



ARBOR VITAE

A NEWSLETTER OF LIVE OAK ACADEMY

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

WINTER 2007

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 12-16

Winter Break – No Classes

March 3 – Spring Cleaning
at Live Oak Academy

March 6

Parent Night, 7:30 - 9:00 PM
Guest: Debra Ullmann
Educational Planning
Services

March 15

National Latin Exam

April 2-6

Spring Break – No Classes

April 20

Spring Concert, 7:30 PM
at Live Oak Academy

April 25 – 28

CHEA Convention
Santa Clara Convention
Center
www.cheaofca.org

May 10-18

AP Tests
Register by March 15

May 25

Open House, 7:30 PM

May 29, 30, 31

Standardized Testing
at Live Oak Academy

June 2 - SAT's

Register by April 27

HEADMASTER'S HIGHLIGHT

In the Christian allegory *Hinds' Feet on High Places*, the main character, Much-Afraid, determines to go on a journey to High Places to be with the Chief Shepherd. Along the way, she experiences a number of challenges, and the Shepherd invites her to save a small pebble in a pouch as a remembrance of her lesson learned. After a long and challenging journey to High Places, the Chief Shepherd opens her pouch to show her that the ordinary stones she had collected had been transformed into glorious, sparkling jewels.

This is a beautiful illustration of what we hope to see accomplished in the hearts and lives of our students. Toward that end, Academy students, staff and parents assemble every morning at 7:25. We raise the American flag, recite the Pledge of Allegiance, listen to a Scripture reading, sing a hymn and offer a prayer to God to thank him for the new day. Finally, we “add a small pebble in their pouch” with my Headmaster’s Minute, a word of encouragement toward Godly character and wisdom. As they scurry off to class, my hope is that these nuggets will take root in their hearts and spur them on to Godly character and good works.

One of our morning topics, for example, was, “*What is the difference between giftedness and character?*” Giftedness is what we see on the outside – talent, ability, beauty, position, wealth. Character is from the inside, from the heart. It’s what God sees when he looks at us. Character qualities like obedience, truthfulness, attentiveness, patience, self-control, and generosity are intentionally nurtured.

Giftedness can be a great resource to get us where we want to go; it can be used to further God’s kingdom. But it can so easily be taken away by external circumstances. Character, on the other hand, transcends circumstances. Though external circumstances may challenge it, character that is rooted in the heart will not be taken away from us unless we allow it.

Giftedness may help us endure or face the challenges of life, but not fully. Tragedy might swoop down unexpectedly to tear external giftedness from our grasp. But when giftedness is supported by character, we can endure almost anything.

At Live Oak Academy, there are many things to learn and great opportunities for academic and extracurricular achievement. But, while these are to be applauded, our heart’s desire is for the “*hinds’ feet*” to stand on the “*high places*,” with hearts transformed into sparkling jewels.

God bless you,
Chris Owen



FREEDOM IS AN ART: A PERSONAL VIEW ON CLASSICAL EDUCATION, PART TWO

by John Rose

The Trivium, in summary, is about the skilled use of language. The remaining liberal arts, the Quadrivium, are more like math and science. They build on competence in language, and deepen it, by applying it to certain areas of study. These areas are in some ways comparable to college majors or faculty departments. There are two key differences: All parts of the Quadrivium are necessary to the general education of a free person; they are not “majors” or areas of specialization. Also, while Plato and Aristotle would have welcomed most of the newer disciplines found on college campuses, they would have ranked some merely optional. In their ancient academies, everyone took math, music, and astronomy, but there was no Persian Studies department.

I think the primary reason for such a choice in the ancient world was the fact that 2500 years ago the few well-developed scientific disciplines were those of the Quadrivium. Below philosophy and theology, they were the intellectual crown jewels of the ancients.

It is odd for us to think of music as a science, but that is because we take the technology of music for granted. The ancient Greeks had recently acquired the skill to accurately measure and classify tones, harmonies, modes, scales, and rhythms. The person who could learn the complexities of all this, and then make use of it to perform music, would have gained considerable poise and strength of mind, not just for music, but for other complex tasks. It is still true today. Beyond that, musical ability, both to perform and to listen, is a kind of wealth well-suited to those who are free.

