Summer Reading 2010

We like to believe that a healthy and curious mind does not shut off in June and shift back into gear in August. To keep your minds engaged, you must read a novel, one that relates our first unit in junior or senior English.

Below you will find your class reading selections and assignment and the themes to consider when reading the novel. Any notes you take regarding the theme as you read the novel may be used for the first assignment in the fall.

Both seniors and juniors: e-mail English teacher Jennifer Fraser at fraserjen08@yahoo.com if you want to discuss the novel, or you run into trouble.

Middle College Juniors

The junior English course ties in with American History and is focused on The American Character: What is the image of an American and where in literature has that image developed? The first unit deals with the idea of Americans as vitally connected to the land. (Recall the words to "America, the Beautiful" if you want an example.)

Read one of the works below and answer these questions:

- How is "nature" portrayed: kind, neutral, hostile?
- What is the relationship between man and nature: Man as Caretaker? Man as Dominator? Man as Respectful Equal?
- What message is the author implying about the best relationship one can attain between himself and the environment?

Write down 5 quotations that relate to any of the above questions.

Book Choices

Shooting the Boh by Tracy Johnston. "A poignant and entertaining memoir of a woman's wild ride...while descending the Boh River of central Borneo... and what it means to be an adventurer."

Crazy for the Storm This is an autobiography of Norman Ollestad and his father which focuses on his relationship with his Dad and how his father taught him to find his inner strength, both emotionally and physically, to climb down a mountain and become the only survivor of a plane crash that killed everyone else on board.

Into the Wild by John Krakauer. "Terrifying...Eloquent...A heart-rending drama of human yearning... A young man from a well-to-do family hitchhikes to Alaska, gives $25,000 to charity, abandons most of his possessions...and invents a new life for himself in the Denali Wilderness...."

Endurance by Alfred Lansing. "In the summer of 1914, Sir Ernest Shackleton set off aboard the Endurance bound for the South Atlantic. The goal of his expedition was to cross the Antarctic overland, but more than a year later, and still half a continent away from the intended base, the Endurance was trapped in ice and eventually was crushed. For five months Shackleton and his crew survived on drifting ice packs in one of the most savage regions of the world before they were finally able to set sail again in one of the ship's lifeboats. Alfred Lansing's Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage is a white-knuckle account of this astounding odyssey."
The major theme of the first semester is one of self-analysis: Who Am I? The factors we explore are the genetic, cultural, and experiential components that have created you. The readings below represent the individual on a quest for self-knowledge.

**Read one of the books below and answer in complete sentences**

- What is the quest the protagonist goes on and what does he/she achieve?
- What stages do we all go through that the protagonist experienced?
- What advice can the modern young person draw from another's quest?

Write down at least four quotations that relate to the issue of a “quest.”

**Book Choices**

*Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse. Young Indian boy leaves home to search for independence and self. Story follows the live of young Buddha.

*Cat's Eye* by Margaret Atwood. Great story of young girl's passage to womanhood - and the sweet revenge of escaping the destructive social cliques that we all encounter.

*On The Road* by Jack Kerouac. The most famous of Kerouac's works, is not only the soul of the Beat movement and literature, but one of the most important novels of the century. Like nearly all of Kerouac's writing, the novel is thinly fictionalized autobiography, published in 1957, filled with a cast made of Kerouac's real life friends, lovers, and fellow travelers.

*Boy's Life* by Robert R. McCammon. Yes, long, but if you like fantasy and reality mixed in, this is a good read. "A mixture of joy and wonder, magic and horror; mysterious and poignant, …" Several people say, "Best book I've ever read."

This is the poem that introduces the novel.

*We ran like young wild furies, where angels feared to tread.*
*The woods were dark and deep. Before us demons fled.*
*We checked Coke bottle bottoms to see how far was far.*
*Our worlds of magic wonder were never reached by car.*
*We loved our dogs like brothers, our bikes like rocket ships.*
*We were going to the stars, to Mars we'd make round trips.*
*We swung on vines like Tarzan, and flashed Zorro's keen blade.*
*We were James Bond in his Aston, we were Hercules unchained.*
*We looked upon the future and we saw a distant land,*
*where our folks were always ageless, and time was shifting sand.*
*We filled up life with living, with grins, scabbed knees, and noise.*
*In glass I see an older man, but this book's for the boys.*

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. Written from the perspective of a young autistic boy, the plot involves both mystery as well as “quest” elements. Not hard to read, but interesting!

*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer is “a collage about the world we live in: its terrorism, its beauty, its love, its mysteries, its absurdities, its people. Oskar is a precocious nine-year old who writes letters to famously intelligent people asking to be their protégé, invents a "googolplex" of devices (such as an ambulance that tells people when a loved one is inside and a lollipop that tells people how they are feeling."