

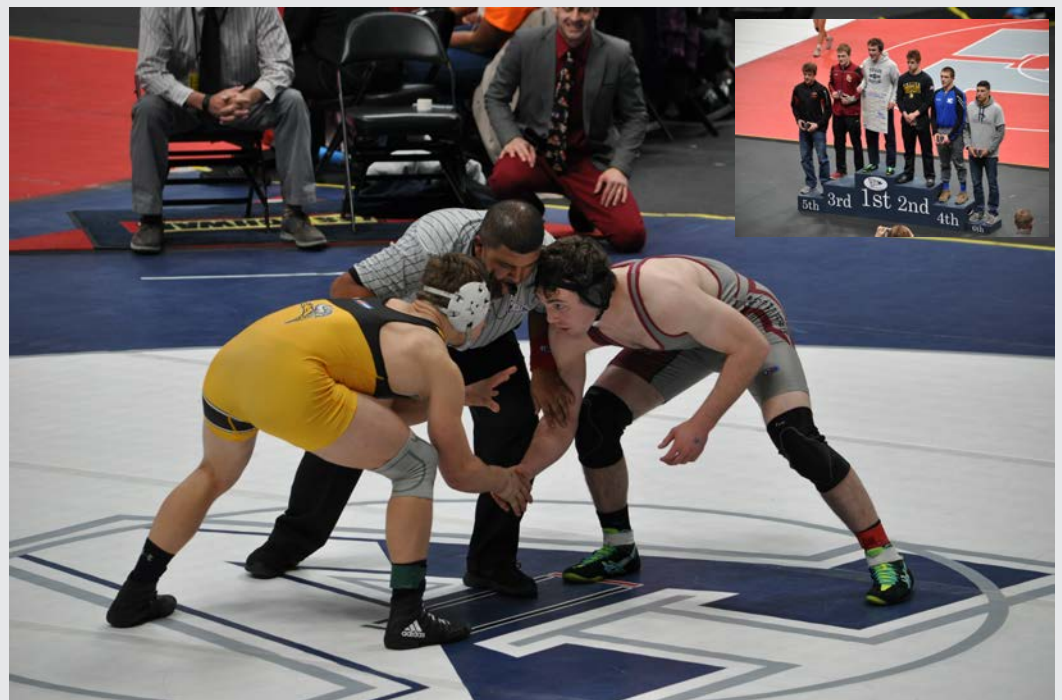
THE CLASSICAL ACADEMY EXISTS TO ASSIST PARENTS IN THEIR MISSION TO DEVELOP EXEMPLARY CITIZENS EQUIPPED WITH ANALYTICAL THINKING SKILLS, VIRTUOUS CHARACTER, AND A PASSION FOR LEARNING, ALL BUILT UPON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

# PALMARIUM

## Parent Survey

### All Time High Response

THANK YOU! More parents participated in the annual TCA parent surveys than ever in our history. **1,911 parents** took the time to answer the survey questions provided by our seven schools. The previous high in 2014 was 1,616 parent participants. Your efforts *bested the all time high by over 18% and last year's results by over 33%*. Information from the surveys will be provided to the TCA Board in May and our principals will be sharing with their respective communities before the school year ends. *Your efforts made this new high response rate possible and we look forward to analyzing your feedback.*



Last month, TCA's **Nathan Johns** (junior) won the **3A State Wrestling Championship** in the 182-pound weight class at the Pepsi Center in Denver. Nathan defeated his opponent 3-2 after a last-second reversal. Nathan was the runner-up at the state competition last year.

## 3A STATE CHAMPION

## Twenty Years



## HONESTY

"We are all travelers in the wilderness of this world, and the best we can find in our travels is an honest friend." - **Robert Louis Stevenson**. This month, Rebecca Wade, *Elementary Mentor Teacher*, shares some thoughts with us about *honesty*.

The Editor





## BRANCHES POSITIONING TO ENSURE A SOLID FUTURE

Atop a solid trunk for support, scaffolding branches diverge in an effort to position themselves in sunlight to host the promising leaves that will emerge in spring. Equipped with vascular tissue to pipe water to the budding canopy, the branches will provide the leaves with the raw materials needed to create nourishment for the tree as a whole. The leaves will reciprocate in the relationship by sending down life-giving nutrients for the tree to use, providing energy for new growth and bearing fruit, ultimately ensuring a solid future.