Arithmetic and geometry are unified today in a sort of continent of mathematics along with algebra, calculus, and so on. In ancient times, they were more like two lone islands. They still stand as representatives of what we would call discrete and continuous mathematics. Or, as the medievals would say, arithmetic is about counting, and geometry is about weight and form. A neurologist might say, left brain for accounting and right brain for spatial reasoning. These are distinct and complementary mental functions or modes of thinking, and the well-trained mind should be completely comfortable (so says the classical model) with both. In the ancient and modern worlds, “innumeracy” is almost as destructive as illiteracy to one’s freedom.

Geometry, as taught in the classical tradition, is more than just a skill with measuring. It is an advanced level of logic. In ancient times, it was the course of study which required the student to reason with the greatest of precision, of rigor. In our world, which rests lightly on the labors of three millennia, logical rigor is often deprecated or taken for granted, but in the days of the Greeks, it was a new revelation. Euclid’s geometry textbook, *The Elements*, is a standard of sustained clear thought that was previously unheard of, and has since been only rarely equaled. We remember Abraham Lincoln for his rhetorical skills, informed by Shakespeare and the King James Bible, but Lincoln said it was Euclid’s *Elements* that taught him to reason accurately. This sort of reason was so prized at Plato’s Academy that over the front door was inscribed the following entrance requirement: “*None But Geometers Shall Enter Here.*”

Finally we get to astronomy. In the days before hyper-accurate clocks and calendars, the sky was everyone’s timepiece, and it behooved the educated person to be able to read it fully. Though astronomy is less useful today, and even somewhat unfashionable, it still retains one special claim on the educated person. When one is out of doors, the sky is half of everything visible (on an unclouded day), and surely it is important to have an appreciation for what is going on up there.

I might include several other modern sciences (physical, social, or historical) on the short list as soon as astronomy. Today it is a truism that students need more science. The rulers of the schools generally reason that this would make the graduates more productive in technical careers. This is (in the terms defined above) an illiberal goal. But science is, I believe, preeminently a liberal art. As a discipline, it (like mathematics) strengthens the mind and prepares it to reason through difficult decisions, and to evaluate and criticize the claims of experts. For these reasons, every citizen in a democratic state should be able to think scientifically. Beyond that, science is an irreplaceable way of knowing, contemplating, and wondering at the world we live in. It is a kind of intellectual music, a joy in itself suitable to the mind of the free person.

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Freedom is an Art, continued

If we were forced to choose just four representatives of the sciences, there is a certain fitness to choosing the Quadrivium. Just as arithmetic and geometry are complementary modes of thought, concerned with number and shape, so also music and astronomy are also concerned with number and shape, but with the addition of movement and change. Music may be regarded as the movement of number: number in rhythm, tone, and harmony. Today, we study change and movement by means of an historical outgrowth of astronomy—calculus, invented by Isaac Newton to describe the heavenly motions.

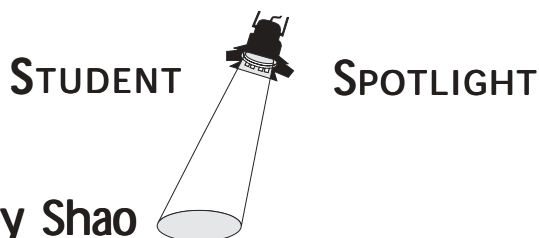
You may have noticed that the Liberal Arts are not an encyclopedia of all useful facts. Rather, they are the intellectual tools needed to read—or write—any given encyclopedia. They stretch out the mind to its full capacity, able to reason in all of its inborn modes, ready to sift truth from falsehood. In these days of increasing tsunamis of information, we need the Liberal Arts to keep us afloat and masters of our own course.

Lastly, the Liberal Arts are not the whole story of human growth; they are not enough to complete us. Plato wanted entrants to his Academy to be well versed in the Liberal Arts. Only then were they ready for the final step, the study of ultimate realities, which he called philosophy. The Christian medievals required a student to become a Master of Arts (the liberal kind, of course), before

attempting a doctorate in theology. They viewed theology as the “queen of sciences,” the final knowledge to which the other arts were but handmaids. The Greeks had a saying that the mature mind is a spear’s throw away from philosophy. So it is. The mature mind is ready to tackle the most important questions of all: Who am I? What are we here for? How shall we live? And finally, the noblest question for any free person, a question unknown to the pre-Christian sages: Whom shall I serve? If I yield myself, heart, mind, and strength, to God, then God can baptize the human freedom conferred by the Liberal Arts (and every other form of education), and fulfill it in the spiritual freedom granted by Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.

