

Maine Student Book Award
A Joint Project of:
Maine Library Association
Maine Association of School Libraries
Maine Reading Association

2005-2006 Reading List (2004 copyright)

Publisher, genre, suggested grade levels, and number of pages are indicated after each title. For more information or to contact the MSBA Committee, please visit our website:

Avi. *The End of the Beginning : Being the Adventures of a Small Snail (And an Even Smaller Ant)*. Harcourt. Fantasy. Gr. 4-6. 143p. Avon the snail decides that going on an adventure is the key to a better life, and he and his new friend, Edward the ant, embark on a charming journey which can be read on many levels. Good read aloud.

Baggott, Julianna (writing as N. E. Bode). *The Anybodies*. HarperCollins. Fantasy. Gr. 4-8. 276p. Poor Fern Drudger is being raised by unbelievably dull parents only to find that she was switched with another child at birth. Thankfully, her true father is an "Anybody" and needs her help to recover his ability to transform into whatever he wishes. Fern discovers she, too, has magical power and can shake parts of stories and characters from books out into the real world! Good read aloud.

Balliett, Blue. *Chasing Vermeer*. Scholastic. Mystery. Gr. 5-8. 254p. Set in Chicago, two twelve-year-old students, Petra and Calder, try to track down a missing painting by the famous artist Vermeer. Along the way there are false leads, codes to solve, exciting secrets to uncover, and fast-paced danger.

Barry, Dave and Pearson, Ridley. *Peter and the Starcatchers*. Hyperion. Fantasy. Gr. 5-8. 451p. In a rollicking adventure-filled prequel to Peter Pan , a band of orphans and Peter are aboard a decrepit ship and bound for slavery. They meet up with the plucky Molly Aster, part of a group of Starcatchers trying to keep a trunkful of magical "starstuff" away from bad guys and evil pirates who would use it to upset the balance of good and evil in the world.

Bredoli, Jane. *The Goat Lady*. Tilbury House. Biography (92 or 759.13). Gr. 4-6. 32p. A beautifully illustrated story tells of an elderly French-Canadian woman who lived in Massachusetts and raised goats for the Heifer Project. The neighbors who complain about the goats begin to see the Goat Lady differently after viewing paintings of her in a local exhibit. This gentle, straightforward narrative is told from the point of view of the artist's daughter and is about intergenerational relationships and tolerance. Good read aloud.

Bredsdorff, Bodil. *The Crow-Girl : The Children of Crow Cove.* Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. Historical fiction. Gr. 4-6. 155p. When a young girl's grandmother dies and she has no one else to whom to turn, she must leave their protected cove side home. She ventures out into a world where she needs all of her grandmother`s wisdom to survive but manages to influence many of the people she meets on her quest.

Colfer, Eoin. *The Supernaturalist.* Miramax/Hyperion. Science fiction. Gr. 5-8. 267p. Fourteen-year-old Cosmo Hill lives in an abusive orphanage in futuristic Satellite City and must escape to survive. When he does, Cosmo becomes part of a motley group of teens who have dedicated themselves to destroying the supernatural blue creatures they believe feed on the energy of dying people.

Constable, Kate. *The Singer of All Songs.* Arthur A. Levine. Fantasy. Gr. 6-8. 297p. In the world of Tremaris, the Chanters practice their eight types of magic by singing. Calwyn is in training to become a priestess of "icecall" and soon becomes involved in the fight to save her world from an evil, power-hungry sorcerer.

Creech, Sharon. *Heartbeat.* Joanna Cotler. Poetic narrative. Gr. 5-8. 180p. Life is change. Twelve-year old Annie is a girl who'd rather run joyously barefoot than race on a team. She matures as her beloved grandfather ages and fails, her mother becomes pregnant, and her running partner becomes harder for her to understand.

Elliott, David. *Evangeline Mudd and the Golden-haired Apes of the Ikkinasti Jungle.* Candlewick. Humorous fiction. Gr. 4-6. 196p. Studying apes is the life's work of eight-year-old Evangeline's parents. Off they head to study the apes of the Ikkinasti Jungle, leaving Evangeline with horrid relatives. When her parents disappear, the plucky youngster contacts another ape specialist, Dr. Pikkafee, who helps her rescue her parents, the apes, and the rain forest. Good read aloud.