In the metaphorical likening of our TCA Core Values to a tree, the branches are both upheld and secured by the trunk of our Educational Philosophy, a trunk that provides growth through life-giving relationships, a warm learning atmosphere, intellectual food in Classical ideas, the acquisition of authentic character, and the freedom found in learning discipline and healthy habits. The branches themselves do not perform the work of photosynthesis; rather they provide strength and access to life-giving substances for the leaves to do their part. Our students do the work of learning, which is in turn upheld and sustained through staff members who model professional excellence, respect family values, and partner with parents in creating a community that teaches and models virtuous character.

Just as there is not a single specialized spire acting as an extension of the trunk, but a multitude of diverging and forking branches which create more surface area to capture life-giving sunlight, so there is a balance of a variety of inspirational and disciplinary subjects through a liberal arts education (mentioned in the Core Values "Roots" section). This multi-disciplined, whole-person focused education is intended to assist

the diligent student in his pursuit of all that is true, good, and beautiful. The classroom is not only an environment where depth of knowledge is esteemed, but it is also a milieu in which the development of strong moral character is integral. We practice George Washington's statement written in a letter to his nephew in 1790, "It is therefore highly important that you should endeavor not only to be learned but virtuous."

Both education and character require depth and consistency in the face of life's struggles. The limbs of a tree may bend to the elements that challenge them, yet reach upward in continued growth. In the same way, "we partner with parents to recognize and embrace adversity, including struggle and even failure as healthy opportunities for each student's growth." We endeavor, as a community, to embrace one another in all conditions and circumstances, not allowing ethnicity, gender, disability, or religion to divide us. Since all trees require pruning to maintain healthy growth, we strive to honestly and humbly evaluate our practices and attitudes, pruning away what is unproductive and ensuring our resources—our "nutrients"—are intentionally allotted for the growing of fruit.

Trees inherently anticipate new growth. The branches' positioning affects the amount of nourishment the tree may receive and the bounty of fruit it may support. This "Branches" section of our Core Values offers our TCA community the framework necessary to create and maintain a relational, disciplined, life-giving atmosphere that promotes both continual growth and perpetual stability. Working as a single, cohesive unit, staff members can model professional excellence while stepping in to positions of influence, and parents can guide, encourage, and love their children while raising them to make a positive impact on the world. Unified, we position, support, and nourish our students on their way to becoming exemplary citizens - the fruit of our labor.

From Cosette Perrodin - TCA College Pathways Sophomore - she is a writer with whom I shared my article:

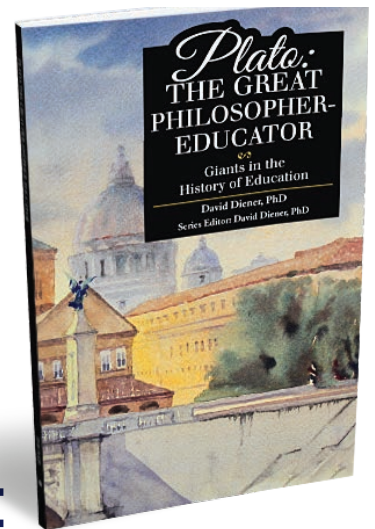
"In order to make it possible for leaves to thrive and access sunlight, tree branches grow in many different directions. In windy areas, trees grow sideways with the direction of the wind with the purpose of protecting the branches and leaves. The biggest job of a tree's branches is to provide a stable place for leaves to access sunlight. "Why do branches matter to our school? A branch's most crucial purpose is to support the leaves and give them access to sunlight. Similarly, TCA's purpose is to support its students and give them access to a learning environment that will prepare them for success, academically as well as socially. TCA desires to build students of valuable character who will not only be able to grow with strength, but who will also be able to grow and flourish with beauty, in mind, body and spirit."

by Nikki Upchurch  
College Pathways

## TCA Wellness Task Force Update

**REMINDER:** As mentioned last month, the next major scheduled community event is the Second Annual **TCA Mental Health Expo** scheduled for **Wednesday, March 21** from 6:00-8:45 pm. **Click here** to find out more about the evening's events. Several breakout sessions will be offered, including an expanded selection for elementary and tween parents. Our focus will be on supporting student mental health, sleep, communication, how to identify your student's unique needs, healthy social media habits, and several other topics.