The Liberal Arts will never make a quick profit. In fact, they can be painful to acquire. It is rightly said that freedom is never free. But freedom, wisely used, is the key to all kinds of wealth, and certainly the noblest kind of wealth, the life rightly lived. I cannot yet lay claim to such a life. I *can* say that the pleasures of intellectual growth have been well worth the difficulties, and that they can point toward wisdom and a better sense of what is worthwhile in life. Let us journey together on the well-marked path.

The Fall 2006 issue of Arbor Vitae contained the first half of this article which discussed the Trivium. The whole article appears at <http://liveoakacademy.org/faculty/~jrose/civ/FreedomisanArt.pdf>.



Bethany Shao

Bethany Shao, age eleven, is a three-year veteran of Live Oak Academy. Although she enjoys all of her subjects in school, Latin and history are two of her favorite classes. As a 6th grader, Bethany took on extra tutoring and worked diligently to move up into Mr. DePangher’s Latin class with the 7th grade.

Bethany is the eldest of three children. Her family includes her parents, Samuel and Yvonne, and her brothers, Jacob and Caleb, nine and four years old, respectively. Bethany and her family are on the move in more ways than one. When she was six years old, she began taking gymnastics because, according to Yvonne, “I thought she looked cute in a leotard and bun in her



hair.” Bethany’s interest in gymnastics continued to grow, and a few years later she entered competitive gymnastics. She has been competing for three seasons. The seasons begin in late August and end in early November. When asked why she enjoys competing, Bethany responded, “It’s a fun sport, and you get to see your scores, and that’s cool to be able to see the scores from the judge.”

A conscientious student of piano for seven years, Bethany also finds time for snow skiing and demonstrates the ability to balance academic excellence along with outside interests.



MEET THE HEGGEMS

Laughter ... gracious hospitality ... kindness and respect ... happy, thriving, obedient children ... indeed nine of them! These are just a few of the reasons why friends and family love the warm, inviting atmosphere that pervades the home of Rick and Win Heggem. In fact, an explanation of the photo at the right will give our readers an insight into the family humor: every Christmas, the family receives the usual assortment of cards and letters, many of which include pictures of friends at far-away vacation spots. Just for fun, Rick gathered the family at home, took this photo, and overlaid it onto a moonscape background. Thus, recipients of the Heggems' most recent Christmas letter enjoyed this tongue-in-cheek depiction of the family's Lunar Vacation!

All of the Heggem children have been homeschooled, and seven of the nine Heggem children are currently Live Oak Academy students. Their oldest son, Timothy (22), graduated from Biola University and is currently applying to law schools, while Christopher (21) is a senior at Carson-Newman College in Nashville. Win is one of Live Oak's star teachers, and she has helped to build an extraordinarily strong elementary English department at the Academy. Currently, she is teaching 4th and 6th grade Grammar and Composition as well as a middle school Language Studies.

Before starting her family, Win trained as a teacher and taught language arts in high school and middle school. Originally, she sent her first son to kindergarten in public school. When Timothy was unhappy there, husband Rick, a business developer, suggested homeschooling. "Absolutely not!" declared Win, and rattled off the benefits of public school. But after switching churches and getting to know a core of home-schooling families who encouraged them, Win and Rick decided to give it a try just for a year at a time. Win says that they haven't looked back and have enjoyed watching their children grow and learn. Homeschooling has allowed them to best cater to their children's individual needs, as well as to impart a Biblical perspective. On a practical level, it was also simply more convenient. Win jokes, "*Can you imagine the logistical nightmare of dealing with several different schools for so many children?*"

At home, Win reports that the kids do a pretty good job of keeping each other entertained. Discipline is also made easier by the fact that errant behavior seldom goes unnoticed! The children are avid readers and also enjoy music and the occasional video game. Everyone pitches in with chores and responsibilities to keep the household running.

One of the family's greatest pleasures is entertaining family and friends. Rick has a large extended family that lives locally. Once every month or so, the combined families



The Heggems Lunar Vacation
Back to front, left to right: Rick, Win, Chris, Nick, Stephen, Timothy, Sheridan, Tori, Noah, Lydia and Phillip

attend church together and gather afterwards at the Heggem home. Win says everyone really enjoys these get-togethers, which usually involve about 30 family members. Friends are also often welcomed to special evenings of entertainment with creative games, plenty of food and great fellowship.

