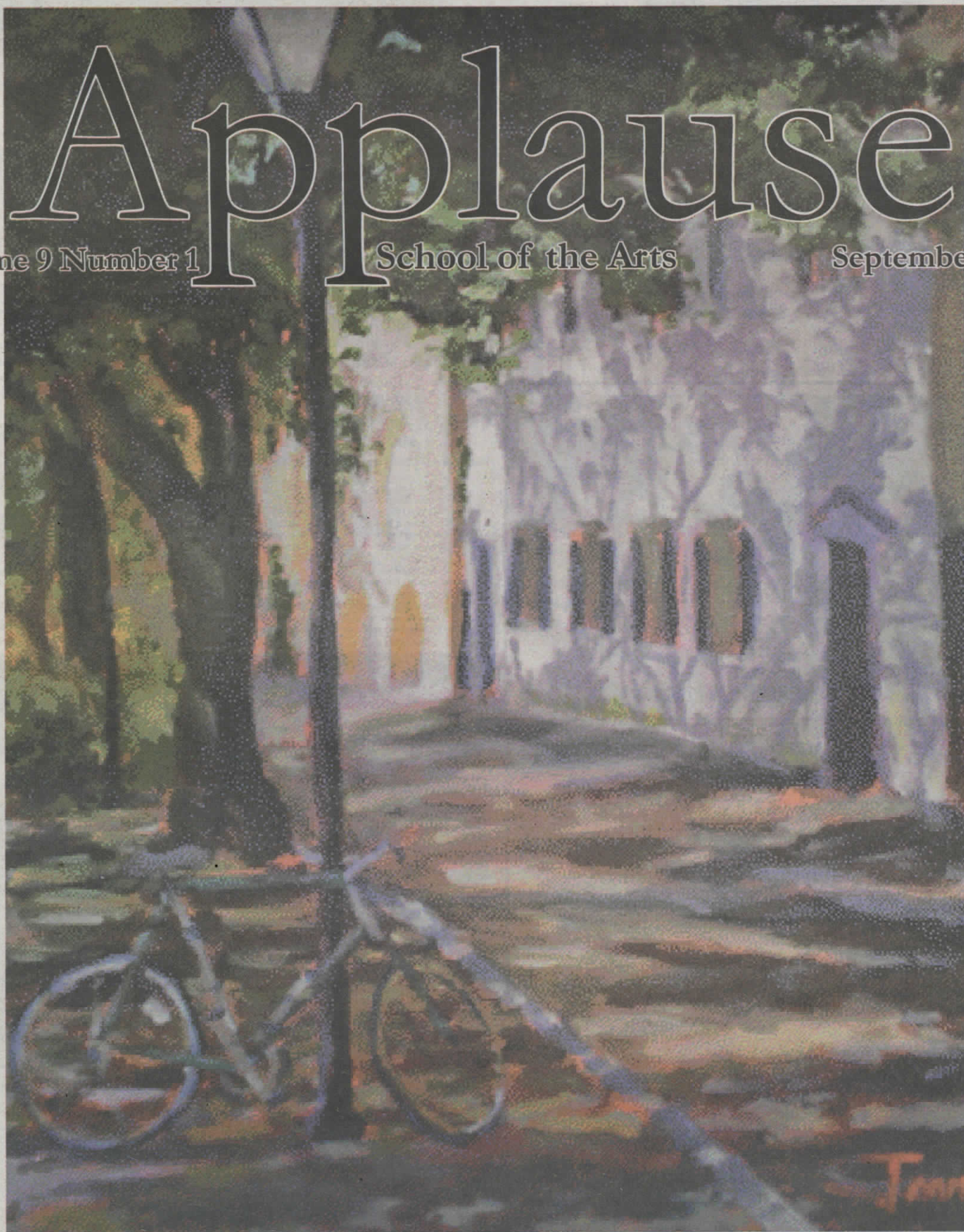


Applause

Volume 9 Number 1

School of the Arts

September 2007





The September issue marks the beginning of an exciting year for *Applause*. Eight new members have joined the staff, and already their impact has contributed to what I feel is the constant improvement of this newspaper. Learn about them, as well as our returning staff members, on page three. I am also proud to introduce our patron list on this page. In one month, *Applause* patrons have donated more than \$600. Not only are these contributions enormously helpful in funding our publication, but also they show the tremendous support of our readership. The *Applause* staff wants to return this

favor by covering the stories that the SOA community wants to read. Our centerfold features photos from different students' summer vacations, and our "School News" section includes an article regarding the SOA's recent administrative changes, as well as a letter from former principal Ms. Rose Maree Myers. I anticipate a wonderful year for *Applause*, and want to thank our readers for starting out the year with such amazing contributions.