Recent topics and those that continued to be discussed by the Task Force include student pressures and anxiety, school start times, and homework load across grade levels.



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

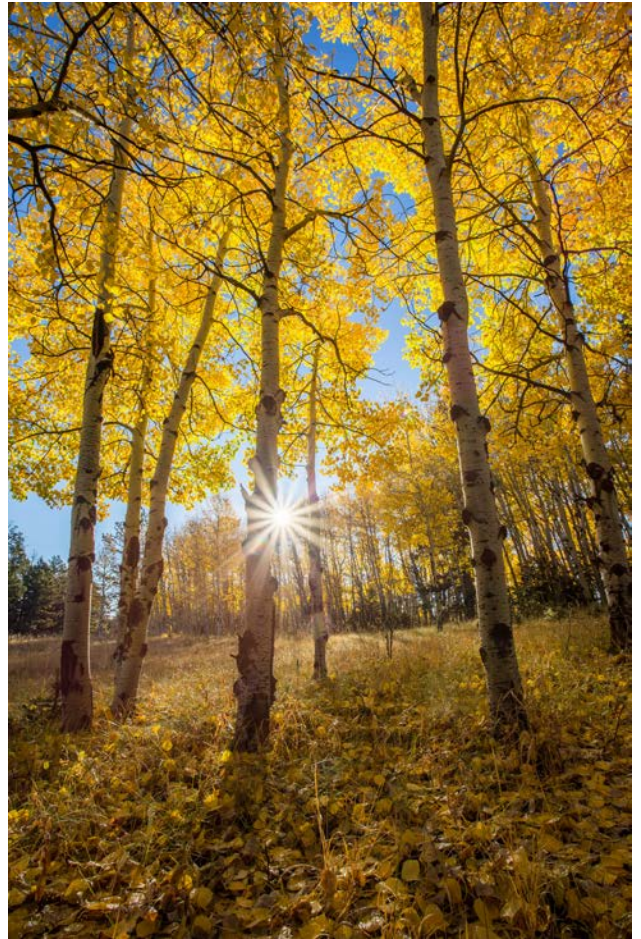
On Tuesday and Wednesday, **April 24-25**, Bleys Kueck will be leading our last *Engaging Minds: Beyond the Book Club* discussion on **Plato: The Great Philosopher-Educator** by David Diener. The study sessions last 90-minutes and are held at the North Campus. If you are interested in attending e-mail me at [wjolly@asd20.org](mailto:wjolly@asd20.org) and I will make sure that you are on the invitation list when I send out the request for RSVPs.





# branches - photo essay

photos provided by Justin Peterson, College Pathways Principal



When thinking about the **branches** and **tree** imagery in the Core Values document these photos by our College Pathways Principal, Justin Peterson, provide a wonderful canvas of what we seek in the true, the good, and the beautiful.



# flashback: PALMARIUM Volume 8 - March 2014

Palmarium: Director of Academic Services

Volume 8: March 19, 2014

## A Titan's Creed Approved by TCA Board

During the course of the 2013-2014 school year the Character, Culture, Curriculum, and Instruction (CCCI) department has worked with numerous stakeholders at TCA – students, parents, staff at all grade levels, administration, and the Academic Lead Team to create a TCA touchstone document (first mentioned in Volume 2 of the PALMARIUM). The goal was to create a clear statement of what we strive for at TCA that could be embraced by all students, staff, and parents. The intent was not to replace the mission statement, or in any way diminish the core values, but rather have a document that embodies the essence of who we are that is actionable in our daily endeavors. The final document after much thought, review, and reflection (*included on the next page*), was approved by the TCA



The Classical Academy's Class of 2014

Board of Directors on Monday, March 10. As we progressed through the stages of development it became apparent that the touchstone embodies *A Titan's Creed*. During the remainder of the 2013-2014 academic year and as we move into the next school year you will see a dedicated effort to emphasize the creed through a variety of school venues. The support by students, staff, and administration has been extremely positive throughout the entire effort and we encourage all of TCA to embrace this powerful statement.



excellence with honor

## four years ago this month

We in this country, in this generation, are, by destiny rather than choice, the watchmen on the walls of world freedom. We ask, therefore, that we may be worthy of our power and responsibility, that we may exercise our strength with wisdom and restraint, and that we may achieve in our time and for all time the ancient vision of 'peace on earth, goodwill toward men.' That must always be our goal, and the righteousness of our cause must always underlie our strength. For as it was written long ago, 'except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.'

