

Fishtrap presents The Big Read 2010:
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
Adult Supplemental Reading

FICTION

Intruder in the Dust by William Faulkner. "At once an engrossing murder mystery and an unflinching portrait of racial injustice in the Reconstruction South, *Intruder in the Dust* stands out as a true classic of Southern literature." Amazon.com. (1948)

Strange Fruit by Lillian Smith. The once-banned and best-selling novel about an illicit love affair and race relations in 1920's Georgia. "The South can hardly be said to recognize itself without this book." Alice Walker. (1944)

The Help by Kathryn Stockett. "Set during the civil rights movement in Jackson, Miss., where black women were trusted to raise white children but not to polish the household silver. In pitch-perfect voices, Kathryn Stockett creates three extraordinary women whose determination to start a movement of their own forever changes a town, and the way women — mothers, daughters, caregivers, friends — view one another. A deeply moving novel filled with poignancy, humor, and hope, *The Help* is a timeless and universal story about the lines we abide by, and the ones we don't." *Publishers Review*.

"For years I have been looking for a book that would make me feel the same emotions as I felt when I read ***To Kill and Mockingbird***, and this book is definitely it. I laughed, I cried, I felt deep concern for the characters, I could not put it down. Unlike Harper Lee, I hope Kathryn Stockett will continue to write more and more stories." Reader review. (2009)

Sweeping Up Glass by Carolyn Wall. "Someone is killing wolves on Olivia Harker's Kentucky property for sport, and Olivia aims to find the culprit. Meanwhile, Olivia recounts her childhood with an adored father and a mad mother in the brutally segregated Depression-era South. As the action moves inexorably to its explosive conclusion, Olivia must come to grips with past betrayals, thereby earning a second chance at love, redemption and long overdue justice." Reed Business Information. "This is a perfect little book, like a head-on collision between Flannery O'Connor and Harper Lee, with a bit of Faulkner." Edgar Award winner, Joe Lansdale (2008)

Mudbound by Hillary Jordan. "In this award-winning portrait of two families caught up in the blind hatred of a small Southern town, prejudice takes many forms — some subtle, some ruthless. Set in 1946, the Mississippi Delta, this is the saga of the McAllan family, who struggle to survive on a remote ramshackle farm and the Jacksons, their black sharecroppers. A tremendous gift...accessible, engaging and spiked with suspense." Back cover of book. (2008)

A Time to Kill by John Grisham. "In this lively novel, Grisham explores the uneasy relationship of blacks and whites in the rural South. His treatment is balanced and humane, if not particularly profound, slighting neither blacks nor whites. Life becomes complicated in the backwoods town of Clanton, Mississippi, when a black worker is brought to trial for the murder of the two whites who raped and tortured his young daughter. Everyone gets involved, from Klan to NAACP. Grisham's pleasure in relating the byzantine complexities of Clanton politics is contagious, and he tells a good story." *Library Journal*. (1989)

"***The White Man's Burden***," a poem by Rudyard Kipling. An example of satire of European superiority.

Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café by Fannie Flagg. Set in a small Alabama train stop town in the 1930s. Various women's voices tell anecdotes of Whistle Stop, as the chapters jump back and forth through time. Idgie and Ruth are two friends who become partners in running the Whistle Stop Cafe, where no one, "not even hobos and colored," is turned away for inability to pay. Among revelations big and small, Fannie Flagg mixes direct and empowering confrontations with racism, sexism, and ageism with the colorful and endearing language of the depression-era South and the cafe's recipes for grits, collard greens, and, of course, fried green tomatoes." From *500 Great Books by Women*. (1989)

NONFICTION

Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee by Charles Shields. "Few novels are as beloved and acclaimed as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and even fewer authors have shunned the spotlight as successfully as its author. Although journalist Shields interviewed 600 of Harper Lee's acquaintances and researched the papers of her childhood friend Truman Capote, he is no match for the elusive Lee, who stopped granting interviews in 1965 and wouldn't talk to him. Shields enlivens Lee's childhood by pointing out people who were later fictionalized in her novel. The book percolates during her banner year of 1960, when she won the Pulitzer Prize and helped Capote research *In Cold Blood*. Capote's papers yield some of Lee's fascinating first-person insights on the emotionally troubled Clutter family that were tempered in his book. Shields believes Lee abandoned her second novel when her agents and her editor—her surrogate family in publishing—died or left the business, leaving her with no support system. There's a tantalizing anecdote about a true-crime project Lee was researching in the mid-'80s that faded away." *Publishers Weekly*. (2007 – paperback)

