



Volume 15 Issue 17
December 12, 2011

*"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

Dec. 12 - 6th Grade Band/5th
and 6th Choir Concert, 6:30p.m.
Performance Hall, LCS

Dec. 16– Liberty T-shirt Day

Dec. 16– Registration
deadline for Lil Dribblers

Dec. 16-Tryouts for 6th, 7th,
8th grade girls basketball,
3:30-5:00. Tryouts continue
on **Dec. 19th**-3:30-5:30 p.m.

Dec. 21– Registration
deadline for Multi-Activity
Intramurals and 5th & 6th
grade basketball intramurals

Dec. 21– Free Dress Day

Dec. 22-Jan. 6– Christmas
Break.

Jan. 10-Liberty Geography
Bee, 3:30 p.m. in the library

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
December 15, 2011
1725 Sharp Point Dr.
Faculty Room
7:00 p.m.

Headmaster Writing by Russ Spicer

Reading Skills vs. Broad Domain Knowledge

For years now, E.D. Hirsch has championed the cause that in order to be a proficient reader, it is imperative to have broad background knowledge in many areas. Dr. Hirsch has always been a proponent of having an expansive knowledge of certain core knowledge topics in order to be "culturally literate." But he takes this one step further in the application of the same principal as it applies to reading and reading comprehension.

In the Spring, 2003 edition of "[American Educator](#)", Dr. Hirsch wrote an article entitled, "Reading Comprehension Requires Knowledge- of Words and of the World." In this article, he addresses how having contextual knowledge of the topic greatly aids in the ability to understand what is being read. His concern is that all too often a great deal of time is spent in teaching children only the skill of reading. His contention is skill development alone will only carry a child so far. The child must also have a broad contextual knowledge of what is being read for him or her to be more successful in comprehension.

In his latest book entitled, "[The Knowledge Deficit](#)," E.D. Hirsch continues to point out how a vast domain of knowledge is the greatest equalizer in reading and in becoming a culturally literate member of society. In the first chapter of his latest book, he addresses how knowledge plays into being a successful reader beyond the fourth grade. He states on page 10,

"The factual knowledge that is found in books is the key to reading comprehension. A deficit of factual knowledge and the deficit in language it entails are the causes of the so-called fourth grade slump that many children experience. For some time now, researchers have observed this phenomenon. Jane scores well in reading in grades one through three but surprisingly begins to score badly in grade four. That's not because Jane suddenly took a backward step. It's because in the early grades she was mainly learning how to decode the printed marks easily and fluently, as reflected in her rising test scores. But in grade four, when Jane was given more challenging content to read in class and on tests, her limited comprehension of language began to show. It was not her fault. Her comprehension problem had been there but had gone unrecognized and untreated in the earlier grades. By fourth grade it is very late to correct it – a tragedy, because this failure most seriously limits her progress in later elementary grades, in middle school, in high school, and in later life. Children who lag in comprehension in early grades tend to fall even further behind in later years. For children to make substantial progress in reading, they must make early and substantial progress in knowledge."

Dr. Hirsch goes on to debunk the theory that knowing "how" is better than knowing "what." Many schools have simply increased the amount of reading their students do, but fail to address the teaching of knowledge. When a child is reading something he or she has no clue about, reading is the only skill occurring. Knowledge and comprehension are not necessarily occurring. To ensure that comprehension is happening, the students ought to be exposed to a broad base of knowledge from the very start of their education.

Thus the genius of Core Knowledge schools such as Liberty Common School. We not only teach the students the skill of reading...letter recognition, phonemic awareness, and decoding, but we also immerse the children in a content rich, broad curriculum. This is one of the reasons why Liberty continues to score so well in reading on the CSAP's. The students at our school definitely are not experiencing a "knowledge deficit." Quite the opposite, they are experiencing a knowledge bombardment.

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.



**Show your Liberty pride!
Next Liberty T-Shirt Day is
December 16th. Wear your
favorite Liberty T-Shirt.**

Clothes Closet Needs Donations

Thanks to all who have already donated to the clothes closet. We are currently needing pants in sizes 6, 7, 8 and 12. Please make sure all clothing meets dress code and is without stains or holes. Please bring clothing in anytime between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. And remember if you bring in items you can evenly exchange items for others. Thank you.