*Undelivered luncheon speech, Dallas, Texas November 22, 1963*



President Kennedy and the First Lady in Dallas, TX – November 22, 1963.

# **flashback: PALMARIUM Volume 8 - March 2014**

Palmarium: *Director of Academic Services*

Volume 8: March 19, 2014

## **A Titan's Creed**

Titans endeavor to recognize and pursue truth, beauty, and goodness.

Titans celebrate virtue in scholarship, relationship, and citizenship.

Titans take ownership of and find joy in learning.

Titans value our responsibilities above our rights.

Titans love, respect, and protect one another.

Striving to be our best, do our best,

And give our best to the world, in

Mind, Body, and Spirit,

# **We Are Titans!**

# Honestly on Honesty

by **Rebecca Wade**, Elementary Mentor Teacher

Let's be honest . . . does honesty really matter? In a culture of "white lies," "relative truth," and "fake news," we are sadly obliged to discover whether honesty is still the best policy.

The first line of A Titan's Creed reads "Titans endeavor to pursue truth, beauty, and goodness." If truth is "a being true; specifically, sincerity; honesty" (Webster), why is it important that we pursue it?

At TCA, we follow the trivium, the first part of a liberal arts education, which consists of three main aspects: logic, grammar, and rhetoric. Logic is the art of thinking and includes an understanding of truth. "Truth is the norm of logic. Correctness in thinking is the normal means to reach truth, which is the conformity of thought with things as they are—with reality" (excerpted from "What Are the Liberal Arts?" article originally published by a guest writer in *The Classical Teacher*, Summer 2012).

Thinking about the ideas of just and unjust, C.S. Lewis reasoned, "A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line." Similarly, a man does not call an idea *deceit* unless he has some idea of *honesty*. It is between these two ideas—honesty and deceit—that we find ourselves today. At a time in history when we could most effectively promote ideas of truth through unprecedented communication, we are instead redefining the idea of honesty. There was a time when the media promoted ideas of integrity and honesty. The heroes of long-ago (and nearly long-gone) narratives were men and women of integrity; people who were honest with themselves and others. They were true in word and deed and true to their convictions.



As children, we learned stories about George Washington and the cherry tree, and Abraham Lincoln walking several miles to return a few cents overcharge to a customer. As I reflect on these tales, I wonder if Lincoln considered his own "pursuit of happiness" rights before walking miles to pay back the overcharge, or did he value his responsibilities above his rights—the responsibility to deal honestly with his customers? Maybe he considered integrity as the means by which he could pursue happiness. When asked the tough question of who killed the cherry tree, in Parson Weems story, George bravely answered, "I cannot tell a lie, father. I did it with my hatchet." After reprimanding young George for his careless act, his father admonished him, "I am sorry to have lost my cherry tree, but I am glad that you were brave enough to tell me the truth. I would rather have you truthful and brave than to have a whole orchard

full of the finest cherry trees" (taken from William J. Bennett's *Book of Virtues*). Such stories give insight into the importance of honesty, as related to a couple of our nation's most revered leaders.

In truth, living an honest life is not always a simple endeavor. Sometimes, telling the truth could cost something: a friendship, a position, or a promotion. Shading the truth may seem like a better option when telling the whole

## A Few Thoughts on Honesty

The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest.  
**Thomas Jefferson**

Accuracy is the twin brother of honesty; inaccuracy, of dishonesty.  
**Nathaniel Hawthorne**

The influence of a mother upon the lives of her children cannot be measured. They know and absorb her example and attitudes when it comes to questions of honesty, temperance, kindness, and industry. **Billy Graham** (in honor of his recent passing)

Nothing in the world is harder than speaking truth, nothing is easier than flattery. **Fyodor Dostoyevsky**





## Honestly on *Honesty* (continued)



truth is costly. Perhaps this is why adjectives have been added to the words truth and lies to give them a more favorable twist, allowing people to feel all right about incorrect thoughts, actions, and words. Relative truth allows people to speak and act as they like, arguing for each individual's "version" of the truth. Likewise, white lies do not carry the same negative weight as regular lies do. However, where is truth, or logic in this truth shading? Where is reality? Truth cannot be shaded without diminishing it.