The Devil's Highway by Luis Urrea. The true story of a group of 26 men who crossed the border from Mexico illegally in May, 2001 and got lost along The Devil's Highway, an inhospitable area of the Arizona desert on the Mexican border, where temperatures are regularly well above 100 degrees and any many would need two gallons of water a day to survive. Twelve men managed to survive. Urrea not only chronicles their descent into hell on earth, but the economic and cultural forces that drove them to attempt such a risky trek in search of a better life. Caught as pawns between governments and tempted by smugglers who seek only to profit from others' despair, these men were willing to take that risk, with disastrous consequences. *The Devil's Highway* has received positive reviews with the Detroit Free Press saying, "It's a beautiful book about a horrible trip." (2004)

Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa by Mark Mathabane. Autobiography about life under the South African apartheid regime. It focuses on the brutality of the apartheid system and how he escaped from it, and from the township Alexandria, to become a well-known tennis player. He also depicted how the young black children dealt with racism and stereotypes." *Publishers Weekly*. (1996)

Tall Grass by Sandra Dalls. Adult/High School. Dalls has made a major contribution to a growing body of literature about the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Based on the one camp in Colorado, the story focuses on the impact it had on the local farmers and townspeople. It is told from the viewpoint of Rennie Stroud, 13, and poignantly portrays the emotional turmoil of both the internees and local residents. Part mystery, part historical fiction, part coming-of-age story, *Tallgrass* has all the elements of a tale well told: complex characters, intriguing plot, atmospheric detail, pathos, humor, and memorable turns of phrase. But most of all, the book offers a fresh look at a theme that can never be ignored: the interplay of good and evil within society and within people.—*Robert Saunderson, Berkeley Public Library, CA* (2008)

The Origins of Totalitarianism by Hannah Arendt. The book begins its study with European anti-Semitism in the 1800s and moves up to Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany, which the author fled in the 1930s." *Library Journal*. (2004)

Books suggested by local Non-Violent Communication Group

Speak Peace in a World of Conflict: What You Say Next Will Change Your World by Marshall Rosenberg. As many others in this world, Rosenberg grew up experiencing social and physical abuse because of his race. However, instead of fighting back he searched for solutions in his graduate studies. Unfortunately, when he approached graduation he was disappointed to realize that he had not found a solution, so he continued to search and learn as he worked with couples, with racial conflicts in the 60's, with gangs, and in war zones around the world.

The peace he speaks of is not one of submission, oppression, or manipulation. It is one of mutual respect and understanding that reaches across divides, across the strange and unknown, across fear, anger, suspicion, and hatred. His method enables one to reach across barriers of gender, generations, race, religion, and ideology, to touch, and to connect with others on a heartfelt level. It can be simple to implement, yet it requires practice and a deep inner work. This inner work, in a powerful and practical way, can transform our hearts and our relationships. Check out <http://www.cnvc.org> (2005)

Community: The Structure of Belonging by Peter Block. This book is based on the premise that citizens can change the context within which they act. Community members have the capacity to own and exercise power by accepting accountability to each other, rather than by delegating that power to others. Little things matter, every step along the way must reflect the same qualities desired in the final goal. These include asking the right questions, naming the debate, listening, opening to possibilities, involving the marginalized, recognizing individual's gifts, valuing everyone's voice, fostering ownership, and evolving toward commitment. Brief chapter summaries give readers easy access to identifying the principle elements of healthy communities. These are then integrated into practical applications, giving those who have become disillusioned renewed hope. Block shows how we can use the techniques presented as a process for building social fabric, transforming isolation into connectedness, and shifting the conversation from focusing on problems and self-interest to identifying and creating desired alternatives. Prepared by Walter J. Smith. (2009)

Young Adult Supplemental Reading

FICTION

In Search of Mockingbird by Loretta Ellsworth. "A book is all that connects Erin to her mother, who died when she was a baby. But how much can Erin really learn about her mother from a tattered copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*? On the eve of her sixteenth birthday, Erin decides it's finally time to find out. And so begins her bus journey from Minnesota to Alabama in search of Harper Lee, the reclusive author of *Mockingbird*." From the publisher. (2007)

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor, "one of our top African American women writers today. This novel begins a series of the life of the Logan family whose neighbors are all sharecroppers. The Logan family is fortunate to own land, purchased by a most focused and ambitious ancestor following the Civil War. Readers meet Cassie, a feisty young woman and her siblings as they navigate the segregated and unjust South. Schooling is one topic that arises when, for example, the bus carrying the White children to their school deliberately sprays roadway mud on the Logan children making their long walk to their own school (Black children are not allowed bus transport) and how enraged some students become when their "new" schoolbooks issued by their teacher are actually very old discards from the Whites only school. This novel is a remarkable depiction of the era. Based on Taylor's own family history, sequels include **Let the Circle be Unbroken** (which deals with issues of voting, among others), and **The Road to Memphis** which brings the Logan family, grown, into the Civil Rights movement." Wendy Kasten, Kent State University. (1976)

