



Volume 15 Issue 21  
January 23, 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. 24**-Public Information  
Night- 6:30 p.m. at LCS.

**Jan. 24**-Wizard of Oz Mtg.  
3:15-4:00 p.m. Band Rm.

**Jan. 27**- Liberty T-shirt Day

**Feb. 20** - No School,  
President's Day

**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.

**Feb. 24**- Winter Carnival-  
6-8 p.m.

**March 12- 16**-Spring Break

### 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  
February 16, 2012  
1725 Sharp Point Dr.  
Faculty Room  
7:00 p.m.

## Headmaster Writing by Russ Spicer

### Clearing Up Core Knowledge (Part II of III)

This week's writing is a continuation of a column that addresses misconceptions about Core Knowledge. [The information below is found in a handout from the National Core Knowledge Foundation titled "Common Misconceptions About Core Knowledge."](#)

*5. Knowledge is changing so fast that the best approach is not to teach specific knowledge but to teach children to "learn how to learn."*

"Learning how to learn" is an admirable aim but a misleading slogan. If learning is to proceed on any principle besides random chance, then schools need to follow a carefully sequenced body of knowledge. Why? Because children learn new knowledge by building upon what they already know. It's important to begin building foundations of knowledge in the early grades because that's when children are most receptive, and because academic deficiencies in the first six grades can permanently impair the quality of later schooling. The most powerful tool for later learning is not an abstract set of procedures (such as "problem solving") but a broad base of knowledge in many fields. The idea that "knowledge is changing" is only part true, and, as it pertains to schools, mostly misleading. It is true that some ideas and terms -- such as sub-atomic particles, "SCUD" missile, software, or the Commonwealth of the United States-- Did not exist or were not widely known even as recently as a couple of generations ago. But the obvious fact that the modern world is changing -- sometimes, as in the case of the breakup of the Soviet Union, in dramatic and dizzying ways -- in no way leads to the conclusion that "knowledge is changing so fast that we can't keep up with it" or that "what we learn today will be obsolete by the year 2000." The basic principles of science and constitutional government, the important events of world history, the essential elements of mathematics and of oral and written expression -- all of these are part of a solid core that does not change rapidly, but instead forms the basis for true lifelong learning.

*6. In curriculum, "less is more"; schools should not try to cover a lot of content but instead should help students master a few areas in depth and detail.*

Many among us perhaps share grim memories of, for example, the high school history course as a superficial blitz through a heavy textbook crammed with facts, names, and dates. Courses like this are what make many people respond warmly to the idea that "less is more." Surely, we think, we would have learned more if we had been confronted with less, if we had been allowed to investigate specific issues and questions in depth and detail. Does it follow, then, that when it comes to knowledge, less is more? Like most slogans in education, there is some truth to "less is more," but also some danger when the slogan is wrongly construed or thoughtlessly applied.

It is hard to disagree with the view that deep knowledge is better than shallow. But--particularly in the elementary years -- it does not follow that deep knowledge of a few things is better than broad knowledge of many things. In fact, one needs both -- both deep knowledge and broad knowledge.

To help children gain breadth of knowledge is to help them lay the foundation on which they can build new knowledge, including more in-depth, specialized knowledge. The best time to acquire broad general knowledge is in the early years, when children are most curious and receptive. In the early years, the idea of "less is more" does not apply, and is especially irrelevant, even potentially damaging, to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who may be left behind while some advantaged students learn a desirable breadth of knowledge at home.

(Continued on Page 6)

## 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.

## Congratulations to Us

Liberty Common School won the John J. Irwin award this year for the elementary, middle and high school.

The John Irwin awards are given to schools that demonstrate excellent academic achievement. On the school performance framework that is used by the state to evaluate schools, these schools "exceed" expectations on the academic achievement indicator and "meet or exceed" expectations on the indicator related to academic growth gaps. Liberty Common School has received this recognition every year since the award's inception.

Way to go students, parents and teachers!

## Churchill's Chat

### Don't Eat the Marshmallow!

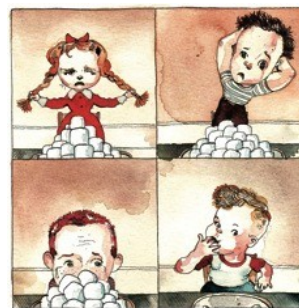
This month's foundation stone is self-control. I recently read an interesting article in the New Yorker, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 [click here](#) about self-control and a study that was conducted using marshmallows.

