



Volume 15 Issue 20
January 17, 2012

*"Semper Excelsius-
The Liberty Way"*

The Liberty Common School
Common Knowledge, Common Virtues, Common Sense
A National Charter School of the Year, A Nationally Recognized Blue Ribbon
School, A Certified Core Knowledge Visitation Site School,
A John Irwin School of Excellence

[Click Here](#) to view Liberty
Common High School
Newsletter

What's Happening at LCS K-6th

Jan. 17- Spelling Bee in
Library at 3:15 p.m.

Jan. 17- Multi-Activity
Intramurals for 3rd-4th
graders begins- 3:10-3:55
p.m.

Jan. 17-Intramural
basketball for 5th and 6th
grades begins-
4:00-4:40 p.m.

Jan. 24-Public Information
Night- 6:30 p.m. at LCS.

Feb. 7- 1st/2nd Grade
Concert, 6:30p.m.
Performance Hall, LCS

Feb. 15- "Liberty for Lunch"-
Olive Garden, 11:30 a.m.,
Bob Schaffer, speaker.

Liberty Common School Board of Directors 2011-2012

Crissy Kopren 266-1005
Amy Redstone 378-1170
Dan Provaznik 223-0188
Mark Sutherlin 225-0432
Cassy Turner 691-3027
Jeff Webb 545-9636
Bill Werst 631-8379

Board of Directors Meeting:
Liberty Common School
January 19, 2012
1725 Sharp Point Dr.
Faculty Room
7:00 p.m.

Headmaster Writing by Russ Spicer

Clearing Up Core Knowledge

A few years ago I had the opportunity to speak to a "Politics of Literacy" class at Colorado State University. The class had many questions about Core Knowledge in general and about the literacy components of Core Knowledge. Many questions that were asked indicated to me that there are still many misunderstanding about this educational program. Often these mistaken beliefs are based on a lack of accurate information. The Core Knowledge Foundation has printed a handout entitled "Common Misconceptions About Core Knowledge." For the next few weeks, I will be pointing out a number of these misconceptions, and the Core Knowledge Foundation's response to them.

1. A common core of knowledge will make schools into cookie cutters that turn out the same product everywhere.

Other Countries teach a common core of knowledge: are all French, Japanese, and German children alike? A common core of knowledge that makes up only about half of American schooling will be no threat to children's individuality. A body of shared knowledge will be taught in a variety of ways by different teachers, and responded to in a variety of ways by different students. And, influential as schools are, children are shaped a great deal outside of school as well.

2. Students are unique individuals and can't be expected all to learn the same material. Schooling should respond to the unique learning styles of each individual child.

There is no incompatibility between teaching a core curriculum and adapting instruction to the needs of individual students. Moreover, even as we look to teachers to bring out the best in each child as a learner, we also ask them to recognize the need of each child as a part of the larger community. All communities require some common ground. The community of the classroom requires, in particular, that its members share some common knowledge, because this knowledge makes communication and progress possible.

3. Specific academic content is not developmentally appropriate for young children.

What exactly does "developmentally appropriate" mean? Who is to decide what is "developmentally appropriate" for particular children? Are the topics recommended in existing curricula "developmentally appropriate?" For example, to cite one state's Social Studies curriculum framework, is it "developmentally appropriate for second graders to "learn about the community and its components – stores, recreational facilities, protective and educational services," or to "explore components of the community such as shopping centers or community services"?

Must children in the second grade have their horizons bounded by the local mall, as opposed to the much greater reach of the Core Knowledge Sequence for second grade, which has children learning about China and India, ancient Greece, and the Civil War?

The question of "developmentally appropriateness" applies less to content than to methods of instruction. That is, within reason, specific content is itself neither developmentally appropriate nor inappropriate. Give specific content guidelines, teachers are generally not lecturing to kindergartners about the seven continents, but singing songs, making paper-mache globes, cutting out and coloring continent-shaped patterns, and making charts with animals characteristic of different continents.

(Continued on Page 3)

How to Reach Us

- Our office hours are **7:30-4:00 p.m.**
- Our telephone number is **(970) 482-9800**
- Our attendance line is **(970) 482-9800, option 2**, please call by 8:30 a.m.
- Please note that you may go to your student's classroom and wait for them to be dismissed only after 2:50 p.m.
- If you need to take your child to an appointment during school hours, please come to the Front Office, sign them out and we will call them out of class.
- All students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must be signed in at the Front Office. It is important that a reason be written as this determines if the tardy is excused or not.
- Our school closes at 4:00 p.m. All students need to have left the building by 4:00 p.m. or be chaperoned by a parent or guardian.

6th, 7th and 8th Grade Girls Basketball Schedule

Basketball season has begun for our Jr. High Lady Eagles. Please come out and support this talented group of athletes. All games begin at 4:00 p.m.

1/17/12-Liberty at New Vision Charter
 1/19/12-Liberty vs. St. Mary's
 1/23/12- Liberty at Ridgeview
 1/26/12-Liberty vs. Frontier
 1/30/12-Liberty vs. St. John's
 2/2/12-Liberty at KQA
 2/6/12-Liberty at St. Joe's
 2/9/12-BYE
 2/13/12- Liberty at Resurrection
 2/16/12- Liberty vs. Windsor
 2/21/12-Liberty at HMS

New Telephone System

Over the holiday break, Liberty had a new telephone system installed. We apologize if any messages left, got lost in the transition or if we lose you during a transfer or hold. All of the staff extensions have been changed. Please use the staff directory to reach your party. Thanks for your patience while we learn this new system.