Esckilsen, Erik. *Offsides: A Novel.* Houghton Mifflin. Realistic/Sports fiction. Gr. 5-8. 172p. Tom Gray, a gifted soccer player, refuses to play for his new high school unless its insulting mascot is changed. Tom is a Mohawk Indian, and the offensively named team is the Warriors. Tom puts together a ragtag but spirited independent team to challenge Coach Dempsey's squad.

Giff, Patricia Reilly. *A House of Tailors.* Wendy Lamb. Historical fiction. Gr. 4-8. 148p. In 1871, thirteen-year-old Dina longs to escape a life of sewing in her mother's dress shop in Germany. When she arrives in New York City to live with her uncle's family, strong-minded Dina finds life away from her homeland even more of a challenge than she expects.

Grimes, Nikki. *What is Goodbye?* Hyperion. Poetic narrative. Gr. 4-6. 64p. Fifty-two poems by a brother, Jesse, and his sister, Jerilyn, explore their feelings about the death of their older brother and its impact on their family. Good read aloud.

Hannigan, Katherine. *Ida B--- : And Her Plans to Maximize Fun, Avoid Disaster, and (Possibly) Save the World.* Greenwillow. Realistic fiction. Gr. 4-6. 246p. Fourth-grader Ida B's happy life in Wisconsin crumbles when her mother is diagnosed with cancer, part of her beloved apple orchard must be sold, and she is sent against her will to public school. Good read aloud.

Hartinger, Brent. *The Last Chance Texaco.* HarperTempest. Realistic fiction. Gr. 6-8. 228p. At fifteen, Lucy Pitt tries to fit in as a newcomer to a last-chance foster home. Having lost her parents at seven, she uses gritty language to describe how she's messed up ever since. However, this home is a big improvement from others where Lucy has lived, and when its funding is threatened by mysterious fires in the neighborhood, Lucy must uncover the culprit in order to save it.

Hazen, Lynn E. *Mermaid Mary Margaret.* Bloomsbury. Realistic fiction. Gr. 4-6. 87p. When her grandfather passes away, the delightful, mermaid-obsessed eleven-year-old Mary Margaret takes on the responsibility of accompanying her grieving grandmother on a previously planned cruise through the Greek Isles. Good read aloud.

Ibbotson, Eva. *The Star of Kazan.* Dutton. Historical fiction. Gr. 5-8. 405p. Annika, abandoned as an infant, has grown into a talented and well-loved twelve-year-old in late nineteenth-century Vienna. Sadly, she yearns for the day when her rich and beautiful mother will come to claim her. When Annika inherits a trunk of costume jewelry, an aristocratic woman saying she is Annika's mother whisks her away to live in an oddly run-down mansion in Germany. Good read aloud. Illustrated by Kevin Hawkes.

Janeczko, Paul B. *Top Secret : A Handbook of Codes, Ciphers, and Secret Writing*. Candlewick. Nonfiction (652). Gr. 4-8. 136p. Janeczko explains many of the secret codes used throughout history and how they work. From codemaking to codebreaking, this informative guide to secret writing includes exciting stories of how, when, and why codes have been used.

Jordan, Sarah Clark. *The BossQueen, Little BigBark, and the Sentinel Pup*. Tricycle. Humorous fiction. Gr. 4-6. 133p. Look at life from a dog's point of view in a charming story of three dogs in the midst of moving with their owner, OurShe, to a new household...to live with other humans (big and small) and That Cat as part of their pack! Good read aloud.

Konigsburg, E. L. *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Realistic fiction. Gr. 5-8. 296p. Margaret Rose's doting uncles have rescued her from an unhappy summer camp experience, but the blissful summer the twelve-year-old anticipates at their house is threatened when she discovers that the unique towers the uncles spent years building in their back yard are scheduled for demolition. Margaret Rose must save the day. Good read aloud.

