

June 2, 2011

Dear Seventh Graders,

This summer you are to read three of the books on the following suggested list. Each book is an award winner and highly recommended by students who are your age. Several genres have been included on the list. I suggest that you keep a journal so that you can keep track of the characters, setting, important events, and your opinion of the book. **If you find other books that you would rather read instead of the suggested list, you may do so.** Just be sure to record the important information mentioned above.

You will be demonstrating your knowledge of these books during the first two weeks of school. These books are available at the public library, and you are strongly encouraged to join the U.A. Library Summer Reading Program!

Have a safe and enjoyable summer and have fun reading. I am looking forward to a great seventh grade year.

Sincerely,

Mrs. McCarron

City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau (series)

In the year 241, twelve-year-old Lina trades jobs on Assignment Day to be a Messenger to run to new places in her decaying but beloved city, perhaps even to glimpse Unknown Regions. (science fiction)

Thief Lord by Cornelia Funke

Orphaned brothers Prosper and Bo, having run away from their cruel aunt and uncle, decide to hide out in Venice where they fall in with the Thief Lord, a thirteen-year-old boy who leads a crime ring of street children. (historical)

Fair Weather by Richard Peck

In 1893 thirteen-year-old Rosie and members of her family travel from their Illinois farm to Chicago to visit Aunt Euterpe and attend the World's Columbian Exposition, which, along with an encounter with Buffalo Bill and Lillian Russell, turns out to be a life-changing experience for everyone. (historical)

Far North by Will Hobbs

After the destruction of their float plane, sixteen-year-old Gabe and his Dene friend, Raymond, struggle to survive a winter in the wilderness of the Northwest Territories. (adventure)

Among the Hidden by Margaret Peterson Haddix

In a future where the Population Police enforce the law limiting a family to only two children, 12-year-old Luke lives in fear on his family's farm until Jen convinces him that the government is wrong. (science fiction)

Stepping on the Cracks by Mary Downing Hahn

In 1944, while her brother is overseas fighting in World War II, eleven-year-old Margaret gets a new view of the school bully Gordy when she finds him hiding his own brother, an army deserter, and decides to help him. (historical)

Behind the Bedroom Wall by Laura E. Williams

thirteen-year-old Korinna must decide whether to report her parents to her Hitler youth group when she discovers that they are hiding Jews in a secret space behind Korinna's bedroom wall. (historical)

Spirit Seeker by Joan Lowery Nixon

To prove that her friend did not kill his parents, Holly enlists the help of a clairvoyant. (mystery)

Hope was Here by Joan Bauer

When sixteen-year-old Hope and the aunt who has raised her move from Brooklyn to Mulhoney, Wisconsin, to work as waitress and cook in the Welcome Stairways diner, they become involved with the diner owner's political campaign to oust the town's corrupt mayor. (realistic)

Chains by Laurie Halse

School Library Journal (October 1, 2008)

Gr 6-10-Set in New York City at the beginning of the American Revolution, *Chains* addresses the price of freedom both for a nation and for individuals. Isabel tells the story of her life as a slave. She was sold with her five-year-old sister to a cruel Loyalist family even though the girls were to be free upon the death of their former owner. She has hopes of finding a way to freedom and becomes a spy for the rebels, but soon realizes that it is difficult to trust anyone. She chooses to find someone to help her no matter which side he or she is on. With short chapters, each beginning with a historical quote, this fast-paced novel reveals the heartache and struggles of a country and slave fighting for freedom.

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

Esperanto and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression. (historical)

Milkweed by Jerry Spinelli

Captures the hardships and cruelty of life in the ghettos of Warsaw during the Nazi occupation of World War II, through the eyes of a Jewish orphan who must use all his wits and courage to survive unimaginable events and circumstances.
(historical)

Crispin: the Cross of Lead by Avi

Falsely accused of theft and murder, an orphaned peasant boy in fourteenth-century England flees his village and meets a larger-than-life juggler who holds a dangerous secret. (historical)

Chu Ju's House by Gloria Whelan

In order to save her baby sister, fourteen-year-old Chu Ju leaves her rural home in modern China and earns food and shelter by working on a sampan, tending silk worms, and planting rice seedlings, while wondering if she will ever see her family again.
(historical)

Slam! by Walter Dean Myers

Sixteen-year-old "Slam" Harris is counting on his noteworthy basketball talents to get him out of the inner city and give him a chance to succeed in life, but his coach sees things differently. (realistic)

Kick by Walter Dean Myers

Kevin Johnson is thirteen years old. And heading for juvie. He's a good kid, a great friend, and a star striker for his Highland, New Jersey, soccer team. His team is competing for the State Cup, and he wants to prove he has more than just star-player potential. Kevin's never been in any serious trouble . . . until the night he

ends up in jail. Enter Sergeant Brown, a cop assigned to be Kevin's mentor. If Kevin and Brown can learn to trust each other, they might be able to turn things around before it's too late.

