

St. Thomas Aquinas High School

Summer Reading 2013

The goals of the Summer Reading program at STA are to enhance the reading life of our students, to expand the curriculum and to promote the belief that reading is one of life's great pleasures. To that end, the Summer Reading Program consists of two parts. One is required of all students, while the other is completely optional and open to any student who might enjoy reading some of our faculty's favorite books.

PART I – THE REQUIRED BOOK:

Each student will be required to read ONE book designated by grade level. That is, all 9th grade students will read the same book, etc. The book for each grade level has been chosen by one of the academic departments and will be discussed at the beginning of the school year in a given class. For instance, students in 12th Grade will be required to read a book for their English classes. (11th Grade – Social Studies; 10th Grade – Theology; 9th Grade – Science)

IMPORTANT: You will take a test on the required book during the first week of school next fall.

Grade 9: *The Hot Zone* by Richard Preston

The story behind *The Hot Zone* began in central Africa, where a mysterious virus appeared and killed a large number of people in a fast acting epidemic – the first Ebola outbreak. Since the Ebola virus was identified, great care has been taken to isolate and prevent its spread. However, Preston's frightening account of the reappearance of Ebola in a laboratory near Washington D.C. is a mesmerizing story of the power of nature and the need for scientists to be on guard against its dangers. And it's all the more chilling because it's true.

Grade 10: *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho

The Alchemist is an enchanting fantasy about Santiago, a Spanish shepherd boy, who desires to see the world, and dreams of a hidden treasure. This sets him off on a quest through which he discovers his own strengths and gifts, the value of friendship and the power of love. His quest for experience and treasure becomes a spiritual journey on which he discovers that the entire world is filled with signs of its creator. He also discovers the divine spirit within himself.

Grade 11: *The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara

In July 1863, the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia under the generalship of Robert E. Lee invaded the North with the hope of ending the Civil War. The Union Army of the Potomac, George Meade commanding, followed in pursuit. The two armies would meet at the small Pennsylvania town of Gettysburg. Over the course of three days, 150,000 soldiers would participate in the bloodiest conflict of the Civil War. *The Killer Angels* is a retelling of these fateful three days as two armies motivated by two very different purposes fought and made Gettysburg the single largest military engagement in the history of the Western Hemisphere. Michael Shaara's chilling narrative and compelling characters from North and South provide a human element to this horrific bloodshed, for it is in this sweeping work that one comes to understand that the war was far more than generals and soldiers. It was a story of pride, love, honor, and fraternity that transcended regional bounds.

Grade 12: *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

Based on his own experiences as a soldier in Vietnam, O'Brien writes of the life of a soldier, an American boy, a human being faced with the terrible truths of war. In doing so, he also writes about writing, claiming that works of fiction convey human truth more effectively than do reality or memory. This is an amazing novel, one which is clearly a blend of the real experiences and straightforward voice of a soldier of the 1960's, with the imagination of a writer looking back and trying to understand his life. This is truly one of those books we all should read.

PART II -- THE OPTIONAL PORTION:

The second component is optional. Any student may choose to read a book from the list of "Faculty Favorites." In September, you will take a test on the book(s) you read, to be given by the teacher who nominated the book. At that time, you will choose to have your score count as an extra grade in any subject you wish. (For example, you might read Mr. Tinney's book, but have it count for your Physics class.) **NOTE:** **Students will be limited to **THREE** books in this optional portion.

Faculty Favorites

Mr. Adams – *Quiet Strength* by Tony Dungy

SPORTS/NONFICTION

"Tony Dungy's words and example have intrigued millions of people, particularly following his victory in Super Bowl XLI, the first for an African American coach. How is it possible for a coach—especially a football coach—to win the respect of his players and lead them to the Super Bowl without the screaming histrionics, the profanities, the demand that the sport come before anything else? How is it possible for anyone to be successful without compromising faith and family? In this inspiring and reflective memoir, Coach Dungy tells the story of a life lived for God and family—and challenges us all to redefine our ideas of what it means to succeed." -- from the publisher

Mr. Adams – *The Shack* by Wm. Paul Young

FICTION

"Mackenzie Allen Philips' youngest daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later in the midst of his great sadness, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back into the shack for the weekend. Against his better judgment he arrives at the shack on a wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. What he finds there will change Mack's world forever.

