as they wrote about their challenging lives. This amazing true story is also a movie.

Going, K.L. *Saint Iggy*. 2006. Iggy is caught both physically and spiritually between good and bad when he is kicked out of high school, goes searching for his missing mother, and causes his friend to get involved with the same dangerous drug dealer who deals to his parents.

Gore, Al. *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*. 2006. Gore outlines the causes, including technological advances, that have contributed to global warming and he offers suggestions for reversing the trend.

Hartnett, Sonya. *Surrender*. 2006. As he is dying, a twenty-year-old man known as Gabriel recounts his troubled childhood and his strange relationship with a dangerous counterpart named Finnigan. A 2007 Michael Printz Honor book.

Johnson, Maureen. *Devilish*. 2006. Jane Jarvis, a senior at a Catholic girl's school in Providence, Rhode Island, tries to save her best friend by making a pact with a demon.

Koontz, Dean. *Odd Thomas*. 2003. Twenty-year-old Odd Thomas works contentedly as a fry cook in a small fictional California town, despite a talent for writing, because he has another,

more unusual talent—he sees and converses with ghosts and helps solve terrible crimes! This brilliant tightrope walk between the amusing and the macabre explores some of the deepest themes of human existence: the nature of evil, the grip of fate and the power of love.

McCormick, Patricia. *Sold.* 2006. Told in vignettes, this is the story of Lakshmi, a thirteen-year-old girl from Nepal who is sold into prostitution in India.

Meyer, Stephenie. *New Moon.* 2006. When Edward leaves Forks so people won't learn he's a vampire, it's almost too much for eighteen-year-old Bella to bear. She finds solace in her friend Jacob, until he is drawn into a "cult" and changes in terrible ways. A sequel to *Twilight*.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Shooter.* 2005. Written in the form of interviews, reports and journal entries, this story of three troubled teenagers ends in a tragic school shooting.

Obama, Barack. *The Audacity of Hope.* 2006. One of the frontrunners for the Democratic Presidential nomination presents his thoughts on reclaiming the American dream.

Pessl, Marisha. *Special Topics in Calamity Physics.* 2006. Blue Van Meer spends her senior year with a group of eccentric geniuses and becomes enmeshed in a murder mystery. This debut novel is modeled after the syllabus of a college literature course, with 36 chapters named after everything from *Othello* to *Paradise Lost* to *The Big Sleep*.

Reeve, Philip. *A Darkling Plain.* 2007. London is a radioactive wreck, deserted for twenty years, when Tom and his daughter Wren discover that something is stirring in the remains of the old city. What will this mean for the raging, never-ending war and life on the planet?

Sheffield, Rob. *Love is a Mix Tape.* 2007. Rob Sheffield, a writer for *Rolling Stone*, tells the story of his relationship with his deceased wife Renee through songs on fifteen mix tapes.

Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Notes from a Midnight Driver.* 2006. After being assigned to perform community service at a nursing home, sixteen-year-old Alex befriends a cantankerous old man who has some lessons to impart about jazz guitar playing, love and forgiveness.

Stassen, Jean-Philippe. *Deogratias.* 2006. The 2000 winner of the Gosciny Prize for an outstanding graphic novel script, this is the harrowing tale of the genocide in Rwanda as seen through the eyes of a Hutu boy named Deogratias.

Werlin, Nancy. *Rules of Survival.* 2006. Matt recounts for his younger sister the events that led to the removal of his siblings from his mother's abusive household. SLJ Best book 2006.

Westerfeld, Scott. *Specials.* 2006. When Tally is turned into a super-modelesque super-fighting machine, she is ordered to keep the uglies down and the pretties stupid in an engineered world of perfection. She refuses to play by the rules in this third book of a popular trilogy.

Yang, Gene. *American Born Chinese.* 2006. The problems of young Chinese Americans trying to participate in the popular culture are presented here in three interwoven stories. This graphic novel won the 2007 Michael L. Printz Award.

Zusak, Marcus. *The Book Thief.* 2006. Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death relates the story of Liesel, a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family, the Jewish man they are hiding and their neighbors.