Calling All Kindergarteners for 2012-2013 School Year

We are continuing to fill our Kindergarten sibling spots for next year. If your child is planning on attending Kindergarten at Liberty next year, 2012-2013, please call the Front Office or stop by and speak with Bev Hanawalt. Don't delay as spots are filling quickly.

Holidays Fast Approaching— Easy Gift Idea

Are you needing a holiday gift idea for your child? Why not peruse the Liberty Common Reading Lists (K-6) and pick a book to purchase from your favorite bookstore. The lists contains a comprehensive list of fiction and non-fiction titles that appeal to all interests. Simply [Click Here](#) to access the list and enjoy shopping.



Intramural News

Beat the winter blues by signing up your student for one of the following intramural activities.

Lil Dribblers Intramural Basketball for 1st and 2nd grade boys and girls begins Saturday, Jan. 14th. Registration deadline is **Friday, December 16th**. See page 5 for more information and registration form.

Multi-Activity Intramurals for 3rd-4th Grades— begins Tuesday, Jan. 17th. **Registration deadline is Wednesday, Dec. 21st. or when 56 slots are filled.** Cost is \$10.00 for 5 intramural dates: Jan. 17, Feb. 2, Feb. 13, Feb. 21 and Feb. 23. from 3:10-3:55 p.m. Sign up forms available in Front Office or from the P.E. office.

Basketball for 5th and 6th Grades— begins Jan. 17th. **Registration deadline is Wednesday, Dec. 21st. or when 24 slots are filled.** Cost is \$10.00 for 5 intramural dates: Jan. 17, Feb. 2, Feb. 13, Feb. 21 and Feb. 23 from 4:00-4:40 p.m. Sign up forms available in the Front Office or from the P.E. office.

Attention Lady Hoopsters - Girls Basketball for 6th, 7th and 8th Grade

Attention all 6th, 7th and 8th grade girls interested in playing basketball for LCHS: Tryouts for the 2011-2012 season are Friday, December 16th from 3:30 –5:00 and Monday December 19th from 3:30-5:30 p.m. Teams will be announced on Monday, December 19th after practice. In order to tryout, it is absolutely necessary to have a physical card and a completed sports packet turned into Mr. Torgeson, prior to Friday, December 16th. When all forms are turned in Mr. Torgeson will issue a "blue card" to the athlete. Girls will not be able to participate until they have a "blue card." Forms may be picked up in the front office of both schools. If you are not going to be in town for tryouts but are interested in trying out, please notify Coach Steve Ronen as soon as possible. Any questions contact Wade Torgeson, Athletic Director at wtorgeson@libertycommon.org or Steve Ronen, Coach at ronen@libertycommon.org.



Halcyon Days

By: Bob Schaffer, LCHS Principal

As ancient tradition has it, we're entering halcyon days this week. Do you know what is meant by the term "halcyon days?"

Your kids probably do, if they've made it past junior high at Liberty. If they don't know, you'll be able to tell them yourself after the next few paragraphs.

"Halcyon days" refers to fourteen calm, tranquil days occurring mid-December. The timeframe is connected to [a mythical bird of Greek legend called an alcyon](#) (the "h" was added later).

According to the story, the alcyon laid its eggs at sea atop a floating nest. The bird's supernatural powers calmed the waters long enough to brood her eggs.

The allegory has made its way into song, lore and literature over thousands of years. Walt Whitman wrote a poem entitled "[Halcyon Days](#)" in his [1891-92 Leaves of Grass edition](#). Here's how it begins:

*Not from successful love alone,
Nor wealth, nor honor'd middle age, nor victories of politics or war;
But as life wanes, and all the turbulent passions calm,*

In the poem, Whitman savors the placid days that follow a season of hard work and a year of bounty. He makes an elegant case for putting one's reward to high and prudent use.

All Liberty parents received an annual fundraising letter last week. It's an earnest request for all families to participate in the school's annual "year-end" fundraising appeal. The serious need for financial support is plainly explained in the letter.

As parents, we've worked hard over many years to build a superior school. Far from being finished, we're still building Liberty.

We want our students to be exceedingly well prepared, to learn more than they might elsewhere. Pleasantly, they know the rich context and meaning of references like halcyon days.