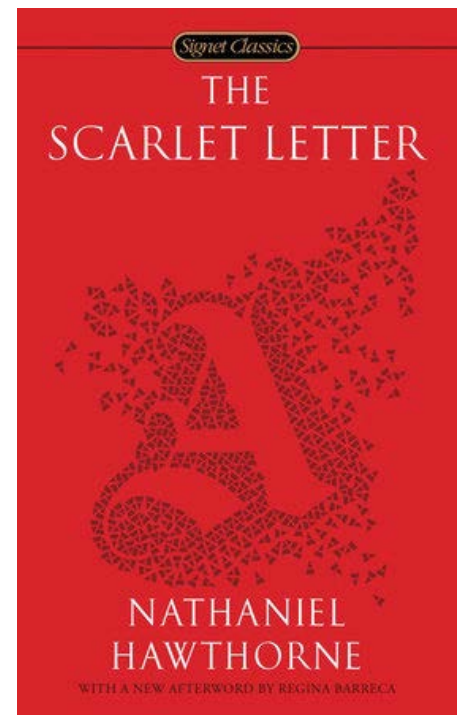
Rather, the very existence of phrases like "fake news," "white lies," and "relative truth" in our culture proves that at the heart of everything, truth matters. At the very core of our nature, we seek for truth. Like Washington's father, we desire that our children

tell us the truth. We expect the media to tell us the truth about what is happening in the world. We want our politicians to be honest with us when they are campaigning for our votes. So how often are we truthful with others, let alone with ourselves?

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne implores his readers, "Be true! Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred!" (*The Scarlet Letter*, p. 224) So severe was the guilt he felt from concealing the truth about his part in Hester Prynne's ignominy, the Puritan minister Arthur Dimmesdale eventually succumbs to the physical degradation of his soul. If only he had divulged the truth as Hester Prynne had. The truth cost Hester her reputation in the Puritan community, but she gained her soul, and, eventually, her freedom. "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32).

Honesty must be more than the words a person speaks. It is, instead, words and actions, or integrity. So, will we be people of integrity? Will we choose to be honest even when no one is watching? Will we value our responsibilities above our rights and pursue truth?

Francis Bacon sums this discussion up well: "Certainly, it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth" (from *Of Truth*).



### Library Addition Approved

At the March 12 meeting the TCA Board voted unanimously to approve \$600,000 from the general fund to complete a junior high/ high school library on the ground floor (where the cafeteria is currently located). The addition of the elementary and secondary cafeterias in the new elementary gym and secondary commons construction projects provided an opportunity this summer to complete the remodel of the library as originally intended in the North Campus building design.