The Well: David's Story by Mildred Taylor Grade 4-6. Another contribution to the Logan family saga, this is Father's account of an incident from his boyhood. During a drought in 1910, 10-year-old David Logan's family has the only working well in their part of Mississippi. They share their water willingly with both black and white neighbors, but white teenager Charlie Simms tests their generosity, goading David's older brother Hammer into a fight requiring restitution in the form of labor on the Simms's farm. Charlie and his brother get even for the disgrace of Hammer's beating by secretly contaminating the Logans' well with dead animals, only to be exposed and punished when a neighbor reveals their act. While David narrates, this is really Hammer's story; his pride and steely determination not to be put down are the source of the novel's action and power. Readers will feel the Logans' fear and righteous anger at the injustice and humiliation they suffer because they are black. As in *The Friendship* (Dial, 1987), Taylor has used her gift for storytelling and skillful characterization to craft a brief but compelling novel about prejudice and the saving power of human dignity *School Library Journal*(1998)

Bat 6 by Virginia Wolff. "A nuanced understanding of how racism can begin and its consequences both for the perpetrator and the victim, as well as for those who stood on the sidelines and didn't speak up. Wolff's novel is about the sentiments of racism, patriotism and guilt that bubble over in two small Oregon towns after World War II." *Publishers Weekly*. (paperback, 2000)

Kira-Kira by Cynthia Kadohata. "Katie Takeshima tells the story of her early years, her family's move from a Japanese community in Iowa to the Deep –South of Georgia. Her beloved older sister, Lynn, who sees the bright side of everything, explains to her why people stare at them on the street, why no matter how hard their parents work at menial jobs they won't be promoted. Racism is treated as part of the family's life. The story Katie tells is about the two girls, their extended family, and Lynn's devastating illness." *School Library* review. (2006)

Sounder by William H. Armstrong. "A poor rural Black family loses the father when he tries to steal food for them and is taken to prison. Sounder is their loyal dog, who accompanies the boy when he goes to see his father in prison." Amazon.com. (revised edition, 1995)

Because of Winn Dixie by Kate DiCamillo. "With her newly adopted, goofy pooch at her side, Opal explores her bittersweet world and learns to listen to other people's lives. This warm and winning book hosts an unforgettable cast of characters, including a librarian who fought off a bear with a copy of *War and Peace*, an ex-con pet-store clerk who plays sweet music to his animal charges, and the neighborhood "witch," a nearly blind woman who sees with her heart. Part Frankie (*The Member of the Wedding*), part Scout (*To Kill a Mockingbird*), Opal brings her own unique and wonderful voice to a story of friendship, loneliness, and acceptance. Opal's down-home charm and dead-on honesty will earn her friends and fans far beyond the confines of Naomi, Florida." Emilie Coulter. (2001)

Cold Sassy Tree by Olive Ann Burns. "If the preacher's wife's petticoat showed, the ladies would make the talk last a week. But on July 5, 1906, things took a scandalous turn. That was the day E. Rucker Blakeslee, proprietor of the general store and barely three weeks a widower, eloped with Miss Love Simpson -- a woman half his age and, worse yet, a Yankee! On that day, fourteen-year-old Will Tweedy's adventures began and an unimpeachably pious, deliciously irreverent town came to life. Not since *To Kill A Mockingbird* has a novel so deftly captured the subtle crosscurrents of small-town Southern life. Olive Ann Burns classic bestseller brings to vivid life an era that will never exist again, exploring timeless issues of love, death, coming of age, and the ties that bind families and generations." Good Reads. (1984)

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie. "Arnold Spirit, a goofy-looking dork with a decent jump shot, spends his time lamenting life on the "poor-ass" Spokane Indian reservation, drawing cartoons (which accompany, and often provide more insight than, the narrative), and, along with his aptly named pal Rowdy, laughing those laughs over anything and nothing that affix best friends so intricately together. When a teacher pleads with Arnold to want more, to escape the hopelessness of the rez, Arnold switches to a rich white school and immediately becomes as much an outcast in his own community as he is a curiosity in his new one. Alexie's humor and prose are easygoing and well suited to his young audience, and he doesn't pull many punches as he levels his eye at stereotypes both warranted and inapt." Chipman, Ian (2007)