Sincerely,

Vera Bradley

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the official student newspaper of

Charleston County School of the Arts

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MEET THE 2007-2008 APPLAUSE STAFF

Chelsea Adent



Major: Band
Favorite Recent Movie: *Hairspray*
I Want to Be: a pediatrician
Last Read: *Dear John* by Nicholas Sparks
Hobbies: Reading,

playing the flute, going to the beach or out on the boat, writing, hanging out with friends

Carolyn E. Brown



Major: Vocal
Dream Job: Attorney
Favorite Movies: *Becoming Jane*, *The Painted Veil*
Favorite Color: Sapphire blue

Book I'm Reading Now: *Fortune Hunters* by Charlotte Hayes

Victoria Doose



Grade: 12th
Major: Creative Writing
Favorite Book: *Call of the Wild* by Jack London
Favorite Past time: Napping
Pets: 1 younger sister

Current Goal: To make it through the school year and suffer as little mental damage as possible

Blake Engel



Major: Creative Writing
Authors I'm Looking Into: Anthony Burgess, Richard Brautigan, John Kennedy Toole
Movie Directors I'm Obsessed with:

Andrei Tarkovsky, Stanley Kubrick, Rainer Werner Fassbinder

Lunch for 5 Days in a Row: Granola bar

Liz Gildea



Major: Piano (switched this year from Creative Writing)
Grade: 12th
Aspirations: I want to be a foreign language teacher, then an administrator and

eventually principal of a school like SOA
Pet Peeves: Complainers, misspellings

Lucy Hunter



Major: Creative Writing
Favorite musician: Jill Scott
Favorite artist: Rufino Tamayo
Hobby: Shark fishing
Best Concert I've

Seen Lately: Rock the Bells

Career inspiration: Ian Schrager

Tanya Lewandowski



Major: Dance
Grade: 11th
Favorite Band: Old school AFI
Favorite Color: Perrywinkle
Favorite Drink: Green tea or fruit punch Gatorade

It Really Bothers Me When: People don't wash their hands. Ever.

K. Chaney Long



Major: Theatre
Grade: 10th
Hobbies: Theatre, garden gnomes, being an avid Harry Potter fan
Favorite Food: Butter and cinnamon crepes

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a christmas story
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defiance
feb. 22 - mar. 8, 2008

rounding third
mar. 21 - apr. 5, 2008

enchanted april
apr. 25 - may 19, 2008

Bryan Rouse



Major: Vocal
Favorite Color: Black and blue
Favorite Quote: "Be careful of who you get to watch your back because they might put a knife in it."

Hobbies: I sing downtown sometimes. I like working out and going to the gym.

Food: Anything with salsa

Favorite Music: Jazz, Rock, R&B

Sign: Libra

David Sass



Major: Creative Writing
Additions: Warhammer 40k, Cherry Coke, Macs
Favorite Bands: The Offspring, System of a Down, Audioslave

Dream Job: Writing for Black Library Publishing Company

Shanequa West



Birthdate: February 10th, 1991
Major: Creative Writing
Favorite Animal: Koala bear!!!
Favorite Food: Potatoes/anything with potatoes/potato salad, French fries, baked potato, etc...

Favorite Artist: Lauryn Hill

Loves: beaded jewelry, bright colors, and texting

Favorite Movies: *The Color Purple*, *Titanic*, *White Chicks*

Dr. John Cusatis



Family: Wife, Anna; son, Giovanni (age 2)
Marathons completed: 11
Forthcoming publications: "The Curious Desire of Knowing" in *Restoring the Mystery of*

the Rainbow

Life-changing books: *The Bible*, *Walden*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Last rock concert: The Doodlebops

Next rock concert: The Wiggles

Visit from Superintendent McGinley

By Carolyn E. Brown

Charleston County School District Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nancy McGinley visited SOA on the first day of the school year, August 21.