"In a world where religion seems to grow increasingly irrelevant *The Shack* wrestles with the timeless question, "Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain?" The answer Mack gets will astound you and perhaps transform you as much as it did him. You'll want everyone you know to read this book!" -- from the cover description

Mr. Burnett – *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo

FICTION

"*Les Misérables* tells the story of the peasant Jean Valjean—unjustly imprisoned, baffled by destiny, and hounded by his nemesis, the magnificently realized, ambiguously malevolent police detective Javert. As Valjean struggles to redeem his past, we are thrust into the teeming underworld of Paris with all its poverty, ignorance, and suffering. Just as cruel tyranny threatens to extinguish the last vestiges of hope, rebellion sweeps over the land like wildfire, igniting a vast struggle for the democratic ideal in France. A monumental classic dedicated to the oppressed, the underdog, the laborer, the rebel, the orphan, and the misunderstood, *Les Misérables* is a rich, emotional novel that captures nothing less than the entirety of life in nineteenth-century France." -- from the publisher. Note on various editions: There are various editions and translations of this classic, some better than others. Of the translations that I have read, I personally recommend the Norman Denny translation because I found it to read more fluently than some of the more literal translations. Another edition that I recommend is the *Barnes and Noble Classic Series* edition, translated by C.E. Wilbur. It is abridged, and omits some chapters that have extraneous detail about Paris, the convent, etc...However, the omissions do not detract from the plot or storyline.

Mr. Campbell – *The Nick Adams Stories* by Ernest Hemingway

FICTION

No American writer had a greater influence on American Literature and American popular culture than Ernest Hemingway, and no character was more important to Hemingway than Nick Adams, whom he first introduced in *In Our Time* and to whom he kept returning for many, many years. Nick is the only Hemingway character we get to see mature from childhood to parenthood, which makes him an important touchstone for all those other Hemingway tough guys. This would be a good book for juniors who will be studying American Lit (and F. Scott Fitzgerald) next year, for seniors who will be reading Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* next spring, and a *great* book for honors freshman and sophomores because Mr. Campbell loves Hemingway and you'd get on his good side right up front!

Mme. Chamberlain – *The Storyteller* by Jodi Picoult

FICTION

Sage Singer is a baker, a loner, until she befriends an old man who's particularly beloved in her community. Josef Weber is everyone's favorite retired teacher and Little League coach. One day he asks Sage for a favor: to kill him. Shocked, Sage refuses—and then he confesses his darkest secret – he deserves to die because he had been a Nazi SS guard. And Sage's grandmother is a Holocaust survivor. How do you react to evil living next door? Can someone who's committed truly heinous acts ever atone with subsequent good behavior? Should you offer forgiveness to someone if you aren't the party who was wronged? And, if Sage even considers the request, is it revenge...or justice? – from author's website

Mr. Christie – *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson

SCIENCE FICTION

From the opening line of his breakthrough cyberpunk novel *Snow Crash*, Neal Stephenson plunges the reader into a not-too-distant future. It is a world where the Mafia controls pizza delivery, the United States exists as a patchwork of corporate-franchise city-states, and the Internet--incarnate as the Metaverse--looks something like last year's hype would lead you to believe it should. Enter Hiro Protagonist--hacker, samurai swordsman, and pizza-delivery driver. When his best friend fries his brain on a new designer drug called *Snow Crash* and his beautiful, brainy ex-girlfriend asks for his help, what's a guy with a name like that to do? He rushes to the rescue. A breakneck-paced 21st-century novel, *Snow Crash* interweaves everything from Sumerian myth to visions of a postmodern civilization on the brink of collapse. Faster than the speed of television and a whole lot more fun, *Snow Crash* is the portrayal of a future that is bizarre enough to be plausible.

Mr. Christie – *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell

FICTION

A classic dystopian novel published in 1949, *1984* is set in the eponymous year and focuses on a repressive, totalitarian regime. The story follows the life of one seemingly insignificant man, Winston Smith, a civil servant assigned the task of perpetuating the regime's propaganda by falsifying records and political literature. Smith grows disillusioned with his meager existence and so begins a rebellion against the system that leads to his arrest and torture.