When Zachary Beaver Came to Town by Kimberly Willis Holt

Toby Wilson is having the toughest summer of his life. It's the summer his mother leaves for good; the summer his best friend's brother returns from Vietnam in a coffin; and the summer that Zachary Beaver, the "fattest boy in the world," arrives. There are heartaches, friendships gained, and old friendships renewed. It's Zachary Beaver who turns the town of Antler upside down and leaves everyone, especially Toby, changed forever. (realistic)

Ella Enchanted by Gail Carson Levine

In this novel, based on the story of Cinderella, Ella struggles against the childhood curse that forces her to obey any order given to her.
(fairy tale, fantasy)

The Wanderer by Sharon Creech

Thirteen-year-old Sophie and her cousin Cody record their transatlantic crossing aboard the Wanderer, a forty-five foot sailboat, which, along with their uncles and another cousin, is en route to visit their grandfather in England. You may read other Creech books except *Walk Two Moons* which we will read next year. (realistic)

Under the Blood Red Sun by Graham Salisbury

After the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 13-year-old Tomizu, the American-born son of Japanese immigrants, suddenly becomes the man of the house after his father is arrested and discovers the true meaning of friendship and loyalty.

Loser by Jerry Spinelli

Even though his classmates from first grade on have considered him strange and a loser, Daniel Zinkoff's optimism and exuberance and the support of his loving family do not allow him to feel that way about himself.
(Realistic fiction)

The Big Field by Mike Lupica) or the Mike Lupica books written for students—*Summer Ball, Heat, Travel Team, Miracle on 49th Street, The Batboy*)

For Hutch, shortstop has always been home. It's where his father once played professionally, before injuries relegated him to watching games on TV instead of playing them. And it's where Hutch himself has always played and starred. Until now. The arrival of Darryl "D-Will" Williams, the top shortstop prospect from Florida since A-Rod, means Hutch is displaced, in more ways than one. Second base feels like second fiddle, and when he sees his father giving fielding tips to D-Will—the same father who can't be bothered to show up to watch his son play—Hutch feels betrayed. With the summer league championship on the line, just how far is Hutch willing to bend to be a good teammate? (sports)

Flush by Carl Hiaasen

With their father jailed for sinking a river boat, Noah Underwood and his younger sister, Abbey, must gather evidence that the owner of this floating casino is emptying his bilge tanks into the protected waters around their Florida Keys home. (Environmental fiction)

The Penderwicks : a summer tale of four sisters, two rabbits, and a very interesting boy By Jeanne Birdsall

While vacationing with their widowed father in the Berkshire Mountains, four lovable sisters, ages four through twelve, share adventures with a local boy, much to the dismay of his snobbish mother.

Red Pyramid by Rick Riordan Brilliant Egyptologist Dr. Julius Kane accidentally unleashes the Egyptian god Set, who banishes the doctor to oblivion and forces his two children to embark on a dangerous journey, bringing them closer to the truth about their family and its links to a secret order that has existed since the time of the pharaohs.

Chasing Mr. Lincoln's Killer by Swanson

If you're looking for an action-packed historical drama, all of it true, then you've got to check out this amazing book. It's the story of President Lincoln's assassination back in 1865, what led up to it, and how the killer James Wilkes Booth escaped and was caught. This book takes us into both the assassin's mind, and that of his pursuers, so that we are both fully aware of what's happening at any given moment, and also eager to see what happens next. It's an excellent piece of writing, accurate and informative, not to mention hard to put down.

The Rivalry : Mystery at the Army-Navy Game by John Feinstein.

Grades 6-9. In their latest adventure, precocious 14-year-old reporters Stevie Thomas and Susan Carol Anderson get a chance to help major Washington newspapers cover the Army-Navy football game and stumble across an illegal gambling racket, perpetrated by the game's officiating squad. Along the way, the cub reporters meet a number of actual famous people (Bob Woodward and Barack Obama, among others). Some of the dropped names of retired players and other old guys will have little resonance with young readers, and fans of the series will recognize that the mystery here isn't as compelling as those in previous installments. Still, sports fans, especially college football followers, will enjoy the behind-the-scenes look at the famous game.