

**7<sup>th</sup> and 8th Grade Summer Reading Book List**  
**Ooltewah Middle School**  
**2010-2011**

*Please choose ONE of the following books and read prior to the beginning of the school year. Also, please complete the attached form and be ready to discuss this novel with your Book Club Teacher.*

**Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli**

**Teacher: Surprise!**

From the day she arrives at quiet Mica High in a burst of color and sound, the hallways hum with the murmur of “Stargirl, Stargirl.” She captures Leo Borlock’s heart with just one smile. She sparks a school-spirit revolution with just one cheer, and the students of Mica High are enchanted. At first. Then they turn on her. Stargirl is suddenly shunned for everything that makes her different, and Leo, panicked and desperate with love, urges her to become the very thing that can destroy her: normal. In this celebration of nonconformity, Newberry Medalist Jerry Spinelli weaves an emotional tale about the perils of popularity- and the thrill and inspiration of first love.

**Lightening Thief by Rick Riorden**

**Teacher: Surprise!**

Dear Mortal Reader, I have sworn upon the River Styx that the events in this book are purely fictional. There is no such twelve-year-old boy as Perseus “Percy” Jackson. The Greek gods are nothing more than old myths. They certainly never have children with mortals in the twenty-first century, nor is there any such place as Camp Half-Blood, a summer camp for demigods on eastern Long Island where I train young heroes to survive against their monstrous enemies. Percy never met a satyr or a daughter of Athena. They most emphatically did not embark upon a quest together across the United States to reach the gates of the Underworld and prevent a catastrophic war between the gods. Having said this, I must warn you to think carefully before starting this book. If you feel anything stirring within you as you read- if you begin to suspect that this story may be describing something about your own life- STOP READING IMMEDIATELY. I cannot be held responsible for the consequences. May the gods of Olympia (who of course do not exist) watch over you. Yours sincerely, Chiton Kentavros, Immortal trainer of Heroes

**The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane**

**Teacher: Mr. Smith**

Although never having seen battle Stephen Cran vividly depicts the grueling intensity of the Americal Civil War. The story revolves around Henry Fleming, a member of the 304<sup>th</sup> regiment of the Union Army. At the start of the novel Henry is eager to show his patriotism in battle but when faced with the savagery of death he flees the front line. Throughout the novel Henry struggles with his courage in the face of the horror of war. The Red Badge of Courage is a classic modern depiction of the psychological turmoil of war from the perspective of an ordinary soldier.

## **Behind the Attic Wall by Sylvia Cassedy**

**Teacher: Mr. Whitecotton**

At twelve, Maggie had been thrown out of more boarding schools than she cared to remember. “Impossible to handle,” they said- nasty, mean, disobedient, rebellious, thieving- anything they could say to explain why she must be removed from the school. Maggie was thin and pale, with shabby clothes and stringy hair, when she arrived at her new home. “It was a mistake to bring her here,” said Maggie’s great-aunts, whose huge stone house looking like another boarding school- or a prison. But they took her in anyway. After all, aside from Uncle Morris, they were Maggie’s only living relatives. But from behind the closet door in the great and gloomy house, Maggie hears the faint whisperings, the beckoning voices. And in the forbidding house of her ancestors, Maggie finds magic... the kind that lets her, for the first time, love and be loved.

## **Al Capone Does My Shirts by Gennifer Choldenko**

**Teacher: Mrs. Evatt or Ms. Sebastian**

1935- “Today I moved to a twelve acre rock covered with cement, topped with bird turd and surrounded by water. I’m not the only kid who lives here. There’s my sister, Natalie, except she doesn’t count. And there are twenty-three other kids who live on that island because their dads work as guards or cooks or doctors or electricians for the prison, like my dad. Plus, there are a ton of murderers, rapists, hit men, con men, stickup men, embezzlers, connivers, burglars, kidnappers and maybe even an innocent man or two, though I doubt it. The convicts we have are the kind other prisons don’t want. I never knew prisons could be picky, but I guess they can. You get to Alcatraz by being the worst of the worst. Unless you’re me, I came here because my mother and I had to.