Mr. Collins -- *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card

SCIENCE FICTION

I read this novel when it was first published in the late 1970's and I've waited 35 years for the film to be made. Finally, in November, this much-anticipated movie will be released. It's the science fiction story of a young boy chosen to lead the Earth's forces against an alien enemy. Adults are too predictable, and the enemy (the "buggers") easily adapt to predictability. And so, select teams of young boys and girls – some as young as seven years old – are trained in outer space for the inevitable final battle. The most prominent, resourceful and charismatic young soldier is Andrew "Ender" Wiggin, who must overcome all the obstacles deliberately put in his way by the adults in charge of Battle School.

If you like science fiction, video games and stories in which the protagonist is a (very) young hero, *Ender's Game* is a tale for the ages.

Mrs. Collins -- *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White

FICTION

This modern classic is a re-telling of the stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, starting with the familiar first section, "The Sword in the Stone." The story of young Arthur continues as he discovers the real story of his parents, meets and weds the beautiful Guinevere and follows his dream of a world where "Might" doesn't always rule over "Right," a world modeled on Christian principles and defended by the Knights of the Round Table. T.H. White uses humor, magic and good storytelling to weave this beautiful, timeless story.

Mrs. Collins -- *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte

FICTION

Set in England in the early 1800's, *Jane Eyre* tells the story of a young girl left in the care of a cruel aunt, who is sent to a school for poor children and has to make her way in the world. She becomes governess to a little girl, and when she meets her employer, the mysterious Mr. Rochester, the romance begins. *Jane Eyre* is a classic in the gothic style, and full of rich detail and surprises. Enjoy!

Mrs. Corr -- *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult

FICTION

My Sister's Keeper explores the difficulties a family faces with one daughter who suffers a serious illness, and a second daughter whose healthy body serves to keep her sister alive through blood transfusions and other medical procedures. Now that the younger daughter is thirteen, she wants to make her own medical decisions; when a kidney transplant is being planned, she hires a lawyer to sue for independence. The perspective of each of the various family members is examined with compassion as the plot builds to a surprising twist at the end.

Mrs. Corr -- *Keeping Faith* by Jodi Picoult

FICTION

"In the aftermath of a sudden divorce, Mariah struggles with depression and her daughter, Faith, seeks solace in a new friend... a friend who may or may not be imaginary.... Faith talks to her "Guard" constantly, and begins to recite passages from the Bible— a book she's never read. Fearful for her daughter's sanity, Mariah sends her to several psychiatrists. Yet when Faith develops stigmata and begins to perform miraculous healings, Mariah wonders if her daughter-- a girl with no religious background-- might indeed be seeing God. As word spreads and controversy heightens, Mariah and Faith are besieged by believers and disbelievers alike, caught in a media circus that threatens what little stability they have left.

"Fascinating, thoughtful, and suspenseful, *Keeping Faith* explores a family plagued by the media, the medical profession, and organized religion in a world where everyone has an opinion but no one knows the truth. At her controversial and compelling best, Jodi Picoult masterfully explores the moment when boundaries break down, when illusions become reality, and when the only step left to take is a leap of faith." – from the publisher's website: <http://www.harpercollins.com>

Mr. Cullity -- *Dracula* by Bram Stoker

FICTION

Lately, we've experienced an explosion of interest in all things vampire. The *Twilight* books and movies, television shows such as HBO's *Trueblood*, and, heck, even Count Chocula cereal owe an enormous debt of gratitude to this 1897 vampire novel by an otherwise conventional-thinking Irishman. Abraham "Bram" Stoker awoke from an eerie dream with the basic idea for a novel wholly different from anything he had written before. *Dracula* chronicles the experiences of several ordinary members of Victorian society as they encounter the utterly mysterious and morbidly sinister Count Dracula. The novel has at least a small relationship with fact. Stoker borrowed the name for his fictional count from a notorious, 15th century Romanian tyrant: Vlad "The Impaler" Dracula. If you have a thirst for a truly blood-curdling tale this summer, look no further than one of the original vampire stories, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

Mr. Cullity -- *Cat's Cradle* by Kurt Vonnegut

FICTION

This is a book I taught to seniors a few years ago and have loved ever since. Short chapters, a fast pace, unforgettable characters, and a truly wild plot are just some of the plusses. It's all strung together (pun intended!) by Vonnegut's trademark ironic wit and blackly humorous vision. Here's what Amazon.com has to say: "*Cat's Cradle* is Kurt Vonnegut's satirical commentary on modern man and his madness. An apocalyptic tale of this planet's ultimate fate, it features a midget as a main character, a complete, original theology created by a calypso singer, and a vision of the future that is at once blackly fatalistic and hilariously funny. A book that left an indelible mark on an entire generation of readers, *Cat's Cradle* is one of the twentieth century's most important works—and Vonnegut at his very best."

