

# Applause

Volume 7 Number 4

Charleston County School of the Arts, North Charleston, SC

December 2005

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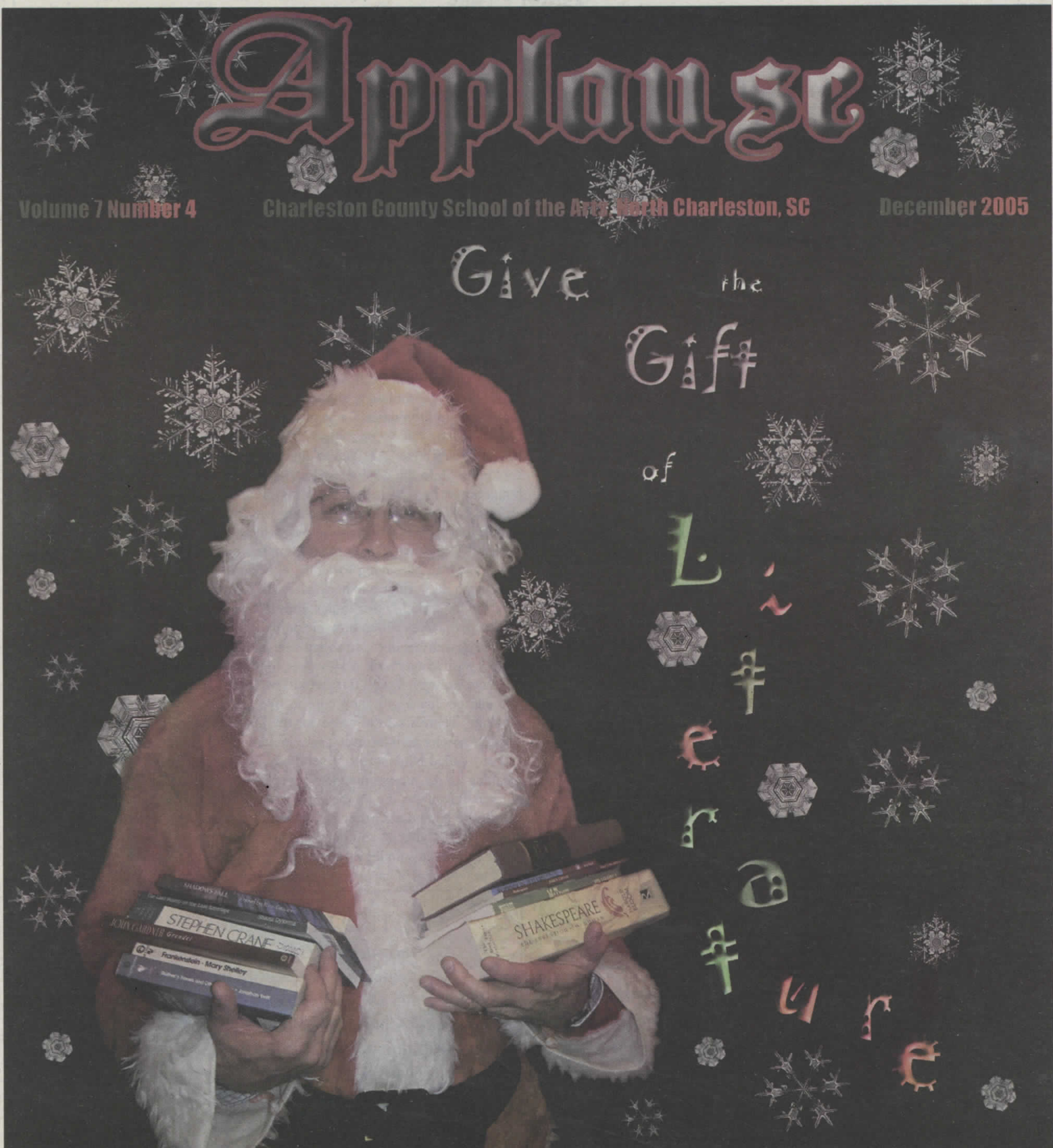
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ALDOUS HUXLEY  
The Case History of the End of the World  
MURDER MYSTERY  
STEPHEN CRANE  
ACQUA CARONNE  
Frankenstein - Mary Shelley  
Woman's Work and the  
Feminist Poet

SHAKESPEARE  
REPRESENTING THE WORLD



## Editor's Page

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## A Note from the Editor

I hope you enjoy our holiday issue of *Applause*. We devoted a portion of this issue to surveying the literary tastes of SOA's students and staff, and we hope you will find the information useful while you do your holiday shopping. Thank you to Santa Claus for taking the time to pose for the camera of *Applause* cover design artist Omi Naderi.



Also, thanks to all the generous students and staff who helped *Applause* raise \$820 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in conjunction with Dr. Cusatis' s running of the St. Jude Marathon in Memphis, TN on 3 December. Finally, our next issue will be devoted to our exciting production of *Big River* in January. Happy Holidays from *Applause*!

- Cait Brennan, Editor

## The men's guide to women

by David Whitely and Harry Harrison

Well, it's that time of year again. Festivus is here again. It's time to put up the pole, join hands and sing "Silent Night, Serenity Now." Oh, that's right, you celebrate Christmas, don't you? It being the Christmas season and all, your girlfriend will probably be expecting a present from you. She may not mention it to you, but trust us, it's an elaborate ruse to see exactly how dedicated you are by purposely not giving you any instructions and seeing how you handle the situation.



Don't expect to get anything you'd want in return; she looks down on your constant video gaming as a bottle she can wean you off of as you mature. Not that we're saying that spending eight hours a day playing your vintage copy of Chrono Trigger is in any way healthy. It's not, but that's really your problem, not hers. Some people read; you like to play video games instead.

Finding her a gift won't be so difficult, you think; you know what she likes. The only problem is, she knows what she likes as well, and even though it's the middle of December, she won't stop shopping for herself. You hear that she likes books by Jan Karon, only to find her coming home one day with the entire Mitford Years boxed set. You ask her about it, and she casually mentions that she spotted it while she was out and had always wanted something like this, so she bought it for herself without a second thought.

In a solution to your problem, you can't simply give her money, like you do for your friends when you're out of ideas. Our first suggestion to you is: try jewelry. Don't go to Kay or Skatell's unless you are about to ask her to marry you and don't plan on paying for college, because one semester's tuition is exactly how much these rings and necklaces will run you. Instead, try Belk or Dillards, which carry, among other things, jewelry that will beat anything from Wal-Mart by one point-five million brownie points, but won't rack your wallet with sobs.