She succeeded Dr. Maria L. Goodloe-Johnson this year as Superintendent, after working as the CCSD Chief Academic Officer for three years. During her visit, she observed middle school and high school theater classes.

Carolyn Brown: *Dr. McGinley, what was your first impression of School of the Arts?*

Dr. McGinley: Well, for the last three and a half years, this school has really been one of Charleston County's flagship schools. I've always been impressed with the amount of talent this school holds.

CB: *Do you have any background in the arts?*

DM: Not much. However, from ages 10 to 12 I performed at a local theater

in several musicals. Once I played Kurt in the Sound of Music. I had to play a boy. Not many boys were there.

CB: *Dr. McGinley, as you know, SOA has been going through many changes. Do you have anything you would like to tell the students?*

DM: Yes indeed, we are doing a national principal search for someone with a background in the arts. We have spoken to the PTSA and faculty and are really looking to find the best fit for SOA.

CB: *What changes are you going to make to Charleston County schools?*

DM: We will be making a portfolio of schools for parents and students to choose from. We feel like it would be best for a student to have several options when it comes to their education so that we can find the best fit for them. We also will be building a new high school called High Tech High. This school is geared for those students who wish to pursue the more technological fields of study, like computer software and programming.

National service club established at SOA

By Tanya Lewandowski

In 2002, the Federal government's Council on Service and Civic Participation created the President's Volunteer Service Award program to recognize Americans who volunteer within their communities.

Mr. Bill Smyth and senior **Elizabeth LeTran** opened the SOA branch of the club. SOA is the second school in the Charleston County School District to have a certified President's Volunteer Club, along with Academic Magnet High School. Participation involves an individual log that keeps track of how many hours a participant has volunteered. To join, club members create a screen name and a password at the web site, www.presidentialserviceawards.gov. Also, meetings will be held the second Tuesday of every month from 3:30-4:30pm in Mr. Smyth's

room.

"No one should sit at home helplessly and complain that there is nothing to do when there is so much to do in his or her own area," Mr. Smyth said.

Mr. Smyth said that volunteering and logging in individual hours is not something that should be considered a burden. Rather, he said, it should be enjoyed.

The President's Volunteer Club website has an area code filter that lists local animal shelters, homeless shelters, and other non-profit organizations that need volunteers. Once participants reach their goal number of hours of volunteer work, they are awarded either a gold, silver, or bronze medal along with a letter from President Bush.

In e-mail to *Applause* staffer, Ms. Rose Maree Myers shares new endeavors

Applause staff member Shanequa West caught up with SOA founder and former principal Ms. Rose Maree Myers, who took the time to share a description of her latest project: turning a downtown elementary school into a creative arts facility.

Dear Shanequa,

Dr. McGinley has asked me to help some downtown schools infuse the arts into their curriculum. I am presently working with Sanders Clyde and that school's Principal, Ms. Mishawna Moore, to develop an arts infused school for them.

We are thinking along the lines of three major arts areas that all elementary students would take twice each week and an arts focus in one of the three areas for the middle school students. Classroom teachers would also learn how to integrate the curriculum including the arts.

The three arts focus areas would be: Visual Arts, Instrumental Music, and Drama. I had hoped we could add dance, but the budget will not allow at this time.

I hope to start providing the Staff Development for the faculty soon. As you know, and data proves, students improve in all academics when the arts are a part of those academics. Students naturally begin to do what the arts demand; think on higher levels and constantly problem solve. These "habits," derived from the arts, naturally help students learn better in all subjects and perform better on all tests. All of you at SOA and Ashley River have proven that.

So that is my mission for now. I hope all of you are doing well. Just learn all you can from Dr. Cusatis. He is the best!

All clubs meet for one hour after school.