Mr. Dinan -- *Moby-Duck: The True Story of 28,800 Bath Toys Lost at Sea and of the Beachcombers, Oceanographers, Environmentalists, and Fools, Including the Author, Who Went in Search of Them* by Donovan Hohn

NONFICTION

This book sounds interesting. I'm planning to read it this summer. Here's the description from the Amazon website: "When the writer Donovan Hohn heard of the mysterious loss of thousands of bath toys at sea, he figured he would interview a few oceanographers, talk to a few beachcombers, and read up on Arctic science and geography. But questions can be like ocean currents: waded in too far, and they carry you away. Hohn's accidental odyssey pulls him into the secretive arena of shipping conglomerates, the daring work of Arctic researchers, the lunatic risks of maverick sailors, and the shadowy world of Chinese toy factories. *Moby-Duck* is a journey into the heart of the sea and an adventure through science, myth, the global economy, and some of the worst weather imaginable."

Mr. Dinan -- *Seabiscuit: An American Legend* by Laura Hillenbrand

NONFICTION

"Seabiscuit was one of the most electrifying and popular attractions in sports history and the single biggest newsmaker in the world in 1938, receiving more coverage than FDR, Hitler, or Mussolini. But his success was a surprise to the racing establishment, which had written off the crooked-legged racehorse with the sad tail. Three men changed Seabiscuit's fortunes: Charles Howard was a onetime bicycle repairman who introduced the automobile to the western United States and became an overnight millionaire. When he needed a trainer for his new racehorses, he hired Tom Smith, a mysterious mustang breaker from the Colorado plains. Smith urged Howard to buy Seabiscuit for a bargain-basement price, then hired as his jockey Red Pollard, a failed boxer who was blind in one eye, half-crippled, and prone to quoting passages from Ralph Waldo Emerson. Over four years, these unlikely partners survived a phenomenal run of bad fortune, conspiracy, and severe injury to transform Seabiscuit from a neurotic, pathologically indolent also-ran into an American sports icon. Author Laura Hillenbrand brilliantly re-creates a universal underdog story, one that proves life is a horse race." -- from Amazon.com

Dr. DiPietro – *Lessons from Little Rock* by Terrence Roberts

NONFICTION

Having met Terrence Roberts recently, I look forward to reading his story. Here is Amazon's description: "Sober news reports of a U.S. Army convoy rumbling across the bridge into Little Rock cannot overpower this intimate, powerful, personal account of the integration of Little Rock Central High School. Showing what it felt like to be one of those nine students who wanted only a good high school education, Roberts's rich narrative and candid voice take readers through that rocky year, helping us realize that the historic events of the Little Rock integration crisis happened to real people—to children, parents, our fellow citizens."

Ms. Donndelinger – *The Power and the Glory* by Graham Greene

FICTION

Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* is engaging and thought-provoking. The book is set in Mexico during a period when the government has outlawed Catholic practices. The main character is a Catholic priest who is thought by the government to be the last priest, and so, is hunted by the government to be executed. While the reader may think of his journey on-the-run as heroic, the priest, and others around him, see his actions and life as cowardly and sinful. This is a story of journey; not only will it give you a different perspective on the Catholic Church's role in our world, but it will help you consider the impact you might make in others' lives.

Mr. Harrison – *A God in Ruins* by Leon Uris

FICTION

"Spanning the decades from World War II to the 2008 presidential campaign, *A God in Ruins* is the story of Quinn Patrick O'Connell, an honest, principled, and courageous man on the brink of becoming the second Irish Catholic President of the United States. But Quinn is a man with an explosive secret that can shatter his political ambitions, threaten his life, and tear the country apart--a secret buried for over a half century--that even he does not know..." -- publisher's description