Jewelry is our safe suggestion and we stand by it for those of you who merely wish to avert crisis. However, for the more daring among you, we have an alternate strategy. If you'd rather kill two birds with one stone while you're at it, you can get her a gift she's sure to like and get her off your back about your gaming. There's a little game for the DS circulating that has been incredibly popular among girls of every age, including our friends and even our mothers (shiver) called Nintendogs. Everybody loves a puppy, but not everybody loves cleaning up the messes they leave when they use their younger sibling's stuffed animals for toilets, dig up the yard, and the annoying and smelly puppy corpses they leave behind after they eat cooking chocolate or antifreeze. Nintendogs is sure to addict anyone and everyone who likes having a puppy that never dies, never chews the sofa legs, and never grows up and gets ugly. Anyway, you still have to replace that cat you ran over back in October.

KATHERINE DIETZEL DUTREMBLE  
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## School News

### Oh, now I get it

by David Whitley

Well, once again, the annual School Report Cards have come around, and SOA is still on top of the game! Students recall tears forming in their eyes as they surveyed it with unbridled pride as one may view the American flag... or that's what the publishers may have hoped for, instead of students dropping it into the nearest trash can or stuffing it into the impenetrable depths of their backpacks, never to be thought of or seen again. Therefore, for those of you who don't enjoy sifting through thirteen pages of tedious graphs and tables of information, here is a summary of our school's achievement in comparison with other similar schools in South Carolina.

It should come as no surprise to any of you that SOA has attained an excellent overall rating as well as an excellent in improvement, which is difficult since it's hard to keep improving when already dominating the South Carolina educational system like an M-1 tank in a water-balloon fight. Traditionally, South Carolina has not been the best state as far as education has been concerned, ranking second to last nationally. Translation: We're smarter than Guam. Nevertheless, with 43.7 percent of SOA seniors being eligible for LIFE scholarships at four-year institutions, we have 10 percent more students eligible than most high schools in the state. There was a 98.9 percent graduation rate, with only 1 person who failed to graduate, as opposed to similar instate high schools, which had an average of 44. That's 2 percent of the usual dropout rate! That means that for every student that drops out of other schools, we have a forlorn pinky toe, wandering through smoke filled jazz clubs just looking for a good time on its pitiful salary, a pinky toe that "could've been a contender," instead of a bum, which it is.

Being one of the best schools in Charleston, SOA is continuing to improve and advance, though attaining an excellent improvement rating may prove difficult when there's nothing to improve upon. Here's to another successful year and wishing for many more.

### A few firsts

by Sharon Stovezky

Well, it's been almost four months since I got here. I've experienced so many new things and met so many new people. In the last month or so I did a lot.

On October 31st, I enjoyed my first Halloween. In Israel we don't celebrate Halloween and so it was an interesting experience for me. I went to my friend's house for a costume party and had a lot of fun. I dressed up and ate a lot of candy...Halloween wasn't that different for me, because in Israel we have a holiday which is pretty much alike. It is called "Purim" and we celebrate it in March. On Purim, everybody comes to school with costumes and we have a festival in school.

Secondly, in the beginning of November I went to Orlando, Florida with my host family. We took a trip to Disney World and Universal Studios. It was the greatest trip ever, and I had so much fun. We were there for four days and just had a really good time. Since this is my first time in the United States I've never been to Disney World. I really enjoyed the Disney atmosphere, the rides, the shows, the Parade, the fireworks and everything. Also, it was my first trip with my host family and we had a great time being together. Universal Studios was also very nice. There were some really good rides and shows. I'll always remember that trip.

Thirdly, I had my first Thanksgiving. In Israel we don't have anything like Thanksgiving, and so it was really new to me. I really enjoyed it. I thought it was a lovely holiday, about family and giving thanks for all we've got. I spent Thanksgiving week with my host family, which was fun. I met some of their relatives. On Thanksgiving day we had a lot of guests over and there were about 15 people. It was a lot of food and fun.

## Where Are They Now?

### Lane Elsey : Class of 2005

by Sharon Stovezky

Former SOA dance major **Lane Elsey** is now a college freshman, and she's still focusing on her artistic side.

**What college are you attending and what is your major?**

I'm at USC and my major is dance.

**What made you decide to go there?**

It was actually my fallback because I didn't get enough money to go to Jacksonville University.

**How does college life compare to what you imagined and/or were told?**

I've definitely experienced a lot more freedom since I'm not living at home. It's weird just being able to do what you want. It's also kind of weird living with someone, but luckily I was able to room with a friend from home.

**When you're not in class, what do you typically do?**

Force myself to get my homework done fast and then just hang out with friends...live the college lifestyle and what not.

**Do you live with a roommate? How do you get along?**

I live with one roommate in a little tiny dorm. We get along fine since I knew her before I went to school...but she does get a little angry every once in a while.

**What are your teachers like?**

I really like most of my professors. Of course my English teacher doesn't even compare to the excellence of **Ms. Marshall** and **Dr. Cusatis**. But like every year, I always have a crush on one of my teachers. This year it's my religion professor, he's very smart and very cute.

**How did the academic and arts instruction you received at SOA prepare you for college?**

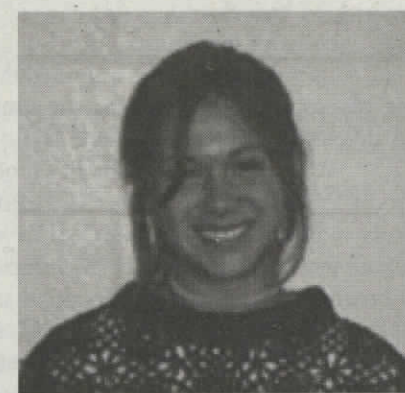
The academics at SOA were actually a lot more beneficial than I thought. While being one of the dumb kids at SOA, with everything I've learned there, I've been one of the smart kids here and have all A's so far. So thanks for a great education!

**What do you miss most about home?**

I miss my dogs, Taco and Belle, and my mom, and I miss sleeping in a big bed and having enough water pressure to take a shower. But I also miss SOA a lot and I know all you seniors call us losers for coming back and visiting because I did the same thing. But once you leave you really do miss it a lot and you'll find that out.

**Do you have any advice for seniors at SOA this year?**

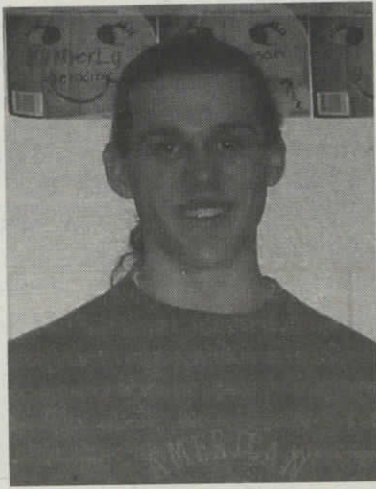
Don't waste your money because it goes fast, and be prepared to have to walk everywhere. If you go to USC then imagine big hills and the hot sun to walk around in.