The researchers placed a student in a room at a table. They then placed a bowl of marshmallows in front of the student and said that they can take one now or two when the researcher gets back. If the student really wants to eat a marshmallow when the researcher is out, they could ring a bell. The researcher then left the room.

Some students rang that bell immediately and others waited to get two. The funny thing is that some students knew enough to look away, cover their eyes, or think of other things to distract themselves when the researcher was gone. They had somehow learned tricks to help them delay the temptation to ring the bell. Others just stared at that marshmallow with all their might (this of course is a horrible idea). The article goes on to explain the relationship between self-control and success in school. The students that waited for the second marshmallow were much more successful in school and SAT tests than the students that didn't wait.

As parents, we can help by reinforcing self-control. Students need to learn the importance of waiting to open their Christmas gifts, or saving their money to buy a new skateboard, or not snacking before dinner, etc. There is an endless list of daily events that happen where students can show their self-control.

Our next character education assembly will take place on January 31<sup>st</sup>. Wendy Mader, the founder of T2Coaching, will talk to our students about self-control and how it relates to her business that specializes in the training of triathletes. What a great role model of self-control. We are very excited to have her here to talk with our students about how she uses this specific character trait to train. I'm sure Wendy wouldn't have eaten the marshmallow.



## Spelling Bee Contestants Put A Sting In The Competition

Congratulations to Walter Jordan(6) who was the winner of the Liberty Common Spelling Bee held on Tuesday, January 17, 2012. Our 2nd place winner was Chelsea Wang (6). Participants included: Leif Olson (4), Sophia Geary (4), Andrew Ikeler (4), Michael Hofinger (5), Andrea Schuetter (5), Durga Sassendran (6), and Kate Molenaar (6). The winning word was "stratosphere". Walter Jordan will compete in the district bee via video on January 25th. Thanks for all who participated and good luck Walter-we are behind you all the way!

## Wizard of Oz Meeting January 24th

All Wizard of Oz cast members and their parents are asked to attend a meeting on **Tuesday, January 24th from 3:15 to 4:00 in the Band Room**. If you or your student(s) are unable to attend this meeting you need to speak with Ms. Palfreeman or Mrs. Grandprey as soon as possible.

## Important Dates 2012-2013 School Year

The 2012-2013 Calendar has been approved by Liberty Common's Board of Directors. Please note the following dates when making vacation plans for your family.

**Classes Begin** - August 15, 2012

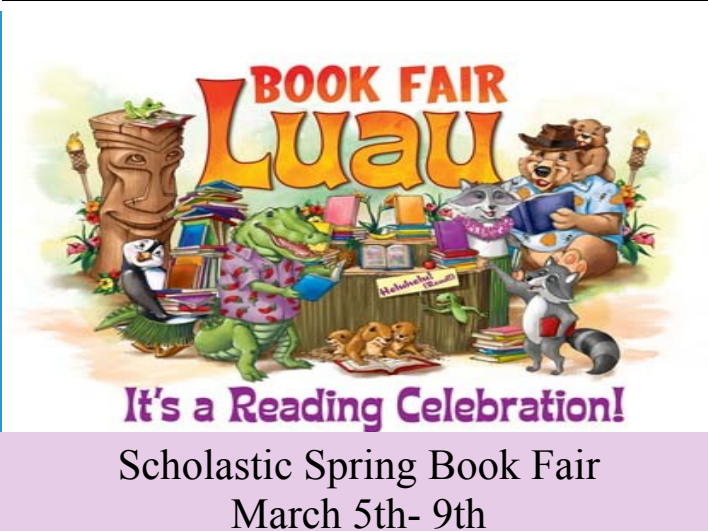
**Labor Day** - September 3, 2012

**Thanksgiving Break** - November 21-23, 2012

**Christmas Break** - December 24-January 4, 2012

**Spring Break** - March 18-22, 2012

**Last Day of School**- May 24, 2012



**It's a Reading Celebration!**  
**Scholastic Spring Book Fair**  
**March 5th- 9th**

Join in the reading celebration as Liberty hosts the Scholastic Spring Book Fair March 5th-9th. Book Fairs are a convenient way for students, parents and grandparents to purchase books and support the Liberty library at the same time.