The Heggem family is passionate about speech and debate. Win founded and directs the renowned CHAT Speech Club, which competes in the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (www.ncfca.org), a homeschool speech and debate league. Win also teaches Camp Communication speech camps in the summers that are very well attended by students from all over the state. Both Win and Rick coach speech and debate students on an individual level, including several from Live Oak. The Heggem children have been enormously successful in both disciplines. Chris and Tim were national award winners and earned college debate scholarships, and the younger children have won numerous awards. Vacations and trips tend to be centered around speech and debate, too. Last year, the family drove cross-country through 26 states to attend a tournament!

Win says that she and her family are thankful for the varied and interesting community they have come to know through their involvement with homeschooling and speech/debate in particular. She's grateful for the diversity in backgrounds, churches, and political viewpoints that provide a rich and stimulating environment for her family.

Note: Inquiring minds will be interested to know that Randy Heggem, our P.E. and 6th grade math teacher, is actually Rick Heggem's brother.



WHO'S WHO ON STAFF

This is the first article in a series to introduce you to the wonderful staff at Live Oak Academy.



Debbie Luoma

High School English and History Teacher

Debbie and her husband, Jack, an engineering manager at General Dynamics, have been married for 26 years. They began home schooling their children in 1987. “Homeschooling my three older children from K-12th grade were the “best years of my life. I enjoyed their company and interacting with them intellectually,” she reminisces. Homeschooling allowed her to “see things I hadn’t seen before.” The children were actively involved in 4-H as part of their homeschool education, and Debbie found herself wearing different hats such as goat midwife, and bee keeper. “I even gave shots to pigs,” she adds proudly. While the bees and honeycombs were kept in their own backyard, their four-legged pets were housed at the Gilroy High School farm.

Today their four children have pursued various career and educational paths, from Blackhawk Helicopter pilot for the United States Army (23-year-old son, Lieutenant Kyle) to nursing student (24-year-old daughter, Meghan). John, 19, is a college student studying journalism, currently living at home; Kelsey, 17, is a senior at Valley Christian High School and applying to colleges.

An avid poetry enthusiast, Debbie quotes the poet Robert Frost on her bio page, “My desire in life is to unite my avocation with my vocation, as my two eyes make one in sight.” How fitting for this most dedicated educator who loves to teach.

A Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and Master of Arts in Linguistics, Debbie brings 29 years of literature, writing, and history teaching experience to Live Oak Academy at the community college, high school and AP levels. She founded the Maranatha School of Rhetoric for homeschoolers 9 years ago and has enjoyed the continuity of helping the same students over a period of years to develop a love for literature and improve their writing skills.

The Luoma’s live in a 1920’s bungalow in Gilroy. This is convenient for teaching at Gavilan Community College, a rewarding experience she has been enjoying for the past 15 years. “I love living in the town where I teach. I encounter former students all over the place. I’ve had opportunities to touch people’s lives and encourage them to go to church.” She also enjoys sewing, hiking, and spending time at their property in the mountains. The family worships at South Valley Community Church in Gilroy.

Debbie on her 4 years at Live Oak— “I love the challenge I feel here, the kids operate at a high level of reasoning, ask wonderful questions. (They) love taking suggestions and correction in their writing. I also love the parents at Live Oak as they are interesting Christian people—Christians who have a very real faith and interest in intellectual discussion.”

What Live Oak students appreciate about Mrs. Luoma—“She values our opinions” ... “She is enthusiastic about the books she teaches” ... “Her personality, fun-filled spirit and intelligence” ... “Her way of letting us run the class and taking control when we get out of hand” ... “A cheerful and happy person, our writing has improved” ... “I have to think about this awhile. There’s a lot ...”



Thank you to the following people who contributed to the articles in this month’s newsletter: *Susanne Englert, Michelle Merritt, Susan Merritt, Nicki Mierzejewski, Annie Rose and Judy Trehan.*



Spring Cleaning

AT LIVE OAK

Saturday, March 17,
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

We have our work cut out for us ... washing windows, scrubbing woodwork, painting walls ... let's see how much we can accomplish in one day. Our children deserve a clean environment. We need at least one parent from every family, so mark your calendar now! This will be a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the sense of community among the LOA families. All teens are encouraged to participate.

**Come Enjoy a Lovely Evening
at Live Oak Academy's
Spring Concert
Featuring Sacred Music
Performed by our
Elementary and Classic Choirs**

**April 20, 2007
7:30 PM**

**Refreshments
and fellowship,
too!
Invite your
friends
and family.**



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