Larson, Peter L. and Donnan, Kristan. *Bones Rock! : Everything You Need to Know to be a Paleontologist*. Invisible Cities. Nonfiction (560). Gr. 4-8. 204p. In an informative guide to paleontology, enthusiastic author Larson shares his knowledge of a fascinating field. Excellent photographs and diagrams and a conversational tone make this an inviting and rewarding volume for curious readers.

Leonard, Elmore. *A Coyote's in the House*. HarperEntertainment. Humorous fiction. Gr. 5-8. 149p. Antwan, tough-talking coyote from the Hollywood hills, and Buddy, aging German shepherd and former film star become friends and decide to switch places in a page-turner of a romp. Good read aloud.

McWhorter, Diane. *A Dream of Freedom: The Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968*. Scholastic. Nonfiction (323.1). Gr. 5-8. 160p. Beginning with her own upbringing as a white child attending a segregated school in the South, McWhorter moves on to explore the men and women involved in the fight for civil rights in America. Illustrated with powerful archival photographs.

Morpurgo, Michael. *Private Peaceful*. Scholastic. Historical fiction. Gr. 6-8. 202p. In a powerful, haunting World War I tale, young Thomas Peaceful lies about his age and enlists in the British Army so that he can join his older brother fighting in the trenches in France.

Oppel, Kenneth. *Airborn*. Eos. Adventure/Fantasy. Gr. 6-8. 355p. As cabin boy on a luxury passenger airship, Matt performs a daring rescue, pulling an unconscious elderly man from his hot air balloon. The dying man describes mysterious and beautiful creatures flying over an uncharted island. Later, Matt teams up with young and wealthy Kate to find these winged animals, save the airship, and defeat a band of evil pirates.

Packer, Tina. *Tales from Shakespeare*. Scholastic. Nonfiction (822.3). Gr. 5-8. 192p. Packer retells ten of Shakespeare's most familiar comedies and tragedies in clear and understandable language. Each starts with a full page illustration, followed by a short summary of the plot, a list of the characters, and the concise retelling. Includes "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Othello," and "Romeo and Juliet."

Patneau, David. *Thin Wood Walls*. Houghton Mifflin. Historical fiction. Gr. 5-8. 231p. After the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, 11-year-old Joe Hamada and his family of Seattle face growing prejudice because they are Americans of Japanese descent. The FBI places Joe's father in custody, and soon the rest of the family is forced to move to the harsh living conditions of a relocation camp in California. In spite of the injustices the Hamada family faces, Joe's older brother decides to enlist and fight for the country detaining the family.

Philbrick, Rodman. *The Young Man and the Sea.* Blue Sky. Adventure. Gr. 5-8. 192p. When twelve-year-old Skiff Beaman's mother dies, his fisherman father stops working and starts drinking to try to forget. Skiff tries to make repairs to the family boat and hold things together at home, too. In an attempt to raise the money needed for engine repairs, Skiff heads out from the Maine coast in a 10-foot boat to catch a giant tuna. Good read aloud.

Place, Francois. *The Old Man Mad About Drawing : A Tale of Hokusai.* David R. Godine. Historical fiction. Gr. 4-8. 105p. On his route on the streets of nineteenth-century Edo (now Tokyo), nine-year-old Tojiro sells rice cakes to a grouchy eighty-year-old customer who turns out to be a famous Japanese artist and hires Tojiro as his assistant. Gorgeously illustrated and beautifully designed. Good read aloud.

Robinson, Sharon. *Promises to Keep : How Jackie Robinson Changed America.* Scholastic. Biography (92 / 796.357). Gr. 4-8. 64p. Jackie Robinson's daughter has written an intimate and well-illustrated portrait of her father's life and times, including his struggles with prejudice, segregation, and racism as the first African American player in the major league.

Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Becoming Naomi Leon.* Scholastic. Realistic fiction. Gr. 5-8. 246p. When Naomi's deadbeat mother turns up to claim fifth-grader Naomi but not her younger brother, their spunky grandmother spirits the children away to Mexico to find Naomi's father.

Schanzer, Rosalyn. *George vs. George -- The American Revolution as Seen From Both Sides*. National Geographic. Nonfiction (973.3). Gr. 4-6. 60p. King George III of England and George Washington are explored in this nicely illustrated and well balanced view of the American Revolution.