## Editorials

## Why I hate France (and air travel in general)

by David DuTremble



Only my family could begin an international journey with a bomb threat. On our flight out of Charleston, we had a bomb threat that made security recheck every passenger and their carryon luggage, thusly making us miss all of our connections for that day. So, after we had rebooked our flights for the next day, we went home and went to sleep.

The next morning, our Atlanta flight left without a hitch, and upon arrival, we waited for our connection to Paris for six hours in the international terminal. We only had a fifteen minute delay, and we assumed that we would be fine for our next flight. Little did we realize how inefficient the French are at airport design.

Eight hours later, we land in Paris-Charles-De-Gaulle airport. Here, the caterpillars that come out to the plane do not exist. So instead, like cattle

being led off to slaughter, they loaded us on buses and paraded us around the tarmac for fifteen minutes in the early-morning dark of France before dropping us off in the baggage claim. Note - the baggage claim has no terminals connected to it and one must walk about a quarter of a mile of poorly marked airport before one reaches any terminal. Because of the ensuing bus delay, we missed our flight to Vienna.

Now, if anyone has ever been to Paris, they will realize how little the French like Americans. They will also realize that the French pretend not to speak English, just to annoy us. So, after haggling with mostly useless airline representatives, we got to wait in what I refer to as the worst airport in the world for three hours before finally making it to Vienna.

This, however, was only the beginning of our problems. We hadn't even tried to get back yet. This part makes the start of our trip look like a breakfast brunch in the Ninth Circle of the underworld.

Now for the return.

In Vienna, we were informed that there was a problem with our e-tickets. However, we were also informed that we could have them transferred to our gate in Paris and pick up our boarding passes there. Hi ho the dairy-o, to the underworld again, we go.

We arrive in Paris without a problem. We make it through customs with the ever-friendly French national police. Then, going through security, we were informed that our tickets were not boarding passes (I'm so glad they cleared that up for us), and thusly couldn't pass through security. We informed them that we had to get to the gate to receive our boarding passes, were again told that tickets are not boarding passes, and then that it was not their problem. This is 1:30 PM. Keep in mind that after 3:30 PM no flights leave Paris for America. At 4, the international terminal closes.

So back to the Delta/Air France counter we go. We stand in line, and, by the grace of God, get the one person who speaks English. He also happens to be British. So, after 30 minutes and almost getting on a flight to New York, we are informed that we will be stuck in France. Delta pays for us and a bunch of other unlucky Americans to stay in the 4-star Paris Hilton hotel (no wonder they're going bankrupt), and off to the baggage services desk.

We decided that there was no way that we were going to wear the same clothes for the rest of the day, all night, and then all the next day, and wanted our baggage so we could shower and change clothes, etc. The little French woman at the desk, however, greeted us with the typical French attitude of, "Yes, we know you have a problem, and we do not care, stupid Americans!" Back to the airline counter we go.

At this counter, the little French man says "Zat is not an acceptable answer! I will get you your bags!" Thirty minutes later, he comes back and says, "Go to ze baggage claim. Your bags will be zere in fifteen minutes." Again we descend to the baggage claim.

Fifteen minutes pass, and no bags. We ask the lady at the desk, and she says "I do not know, you will just have to wait." So we wait. Two hours pass. Again we ask, and again, "I do not know. You may have to wait two, three hours, or two days. You will just have to wait." Four hours later, it is almost closing time for the international terminal. We ask again, and are informed "We will go get your bags now." Apparently, we had, through

persistence and tenacity, passed the French baggage-claim initiation, and fifteen minutes later, our bags were delivered. The French have little conception of time.

And the farce continues.

Now we got to wait for the free airport shuttle. We waited for thirty minutes, and when all the buses BUT the Hilton one had driven up and then away, we decided to go get a cab. After trekking across the immensity of Charles-de-Gaulle, we got in a cab, loaded up, sat down, and then were informed that "I cannot take you zere. It is not far enough." At which point, our cabbie gets out and throws our baggage out of the back of the cab and, amidst my father's screaming and swearing, tells us that we have to take the bus.

We trek back across the airport, and finally catch the bus twenty minutes later to get a few hours of sleep, so we can return to the airport the next day.

We return two hours before our flight, just in case the French decide to see how much they can push the Americans again. The flight leaves at 11:15 AM. We begin boarding our buses at 10:15 AM. by 10:30, we have a 747-load of people crammed onto three buses, standing room only. No discomfort among strangers.

Eventually, we start noticing that we aren't moving. It is 11:00. 11:15. 11:20. At 11:25, a small French man comes on the buses and announces, "Madames et Monsieurs, we regret to inform you zat we have not begun boarding because we do not yet have a flight crew. Zey have been detained by security at ze other side of ze airport." How, you may ask, does the flight crew get detained? We wondered the same thing. At 12, after standing on buses nose-to-nose with total strangers, we find out.

The flight crew was American.

At 12:30, our flight leaves. Ergo, we miss all of our connections in Cincinnati. And, with our inevitable luck, we get stuck with a baby that screams for eight and a half solid hours. Upon landing in Cincinnati, we go through customs and security, and find out they kindly rebooked our flights, and we have thirty minutes to get our bags, go through customs and security again, and recheck our bags. This, obviously, is not going to work.

We miss our next flights as well. Then we find out that the next flight for Charleston doesn't leave Cincinnati until 11 PM that night. At this point, it is 5 PM. And, we are still on European time, so it is midnight for us, and we had been up since 7 AM (European time).

For the most anticlimactic (but joyous) conclusion to this horrid farce, we make it home at 1:30 AM (US time). My family is God's cosmic sitcom.

## Under Pressure

by Kathleen Smith

David Bowie's hit, "Under Pressure" sums up any high school senior's last year. It can be filled with stress, rejection, acceptance, humiliation, and pride. Being accepted to your ideal college is a relief to many and helps seniors enjoy there last year.

Many SOA seniors have already been accepted to college, such as our very own *Applause* feature editor, **Rachel Maguire**. Rachel applied to both University of South Carolina and Winthrop and was accepted to both. "USC has always been my dream college, I have known I have wanted to go there since I was a little girl," Rachel states. Some seniors are not sure of where they want to go to college. Dance major **Cameron Funderburk** has applied to many schools such as University of Texas, Elon College, Columbia College, University of North Carolina in Charlotte, and College of Charleston. "I have no idea where I want to go; my first choice would be UT, but I might have to stay in state for scholarships." Cameron has already received her acceptance letter from College of Charleston and hopes there are many more to come.

And as for me, Queens University in Charlotte is my number one college choice. I e-mailed my application two weeks ago and I'm still waiting.