## **A Choice of Weapons by Gordon Parks**

**Teacher: Ms. Neal**

The youngest of 15 children, Parks was born into a poor, black family in a segregated town in rural Kansas. His mother was the main influence on his life, refusing to allow her son to justify failure with the excuse that he had been born black, and instilling in him self-confidence, ambition and a capacity for hard work. In Parks' early teens, his mother died and he was sent to live with a married sister in St. Paul, Minnesota. He and his brother-in-law did not get along and he was evicted within a few weeks. “A Choice of Weapons” is the autobiography of Gordon Parks and how he struggles to survive as a homeless teenager in a large city during the 1920s.

## **Canyons by Gary Paulson**

**Teacher: Ms. Henry**

Two boys, separated by the canyons of time and two vastly different cultures, face the challenges by which they will become men. Coyote Runs, and Apache boy, takes part in his first raid. But he is to be a man for only a short time... More than a hundred years later, while camping near Dog Canyon, fifteen-year-old Brennan Cole becomes obsessed with a skull that he finds, pierced by a bullet. He learns that it is the skull of an Apache boy executed by soldiers in 1864. A mystical link joins Brennan and Coyote Runs, and Brennan knows that neither boy will find peace until Coyote Tuns’ skull is carried back to an ancient sacred place. In a grueling journey through the canyon to return the skull, Brennan confronts the challenge of his life.

## **American Born Chinese by Gene Lee Yang**

**Teacher: Ms. Manning**

American Born Chinese is a graphic novel which contains three intertwined stories. The first story is about Jin Wang who wants to fit in, but he is the only Chinese-American at his school. He gets bullied and has hardly any friends, then he falls in love with an American girl. The second story is about the Monkey King, one of the oldest Chinese fables, and how he wants to be a god and not a monkey. The final story deals with Chin-Kee. He is the ultimate Chinese stereotype and ruining his cousin's life. You will find out how these three stories intertwine in an unexpected twist!

## **Crossing the Wire by Will Hobbs**

**Teacher: Ms. Hernandez**

In the mountains of central Mexico, fifteen-year-old Victor Flores has been scratching out a living for his family by farming ever since his father died. Days after Victor's best friend, Rico, runs away from home to seek a better life in the U.S., Victor learns that he may not be able to sell his corn this year. As his family teeters on the brink of disaster, Victor heads north in an attempt to "cross the wire" into the States, find work, and send money home. Unlike Rico, Victor has no experienced men to travel with and no coyote money to pay the smugglers who sneak illegal workers across the border. He resorts to jumping trains. For a while Victor travels with Julio from Honduras, then the mysterious Miguel, and finally with his childhood friend, Rico. Victor's journey is fraught with danger as he faces freezing cold, the scorching heat of the Arizona desert, hunger, and dead ends. It's a gauntlet run by millions attempting to cross the border. Through Victor's often desperate struggle, Will Hobbs brings to life one of the great dramas of our time.

## **Last of the Breed by Louis L'Amour**

**Teacher: Mr. Mahoney**

This is the compelling story of U.S. Air Force Major Joe Mack, a man born out of time. When his experimental aircraft is forced down in Russia and he escapes a Soviet prison camp, he must call upon the ancient skills of his Indian forebears to survive the vast Siberian wilderness. Only one route lies open to Mack: the path to his ancestors, overland to the Bering Strait and across the sea to America. But in pursuit is a legendary tracker, the Yakut native Alekhin, who knows every square foot to the icy frontier- and who knows that to trap his quarry he must think like a Sioux.

## **Gathering Blue by Lois Lowry**

**Teacher: Ms. Feiling**

Kira, an orphan with a twisted leg, lives in a world where the weak are cast aside. She fears for her future until she is spared by the all-powerful Council of Guardians. Kira is a gifted weaver and is assigned a task that no other community member can carry out. While her talent keeps her alive and brings certain privileges, Kira soon realizes that she is surrounded by mysteries and secrets. No one must know of her plans to uncover the truth about her world- and to find out what exists beyond it.

## **Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Myers**

**Teacher: Surprise!**

Seventeen-year-old Richie Perry has just graduated from high school. There's no way he can afford college, and the streets are just too hard. So he signs up for the army and gets shipped off to Vietnam. In a battlefield jungle where every move can mean the difference between life and death, he meets PeeWee, Lobel, Johnson, and Brunner. They're all here for different reasons, but now they share a single dream- getting out alive.