Mr. Harrison – *The World as We Know It* by Joseph Monninger

FICTION

(Note: *The author is a former English teacher at STA; this was his first teaching job. I had him in 1979, and he is now an English Professor at Plymouth State.*) "A lifetime of friendship begins the day brothers Ed and Allard save Sarah from drowning in an icy river near their rural New Hampshire home. Though their paths diverge through the years, the connection between the three endures until a heartbreaking tragedy in the remote mountains of Wyoming forces Sarah and Allard to confront the unthinkable. In their grief, they find themselves on separate journeys that test the enduring bonds of their relationship and time's unremitting power to heal. *The World as We Know It* is subtle and heartrending—a love story of friendship, nature, and the surprising twists that can alter our destinies forever." -- Amazon

Mr. Holtz – *Prey* by Michael Crichton

FICTION

Prey tells the story of a mechanical plague and the desperate attempts of several scientists to destroy it. "A cloud of nanoparticles - microrobots - has escaped from the laboratory. This cloud is self-sustaining and self-reproducing. It is intelligent and it learns from experience. For all practical purposes, it is alive. It has been programmed as a predator. It is evolving swiftly, becoming more deadly with each passing hour. Every attempt to destroy it has failed. And we are prey." -- from the book cover

Mr. Holtz – *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot

FICTION

"From a single, abbreviated life grew a seemingly immortal line of cells that made some of the most crucial innovations in modern science possible. And from that same life, and those cells, Rebecca Skloot has fashioned in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* a fascinating and moving story of medicine and family, of how life is sustained in laboratories and in memory. Henrietta Lacks was a mother of five in Baltimore, a poor African American migrant from the tobacco farms of Virginia, who died from a cruelly aggressive cancer at the age of 30 in 1951. A sample of her cancerous tissue, taken without her knowledge or consent, as was the custom then, turned out to provide one of the holy grails of mid-century biology: human cells that could survive--even thrive--in the lab. Known as HeLa cells, their stunning potency gave scientists a building block for countless breakthroughs, beginning with the cure for polio. Meanwhile, Henrietta's family continued to live in poverty and frequently poor health, and their discovery decades later of her unknowing contribution--and her cells' strange survival--left them full of pride, anger, and suspicion. For a decade, Skloot doggedly but compassionately gathered the threads of these stories, slowly gaining the trust of the family while helping them learn the truth about Henrietta, and with their aid she tells a rich and haunting story that asks the questions, Who owns our bodies? And who carries our memories?" --Tom Nissley (Amazon review)

Mr. Kaubris – *A Land More Kind Than Home* by Wiley Cash

FICTION

An impressive debut novel about a bond between two brothers and the challenges they face in a small North Carolina town. Christopher, the older boy is handicapped, which forces his younger brother Jess into the unintended role of guardian. But when the boys' curiosity gets the best of them, problems start and tragedy results. As the book jacket states, "While there is much about the world that still confuses Jess, he now knows that a new understanding can bring not only a growing danger and evil- but also the possibility of freedom and deliverance as well." Told by 3 interesting and unique characters- Jess, Adelaide Lyle, the town midwife and moral conscience, and Clem Barefield, the town sheriff, this is a haunting tale of courage, family dynamics and the power of love.

Mr. Kaubris -- *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jamie Ford

FICTION

A moving story of love lost during wartime. In 1942, Japanese families were interned, most for the remainder of WWII. Henry, a young man, himself of Chinese descent, meets Keiko, a young Japanese girl and they become instant friends. Their bonds are forged, not only because they are decidedly in the minority among their peers in Seattle, but because of their love of music. Even though they spend only a few months getting to know each other, the feelings run deep. Their friendship transcends the prejudices of their old world ancestors and an all-white school. Written from 2 points of view; one set in 1942 and the other in 1986. This book will take you on Henry's roller-coaster journey as he revisits the sacrifices he made for family, love and country.

Mr. Kaubris -- *The Sweet Season* by Austin Murphy

NONFICTION/SPORTS

A sportswriter rediscovers football, family and a bit of faith at Minnesota's St. John's University. From the back cover of the book: "After fifteen years as a *Sports Illustrated* writer, pleading for interviews with large men in possession of larger egos, Austin Murphy decides to bail out. The time has come, he concludes, to fly beneath the radar of big league sports, to while away a season with the Johnnies. So, he moves his family to the middle of Minnesota to chronicle a season at St. John's, a Division III program that has reached unparalleled success under the unorthodox guidance of John "Gags" Gagliardi. "*The Sweet Season* is an account of what happens when a family pulls up stakes and spends months in a strange and wonderful place. It is also, not incidentally, the story of the most incredible football program in the country, run by a smiling sage who has forgotten more about the game than most of his peers will ever know." This is a great book, no matter if you like, or even understand, football! Austin Murphy writes a humorous, easy-reading account of his 4 months in mid-America. The author confronts the challenges of raising two young children while trying to enhance a marriage and write a book! It is equal parts inspiring, touching, bawdy and life-affirming!