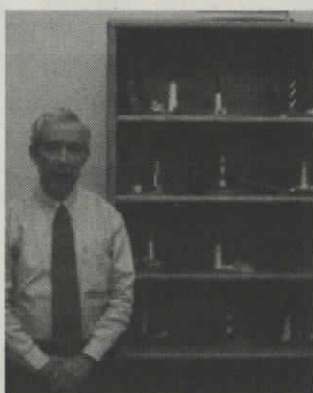


Happy Holidays SOA!  
Enjoy your Break

## School News &amp; Features

## 2 D's and an R

by Kathleen Smith and Rachel Maguire



Mr. Davis

*Look out Mr. Davis, Santa Claus is coming to town! Confident that our V.P has always been on his best behavior, we assumed Good Ol' Saint Nick has been delivering presents to Mr. Davis for many years. So we asked, "In your lifetime, what's the best Christmas present you have ever received?"*

"Well, Rachel and Kathleen, I really enjoy being with my family during the holidays. I'm not concerned with material things. The greatest present I ever received was seeing my daughter's eyes light up on her first Christmas morning upon seeing all of

the presents. My family has always decorated a big tree with tons of lights and ornaments, and lots of presents that any child would be delighted to see."

*Decorating for Christmas can be a hassle for many people; finding the perfect tree, searching for all the ornaments in the attic, and making sure all the lights on the tree light up. Handyman Mr. Dawson is probably "Speedy Gonzales" when he begins decorating for Christmas. So we asked, "How long does it take you to put up and take down your Christmas decorations?"*

"My wife and I don't usually decorate for the holidays unless my nephew comes to town. We listen to Christmas jingles and the wife buys cookies. We always eat a big meal on Christmas day. As long as it's ready to eat, I like to leave the cooking out of it. Usually I fill up on turkey, macaroni, whatever I can get my hands on!



Mr. Dawson

*Chef Randy is always busy whipping up tasty treats in the cafeteria for SOA students, however, everyone needs a chance to take a break and enjoy the food instead of cooking it. We asked him to take a trip down memory lane to remember a Christmas day feast as a child.*

"Hahahaha, girls, I can't even remember what I ate for breakfast yesterday let alone what my Christmas day feast consisted of many years ago. I know we always had a big meal, usually with turkey, green beans, and

all of those traditional dishes. Since I have gotten older and started making Christmas dinner for my family, I have created my own feast with all kinds of yummy foods but no separate Italian feast for this holiday."

## Down with destructive decisions!

by Kathleen Smith

**M**s. Carr and SOA high school students are taking action to help kids from making destructive decisions. SADD (students against destructive decisions) used to be called Students Against Drunk Driving, but decided to change the name to help teenagers realize that not wearing a seat belt and underage drinking are serious issues.

SADD is an inclusive organization that exists in more than 10,000 schools all over the United States. Ms. Carr, SADD's advisor, states that teenagers need to become more aware of the bad decisions they are making. SADD is a student ran organization that elects a president, a vice president along with other positions. "I could probably get people help that are making bad decisions, and maybe they could help me," ninth grader Robert Stanley said. Robert along with many other SOA's high school students attended the first meeting on Monday, November 14 in Ms. Smyth's room. "Our first meeting was just an interest meeting to see how many students would want to join," Ms. Carr states. So check your schedule and try to clear one Monday, once a month to meet with your fellow SADD members and Ms. Carr. Who knows, you could save someone's life.

## From midterm exams to candy cane grams

by Nicole Adams

**T**he National Honor Society is here for you SOA! Exams are coming up and Mr. Murray's door will be wide open for those of you wanting a little extra help. Be aware of the special request forms on the NHS bulletin board; those could come in handy.

On a different note, the NHS yard sale was not the hit we were expecting it to be. There was a considerable turn out from the community, but we were shocked to see hardly anyone from SOA! We are hoping to continue having yard sales periodically throughout the year. Listen to the announcements to hear when we will be accepting more donations. A big thank you goes to everyone who brought in donations!

So, it turns out that our breakfast sales are turning out to be a big hit. The NHS has started a new fundraiser (for those of you who haven't taken notice) selling coffee, granola bars, doughnuts, bagels, etc. Each morning we are set up in the fine arts building in a very convenient locale. As you are making our way to class swing by the alcove near **Mr. Kerr's** and **Ms. Nichols'** rooms and check out what is for breakfast.

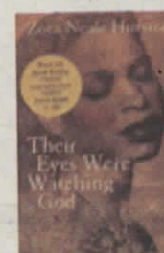
The holiday season is here and the National Honor Society is taking the opportunity to reach out to a child in need. In the past, members of the NHS have probably bugged you at lunch trying to get your change or loose bills to put in those lovely wrapping paper covered shoe boxes. In case they didn't tell you what you were giving them money for, I'll tell you now. All of the money collected is combined to try to buy one child in DSS everything he/she is asking for on his/her Christmas list. Last year we were able to buy everything on the child's list. It would be great if we could do that again this year, so please don't hesitate to donate. It's for a good cause!

Last but certainly not least, I have one more fundraiser to tell you about. Last year we sold candy cane grams which were similar to the carnations we sell for Valentine's Day. We will be selling these wonderful candy cane grams again! Why miss the opportunity to send your friends or that special someone a nice candy cane with a cute holiday greeting? Sales will take place Monday December 12, through Friday December 16 at both high school lunches in the cafeteria. The delivery will be the following week before we go on break. So don't miss out on a chance to surprise your buddies with a sweet treat to spread the holiday spirit!



Mr. Randy

## Features



# SOA Book Wish List



Applause surveyed the entire SOA student body, nearly 850 students, to determine what books they would like to receive as gifts this holiday season. These are the top 25 responses for high school and middle school.

## High School

1. *Harry Potter* series - J.K. Rowling
2. *The Da Vinci Code* - Dan Brown
3. *Catcher in the Rye* - J.D. Salinger
4. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* - Zora Neale Hurston
5. *Catch 22* - Joseph Heller
6. *1984* - George Orwell
7. *The Lovely Bones* - Alice Sebold
8. *Memoirs of a Geisha* - Arthur Golden
9. *Pride and Prejudice* - Jane Austen
10. *Go Ask Alice* - Anonymous
11. *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* - Ann Brashares
12. *Wicked* - Shannon Drake
13. *Angels and Demons* - Dan Brown
14. *Eldest* - Christopher Paolini
15. *A Million Little Pieces* - James Frey
16. *Lord of the Rings* series - J.R.R. Tolkien
17. *Beloved* - Toni Morrison
18. *The Crucible* - Arthur Miller
19. *The Chronicles of Narnia* - C.S. Lewis
20. *Lucky* - Alice Sebold
21. *Of Mice and Men* - John Steinbeck
22. *The Scarlet Letter* - Nathaniel Hawthorne
23. *Cut* - Patricia McCormick
24. *The Screwtape Letters* - C.S. Lewis
25. *Cool Hand Luke* - Donn Pearce