## **The Contender by Robert Lipsyte**

**Teacher: Mr. Drago**

Before you can be a champion, you have to be a contender... Alfred Brooks is scared. He's a high school dropout and his grocery store job is leading nowhere. His best friend is sinking further and further into addiction. Some street kids are after him for something he didn't even do. So Alfred begins going to Donatelli's Gym, a boxing club in Harlem that's trained champions. There he learns it's the effort, not the win, that makes the man, that last desperate struggle to get back on your feet when you thought you were down for the count.

## **Dear John by Nicholas Sparks**

**Teacher: Ms. Solock**

"Dear John," the letter read. And with those words, a heart was broken and two lives changed forever. When Savannah Lynn Curtis comes into his life, John Tyree knows he is ready to turn over a new leaf. And angry rebel, he had enlisted in the army after high school, not knowing what else to do. Then, during a furlough, he meets Savannah, the girl of his dreams. The attraction is mutual and quickly grows into the kind of love that leaves Savannah vowing to wait for John while he finishes his tour of duty. But neither can foresee that 9/11 is about to change the world. Like so many proud men and women, John must choose between love and country. Now, when he finally returns to North Carolina, John will discover how love can transform us in ways we never could have imagined.

## **Spying on Miss Muller by Eve Bunting**

**Teacher: Ms. Lawrence**

Before World War II began, Jessie Drumm and her friends at Alveara boarding school in Belfast liked their German teacher, Miss Muller. But after Jessie sees the teacher climbing to the roof at night, she and the others wonder if Miss Muller is a secret agent, signaling the enemy. Hoping to prove her favorite teacher's innocence, Jessie agrees to help spy on her. The escalating war, Jessie's family problems, a first romance, and the revelation of Miss Muller's real purpose intertwine in this suspenseful, sensitively written novel. Eve Bunting combines her own youthful experiences with a keen sense of the intense, sometimes painful process of growing up during wartime.

## **Nineteen Minutes by Jodi Piccoul**

**Teacher: Mrs. Kuttig**

Sterling is an ordinary New Hampshire town where nothing ever happens- until the day its complacency is shattered by an act of violence. Josie Cormier, the daughter of the judge sitting on the case, should be the best state's witness, but she can't remember what happened before her very own eyes- or can she? As the trial progresses, fault lines between the high school and the adult community begin to show- destroying the closest of friendships and families. Nineteen Minutes asks what it means to be different in our society, who has the right to judge someone else, and whether anyone is ever really who they seem to be.

## **Athletic Shorts by Chris Crutcher**

**Teacher: Coach Williams**

Open this book and meet Angus Bethune, the fat kid who is quick on his feet; Johnny, whose father makes him do ten push-ups every time he hears a word he doesn't like; Petey, who gets volunteered to wrestle the toughest opponent around; and Lionel, a good swimmer and an orphan. These and other quirky, sometimes lovable, sometimes bitingly sarcastic teenage athletes and their deeply touching, sharply humorous stories are waiting to talk to you. In six short stories, master storyteller Chris Crutcher captures the world of real teenagers facing challenges and doing their best- no matter what happens.

## **Shoeless Joe by W.P. Kinsella**

**Teacher: Coach Crawford**

The voice of a baseball announcer tells Iowa farmer Ray Kinsella: "If you build it, he will come." "He" is Shoeless Joe Jackson, Ray's hero. "It" is a baseball stadium, which Ray carves out of his cornfield. Shoeless Joe is about baseball. But it's also about love and the power of dreams to make people come alive. Will you be among the Iowa dreamers who can see a cornfield stadium filled with baseball's greatest heroes?

## **Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom**

**Teacher: Mrs. Bell**

Maybe it was a grandparent, or a teacher, or a colleague. Someone older, patient and wise, who understood you when you were young and searching, helped you see the world as a more profound place, gave you sound advice to help you make your way through it. For Mitch Albom, that person was Morrie Schwartz, his college professor from nearly twenty years ago. Maybe, like Mitch, you lost track of this mentor as you made your way, and the insights faded, and the world seemed colder. Wouldn't you like to see that person again, ask the bigger questions that still haunt you, receive wisdom for your busy life today the way you once did when you were younger? Mitch Albom had that second chance. He rediscovered Morrie in the last months of the older man's life. Knowing he was dying, Morrie visited with Mitch in his study every Tuesday, just as they used to back in college. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final "class": lessons in how to live.