Mrs. Kirsch – *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

FICTION

Though *The Book Thief* is a novel set in World War II Germany, it is NOT your typical Holocaust story. For starters, it's told from the point of view of Death. You know, that guy who wears a black cape and carries a scythe. (Although early on our narrator informs us that the scythe is a human invention which he finds quite humorous. He does wear the cape.) Death tells us all about a girl named Liesel who is torn from her mother at the start of World War II and sent to live with foster parents. Liesel finds solace in stealing books and in her friendship with a Jewish boxer who comes to hide in her parents' basement. *The Book Thief* is an inventive narrative that incorporates a bit of poetry and illustration. Give it a read—you won't be disappointed.

Mr. Lloyd – *Joyland* by Stephen King

FICTION

"*Joyland* is a book that cheats the reader but not the way one could complain. The cover and synopsis tells that you're about to read a suspense story that takes place in Joyland, an amusement park. And yes...you'll get that. But you also get one of the best life experiences present in King's books. A story of how a life could change when a heart is broken and objectives suddenly change, forcing college student Devin Jones to find a way to heal himself while working at Joyland."

Mr. Luddy – *Room* by Emma Donoghue's

FICTION

This is the story of a young boy, Jack (aged 5) and his mother who spend their life so far in one room. The story is told through the perspective of Jack, and while the story is sometimes quite devastating, it is also funny and optimistic. Here is the blurb from Amazon's best of the month description in 2010: "In many ways, Jack is a typical 5-year-old. He likes to read books, watch TV, and play games with his Ma. But Jack is different in a big way--he has lived his entire life in a single room, sharing the tiny space with only his mother and an unnerving nighttime visitor known as Old Nick. For Jack, Room is the only world he knows, but for Ma, it is a prison in which she has tried to craft a normal life for her son. When their insular world suddenly expands beyond the confines of their four walls, the consequences are piercing and extraordinary. Despite its profoundly disturbing premise, Emma Donoghue's *Room* is rife with moments of hope and beauty, and the dogged determination to live, even in the most desolate circumstances. A stunning and original novel of survival in captivity, readers who enter Room will leave staggered, as though, like Jack, they are seeing the world for the very first time.

Mr. Luddy – *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon

FICTION

The narrator of this novel is Christopher John Francis Boone, a teen who is trying to come to terms with his parents' divorce, a confusing world and a dead dog. It's part mystery, part sad and complete fun. The book captures the voice of a boy who is slow to catch on to the complexities of life, and reluctant to accept the world as different to how it first appears to him. If you've ever wondered how a very literal mind works, this book will allow you to take a humorous look; you'll also see many of the irrational and funny things that we take for granted.

Mrs. Mann – *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Frank McCourt was born in Depression-era Brooklyn to recent Irish immigrants and raised in the slums of Ireland. Frank's mother, Angela, has no money to feed the children since Frank's father rarely works, and when he does he drinks his wages. However, Frank lives for his father's tales of Cuchulain, who saved Ireland, and of the angel who brings his mother babies. He endures poverty and the cruelty of relatives, neighbors and the world. It is an amazing story about survival and the pursuit of the American dream.

Ms. Pate – *Secrets, Lies, & Alibis* by Patricia H. Rushford and Harrison James

FICTION

I have always loved a good detective story. Patricia H. Rushford is one of my favorite authors in this category. I began reading her young adult Jenny McGrady series back in my middle and high school days. From there I was hooked! I continue to read her books, but now her books written for adults. The one I have chosen for summer reading is the first book in a series called *The McAllister Files*. In this book you will find the beginning of Mac's career: "With his newly minted detective badge, 'Mac' McAllister reports for his first assignment with the Oregon State Police: a particularly gruesome homicide. It's a headline case, as the victim – Megan Tyson – was brutally murdered mere weeks before her wedding. The investigation turns up far too many suspects, and too little hard evidence" -- from the cover.

