

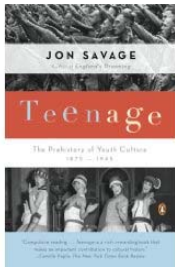
**LIBRARY STAFF SUGGESTIONS**  
**What We Read in 2008**

Welcome to our fourth annual list of (some of) books we read (or listened to) in the past year. Happy New Year from the University of Idaho Library staff.

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--Rami Attebury--

**Teenage: The Prehistory of Youth Culture, 1875-1945** by Jon Savage  
(NIC Stacks [HQ796.S284 2008](#))

Although I can't say I've read all of it, I did start it in December 2008, and so far it is shaping up to be the best book I read (or started reading) last year. It covers broad trends in eight to ten year chunks seen in both European and American history. Although the author focuses heavily on the extreme end of teenage activities, he justifies his focus by stating that extremists are often harbingers of future mainstream developments. In addition to



widespread movements, which help readers to make sense of the big historical picture, especially the role of World War I in teenage identity creation, the book also has plain old interesting little tidbits of trivia, like the relationship between the Greek goat god Pan, Peter Pan, and the Pied Piper. It is

probably most interesting to people with a pre-existing interest in teenage culture and history, but it could also be a good read for anyone who has to hang out in an airport bar after a long trip home from, say, Hawaii.

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--MaryJane Bailey--

One of the best things about being retired is being able to catch up on all the reading I've been putting off. I've been trying to read some of the "old" stuff that everyone ought to read or at least they appear on lots of recommended reading lists. In addition, I've been reading a few current or almost current things.

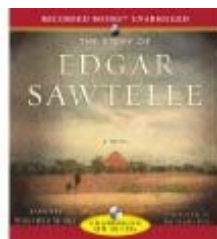
Jane Austen's novels

**Kite Runner**, by Hosseini, Khaled. (UI Library Main Stacks [PS3608.O525K58 2003](#))

**Secret Life of Bees**, by Sue Monk Kidd (UI Library Main Stacks [PS3611.I44S38 2003](#))

**Story of Edgar Sawtelle**, by David Wroblewski  
([BROWSING WROBLEWSKI](#))

**The Worst Hard**

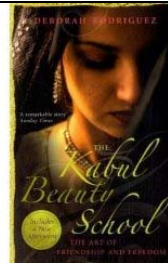


**Time**, by Timothy Egan. (UI Library Main Stacks [F595.E38 2006](#))

Do audio books count? Franklin and I took a long road trip to Texas and back and loaded up the Ipod and listened to the following on the road.

**Walking Across Egypt**, by Clyde Edgerton (UI Library Internet Audio Book [Internet PS3555.D47 W3 1997](#))  
**The Voyage of the Devilfish**, by Michael DiMercurio.

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--Marian Murta-Bell--



**Kabul Beauty School : An American Woman Goes Behind the Veil**, by Deborah Rodriguez. (UI Library Main [HQ1735.6.R63 2007](#)) It

is a memoir of one woman's participation in a project to set up a beauty school in

Afghanistan. It speaks directly of the women's lives there.

My winter read is **Dr. Zhivago** by Boris Pasternak. UI Library Main Stacks [PG3476.P27D63 1991](#) Not a new book, I know, but a wonderful tale of revolution and passion and SNOW!

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--Robert Perret--

**Special Topics in Calamity Physics** by Marisha Pessl. (BROWSING PESS)

A lurid tale of murder and desire set in a posh prep school and told in nouveau noir style. Bookworms will appreciate the extensive literary footnotes with which the protagonist attempts to make sense of the topsy-turvy world she stumbles into.

**The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle** by Haruki Murakami. (UI Main Stacks [PL856 U673N4513 1998](#)) A man

spends a surreal year trying to discover what happened when his wife just walks out of his life one day. There are magic wells and psychic prostitutes and wig factories and lots of spaghetti involved. There's no good way to describe it that doesn't fail to do it justice.



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--Geoffrey Wood--

**Tales of the Otori**, by Lian Hearn. Popcorn literature, but the good type. A fun, violent evocation of a pseudo-medieval-Japan, bursting with warlords, ninjas and femme-fatales.