It's doubtful they would at any other school. The academic advantage our students are earning is of enormous value. Delivering it isn't cheap.

We truly need all families at Liberty to [respond generously to our year-end appeal](#). It makes a crucial difference in how our kids come to be actually knowledgeable about – and perhaps moved by – the truth, beauty and perfect meaning of, for example, a Whitman poem.

*As the days take on a mellower light, and the apple at last hangs
really finish'd and
indolent ripe on the tree,
Then for the teeming quietest, happiest days of all!
The brooding and blissful halcyon days!*

Math Club News

Congratulations to all students participating in Math Club. Students last week completed over 218 games and answered almost 10,000 questions on [Sumdog.com!](#)

Monday's super math-fueled afternoon propelled Liberty to the top of the state! We were a daily winner in the Colorado division of the competition. The club is getting a nice certificate and the school scores software valued at \$100 for the school. The contest continues through next week and we have **three** students from the Math Club who are currently in the top ten students in Colorado. **Kudos** to Megan, Alex and Robert, who are ranked 3rd, 4th and 5th in the state right now.

We're #1, we're #1!

Not only do we have three students in the top ten, Liberty is currently ranked **first** in the state for average number of correct answers. Here's the top 5 list:

School	Total
Liberty Common School	427
Brown Elementary	408
Palmer Elementary	243
East Elementary School	123
Goldrick Elementary	119

The winning school receives a giant trophy and \$750 worth of mathematics software, not to mention those priceless **bragging rights**.

If your child is interested in attending Session II of Math Club on Monday afternoons there are a few openings available. Please contact Cassy Turner at cassyt@gmail.com.

Time to Sign Up for Chess Club

If you think your student would enjoy improving his or her chess game, learning strategies and forward thinking while spending time with friends, then now is the time to sign up for Chess Club.

Chess Club is a 12 week chess program full of lessons, chess games and tournaments! Beginners(K-2) meet on Friday mornings from 7:00 a.m.– 7:50 a.m. and Advanced Players meet on Friday afternoons from 3:15-4:15 p.m. Cost is \$40.00/student. Sign up in the Front Office.

For more information see flyer on page 4.

Liberty Chess Club



Who: For all students K-6.

What: A 12 week chess program full of lessons, chess games and tournaments!

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

Advanced (3-5): Fridays 3:15pm-4:15pm in the Art room.

Why : To improve your chess, learn strategy and forward thinking and have a great time with friends.

Schedule

January: 13, 20 and 27.
 February: 3, 10, 17, and 24.
 March: 2, 9, 23, and 30
 April: Last day 13th
 (The second session start date will be January 13th)

Introducing the Coach

Hi! My name is Zachary Bekkedahl, chess coach and teacher of many schools and my own chess club. I can't wait to run Liberty chess again! I want to build off of our hard work last year and continue to grow as a team! Nice work everybody in placing 2nd in the district tournament!!!

If you have questions please call me @ (970) 581-2424 or e-mail me at info@chessmatesfc.com If you would like further information about me or my club check out my website at www.Chessmatesfc.com. Thanks!



Lil Dribblers Intramurals



1st & 2nd Grade Boys and Girls

When: Saturdays - Jan. 14th, 21st, 28th and Feb. 4th and 18th
(Games will run approximately every 40 minutes) When teams have
been picked a schedule will be released with times your team will play



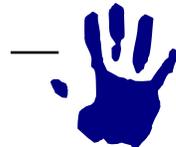
The first Saturday will be a practice day. Fundamentals will be taught to the teams
and a basic explanation of the rules will be given.



Where: Liberty Common School Facilitated by: Mr. Wilcox

Registration Deadline: December 16th, 2011

Cut along line and turn form in with registration fee



1st & 2nd Grade Basketball League Form

Name _____ Grade _____ Basketball Experience (years) _____



Leagues will be formed according to the numbers in each grade that sign up. Ideally we would
like to offer separate gender brackets, but that will be determined by how many children sign
up. There may also be a limited number of spots and those with their fee and attached form
turned in first will be guaranteed a spot.

The teams will wear colored pennies for the games.

COST will be \$15.00. Make Checks payable to Liberty Common School.

Please turn into Mrs. Ronen in the front office.