Mr. Payeur – *Once a Runner* by John L. Parker

FICTION/SPORTS

If you are a competitor at heart you need to read this book. *Once a Runner* captures the essence of what it means to be a competitive runner: to devote your entire existence to a single-minded pursuit of excellence. It has become one of the most beloved sports novels ever written (Barnes and Noble). Check out the reviews on Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Here are some of the professional reviews: "By far the most accurate fictional portrayal of the world of the serious runner. . . a marvelous description of the way it really is." - *Kenny Moore, of Sports Illustrated* "The best novel ever written about running." -- *Runner's World*

Mrs. Payeur – *The Miracle of St. Anthony: A Season with Coach Bob Hurley and Basketball's Most Improbable Dynasty* by Adrian Woinarowski

SPORTS

If you want to be motivated by an inspirational basketball coach, both on and off the court, this book is for you. Coach Bob Hurley teaches basketball skills, but more importantly life skills to inner city high school boys.

Mr. and Mrs. Payeur – *When the Game Was Ours* by Larry Bird and Earvin Magic Johnson with Jackie MacMullan

SPORTS

Get the inside scoop from Larry, Magic and their teammates. They give a firsthand account of this ageless rivalry. This story is about basketball, competition and friendship. It's a fun a read and gives you an insight to the history of both the Lakers and Celtics! Enjoy!!!

Dr. Pike – *The Colour of Magic* by Terry Pratchett (or any novel in the Discworld series)

FICTION

Terry Pratchett invented the Discworld universe in 1983 with the *The Colour of Magic*, the first in a series that contains at least 36 novels. Discworld is a flat planet resting on the backs of four elephants riding on the back of a turtle that slowly makes its way across the universe. Almost all books in this series are good reads, fantasy fiction about a world that is very different from our own; the magic, the witches, the wizards, trolls and vampires are all real, but the plots are often subtle satire (and not so subtle satire) of our world.

Dr. Pike – *Heat: Adventures in the World's Fiery Places* by Bill Streever

NONFICTION/SCIENCE

Bill Streever is one of my favorite science writers; he writes exciting personal narratives about whatever subject he is focusing on, in this case 'heat', in which he interweaves science, history and interesting stories. Melting glaciers, warming oceans, droughts-it's clear that today's world is getting hotter. But while we know the agony of a sunburn or the comfort of our winter heaters, do we really understand heat? Streever starts off with his fascination with firewalking and ends up drinking crude oil, exploring thermonuclear weapons and the hottest moment of all time—the big bang. Anyone interested in science trivia should like this book!

Mr. Prince – *Our Lady of Fatima* by William T. Walsh

NONFICTION

Excerpts of reviews of this book: "Our culture has a remarkable talent for ignoring events that don't fit in well with the prevailing worldview. Many people don't know anything about many of the most important events in recent history. The visions at Fatima, which changed the history of Portugal and the world at large, are one such event. Though I'd heard the words 'the miracle of Fatima' occasionally throughout my life, until recently I had no clue what they meant. William Thomas Walsh's book *Our Lady of Fatima* fills a necessary gap by telling what the author describes as 'one of the strangest and most beautiful stories I have ever heard'". "I recently converted to Catholicism so I really didn't know that much about the apparitions of Our Lady. After reading this book my only reaction was, 'Why didn't anyone tell me about this?' This book reads like a novel but is informative about the events of Fatima as well. I'd recommend it to anyone interested in learning about this miraculous event."

Mr. Quimby – *Foundation* by Isaac Asimov

SCIENCE FICTION

Isaac Asimov's *Foundation*, the first book of the *Foundation* Trilogy, introduces the Seldon Plan and enmeshes us in futuristic worlds and societies. Learn about the "new" science of psycho-history and learn how to predict the future. Watch as generations flash by. This novel is one of the best examples of "future history" science fiction. ("Extra" extra credit available for also reading *Foundation and Empire* and *Second Foundation*, the other books in the trilogy.)