Club Name	Meeting Dates	Advisor/Meeting Room
Chemistry Club	Every other Friday.	Dr. Price
Astronomy Club	First Thursday of the month.	Ms. Colquitt
Quest Club	To be announced in December.	Ms. Bronk-Lutz
Ecology Club	Every Monday.	Dr. Ball
Culinary Arts	First Monday of the month.	Dr. Price
French Club	To be announced.	Ms. Matthews
Swing Dance Club	To be announced.	Ms. Bronk-Lutz
Fellowship of Christian Artists	Every Monday of the month.	Ms. Nichols
Math Club	To be announced.	Ms. Rickson
Presidents Volunteer Service Club	Second Tuesday of each month.	Mr. Smyth
Classic/Vintage Films Club	To be announced.	Ms. Marshall
Animal Rights Club	Third Tuesday of every month.	Ms. Cline

Changes to SOA administration

By Victoria Doose

In May 2007, SOA's administrative hierarchy experienced a sudden change when **Ms. Rose Maree Myers**, principal since the school's inception, was assigned a new position at the Charleston County School District office on Calhoun Street. At that time, **Ms. Myrna Caldwell** was serving as SOA's only assistant principal, though **Mr. Michael Locklair**, the fine arts director, aided her by handling the issues of buses and student parking. **Mr. Bill Smyth** served as curriculum coordinator, and continues to do so with the additional title of Lead Teacher for Academics.

This school year, Ms. Caldwell has been appointed interim principal, Mr. Locklair has left the SOA staff, and the school now has two Assistant Principals, as it did previous to the 2006-2007 year – **Mr. Roy Davis**, a veteran of SOA administration, and **Mr. Robert Cook**.

As interim principal, it is Ms. Caldwell's job to perform all the duties of the principal, until someone is found to formally fill the position. Having taught several years and been an administrator for the past five, Ms. Caldwell brings a great deal of experience to the position. In fact, she said she would like it if she were to fill the role more officially.

"I am very interested in being the permanent principal of SOA," Ms. Caldwell said. "I believe I have the qualifications the district is looking for. I love this school and want to continue to lead it as we transition towards a fabulous new facility!"

The district is looking for a principal who has experience with an arts school and both a middle and high school. The position is expected to be filled by the summer of 2008, before the next school year begins.

Mr. Davis returns to SOA after a year of leisure and family time. The school was unable to keep him in his administrative position for the 2006-2007 year, but he was invited back this summer and has taken Mr. Locklair's

former administrative duties, as well as supervisory and evaluation responsibilities.

During his absence, what Mr. Davis said he missed most about SOA was the student body.

"I know lots of them on a first name basis. The diversity of the student population makes this school unique, and overall, they are very well-behaved students. I just enjoy being around them."

However, this may very well be Mr. Davis's last year at SOA. He says he will only stay as long as it takes to fill the principal position, so it is likely that he will leave once more at the end of this year.

Also serving as Assistant Principal this year is Mr. Cook, a new face on campus. He is mainly in charge of discipline and campus safety, working in conjunction with Mr. Davis on matters of supervision and evaluation. He was also invited over the summer to work at the school, and though SOA is markedly different from the schools at which he has worked previously, he said he "jumped at the chance."

Mr. Cook does not originally hail from Charleston. A graduate of Bowling Green State University in Ohio, he taught Biology and coached softball and football in Washington, D.C. before moving to Charleston to teach at St. Andrews High. For the past nine years, he has been an administrator, working at Stall High School and Birney Middle School.

Mr. Cook hopes to stay at SOA and to continue working with the rest of SOA's administrative staff to provide the students and teachers with the most successful environment possible.

"Everyone has made me feel very welcome. The feeling around the school is positive and friendly; I feel a real sense of pride among the people here. I hope to stay a long time."

Stricter art major policy instated

By Tanya Lewandowski

"Last year we encountered problems in the art departments which reached such high proportions that it needed to be addressed differently," SOA Interim Principal **Ms. Myrna Caldwell** said about a new arts major policy. "Some students have lost their motivation to pass their art major, which has now resulted in the new policy."

The policy states that if a student receives an average of 84 or below in his or her major for two or more consecutive grading periods, that student is required to re-audition. If he or she is not accepted, the student will not be able to attend SOA the following year.

Art major teachers welcome the new rule.

"The new policy is positive," says **Ms. Linda Cline**, a middle and high school dance teacher. "It will make the



Lazy, no more: Art majors are less lenient this year.

students more motivated to meet our higher standards."

