

## **Isinglass Teen Read Award For 7th & 8th Grade Criteria and Committee**

The Isinglass Teen Read Award has been ongoing since 2001 with winners such as Rodman Philbrick, Walter Dean Myers, Patricia McCormick, and Christopher Paolini. We have gone from one community voting to 28 voting as of the 2012-2013 voting cycle. We have opened up voting to all NH towns that wish to participate. The committee currently meets monthly from September-April to determine the list from student-generated recommendations. We have multiple librarians who make up the selection committee, about half of which are school librarians. The web site for Isinglass titles is hosted on the Barrington Public Library web site. ([www.barringtonlibrary.com](http://www.barringtonlibrary.com))

**Mission Statement:** To encourage middle school level students to read for enjoyment and promote a life-long love of reading and books.

### **Our criteria:**

- Recommended by a teen directly, or, a book that YA librarians can't keep on the shelf due to high interest among students.
- High interest and appropriate reading level for 7-8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Readily available in print in the US; author does NOT have to be from this country.
- A title in a series must stand alone.
- Non-fiction and previous award winners may be nominated.
- We prefer titles published in the last 3 years, and choose the majority of the list from these titles, but we **WILL** consider older titles that may deserve a "new life" among our youth.
- Titles must be submitted to the committee chair June-January and include title, author, publication year, and genre.
- Books will not be disqualified for tough topics or language that is appropriate to the story. We strive to provide a well-rounded list that may also include some books that are not appropriate for all readers. Parents make the final decision as to what their children read.
- All books are read by the committee, reviews are sought, and selections chosen by a panel of school and public librarians with expertise in working with teens.
- The committee **will not include** books previously listed on other NH State Awards lists such as Flume or Great Stone Face. We ask librarians submitting student recommendations to remove such items before sending suggestions along, and, let students know that these items will not be re-considered.

### **Selection Criteria:**

- Teen appeal, i.e. will teens be interested in the book topic, characters, and setting and find the book a satisfying and enjoyable read.
- Quality of writing, i.e. has the author written a story with well-developed plot, characters, and setting. The book must be a model for that genre and have an interesting theme.

- Originality of the text
- Subject matter of current interest to teens
- Suitability of vocabulary and content for the age range
- Relevance to today's societal issues
- Reflects a teen experience or concern
- Language style and usage
- Books that provide a balance selection of genres so the list reflects a wide variety of reading tastes

### **The Isinglass Final List:**

The committee meets Sept.-April to talk about books recommended for the list. The committee will finalize the list in early April in order to make the choices available for the May Library Conferences. The final list will be comprised of 15 titles and will be announced at spring library conferences. The Barrington Public Library will host the Isinglass page and add any criteria, forms, etc. as needed. PR about the book list will be sent via the state e-mail list and school librarians will be informed.

- Student recommendations for the next year's list may be sent via e-mail to [ycouser@merrimacklibrary.org](mailto:ycouser@merrimacklibrary.org) Please include full title, author, and year published. Recommendations will be taken from June-January in order to give the committee time to review titles for a May final list.

### **The Committee:**

The Isinglass committee will be made up of volunteers, both public and school librarians, whose love of reading and working with teens combines to make them well suited for such a selection process. The members work with children directly and have knowledge of current interests, needs, and skill levels among middle grade students. They will offer a cross-section of differing skills, knowledge, community needs, and interests in order to end up with a balanced list. Committee members are expected to serve a minimum of one-year and come to all meetings in person or by sending e-mail comments to the Chair before meetings. Members are expected to read and evaluate a large number of books (75-100), and to help in the production of book description/book talks, which will be provided to librarians throughout the state.

The Chair of the committee will be chosen by the members of CHILIS and will represent the committee at CHILIS Board meetings and conferences. The Chair presides over monthly meetings, keeps members informed, and stays in contact with NH public and school libraries. The chair, at this time, also keeps the master list of recommended titles and any reviews used. The Chair also sends out updates and lists after each meeting. This position could be split in two at a later date into Chair and Secretary.

Current active committee members include:

Yvette Couser, Chair [ycouser@merrimacklibrary.org](mailto:ycouser@merrimacklibrary.org)

And approx. 10 members who regularly read, share comments, and work on brochures, bookmarks, award purchasing, updating the website and various other necessary tasks. These librarians represent libraries from around the state at various positions within their libraries. Please contact the Chair to become a member.