

LIBERTY GAZETTE

WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO ON OUR SUMMER VACATIONS

by Lisa and Aaron



Eastman-Baldwin Junior High! Are you ready for summer?

We sure are. Because this is going to be our Summer of Community.

Wanna know what that means? Okay, we'll tell you!

It means that this summer, we are gonna get to know our neighbors. We're gonna meet up and talk about things we care about. And we're gonna see if we can work together and make change!

Mr. Charles says that community is like a foundation for a house. It holds the house up, even if the ground gets shaky. And we don't know about you, but whenever we look at the news, things can definitely feel shaky sometimes.

That's why a strong community is so important. But like any foundation, ya gotta build it first!

So we've been thinking up all sorts of ways to bring people together this summer.

Maybe we'll start a banned books club at the library.

Maybe we'll get together to clean up the park.

Maybe we'll organize a lemonade stand and food drive for the food bank. Drop off canned goods, get an ice-cold drink!

Maybe we'll host a letter-writing pizza party where we write to our representatives in Congress and tell them what we think about what's going on in the country.

Whatever we end up doing, it'll be fun because we'll be doing it together. So come join us! Or invite us to your community event! We're super fun at parties!!!!

See you this summer, guys! Til then, this is Lisa and Aaron for the Liberty Gazette, signing off!



1. I heard Mr. Charles say “Our rights and freedoms are guaranteed by the Constitution and defended by individuals and civil rights organizations and foundationally rooted in community.” What on earth does that mean?!

Great question! Let’s take it piece by piece.

Our rights and freedoms are guaranteed by the Constitution...: The United States Constitution is our country’s founding document and supreme law. Through the Bill of Rights and other amendments, the Constitution guarantees that all people living in the United States are entitled to specific rights and freedoms.

...and defended by individuals...: It is up to each and every one of us to stand up for our rights and freedoms.

...and civil rights organizations...: Sometimes, it takes more than individuals to protect and uphold our civil liberties. That’s where civil rights organizations come in. These are groups of people working together to fight for equality and fair treatment for all.

...and foundationally rooted in community: As humans living side by side with one another, we exist in community with others. Our system of government, our rights, and our freedoms must work to protect all of us.

In short: We have rights and freedoms. It’s up to us, as individuals and communities, to protect them. And civil rights organizations are here to help.

2. What are civil rights organizations?

Civil rights organizations bring people together on behalf of civil rights issues. These groups educate the public, advocate for change, and challenge unfair laws and policies. They may include lawyers, political advocates, researchers, community organizers, volunteers, and others – all working together towards a common goal of liberty and justice for all.

Some organizations may focus specifically on advancing or protecting the civil rights of a particular group of people whose rights are at risk. Others, like the ACLU, work to defend the rights of all people nationwide.



3. What is the ACLU?

The ACLU stands for the American Civil Liberties Union. It was founded in 1920 by a small group of civil rights activists who felt that the government was unfairly stepping on the rights of people who disagreed with its actions. They decided to take a stand against what they believed was a violation of the Bill of Rights. The ACLU has been educating about and defending the rights of people all across America ever since, with offices across all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington D.C. Like other civil rights organizations, they bring together a wide group of people – from civil rights attorneys to community volunteers – to act as “guardians of liberty.”

4. What do civil rights attorneys do?

Civil rights attorneys help people who have been hurt by actions or rules that unfairly limit their rights and freedoms. As experts in our country’s laws, civil rights attorneys offer advice and advocate on behalf of the people they represent. They know how to use the legal system to fight for people’s equal protection under the law: by filing lawsuits, arguing court cases, and appealing losses (or asking a higher court to reconsider a lower court’s ruling). Civil rights attorneys have taken cases all the way up to the Supreme Court – *Tinker vs. Des Moines*, for example!

Notes

EPISODE 4 STUDY HALL:

Pop Quiz

Think you know your rights?

Test your knowledge with this pop quiz!



1. What is “Freedom of Expression”?

- a. One of the five freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment.
- b. How we collectively refer to the ideas set forth in the First Amendment.
- c. One of the ten amendments in the Bill of Rights.
- d. All of the above.

2. In Tinker vs. Des Moines, the Supreme Court ruled that students:

- a. Must put aside their First Amendment rights at the schoolhouse gate.
- b. Must check their hats at the schoolhouse gate.
- c. Don’t lose their First Amendment rights while at school.
- d. None of the above.

3. “Symbolic speech” refers to:

- a. Ideas communicated through symbols.
- b. Ideas communicated through actions.
- c. Ideas communicated through clothes.
- d. All of the above.

4. What is a book challenge?

- a. When someone urges you to read a lot of books in a short amount of time.
- b. When someone attempts to get a book removed from a school or library.
- c. When someone succeeds in removing a book from a school or library.
- d. When you read a book that is complex or difficult.

5. Why is book banning a First Amendment issue?

- a. Because free speech applies to ideas communicated with spoken words, written words, or without using any words at all.
- b. Because the First Amendment protects the freedom of the press, which includes writing.
- c. Because it puts our ability to freely exchange ideas and receive information at risk.
- d. All of the above.

EPISODE 4 STUDY HALL:

Pop Quiz

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6. What are the three branches of the U.S. government?

- a. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches
- b. Congress, the White House, and the Supreme Court
- c. he House of Representatives, The Senate, and the White House.

7. Which of the following are examples of checks and balances in the government?

- a. The judicial branch can declare a law unconstitutional.
- b. The president can veto a bill.
- c. Congress can override a presidential veto with a two-thirds majority vote.
- d. All of the above.

8. True or False: The president has the power to create laws.

- a. True: As the head of the United States government, the president has the power to make the rules of the country.
- b. False: Only the legislative branch – Congress – has the power to create laws.

9. What do civil rights organizations do?

- a. Educate the public on their civil rights.
- b. Fight civil rights violations through the courts.
- c. Build community to protect people's civil rights.
- d. All of the above.

10. Building community is...

- a. A way to show people you care about them.
- b. A way to be a helper.
- c. A way to get involved with issues that matter to you.
- d. All of the above.

Pop Quiz Answer Key



1. What is “Freedom of Expression”?

b. How we collectively refer to the ideas set forth in the First Amendment.

The phrase “freedom of expression” isn’t written anywhere in the Constitution, but it is essentially the big idea at the heart of the First Amendment.

2. In Tinker vs. Des Moines, the Supreme Court ruled that students:

c. Don’t lose their First Amendment rights while at school.

Justice Abe Fortas wrote: *“It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.”*

3. “Symbolic speech” refers to:

d. All of the above.

“Symbolic speech” refers to ideas communicated without the use of words.

4. What is a book challenge?

b. When someone attempts to get a book removed from a school or library.

A book challenge is an attempt to ban a book. A ban is when the challenge is successful.

5. Why is book banning a First Amendment issue?

d. All of the above.

No matter the reason, book bans and the First Amendment are not compatible.

Pop Quiz Answer Key



6. What are the three branches of the U.S. government?

- a. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches**

7. Which of the following are examples of checks and balances in the government?

- a. All of the above.**

Each branch of government can put checks on the power of the other branches, keeping power balanced across all three.

8. True or False: The president has the power to create laws.

- b. False: Only the legislative branch – Congress – has the power to create laws.**

That's no accident! Our Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution this way because they didn't want any one person to have lawmaking power.

9. What do civil rights organizations do?

- d. All of the above.**

Civil rights organizations work through a variety of channels to protect the rights of people in America.

10. Building community is...

- d. All of the above.**

In addition, building community is one of the best things you can do to feel better when you are feeling down!