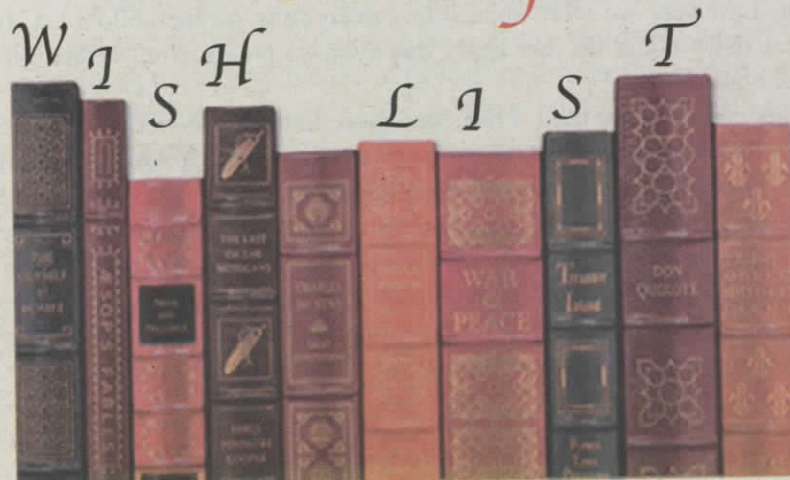
## Middle School

1. *Harry Potter* series- J.K. Rowling
2. *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* - Ann Brashares
3. *House of the Scorpion* - Nancy Farmer
4. *Eragon* - Christopher Paolini
5. *Eldest* - Christopher Paolini
6. *Hoot* - Carl Hiaasen
7. *Inkspell* - Cornelia Funke
8. *Swear to Howdy* - Wendelin van Draanen
9. *Chronicles of Narnia* - C.S. Lewis
10. *Small Steps* - Peg Kehret
11. *Pirates* - Celia Reese
12. *To Kill a Mockingbird* - Harper Lee
13. *The Thief Lord* - Cornelia Funke
14. *Speak* - Laurie Halse Anderson
15. *A Child Called "It"* - Dave Pelzer
16. *Full Tilt* - Janet Evanovich
17. *Point Blank* - Gary Kleck
18. *A Series of Unfortunate Events* - Lemony Snicket
19. *She Said Yes* - Misty Bernal
20. *Give a Boy a Gun* - Todd Strasser
21. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* - Roald Dahl
22. *Or Give Me Death* - Ann Rinaldi
23. *Smack* - Melvin Burgess
24. *A Break With Charity* - Ann Rinaldi
25. *You Don't Know Me* - David Klass

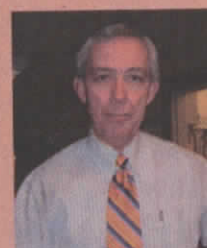


# SOA'S

## Holiday



What three books would SOA administrators and staff like to receive this Holiday Season?



Mr. Davis

- 1) *The Great Cooper River Bridge*- Pamela Gabriel and Jason Annan
- 2) *Universe*- Martin Rees
- 3) *Our Endangered Values*- Jimmy Carter



Mrs. Taylor

- 1) *Nights In Rodanthe*- Nicholas Sparks
- 2) *Lion's Game*- Nelson DeMille
- 3) *Mere Christianity*- C.S. Lewis



Mrs. Caldwell

- 1) The latest P.D. James novel
- 2) *Grace at Low Tide*- Beth Webb Hart
- 3) *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*- Mark Twain



Mrs. Moore

- 1) *A Million Little Pieces*- James Frey
- 2) *It's A Wonderful Life*- Jeanine Basinger
- 3) *Post-It Notes Book*- David Straker

Features

**Who is your favorite literary character and why?**



*"Mary Alice from A Long Way from Chicago. She is so funny throughout the book."  
Allie Augustine  
6th grade Vocal*



*"Melinda Sordino from Speak because I like the way she developed through the story."  
Lauren Hester  
9th grade Creative Writing*



*"The main character of That was Then, This is Now because it was emotionally uplifting."  
Lea Yanetti  
12th grade Visual Arts*



*"The Grinch because he's mean and green!"  
Grayland Murdock  
10th grade Band*



*"Remy from This Lullaby because she's adventurous and not afraid to be who she is."  
Bailey Gaskin  
7th grade Theatre*



*"All of the characters in the Book Hippie because they show the love, peace, and happiness that was portrayed in the 60s."  
Jill Biggerstaff  
11th grade Dance*

*"Eragon from Eragon because he always has to solve problems. I find it very interesting."  
A.J. Dales  
8th grade Piano*



## Feature

**Where Are They Now?****Eva Sclipa: Class of 2004**

by Omi Naderi

**Where are you now?**

At Furman University in Greenville, SC, in a suite dorm fondly referred to as "The Den" (short for "The Den of Sin and Iniquity"). Although I do travel a lot; I can be found weekly in Asheville, NC, and I pop up in random towns around the upstate, depending on current attractions.

**How has life changed for you since leaving SOA? Is it better?**

First off, we don't do homework anymore. We study. Same thing, different name. On a larger scale, an exponentially increased level of freedom; the ability to hare off to distant lands without notifying anyone, and generally having total control over my mobility, which has worked rather well. I get to combine slavish studying with a slow tallying of Excellent Life Events, a column which usually features dances and drives, concerts and coloring, strolls and hikes (sorry for that abrupt end of alliteration). Speaking of, another change is the extent to which dance has annexed my life. Were one to make a pie graph of it, dance would occupy a vast, pac-man-like sphere, with a few tiny slivers devoted to "Other." I blame much of this explosion on my roommate; though I'd started dancing with contra and a touch of swing beforehand, her hardcore devotion to



the world of swing and lindy hop fed mine, and now we hop from city to city, seeking dance events (largely in contra and swing, although I'm also fond of latin dance, and we collectively can follow about 30 dances between us, with varying degrees of success). Said roommate (name of Adrienne) and I have actually set ourselves up as co-president's of Furman's first and only swing dance association, and we've started teaching weekly lessons. Strange world. While on the topic of the arts, I

suppose I'll make a brief mention of majors and all. Though I'm still planning a major in studio art (focus on graphic design, probably computer based, though if I ever got a job designing books I would be forced to sacrifice a few bulls in thankfulness), I've developed a powerful interest in art history. Taking Art of the Ancient World at the moment, and have formed a great fondness for the Minoans. In writing, no serious works have been forthcoming as of late. I wrote a poem that is lodged somewhere between the unbrushed teeth of my hard drive, and have vague plans for a novel-length piece which will involve transformations and, hopefully, a fox spirit, but nothing definite. I try to keep out of total decline by writing short genre pieces for my friends on request--they're completely mind candy, but they keep the words coming. They also result in a garnering of interesting facts, depending on the genre; say, for example, the naming traditions of gypsies in Victorian England. Finally, I've become much more attentive to the physical world. Furman is a beautiful campus, whatever qualms I may have about it, and sometimes perching on the railing of a stone walking bridge over a bubbling stream is the only way to keep a fast hold on sanity. Staring into the hypnotic waving of willow tree branches helps, too. It's hard to make a judgement on my overall quality of life, but I think I'd have

to say yes, for the most part, it is better. Marginally. In some areas, worse, but usually better.