This new policy has been instated in the hopes of eliminating the number of failing grades that Ms. Caldwell and the other administrators saw rise to an all-time high last year. She does not expect that many students will fail to meet the B average standard, and hopes that the policy will help alert the students and their parents if there is a problem with their performance in their art major.

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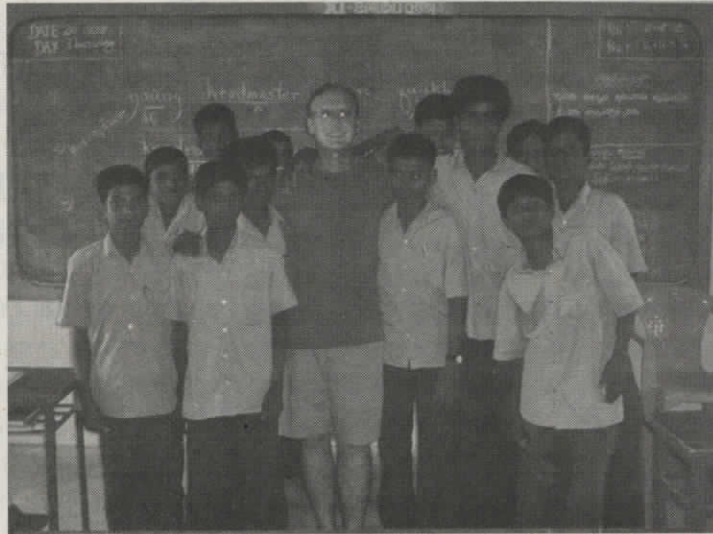


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Mr. Smyth helps deliver clean water to a community in India

By Chelsea Adent

Last July, **Mr. Bill Smyth** and **Vasanth Kuppaswamy**, a senior at Academic Magnet High School, traveled to India for 23 days to deliver a water purification system to a school in Maganurpatti Village.



Mr. Smyth and Vasanth hope to send 30-40 seniors from the Maganurpatti village to college next year.

in transport to reach Maganurpatti, which was north of the port. Twelve students carried the system on bamboo poles to the school entrance. Putting the water system together took another two days and required the help of local village engineers.

When Mr. Smyth and Vasanth arrived, the water system was functional. When students tasted the purified water, though, they said the taste was funny. They were used to drinking unfiltered water. Now, the 500-600 families who live in

the village can come to the school to receive purified water.

While in India, Mr. Smyth lived with Vasanth and his aunt and uncle. Living in Maganurpatti was an eye-opening experience, Mr. Smyth said. The house he stayed in was made of concrete. Most of the houses in India are made of mud and have a thatched roof, so the house they lived in was considered one of the nicer ones in the village. The house had run-

ning water but no shower. To bathe, they filled up a bucket with room-temperature water from the sink.

Each child at the school in Maganurpatti only had one uniform. Every night, uniforms were washed and hung to dry to be worn the next day. Each grade level wore a different color shirt. The students came to school barefoot because they couldn't afford \$4 shoes. There were 60-80 kids in a class, each of which was separated into single-sex seating areas. Mr. Smyth said the students wanted him to sign various belongings. "I signed my name about 3,000 times," he said.

Next year, Mr. Smyth and Vasanth are going to continue this project and send 30-40 seniors from the village to college. Right now, only five kids go to college every year because of financial constraints. Without college, most

children become sugarcane farmers, like their parents. Mr. Smyth and Vasanth promised to pay for three years of college to the students who passed their entrance exams. They hope to raise \$10,000-\$12,500 every year in order to continue supporting the education of Maganurpatti students.

The project in India is attracting more attention as it continues. Mr. Smyth said the former president of India, who recently stepped down and became a university professor, has shown a great deal of interest in the project. *Weekly Reader*, the nationally syndicated magazine, released a story on Mr. Smyth and Vasanth on September 21. For more information on Mr. Smyth and Vasanth, visit their website: www.TNISF.org.



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What were you up

Students share photos chro

Sarah Gallagher



Sarah Gallagher, a sixth grader and Vocal major, went with her family to Vancouver, Canada. They crossed the Capilano Suspension Bridge (pictured above), a major Vancouver attraction. "It's about one hundred twenty to one hundred fifty feet up," said Sarah, "and it overlooks the side of the mountains. Underneath there's a river flowing." Of her experience on the bridge, she said, "I was pretty nervous, because it rocks as everyone walks." The Gallaghers also spent time in the city. "Vancouver is the cleanest, coolest city I've been to," said Sarah.