We are seeking a chairperson to organize and run the event with the help of parent volunteers. If this is something you are interested in please contact Miss Behr, our librarian, at (970)482-9800 ext. 3166 or [cbehr@libertycommon.org](mailto:cbehr@libertycommon.org).

## Clothes Closet Needs Donations

Thanks to all who have already donated to the clothes closet. We are currently needing pants in sizes 7, 8 and socks. 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 even exchange items for others.

## Winter Carnival Set for Feb. 24th

Mark your calendars for this year's winter carnival, **February 24<sup>th</sup> from 6 – 8 pm**. We have *new* activities for the kids, young and not so young, as well as crafts, games, entertainment and food.

Volunteers are needed for donations and activities during the carnival as well as pre-event help. For volunteer opportunities, please contact Marnie Dame at 391-8983 or [MarnieDame@MSN.com](mailto:MarnieDame@MSN.com)

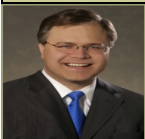
## New Telephone System

Liberty Common's new telephone system is up and running. All of the staff extensions have been changed. Please use the staff directory to reach your party. Thanks for your patience while we adapt to this new system.

## Scrip Program Easy Way to Help Liberty

**What are scrip cards?** These are face-value gift cards, that if you spend \$25 you will receive \$25 on the card. There are over 100 merchants that have scrip cards available to order and many donate more than 5% back to Liberty Common School. If you don't see a card for the merchant you want, please feel free to ask, it may be available but not listed on the current order form. King Soopers gift cards are available in \$25 and \$100 increments and are reloadable at the register for any amount. If you are interested in helping with this program or have any questions, please contact **Tracy Horst** at [thorst@msn.com](mailto:thorst@msn.com) or (970) 223-7282. We need more volunteers to make this program successful and profitable for the school. To enroll just [click here for a form](#) or get one in the front office. [Click here for the policy page](#). [Click here for an order form](#).

**February Order Dates are Feb. 13th and Feb. 27th**



## The Dress Code & ZZ Top

By: Bob Schaffer, LCHS Principal

Is it true that every girl is crazy about a sharp-dressed man? According to a notable trio of poets, young women will “come runnin’ just as fast as they can” upon sight of a neatly clothed gentleman.

Alas, even the enchanting prospects of these poetic verses sometimes fail to inveigle a student’s enthusiastic embrace of the Liberty Dress Code. The same is true, regrettably more frequently, for our female scholars.

For whatever reason, following the Christmas break, we’ve experienced an uptick in high-school students who somehow think the Dress Code is only a mild suggestion. We really need some parental support on this.

The truth is, policing the Dress Code is not exactly the most favorite duty of a Liberty teacher or administrator. Maintaining proper decorum in the school is critical, so we ding the students when we notice a Dress Code violation, but we’d rather maintain focus on the business of teaching.

For every offence, a teacher must cull an offender out of a crowd, write them up, and manually update the student-discipline records. In the front office, the discipline records need to be reviewed watching for excessive accumulation of “conduct violations.” If a student receives three of these per quarter, notices to parents have to be processed, receipt confirmations have to be signed by students, collected and filed. Upon a fourth violation, the student is assigned an after-school detention which requires adult supervision.

All of this eats precious staff time. Dress-Code violations are a real nuisance. Moreover, violators annoy the majority of conscientious students who make the effort to live by the rules.

Here’s the pitch: Parents, please make sure your students are complying with the Liberty Dress Code. Make sure they’re ready for school when they leave home in the morning.

I’ve spoken to few parents of our more chronic offenders. It makes me cringe when a parent says, “I warned my daughter, as she left for school, that she might get caught by wearing that.”

To see how the Dress Code promotes success, [CLICK HERE](#). To see the Dress Code [CLICK HERE](#). To see what happens to habitual conduct-violation offenders [CLICK HERE](#).