**What do you miss most about SOA?**

To make this easier on myself, being that I find actual decision very difficult, I'm going to make a list. Option A) Creative Writing class. I miss having a time set out for me to work on, well, just that, creative writing. Even if sometimes a particular topic or mental block sent me into writhing throes of agony. Option B) The general artsy-ness. The strange and curious habits of its inhabitants (who I also miss), and the fact that those are, for the most part, accepted. The relievingly unusual modes of dress that crop up here and there. Option C) The teachers. No, really. Furman is fairly small, but it's still not possible to get on quite the same terms with your teachers, as they tend to be more distant, you tend to be in a larger class, and you also tend to be in a rush to spring out the door as soon as you are allowed to. They're excellent teachers, for the most part, but only a handful so far have had true charisma, and those are usually the teaching equivalent of rock stars. Everyone's heard of them, no one knows them.

**How many nights have you lay in bed, thinking of your homies back when you were a senior at SOA?**

Not so much lying awake in bed. Sleep is a valuable commodity, more so than salt to ancient civilizations (and that's daaayyyym valuable (herespelled phonetically)). I make my best attempts to acquire as much as possible, hence gaining power and status, or at least consciousness. This is not to say that I do not think of said "homies." Not at all. I tell more pertinent stories about them sometimes, or I'm confronted by an object or event I know they would like and fall into a deeply surreal reverie. Every now and then I have sharp, random flashes of memory in which I'm propelled into the world of SOA and my friends there, and sometimes I chuckle out loud with little to no explanation upon remembering some particularly crazy antic, or just in shock that my reality was once so different from what it is now--sights, sounds, and all.

**How many friends have you lost contact with, and how many are still your friends?**

Er...in numbers? Can't help you there. I can make hand-waving generalizations, perhaps. The core group of my close friends from SOA I'm still solidly in contact with. Many of my friends from SOA I've managed to remain linked to--or even become closer with--through dance; again, swing or contra. Because I spend so much of my leisure time in those activities, it's hard to keep up with more distant friends who don't dance, and I admit that I've lost contact with many (well, perhaps not lost, but misplaced). But so it goes. I run into them every now and then when I'm at home, but I figure that if I'm happy with the friends I have, I shouldn't force old acquaintances to stretch the span of time. And happy I am.

**What's your advice to those still at SOA?**

I've been secretly dreading this question. For those afraid of losing old friends/not finding new ones (as I was): don't worry. Before heading to college, I was convinced that any friends I found would be pale facsimiles of my friends at home, a life support system to barely tide me over until I returned--and I was quite wrong. My roommate (not the one I was assigned; I engaged in a vast switcheroo early in my freshman year and got this one) is one of my best friends, and we have a strong tendency to do a split-brain twins act--completing sentences and all that saccharine stuff.

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## Reviews

## Peace On Earth/Little Drummer Boy:

## A holiday classic

by Liz Gildea

Until the fall of 1977, Bing Crosby had never heard of David Bowie. Having risen to fame in two distant eras of 20th century pop music, the nouveau British glam-rocker and the seventy-three-year-old crooner seemed a bizarre pair to perform a duet of "Little Drummer Boy" on the TV special "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas." They didn't even meet until the morning they recorded the piece. But this collaboration came to signify, for some, the end of the intergenerational wars of the '60s and '70s. And in 1999, TV Guide ranked it among the top 25 best musical television moments of the century.

Since a CD-ROM version of the single was released in 1995, I was able to watch the video on my iMac (the resolution is awful, but its preciousness countervails). After two minutes of an obviously contrived but still charming dialogue between Bowie and Bing, they begin singing – a harmonic moment that surely stopped the hearts of baby boomers everywhere the day it aired. The "Peace on Earth" part had been added at Bowie's request, making him a little more prominent in the song, but at the bridge both voices ring in faultless unison: "Every child must be made aware/ Every child must be made to care/ Care enough for his fellow man/ To give all the love that he can."

And right then, it becomes clear that those four-and-a-half minutes were some of the most priceless in pop culture history. The beloved Der Bingle had a fatal heart attack only a month after taping the show, and it would be weeks after his death until the public saw his last great performance glowing from their TV screens. This recording is well worth eight dollars on Amazon.com, or about that much for the 45-speed record on eBay. Whether or not they were fans of either star, it's a potentially tear-jerking gift for parents and grandparents alike.

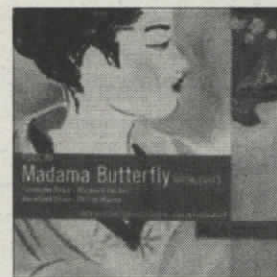
## The Opera : In a Cocoon

by Rachel Maguire

On November 16, 2005, Gaillard Auditorium hosted Opera Verdi Europa's production of Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. Opera Verdi Europa is the last standing touring opera company. When I heard these I immediately assumed that the opera was going to be amazing. A touring opera company is a rather expensive venture and for so many to have folded leaving only Opera Verdi-Europa, I figured that it must possess some astounding quality.

The Gaillard was probably the best place to host such a performance because the acoustics are good for such booming voices. For those of you who aren't familiar with opera, there are no microphones used, solely the voices of these talented people. Specifically in this opera I have no complaints about the voices of soprano Galina Stoyanova, who played Cio-Cio San (Madame Butterfly herself) or tenor Orlin Goranov (Pinkerton). There were probably a few flats and sharps here and there, but overall, their voices filled the auditorium like a strong scent filling a crowded room.

Puccini's story of Madame Butterfly inspired the Broadway musical *Miss Saigon*. It is a tragedy about an American soldier in Japan who meets a young geisha woman. He marries her and then returns to America only to find out that he now has a child. Three years later he returns to Japan with his new wife to retrieve the child so that he may have a better life and leaves Cio-Cio San, his geisha wife, alone where she soon takes her own life. End of Story. The ending leaves the audience feeling relieved that after two hours and forty-five minutes the story has come to a close and the lead character is dead. Depressing or what? The most interesting part, however, is that the opera is done by a Bulgarian company, it is sung in Italian, it takes place in Japan, and a few of the characters are American. Talk about a cultural collision!