Mr. Schoff – *Mind Gym: An Athlete's Guide to Inner Excellence* by Gary Mack, with David Casstevens

NONFICTION /SPORTS

Excerpt: "When Yogi Berra became manager of the Yankees, a reporter asked if he had enough experience to handle the job. 'Sure,' Berra said. 'I've been playing 18 years, and you can observe a lot just by watching.' Closing his notebook, the writer walked away wearing the same look of faint bewilderment that the waitress had after she asked Yogi if he wanted his pizza cut into four slices or eight. 'Better make it four,' Yogi decided. 'I dunno if I can eat eight.' "

Gary Mack explores mental training as a means of not only enhancing performance and increasing productivity, but also as a way of adding to the enjoyment of the game you are playing. "Achieving inner excellence is a process. Building mental muscle, like building physical muscle, requires time and effort."

Mr. Strniste – *Here's the Deal* by David Leonhardt

NONFICTION

Interested in learning about the issues that you see on the news – economy, health care, medicine, and other topics? This short Kindle book by David Leonhardt gives a clear and unbiased account of a wide variety of issues that will affect you in the future. Leonhardt also provides ideas for addressing these major challenges. This book is a great read for any student who wants to develop literacy around the issues facing our country.

Mr. Strniste -- *Blackett's War: The Men Who Defeated the Nazi U-Boats and Brought Science to the Art of Warfare* by Stephen Budiansky

SCIENCE/HISTORY

In March 1941, after a year of unbroken and devastating U-boat onslaughts, the British War Cabinet decided to try a new strategy in the foundering naval campaign: science. To do so, they hired an intensely private physicist. Patrick Blackett was a former navy officer and future winner of the Nobel Prize; he is little remembered today, but he and his fellow scientists did as much to win the war against Nazi Germany as almost anyone else. As director of the World War II antisubmarine effort, Blackett used little more than simple mathematics and probability theory—and a steadfast belief in the utility of science—to help the Allies win the campaign against the U-boat. Here is the story of these civilian intellectuals who helped to change the nature of twentieth-century warfare.

Mr. Tinney – *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky (Constance Garnett translation)

FICTION

St. Petersburg, Russia. Raskolnikov, a cash-strapped student who fancies himself an intellectual and a radical, seeks to strike a blow against the system. He then commits the ultimate crime. Thereafter, he is tortured not only by remorse but also by the relentless pursuit of his nemesis, a nimble detective. Who will win this cat-and-mouse game? Will Raskolnikov find peace? Fyodor Dostoevsky, the most widely read of all Russian authors, presents his readers with "a stunning psychological portrait, a thriller and a profound meditation on guilt and retribution." This novel has it all—murder, suspense, love, and most importantly, truth.

Mr. Tong – *The Disappearing Spoon* by Sam Kean.

NONFICTION/ SCIENCE

We all know about the periodic table of the elements, in general, but did you know that each element has played a significant part in world history, politics, finance, the arts, medicine, technology and even world conflict? *The Disappearing Spoon* is a great combination of mystery novel and history, fantastic stories and real-life situations. After reading this, you won't look at chemistry and the elements in the same way!

Mr. Tong -- *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder

NONFICTION

Here is an amazing call to community service. This is the journey of one medical student, Paul Farmer, who worked to make a difference in Haiti. His organization, Partners in Health, is a major force worldwide, and helped transform the way organizations approach countries in need. This book will challenge your thinking and your approach to life.

Mrs. Turner -- *Defending Jacob* by William Landay and part of *Far from the Tree* by Andrew Solomon

FICTION

I was reading Andrew Solomon's *Far from the Tree* when I picked up the best-selling crime novel *Defending Jacob*. The accused in *Defending Jacob* is the narrator's fourteen-year-old son. *Defending Jacob*, which Warner Brothers is planning to bring to the screen, raises questions about criminal behavior. Is there a genetic component? After reading *Raising Jacob*, read Solomon's chapter on crime. You can borrow *Far from the Tree* from the library or from me. Then let's talk.

Mrs. Warren -- *Roman Blood* by Steven Saylor

HISTORICAL FICTION

Sextus Rocius, a wealthy aristocrat is savagely murdered in the "red light district". Gordianus the "Finder" is asked to help an up and coming lawyer named Cicero to help prove that Sextus's son is not guilty of the crime. The punishment for patricide is horrific beyond imagination. Gordianus's investigation takes him through the city's raucous and pungent streets and to rural Umbria to unravel layers and layers of deceit and murder. Saylor portrays many famous ancient Romans in a different light, and the resolution is not what you would expect – but then again, what good murder mystery has a predicable ending?