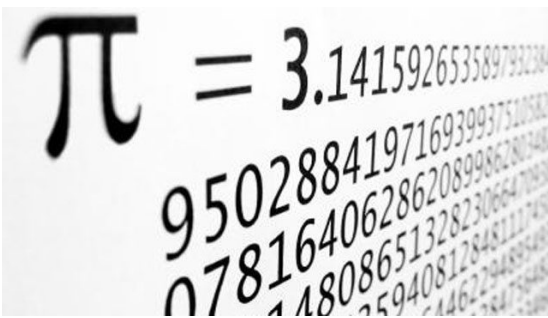


# Central Elementary Assembly

photos provided by Wesley Jolly, Director of Academic Services



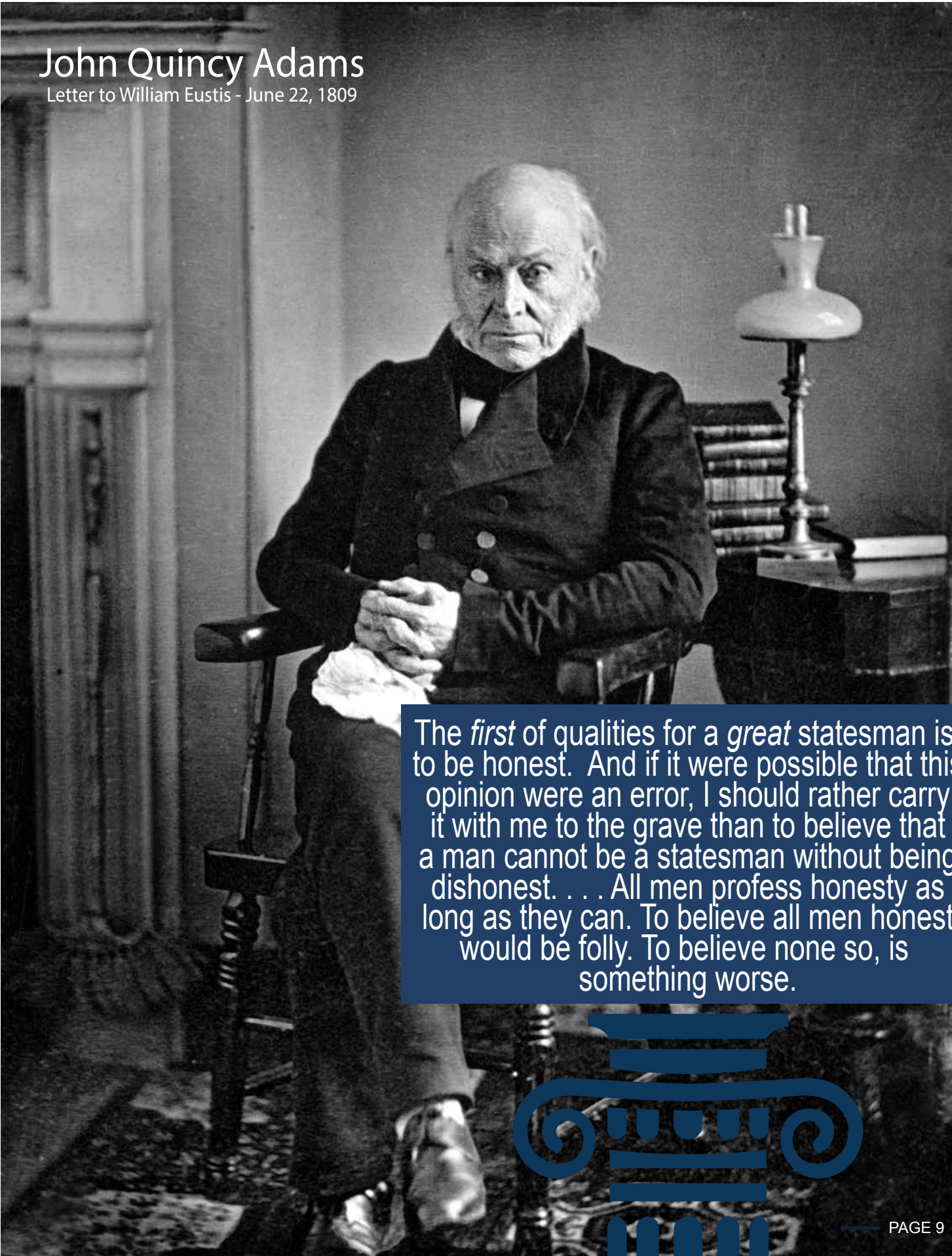
The Friday, March 16 Central Elementary Assembly had a lesson on **courage** through the lens of *A Bug's Life* characters. The first graders dressed up for **Colonial Day** and performed a recitation for the student body and parents present. And finally, in celebration of **Pi Day** some gracious staff members were chosen to receive a pie in the face from those students that memorized Pi to the greatest decimal place. The 5th grade winner memorized Pi to 280 decimal places.





# John Quincy Adams

Letter to William Eustis - June 22, 1809



The *first* of qualities for a *great* statesman is to be honest. And if it were possible that this opinion were an error, I should rather carry it with me to the grave than to believe that a man cannot be a statesman without being dishonest. . . . All men profess honesty as long as they can. To believe all men honest would be folly. To believe none so, is something worse.