

Battle of the Books 2011-2012

OUT OF MY MIND by Sharon Draper

Eleven-year-old Melody is very smart; however she has never been able to speak, as she has cerebral palsy. When she is given a computer to allow her to communicate, the people in her life are surprised by her intelligence. Trouble follows when schoolmates cannot handle having Melody on their quiz team.

A VIEW FROM SATURDAY by E. L. Konigsburg

In this Newbery Medal winner, the sixth grade Academic Quiz Bowl team brings together four distinctly different students who prepare for competitions. Their teacher, Mrs. Olinski, believes that she has chosen them carefully, but it is possible that they have chosen her. This book was last used in Battle of the Books competition in 1998.

CODE TALKER: A NOVEL ABOUT THE NAVAJO MARINES OF WORLD WAR TWO by Joseph Bruchac

A Navajo grandfather tells his grandchildren about his life: from growing up in the mission schools, where he was forbidden to speak in his native tongue to his role in World War Two, when he helped to create and use the unbreakable code based upon that same language. Several students found their fathers borrowing this book from them in 2007, when it was part of the Battle of the Books list.

WHEN THE WHISTLE BLOWS by Fran Cannon Slayton

Seven consecutive Halloweens in a West Virginia town, starting in 1943, become pivotal points in Jimmy Cannon's life. Jimmy is passionate about someday working on the B&O Railroad, but his father senses changes coming, and wants a different life for his son. This book was written by a local author, who graduated from Bishop Ireton and UVA.

THE BIG WAVE by Pearl S. Buck

Kino is the son of a farmer in Japan. His best friend, Jiyo, is the son of a fisherman. Their lives change dramatically when a tsunami ravages their little island. This hopeful story demonstrates that life is stronger than death, and explores what it is to be a survivor. Last used in the Battle of the Books in 2001, it seems very relevant this year.

HOMESICK: MY OWN STORY by Jean Fritz

This Newbery Honor winning memoir is the story of two years of the author's life when she lived in China and longed for life in the United States. Although she includes her own family photographs and memories, she admits, in the forward, that it is fiction, as the story had been altered by her faulty memory and biased perceptions. This book was discussed for the 2003 Battle of the Books.

THE DANGER BOX by Blue Balliett

Zoomy, who is so nearsighted that he is legally blind, is caught up in a mystery involving a box with a stolen treasure inside. Issues of *The Gus Gazette* provide additional clues for Zoomy, as he tries to solve the intriguing puzzle.

THE WESTING GAME by Ellen Raskin

This Newbery Medal winner is a well-crafted mystery, which begins with the reading of Mr. Westing's will. His fifteen heirs follow the clues in an attempt to win all of the dearly-departed's money. This book has been included in the Battle of the Books three times before, and is still a popular, surprising story.

ON THE BLUE COMET by Rosemary Wells

When the stock market crashes in 1929, Oscar feels like his life has been ruined. He soon finds himself on an adventure involving trains and time travel. The book includes the amazing illustrations of Bagram Ibatoulline.

SCUMBLE by Ingrid Law

This story is not a sequel to *Savvy*, but it is a companion book. Ledge is trying to come to grips with his new, unpredictable power, when he must attend his cousin's wedding. When budding reporter Sarah Jane Cabot convinces Ledge to bring her along to the wedding, it is possible that she will be able to uncover the family secret.

THE CONCH BEARER by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Anand is sent on a quest across India, to the far off Himalaya's, to return a magical conch shell to its rightful home. The author includes many details about Indian culture. In the end, Anand must make a decision that will change the course of his life. This book was a popular Battle of the Books title in 2005.

HEART OF A SAMURAI by Margi Preus

This 2011 Newbery Honor winner is based on a true story. Set in 1841, a Japanese teen named Manjiro finds himself far from home, living with strangers from far-off America. He travels with them and learns that his own people are not the only ones capable of prejudice and mistrust.

TURTLE IN THE SUN by Jennifer Holm

Eleven-year-old Turtle is sent away to live with family she has never met in Key West, Florida. She has a difficult time adjusting to island life, but when she discovers a treasure map, she believes that all of her troubles might soon be over. This book also won a Newbery Honor in 2011.

NO MORE DEAD DOGS by Gordon Korman

Wallace Wallace hated every bit of the book he was forced to read for his book report. When he writes about his opinion of the book, he finds himself in trouble with his English teacher. This popular, funny story was a Battle of the Books favorite in 2005.

SHE TOUCHED THE WORLD: LAURA BRIDGEMAN, DEAF-BLIND PIONEER by Sally Hobart Alexander and Robert Alexander

This is the biographical story of Laura Bridgeman, the first American deaf and blind child to be taught how to communicate, read, and write. Bridgeman rose to fame fifty years before Helen Keller came on the scene. The book is filled with photographs of Laura, samples of her work, and descriptions of how she affected those who met her. The final chapter includes information about new technologies that have improved the lives of people with vision and hearing impairments.