NONFICTION

I Am Scout by Charles Shields. The author of the *New York Times* bestseller **Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee** has adapted it for younger readers. What emerges in this riveting portrait is the story of an unconventional, high-spirited woman who drew on her love of writing and her Southern home to create a book that continues to speak to new generations of readers. Anyone who has enjoyed **To Kill a Mockingbird** will appreciate this glimpse into the life of its fascinating author. (2008)

Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston. "The true story of one spirited Japanese-American family's attempt to survive the indignities of forced detention; and of a native-born American child who discovered what it was like to grow up behind barbed-wire in the United States." (reissue, 2002)

Stealing Home: The Story of Jackie Robinson by Barry Denenberg. "The first black man to play in the white major leagues [Jackie Robinson] had the courage to confront racism and fight for the rights of all black people, on and off the baseball diamond. He shattered the color barrier, and with tremendous skill and determination, he became not only one of the most legendary baseball players of all time, but also a great American hero." From the book jacket. (paperback, 2007)

I Have a Dream by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Foreword by Coretta Scott King. A beautifully illustrated book, giving Dr. King's famous speech in its entirety. (paperback, 2007)

Young Readers

The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss. A wonderful story for kids. It is a clever story that not only is fun but also teaches young kids about being different and that it is not a bad thing. It has a good story line that kids will find funny. It is also good to teach kids about rhyme. The story has tons of rhymes and will help kids get to know about word groups. Ages 4-8. (1961)

The Ugly Duckling by Hans Christian Anderson. Ever since its publication in 1845, Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ugly Duckling* has been a favorite with generations of children around the world. Today's youngsters will be equally moved by the hapless ugly duckling, who, ridiculed and rejected by all, suffers terrible hardships. And they will celebrate along with him when he finally emerges triumphant as the most beautiful swan of all! Ages 3-9.

Fluffy and Baron by Laura Rankin. Based on a real-life dog and duck duo, this delightful picture book presents a tale of friendship and loyalty rewarded. Ages 4-8. 2006)

Alley Oops by Janis Levy. "*Alley Oops* is the story of a popular boy who picks on a new classmate for being fat. Since the new classmate is very big and very strong, in addition to being fat, I was impressed that the shrimpy main character had the courage to tease him. The targets of bullying are often the meek, not just the weak. It was interesting to see bullying addressed from the viewpoint of the bully. I was a little sad to see that what really ended the bullying was having the victim prove himself cool enough not to be victimized, but I guess that's realistic, too." myshelf.com. Grades 1-4. (2005)

The Story of Ruby Bridges by Robert Coles and George Ford. Ruby Bridges was the sole African American child to attend a New Orleans elementary school after court-ordered desegregation in 1960. It tells how federal marshals escorted the intrepid six-year-old past angry crowds of white protestors thronging the school. Parents of the white students kept them home, and so Ruby "began learning how to read and write in an empty classroom, an empty building." Reed Business Information, Inc. Ages 5-9. (paperback, 2004)

A Band of Angels by Debora Hopkinson. "This picture book is both touching and inspirational. The narrative is written from the point of view of the great-great-granddaughter of Ella Sheppard, one of the original Jubilee Singers from the Fisk School in Nashville, TN, the first school for freed slaves. Using the device of a family storyteller and a child narrator brings immediacy to the tale and a personal connection to the events. The sepia tones add an antique look to the book. This heartwarming presentation is not a historical account, but rather a human look at recorded facts. A fine read-aloud with a good story, uplifting pictures, and fascinating information." *School Library Journal*. Ages 4-8. (2002)

Can You Say Peace by Karen Katz. "The author takes readers on a bright and colorful journey around the globe to meet children from all over the world who wish for peace and learn the many ways to say *peace!* Karen Katz's bright and childlike illustrations are the perfect way to introduce the very young to the concept of peace and teach them how to say the word in twenty-two different languages." Product description. K-1. (2006)

A Sweet Smell of Rose by Angela Johnson. History and politics get personal for young readers in this dramatic, large-size picture book about an African American child and her younger sister who steal out of the house to join the Civil Rights marchers and listen to Dr. King speak. The child's clear, first-person narrative draws on the language of the struggle. The protestors confront the glowering police, and there are children among the racists who yell, "You are not right. Equality can't be yours." But this book is not only about segregation; it's also about the crowds of people "walking our way toward freedom," the thrilling portrait of Dr. King, and the two brave kids who cross the line." *Booklist*. K-2. (2007)