## King Kong

by Devin Graves

*King Kong*, the classic 30's adventure movie, has been remade and released this year by Lord of the Rings director Peter Jackson. The story, for those of you who've lived under a rock for the past 75 years, revolves around a 25-foot high silverback gorilla, who finds a soft spot for a girl named Anne (). A weird twist on a love story, to say the least. The latest version shows Carl Denham (Jack Black), a dried-out movie producer, with one last chance to make a hit as he cons his way to the virtually unheard-of Skull Island. His star, Anne Darrow (Naomi Watts), along with his script writer Jack Driscoll (Adrien Brody), join him on his quest (not knowing where they're going, of course), and when they arrive, general chaos ensues, finding Anne being "sacrificed" to Kong (voiced by Andy Serkis), while Carl and Jack follow, Carl to film more of the island, Jack to save his newfound sweetheart. Various fights with weird creatures occur, including a really cool fight between Kong and three Tyrannosaurs while Kong protects Anne in his fist. Carl manages to capture Kong, taking him back to New York to show off as "The 8th Wonder of the World", and, of course, Kong escapes and tears through the city trying to find Anne. The end of the movie shows Kong's famous "empire-scaling" scene, and the show ends fairly suddenly after that.



Firstly, everyone take note, this is a long movie, with a run time of over three hours, not including the previews. However, the movie seems to flow very smoothly, and its difficult to realize how long it is.

Unfortunately, the beginning is fairly slow, but easily recognized as plot-important. It sets up a good background to the characters, and serves as a solid foundation for the rest of the movie. It's just not very exciting. After about 45 minutes or so, it picks up significantly as the crew reaches Skull Island.

Another note, the beginning of this movie can be very deceptive, as this movie is scary and gory. Not Saw gory, but Jackson has no qualms showing minor characters being crushed by giant animals or eaten alive by huge bugs. True, it makes for a more realistic adventure, but, take heed, this movie is definitely not for anyone under the age of 12 or so.

Now to the critical parts. Firstly, some of the dialogue in the movie is extremely boring and cliched. The beginning scenes of the movie are disturbingly predictable. However, Jack Black gives a different tone to the beginning than everyone else; his character seems to be so full of crap in everything he says, that it sets up his character's real personality, which is completely contradictory to his words. I really don't know if this is Black's acting genius, or just a mistake. Either way, it gives a forward motion to the movie, as I felt compelled to learn more about him.

As slow as the beginning is, the rest of the movie moves super-fast. The moment that Kong shows his face, things start getting smashed. About half-way through the movie, the best scene, in my opinion, occurs, in which Kong almost literally tears apart three Tyrannosaurs one-handed, as he is holding Anne and protecting her. This scene also acts as a good character-definer for Kong, showing how much, honest, destruction he can cause if he's mad enough. However, most of the time, Kong and Anne are on their own, with Anne doing slapstick jokes to amuse him, and him helping her around and survive on the Island.

The last 45 minutes or so of the movie are very sad, as Kong was captured by the money-desperate Denham, and I really felt bad for the giant simian. Of course, as soon as he is reminded of Anne, he breaks loose (smashing a couple of people in the course), and rips through the city looking for her. I thought it was strange the way that no one in the city felt bad for him except for Anne, but I guess that's just because he was supposed to be shown as a monster, but it seemed to me that instead of monster, he was shown more as a misunderstood human than anything else. I don't know if Jackson intended this, but it made for a very sad story. So, I guess that the movie was very good, but it was quite sad, and if you can make it through the boring (but essential) beginning, you can expect to have a good time.

## School News

## Merry Christmas vs. Happy Holidays

by David Whitley

The bell tolls in the church just as you run across the light powdered snow, which is still falling onto your shoulders. You dash past cheerfully lit shops in an ecstatic frenzy of holiday spirit as you shout, "Merry Christmas, emporium! Merry Christmas, you dear old Building and Loan!" You are just about to look in on Mr. Potter and shout, "Merry Christmas" to him when you are accosted by a socially conscious individual, most likely from southern California or some other such refuge for foolishness. He takes the time to explain that, as an atheist, he is offended by your "narrow-minded and intolerant world view that Christmas is the only major holiday in December," and that you are assuming too much about the people you are shouting "Merry Christmas" to. Thusly, what could have been an extraordinarily influential and popular Christmas classic is ruined by the politically correct.



Several acquaintances of mine congratulate Seth from the O.C. on his invention of "Chrismukkah," because Einstein was a wimp; it takes a true genius to combine two words to form a new word, like "can't" or "won't."

Whoa, check me out! Truthfully, I find it difficult to accept that so many of my compatriots are naïve enough

to be seduced by something so shallow and unreal as the O.C., but that is not the point I am attempting to make. The point is that even the word "Chrismukkah" fails to address many of the major holidays in December. I could go all out and give you "Chrismahanukkwanzaadan," but even that would fail to please the few individuals that celebrate Festivus. It doesn't take more than a concentrated pocket of three or four morons to invent some half-witted holiday for them to celebrate and complain about it when somebody says "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Hanukkah" or "Whatever-the-hell-you-say-before-Ramadan Ramadan," because the holiday they just pulled out of their pockets (I hate people editing my text) isn't being appreciated.

The entire theory behind acceptance of everyone and everything is flawed, since the people who practice this tend to get very snitty about anyone who fails to acknowledge every culture in the known universe, including the social nuances of the Klingons and ancient Idahoans. In so doing, they are refusing to accept the right of any person (i.e. "me") to completely ignore ancient Idahoan cultures and customs, and therefore, in not accepting me, they are not accepting and including everything in the universe, since I am most definitely a part of the universe.

In addition, these people argue primarily that they are defending the feelings of those that don't celebrate Christmas, namely the Jewish and whatever you call somebody that celebrates Kwanzaa-ish. (Actually, I don't recall ever meeting anyone that celebrates Kwanzaa.) However, these aren't the people that are making all of the complaints. All of the crying and whining over "Merry Christmas" and "Happy Hanukkah" comes from atheists.

Atheism, by definition, is the absence of religion, and therefore should not be given the same treatment as a religion would get. Sorry, those of you that pray to Anubis (I know somebody that actually does this; I'm not kidding) but you're gonna have to take that anarchy symbol off of your back-

pack, because that's the worship of a godly figure, and therefore, religion.

As I have mentioned before, I can't stand hypocrisy. Have any of them ever heard the phrase "big boys don't cry," or has that been banned because it gives 1 out of every 1,000,000,000,000 boys some BS psychological disorder centered on their insecurities about crying. Give me a break! I'm certainly not going to shed any tears if somebody says, "Happy Hanukkah" to me. I'll just give them an easy smile and respond with a jovial, "Merry Christmas," right from the bottom of my heart. Choke on it, why dontcha?

## Don't worry, be Happy

by David DuTremble

As a Christian myself, I find the entire Merry Christmas / Happy Holidays argument ridiculous. Not everyone can be edified, as inevitably someone, somewhere, will be offended by something. The politically-correct doctrine is beginning to tire me out, specifically for reasons like this.