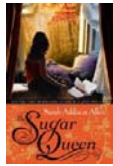
**How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics**, by N.

**Katherine Hayles.** A history of posthuman/cyborg theory. Weird stuff, but compelling, and a necessary read for lit./postmodern theorists.

***The Hokusai sketchbooks; selections from the Manga.*** James Michener (ed.) UI Library Main Stacks [NE1325.K3M47 1958](#) They really don't make books like this anymore. A must-read for artists, Japanophiles, and collectors. And best of all, the library has a copy!

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**--Carol Mayer--**



***Sugar Queen* by Sarah Addison Allen.**

I read many books but this one really stayed with me. It was so much fun to read! I then had to read her older (2007) book, *Garden Spells*. *The Girl*

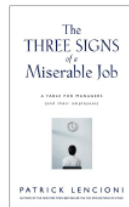
*Who Chased the Moon* is coming out in 2009. Can't wait!

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**---Judy Bielenberg---**

***The Three Signs of a Miserable Job*, by Patrick Leneoni**

Three elements that make work miserable: Anonymity, Irrelevance, Immeasurment



***What Now?* by Ann**

**Patchett (Latah County –**

**Moscow Public Library**

**Temporarily Shelved at Latah County -**

**Genesee [158.1 PAT](#))** Hope and inspiration for anyone at a crossroads

***White House Chef: Eleven Years, Two Presidents, One Kitchen* by Walter Scheib.** (UI Library Main Stacks [TX731.S292 2007](#)) Stories and recipes from the Executive Chef of the White House from 1994-2005.

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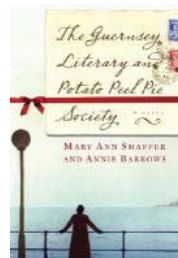
**Nancy Young--**

***American Wife*, by Curtis Sittenfeld (Latah County – Moscow Public Library,**

**Fic Sittenfeld)** Try to imagine why Laura Bush married W and how their relationship works—that's the essence of this fascinating novel.



***The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. (BROWSING SHAFER)** Charming epistolary novel set in World War II and immediately afterward.



**--Kristin Henrich--**

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***Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood*, by Alexandra**

**Fuller (UI Library Main Stacks [DT2990.F85 2001](#))**

An arresting memoir of growing up white in Southern Africa, set

against the backdrop of the Rhodesian civil war. Think *The Glass Castle* and all its dysfunction set in a world of land mines, automatic weapons, boarding school, and 'terrs'.

***The Secret History*, by Donna Tartt.**

(UI Library Main Stacks [PS3570.A657S4 1992](#))

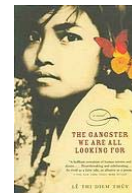
A deliciously rich novel about four exclusive students of Greek at a prep school in the East, and the fifth who is desperate to join their group. Once he does, he finds that the polished exterior hides some very dark secrets indeed. Filled with lush writing and psychological suspense of the neo-gothic kind, this sophomore effort by the author of the brilliant *The Little Friend* will leave you wishing for more.

***The Last of the Savages* by Jay McInerney (UI Library Main Stacks [PS3563.C3694L37](#)**

**[1996b](#))** The author of *Bright Lights, Big City* spins a thought-provoking tale of friendship, brotherhood, and family in the story of prep-school roommates Patrick Keane and Will Savage; a sort of *Catcher in the Rye* seasoned with issues of race, class, and entitlement.

***The Gangster We Are All Looking For* by Thi Diem Thuy Le** (UI Library Main Stacks [PS3612.E2G36 2003](#))

Although seemingly slight, stark, and lacking a plot, the structure of this debut novel is reflective of the unique challenges facing Le's characters, as they emigrate from Vietnam to Southern California. The imagery is rich with meaning, and the growth of the narrator brings a strength to the vignettes that make up the novel.