To see and hear the classic poets mentioned at the top of this column, [CLICK HERE](#) or on the nearby video link. They are Frank Lee Beard, Joe Michael Hill and Billy F. Gibbons – otherwise known as ZZ Top. Our students don’t actually study these poetic rockers in school, but they happen to come in handy right now.

Liberty is a parent-run school. We need all parents to moderate and approve what their kids are wearing to class. Liberty’s faculty and staff truly appreciate your vigilance and support.

## Grandparents Corner

By: Ed Haynes, Chairman of the Liberty Grandparents Club

A representative of the Grandparents Club attended the December 15th, 2011 LCS/LCHS Board of Directors meeting. She reported that it was so obvious that this board consists of dedicated professionals and parents that have the students’ best interests at heart.

A board member suggested that we encourage grandparents to speak and share stories with the students in the classroom about their school and life experiences. The board feels that we as grandparents have experiences that the students could learn from. We will be working on developing a list of grandparents who would like to participate in this activity. Please contact us via e-mail [gpc@libertycommon.org](mailto:gpc@libertycommon.org) if you would like to participate.

We are excited that our inaugural Grandparents Club luncheon “Liberty for Lunch” is scheduled for Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at the Olive Garden at College and Boardwalk. We will meet at 11:30 am. Our speaker will be LCHS Principal and State Board of Education Chairman **Bob Schaffer**. He will be discussing important educational issues relative to our grandchildren’s education. We invite all grandparents to attend. This will be a great way to get to know one another better. Please RSVP to **Tammy Thomas** at 970-204-0033 or email her at: [tamarajthomas@aol.com](mailto:tamarajthomas@aol.com). We look forward to seeing many of you there!!

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

The Jr. High Lady Eagles are now 3-0. Please come out and support this talented group of athletes. All games begin at 4:00 p.m.

1/23/12– Liberty at Ridgeview (game at Azlan Cntr.)  
 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



## ATTENTION: TCAP (CSAP) Schedule– 2011-2012

Please note the following TCAP schedule for 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade. If at all possible, please try to arrange doctor appointments, dentist appointments and orthodontist appointments around this schedule. If you have any questions please contact the Front Office.

### LIBERTY COMMON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TCAP SCHEDULE 2011-2012

GRADE	DATE	SESSION	TIME			
3rd	2/29/2012	Reading #1	8:00-10:00			
3rd	3/1/2012	Reading #2	8:00-10:00			
3rd	3/20/2012	Math #1	8:00-10:00			
3rd	3/21/2012	Math #2	8:00-10:00			
3rd	3/26/2012	Writing #1	8:00-10:00			
3rd	3/27/2012	Writing #2	8:00-10:00			
4th	3/20/2012	Math #1	8:00-10:00			
4th	3/21/2012	Math #2	8:00-10:00			
4th	3/22/2012	Math #3	8:00-10:00			
4th	3/26/2012	Writing #1	8:00-10:00			
4th	3/27/2012	Writing #2	8:00-10:00			
4th	3/28/2012	Reading #3	8:00-10:00			
4th	3/29/2012	Reading #4	8:00-10:00			
4th	3/30/2012	Writing #5	8:00-10:00			
4th	4/2/2012	Reading/Writing #6	8:00-10:00			
5th	3/20/2012	Math #1	10:00-12:00			
5th	3/21/2012	Math #2	10:00-12:00			
5th	3/22/2012	Math #3	10:00-12:00			
5th	3/26/2012	Writing #1	10:00-12:00			
5th	3/27/2012	Writing #2	10:00-12:00			
5th	3/28/2012	Reading #3	10:00-12:00			
5th	3/29/2012	Reading #4	10:00-12:00			
5th	3/30/2012	Writing #5	10:00-12:00			
5th	4/2/2012	Reading/Writing #6	10:00-12:00			
5th	4/3/2012	Science #1	10:00-12:00			
5th	4/4/2012	Science #2	10:00-12:00			
5th	4/5/2012	Science #3	10:00-12:00			
6th	3/20/2012	Math #1	10:00-12:00			
6th	3/21/2012	Math #2	10:00-12:00			
6th	3/22/2012	Math #3	10:00-12:00			
6th	3/26/2012	Writing #1	10:00-12:00			
6th	3/27/2012	Writing #2	10:00-12:00			
6th	3/28/2012	Reading #3	10:00-12:00			
6th	3/29/2012	Reading #4	10:00-12:00			
6th	3/30/2012	Writing #5	10:00-12:00			
6th	4/2/2012	Reading/Writing #6	10:00-12:00			
<b>KEY</b>						
	2/29/2012	3rd Grade Only				
	3/1/2012	3rd Grade Only				
	3/20/2012	3rd/4th/5th/6th				
	3/21/2012	3rd/4th/5th/6th				
	3/22/2012	4th/5th/6th				
	3/26/2012	3rd/4th/5th/6th				
	3/27/2012	3rd/4th/5th/6th				
	3/28/2012	4th/5th/6th				
	3/29/2012	4th/5th/6th				
	3/30/2012	4th/5th/6th				
	4/2/2012	4th/5th/6th				
	4/3/2012	5th Grade Only				
	4/4/2012	5th Grade Only				
	4/5/2012	5th Grade Only				
<b>NOTES:</b>						
Grades 3-4 will be taking the CSAP test from 8-10						
Grades 5-6 will be taking the CSAP test from 10-12						
Teachers may reschedule specials that are missed because of the test but should work that out with the individual specials teachers.						
We may use the specials rooms and staff to help proctor students that need accommodations.						