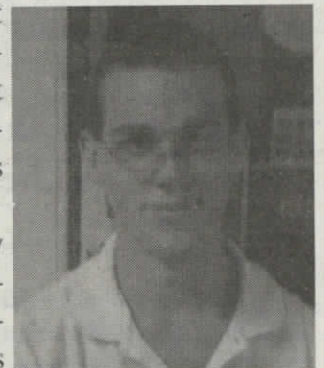
According to Adherents.com, Christianity makes up 33% of the world's religious population, followed by Islam at 21%, Nonreligious at 16%, Buddhist at 14%, and Judaism at a marginal .22%. In the US, which is where the problem of Merry Christmas vs. Happy Holidays originated, 13.2 percent of the population is non-religious. So the real question is,

why are we trying to appease this minimal group? (Now granted, there are, of course, your religious fundamentalists that cram their beliefs and doctrines down everyone's throats, intolerable of anything that differs from their opinion. There are also atheists of the same bent who will take any opportunity to insult anyone's religious beliefs so that they can appear morally and intellectually superior. Fundamentalists come in both stripes.)

In Austria, Slovakia, and many other European countries, there is a strong tradition of the Advent Market, which essentially consists of clusters of small huts filled with various and sundry Christmas goods. They are set up throughout the season of Advent leading up to Christmas, and people flock to them in droves. In Vienna, the Advent Market is set up in front of the City Hall. Can anyone imagine something of that magnitude representing anything religious happening here?

Obviously we have religious freedom, as well as freedom of speech, which will, in course, lead to freedom of stupidity. We all have the right to believe or celebrate (or not celebrate) holidays as we choose. So why get offended? If you want to say Happy Holidays, say it. If you want to say Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukah, Have a Great Festivus, or whatever, say it. Why be offended when someone wishes you happiness and a good time? Be glad that someone is thoughtful enough to take time out to acknowledge your existence besides to give you the finger.

You may not agree with someone's religious beliefs, but why try to ruin someone else's day? At least be respectful. When the 'non-religious' want to be appeased and not offended, they are offending the majority who do celebrate Christmas, or Hannukah. So if someone were to say to me, 'Happy Hannukah!' or 'Merry Festivus', instead of being offended, I would respond with a 'You too!' and go on my Merry Christmas way, feeling that warm and fuzzy feeling that only the holiday season can bring.

David  
Vs.  
David

## Miscellaneous

### Horoscopes

**Sagittarius (November 23 - December 22):** Feeling down? Listen to Jeff Foxworthy's "Redneck 12 Days of Christmas" and you'll immediately feel much better about yourself.

**Capricorn (December 23 - January 20):** Don't deny it - you're totally in love. Show that special someone you care by blowing all your savings on a useless holiday gift for him or her.

**Aquarius (January 21 - February 19):** Going to be spending winter break with your extended family? Try pinching Grandma's cheek for a change...

**Pisces (February 20 - March 20):** Don't feel bad because it never snows in Charleston - create your own winter wonderland! You will need: potato flakes, polyester stuffing, a really big fan...

**Aries (March 21 - April 20):** Santa Claus is now a vegan. He has requested that everyone replace their usual cookies and milk with collard greens and seltzer water.

**Taurus (April 21 - May 21):** If you celebrate something other than Christmas in December, don't feel bad that people don't pay as much attention to your faith. There's just something so attractive about a jolly fat

guy sliding down a sooty chimney...

**Gemini (May 22 - June 21):** What? You want to get some rest over winter break?! Too bad. A flyer has just been sent to all the teachers requiring an intensive, potentially fatal project to be due the day we get back.

**Cancer (June 22 - July 22):** If that caroling group in your neighborhood doesn't shut their yaps after eight hours, it is then okay to pelt them with ornaments.

**Leo (July 23 - August 21):** Have you been naughty this year? Buy Liz Gildea a copy of Christmas With Julie Andrews, and you will be ensured a full stocking and a permanent slot on the "nice" list.

**Virgo (August 22 - September 23):** You said New Year's Resolutions were for losers, but I know you're keeping a secret list in your mind. Why don't you resolve not to be such a hypocrite?

**Libra (September 24 - October 23):** You've always wanted to be a trendsetter. This holiday season, bring the British "Happy Christmas!" into fashion by saying it instead of our archaic and strangely un-American "merry" version.

**Scorpio (October 24 - November 22):** What are you doing? Dreaming about vacation?! Governor Sanford is trying to dismantle the public education system as we speak!! For goodness' sake, DO SOMETHING!!!

#### Attention SENIORS :

### Offer your ideas for the Senior Wall!

Sketch a little picture and write a short description of your idea.  
Turn into Mrs. Awkerman by Wednesday, December 21st.

#### Where are they now?

Continued from pg. 8

Work-wise: good grades and test scores and extracurricular activities and awards DO matter, so keep working at it--but also remember that, once you're in the college of your choice, you can't put any of those things on a resume anymore. That's right. It gets you there, and then, at least according to the officials, it's gone. Don't be afraid to put down the ledger every now and then and run towards the horizon for a while. It'll do you good. And spend some time thinking about "purpose of life" kinds of topics. It helps a lot in meandering road trip conversations, and can be comforting to assure yourself with, to boot. Find something that incontestably relaxes you. I make use primarily of dance and nature/solitude, but whatever suits you.

#### How has your SOA education affected you?

Academically speaking, my essays tend to be spotted with phrases such as "bubblingly blithe architecture," which seems to tickle the fancy of my professors. Socially speaking, I've been a little spoiled. There are people I love here, but there are also times when the only cure for my state of mind is to get off campus by any way possible--usually driving out into the hills. Literally, the Blue Ridge. In other words, I have a rather low tolerance for the typical Furman student. On other days, this expresses itself in the perverse pleasure I derive from dressing in something flamboyantly non-future trophy wife, say, a vivid batik skirt and a red beret, and watching the reactions.

#### 7) Do you ever plan on coming back to visit?

Absolutely. When, I'm not sure. Next time I'm out of school and you people aren't.

## SOA

### December / January Calendar

- 22-Dec-05 Winter Break (December 22 - January 2)
- 03-Jan-06 Students Return from Winter Break
- 10-Jan-06 Teachers Enter Grades (January 10 & 11)
- 11-Jan-06 HS Vocal to Carnegie Hall (January 11-16)
- 19-Jan-06 Report Cards Distributed
- 20-Jan-06 Youth Leadership Conference for selected HS Students
- 23-Jan-06 HS Fine Arts Department "Big River" Musical at NCPAC Set-Up and Rehearsal (January 23-25)
- 26-Jan-06 *Big River* Musical at NCPAC- Matinee - 10:00am and Evening-7:00pm
- 27-Jan-06 *Big River* Musical at NCPAC- Matinee - 10:00am and Evening-7:00pm
- 30-Jan-06 7th Grade Theatre Improv - Black Box

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