Schmidt, Gary D. *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*. Clarion. Historical fiction. Gr. 6-8. 219p. Turner Buckminster, minister's son, has moved unhappily from Boston to Phippsburg, Maine in 1911. A group of former slaves including his new friend, Lizzie Bright Griffin, inhabit nearby Malaga Island. Turner spearheads the fight against the local movement to evict Malaga's residents and make the island into a tourist attraction. Good read aloud.

Shaw, Susan. *The Boy From the Basement*. Dutton. Realistic fiction. Gr. 6-8. 198p. In an emotional and moving story, twelve-year-old Charlie has been imprisoned by his abusive father in the cellar of their home for years. He cannot read or write and does not know his own last name, much less what the words Halloween or Christmas mean. After Charlie is accidentally locked out of the house, he is hospitalized and given the care he needs to recover and begin a new life.

Sherlock, Patti. *Letters from Wolfie*. Viking. Historical fiction. Gr. 5-8. 228p. When Mark finds out that the Army has a program using dogs to help protect soldiers like his brother in Vietnam, he donates his dog, Wolfie, to the cause, not realizing that the dog will not be returned to him when its tour of duty is done.

Sones, Sonya. *One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies.* Simon & Schuster. Poetic narrative. Gr. 6-8. 268p. After her mother dies, sullen, plain speaking teenager Ruby is sent to Los Angeles to live with her movie star father, a man who left her mother before Ruby was born. Missing her best friend, her boyfriend, and her mom, Ruby records her feelings in frank poems and e-mails as she learns to cope with her unfamiliar Hollywood surroundings and a father who is a stranger to her.

Torrey, Michele. *Voyage of Ice: Chronicles of Courage.* Knopf. Adventure. Gr. 5-8. 197p. In the mid 1800s, fifteen-year-old Nick and his older brother sign on as hands on the whaling ship Sea Hawk. They find that the life aboard the ship is tough. Their situation becomes even tougher when the ship is lost, and they are stranded in the Arctic. Memorable characters and lots of action. Good read aloud.

Tunnell, Michael O. *Wishing Moon.* Dutton. Fantasy. Gr. 5-8. 266p. Aminah, a starving orphan, approaches the wealthy Sultan's palace to ask for help from his daughter, Aladdin's wife. The grumpy princess hurls a battered old lamp out her window at Aminah, not realizing there is a wish-granting jinni inside. In an amusing, fast-moving tale inspired by the Arabian Nights, can Aminah improve her life and hide the lamp containing a very discontent jinni?

Van Draanen, Wendelin. *Secret Identity.* Knopf. Humorous fiction. Gr. 4-6. 138p. Shredderman series : 1. In a hilarious story and accompanying cartoon illustrations, an ingenious but small fifth-grader named Nolan uses his brains and a web page to stand up to the school's terrorizing bully, Bubba Bixby.

Wait, Lea. *Wintering Well.* Margaret K. McElderry. Historical fiction. Gr. 4-8. 186p. In 1819, an awful accident leaves twelve-year-old Will with only one leg and dashes his plans of becoming a farmer like his father. Will and his younger sister Cassie move to nearby Wiscasset, Maine to stay with their older married sister and to explore possibilities for their future. Good read aloud.

Webb, Sophie. *Looking for Seabirds : Journal From an Alaskan Voyage.* Houghton Mifflin. Nonfiction (598.177). Gr. 4-8. 48p. With journal entries, line drawings, and watercolors, Webb records her observations of seabirds and her experiences as part of a team of scientists on a research ship in Alaska's Aleutian Islands.

Weeks, Sarah. *So B. It : A Novel.* Laura Geringer. Realistic fiction. Gr. 5-8. 245p. When she was about a week old, Heidi and her severely mentally disabled mother arrived in Reno, Nevada. For twelve years, a kind, intelligent, and financially lucky but agoraphobic neighbor has looked out for the mother and daughter. Young Heidi is remarkably well-adjusted even under these odd circumstances, but she is curious about her true identity. An old camera provides clues which lead her to answers and the history Heidi's mother, So B. It, cannot voice.

Last Updated 4-29-05