American Mathematics Competition-8 Results Are In

We recently had 18 students in grades 5-8 compete in the national AMC-8 contest, and the results are in. Two Liberty students earned awards from the competition. Victor Amato (8th grade) earned the Distinction Award by scoring in the top 1% in the nation, and Matt Iverson (7th grade) earned the Honor Roll Award by scoring in the top 5% in the nation. Congratulations to those two young men for their achievement.

The top four Liberty students are as follows:

- Victor Amato (8th grade) scored 23/25 – School Gold Medal Winner
- Matt Iverson (7th grade) scored 20/25 – School Silver Medal Winner
- Chelsea Wang (6th grade) scored 14/25 – School Bronze Medal Winner
- Eli Oceanak (6th grade) scored 14/25 – School Bronze Medal Winner

Parents of students who took the exam can contact Mr. Lovely (tlvely@libertycommon.org) for their individual student's results.

Congratulations Geography Bee Competitors

Congratulations to the following students for winning their class competition and earning the right to represent their grade at the Liberty Common School Geography Bee, held January 10, 2012 at Liberty Common School.

4th Grade- Chris Brooner (Siener) and Jonah Rinaldis (Ronen)
 5th Grade - Ben Bottom (Henderson) and Maddie Kaminky (Cardenas)
 6th Grade -Spencer Packham (Crisafulli) and Matthew Rhoads (Huey)
 7th Grade – Mary-Claire Spurgin and Justin Eldridge
 8th Grade– Meghan Lloyd and Conner Hansen

Hats off to Mary Claire Spurgin who won the geography bee and will now take an objective test that is sent to the National Geographic Society in Washington D.C. The top 100 scores are selected to compete at the state bee which is held at the University of Denver, in the spring. Liberty students have qualified for the state bee ten out of the last 11 years.

Good Luck, Mary Claire!



Liberty Chess Club Schedule

January:	13, 20 and 27.
February:	3, 10, 17, and 24.
March:	2, 9, 23, and 30
April:	Last day 13 th !

Beginner group (K-2) meets Fridays 7:00-7:50 a.m. in the Library.

Advanced group(3-5) meets Fridays 3:15-4:15 p.m. in the Art Room.



Needed: More CyberPatriots

By: Bob Schaffer, LCHS Principal

Given my amateurish technology skills, nobody's ever accused me of being a computer geek, but one of the newer activities we launched here at the high school makes me wish I were one. CyberPatriot is a nationwide computer-security competition initiated by the U.S. Air Force Association; and this year, for the first time, we fielded a team from Liberty.

Last summer, I got a call from [Brigadier General Bernie Skoch](#) who said he had heard about Liberty, researched the school on the Internet and wanted to come to Fort Collins to meet. A couple weeks later, I gave him a tour and he absolutely loved what he saw.

Gen. Skoch then told me [about CyberPatriot](#) and how important the competition is toward interesting young Americans in the field of cyber security. Although these skills are crucial to America's national defense, they're just as critical when it comes to commerce and industry.

In fact, people employed in this field tend to command quite lucrative salaries. CyberPatriot exists to grow the number of young people nationally who are familiar with the basic techniques of maintaining firewalls, eradicating computer viruses and protecting expensive electronic systems.

CyberPatriot would be a perfect fit for Liberty, Gen. Skoch opined. He encouraged us to form a team – and we have. Our students competed in a national competition this year. Those involved had a great time and learning quite a lot. Next year, we want to do better.

Mr. Bill Kranz is shepherding the team and has been impressed with our first-year progress. Going forward, we could use more help from our parent population, too. For the past couple months, Mr. Kranz has appealed through this newsletter for parents with expertise to lend a hand and their talents by spending some time getting our team ready for competition.

If your experiences and expertise could be useful to our students, please step up. We really need it. Please contact Mr. Kranz by [CLICKING HERE](#).

For more information about the competition, including some very cool videos, visit www.uscyberpatriot.org or click on the nearby video link. When you see how exciting this competition actually is, you'll wish you were a computer geek, too.

Video link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROsy43Vjdde>

Grandparents Corner

By: Ed Haynes, Chairman of the Liberty Grandparents Club

ANNOUNCEMENT!! The Grandparents Club is sponsoring the first of what we hope to become a regular luncheon gathering. "Liberty for Lunch Series" a new quarterly gathering for the Liberty community featuring updates from students, faculty, administration & the BOD and presentations on current education topics. The event is for all Liberty parents and grandparents and is sponsored by the Liberty Grandparents Club.

We will have important speakers address us about current educational policies, trends, and events. Our first luncheon will be on **Wednesday, February 15th** at the Olive Garden at 11:30 am. LCHS principal and State Board of Education Chairman, Bob Schaffer, will be our inaugural speaker. Mark your calendar and make plans to attend. More information will follow.

We are sure this will be a valuable forum for us to learn more about our grandchildren's education.

Headmaster Writing Continued from Front Page

4. A curriculum that specifies what is to be taught at each grade level takes away the creative freedom of teachers.

Some educators argue that curricular decisions should be left up to the individual classroom teacher. They say that it is part of a teacher's "professional autonomy" to decide what should be taught. Yes, the individual teacher should have significant freedom to decide how to teach, and some say in what to teach as well. But to leave all decisions about what to teach up to the individual teacher is to place too great a burden on the teacher, to remove the opportunity for professional cooperation among teachers, and to lose sight of what schools need to be fair and effective. Teaching a common core of knowledge, such as that articulated in the Core Knowledge Sequence, is compatible with a variety of instructional methods and additional subject matters. Teachers in Core Knowledge schools report that making the commitment to teach a shared body of specific knowledge is not confining but liberating. Given specific content guidelines, teacher can fashion a variety of creative lessons and teaching approaches, and collaborated by sharing ideas and resources. In general, teachers in Core Knowledge schools report a sense of empowerment, both personal and professional.

(More to come next week!)