***Couldn't Keep it To Myself*, edited by Wally Lamb (NIC Stacks [PS548.C8 C68 2003](#))**

The York Correctional Institution had increasingly high numbers of inmate suicides, so they approached Wally Lamb to teach a writing workshop to help the women process their emotions in a productive way. This collection of stories from 11 of the women is the result of that workshop, and each is heartbreaking and revealing, both about the women themselves, but also about our own biases regarding prisons and prisoners.

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--Lynn Baird--

***Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia***, by Elizabeth Gilbert. (UI Library Main Stacks [G154.5.G55A3 2006](#))

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--Susan Mueller--

***Barchester Towers*** by Anthony Trollope. (UI Library Main Stacks [PR5684.B3](#))



***Eragon***, by Christopher Paolini (UI Library Main Stacks [PZ9.P345E73 2003](#))

***Age of Innocence***, by Edith Wharton (UI Library Main Stacks [PS3545.H16A7](#))

I enjoyed the first two, but felt I was slogging through the last. I guess it is hard to relate to the class and mores of the time.

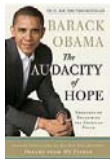
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--Diane Prorak--

***Twilight*** by Stephenie Meyer  
Very high school, but fun to see what all the fuss is about.



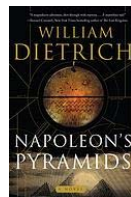
***The Maytrees*** by Annie Dillard  
Really good novel, but can't explain why.

***Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream***, by Barack Obama (UI Library Main Stacks [E901.1.O23A3 2006](#)) Good to learn more about our president elect.



***His Dark Materials*** by Philip Pullman. (UI Library Main Stacks [PR6066.U44H55 2005](#)) Deeper than expected.

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--Theresa Dahmen--  
***Napoleon's Pyramids*** by William Dietrich (BROWSING DIETRICH) was a fun read. The hero was incredibly lucky, but then he had to be in order to be able to tell the tale!



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--Barb Jordan--

***Water for Elephants***, by Sara Gruen. (LCSC Library [PS3607.R696 W38 2006](#))

"A novel of star-crossed lovers, set in the circus world circa 1932. When Jacob Jankowski,

recently orphaned and suddenly adrift, jumps onto a passing train, he enters a world of freaks, grifters, and misfits, a second-rate circus struggling to survive during the Great Depression, making one-night stands in town after endless town. A veterinary student who almost earned his degree, Jacob is put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It is there that he meets Marlena, the beautiful young star of the equestrian act, who is married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. He also meets Rosie, an elephant who seems untrainable until he discovers a way to reach her"--From publisher description.



***Dream When You're Feeling Blue*** by Elizabeth Berg (BROWSING BERG)

"Set in Chicago at the time of World War II, this is a wonderful story about three sisters, their lively family, and the men they love." - From the

book jacket

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--Jennifer O'Laughlin--

***Unaccustomed Earth***, by Jhumpa Lahiri. (BROWSING LAHIRI) Apparently this was a women's lit sort of year. This collection of short stories is about Bengali-American families, and the conflicts between the parents, who maintain their Indian heritage, and their children, who become part of the melting pot of US culture. There are many books on this topic, but Lahiri is one of those rare writers who finds the perfect word and the perfect sentence to create the perfect story. She is a treasure to read and no one should miss any of her books. Also, she's young, and is probably the most beautiful author on the planet. Her previous books, *The Namesake* and *Interpreter of Maladies* are modern-day classics also.

One of the other books I really enjoyed was a surprise. I was stuck in Seattle in the blizzard of January 2008 (not to be confused with the blizzard of December 2008) and went to an independent bookstore in Ravenna. I asked the owner what the Seattle book groups were reading and she suggested ***Broken for you***, by **Stephanie Kallos**. (UI Library Main Stacks [PS3611.A444B76 2004](#)) I loved it. Granted I was snowed in in my daughter's apartment in Wallingford, but this book was perfect for just that time. Broken hearts, broken promises, broken lives, broken plates (I will not explain this to you, you'll just have to read it) all taking place in Seattle, in familiar neighborhoods with characters who are engaging and complex. Interestingly, I mentioned this book to a Moscow friend and learned that the author performed in the IRT about 20 years ago. Caution: this book is decidedly "chick lit"--- a genre some of us adore on our off days.