## Headmaster Writing Continued from Front Page

The idea of “less is more” is misleading because it flatters a strain in some educational theory that disparages challenging content and focuses instead on feelings, attitudes, and “self-esteem.” But there is one sense in which “less is more” applies even to the early years. This sense is not in opposition to broad and rich knowledge, but in encouraging selectivity about the way in which broad and rich knowledge is chosen. Educational planners need to take on the responsibility of selecting a rich core of important knowledge, defined in an explicit sequence. It is this particular sense of “less is more” that informs the process of selection and consensus- building that went into the Core Knowledge Sequence.

*7. It is elitist to specify a body of content.*

A central motivation behind the Core Knowledge initiative is anti-elitist. The goal is to guarantee equal access for all to knowledge necessary for higher literacy and learning. Such knowledge is currently possessed only by the educated elite— and that’s the problem. Our aim is to make that knowledge available to all through the institution available to all: universal public schooling.

Core Knowledge is critically important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. As Albert Shanker, past president of the American Federation of Teachers, has written, as long as curriculum remains completely a matter of local choice, “schools and school districts are free to hold students up to high standards or, as often happens in the case of disadvantaged children, to decide the kids can’t do the work and give them watered-down curriculum. The trouble with this is that it virtually guarantees these children will fall behind their more advantaged peers—and never catch up”(New York Times, Dec. 16, 1991). In a Core Knowledge school, however, all children are taught a core of challenging, interesting knowledge that provides a foundation to build on year to year.

(More to come next week!)



**Show your pride!**

**Wear your  
favorite Liberty  
t-shirt**

**January 27, 2012**

## Liberty Common School Yearbook Still Available to Purchase

The 2011-2012 Liberty Common Yearbook is still available for purchase. The price is now \$18.00 per book and orders will be taken through the end of February or until supplies last. Order forms are available in the Front Office. Yearbooks will be distributed the on the last day of school, May 25th.

## 2011-2012 Concert Season

### FEBRUARY

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

### MARCH

**2/3-** “Aladdin Jr.”, 7:00 p.m.  
Performance Hall, LCS  
Tickets: \$3/students, \$5/general  
admission

**6-** LCHS Spring Instrumental Concert,  
6:30 p.m. Performance Hall, LCS

**8-** LCHS Spring Choir Concert, 6:30 p.m.  
Performance Hall, LCS

**30-** LCS Talent Show, 6:30 p.m.  
Performance Hall, LCS

### APRIL

**10-** 3rd/4th Grade Concert, 6:30 p.m.  
Performance Hall, LCS

**20/21-** 5th/6th Dessert Theatre, 6:00 p.m.  
Performance Hall, LCS  
Tickets: \$5/students, \$10/general  
admission

### MAY

**1-** 5th/6th Band & Choir Concert, 6:30 p.m.  
Performance Hall, LCS

**15-** LCHS Band, Choir, & Orchestra Finale  
Concert, 6:30 p.m. Performance Hall, LCS