Virginia Lee Pfaelher



"This picture was taken at Warped Tour in Charlotte, North Carolina. **John Wray, Hanna Trussler, Hannah McCleskey, Bugsy, Alice Gaynor, and Alanna de la Pena** piled into my minivan. The drive up there was just as much fun as the concert itself!"

Hannah Chilcote



"I went to the Dominican Republic this summer with my children and a church neighborhood in San Mateo, California. We were there to help with poverty standards, and the children were HIV positive. This picture was taken afternoo the children were playing games and they do the same thing. Since we communicated like this we could

to over the summer?

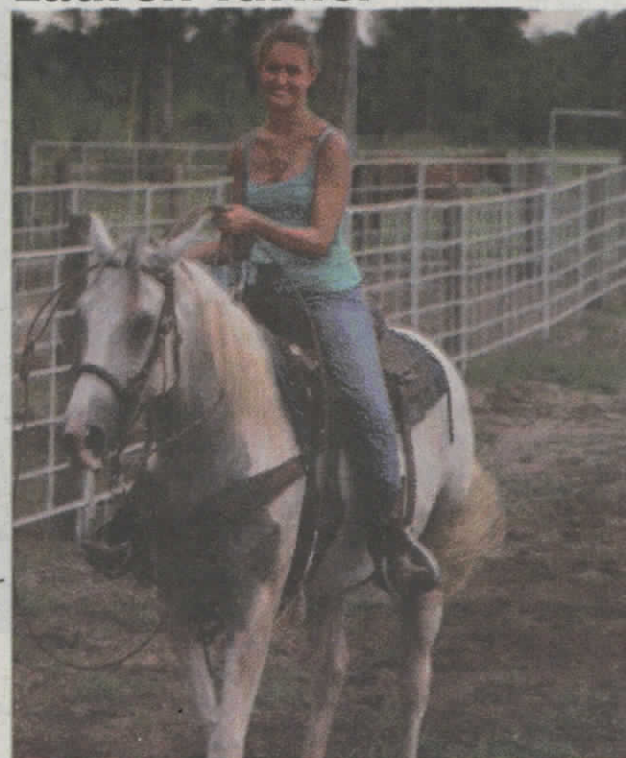
ling their summer experiences.

Laura Stanger



"When I moved into my mom's house this summer, my room was a drab, boring shade of blue. I wanted something different, and my mom went for it when I asked her if I could paint. Basically it took all summer and started being overwhelming before I was even half way done. I finished the day before school started! Overall, it was a lot of fun."

Lauren Turner



"In this picture, I'm on my boyfriend's farm in Leakesville, MS, learning how to rope steer! The horse I'm riding belongs to my boyfriend, Cody, and is named Dash."

John Wray



"Logan Wells (pictured at left), Kevin Green and I went backpacking along the Palmetto Trail in Eutawville. The trail was tough and we decided to reward ourselves by going to a couple water parks the next day."

Courtney Messer



"I went to my homestate of Kansas and the airline permanently lost all of my luggage, except my little 1970's suitcase, Little Red. Oh, the joys of flying."

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Where Are They Now? Hamadi Brown

By Blake Engel

Blake Engel: *In what ways has your SOA education affected you professionally and personally?*

Hamadi Brown: Professionally, SOA has taught me how to adapt and find my niche in whatever problem I am faced with. Personally, SOA has molded me to become a lover of diversity. SOA has strengthened me to always take the challenge, accepting every situation as a chance to learn.

BE: *How has your experience specifically as a student of the Creative Writing program at SOA influenced you?*

HB: Whether through usage of fiction or non-fiction, Creative Writing has served as my "cheap therapy" in expressing myself. From the professional aspect, CW and the love for vocabulary has helped me to write some of the most charming 5 page office referrals ever!!! It's so inspiring that my students often mumble in times of judgment: "Watch Brown now, always using dem words to get you!"

BE: *Which college or university did you attend for undergraduate studies and how was this experience an influence on your life?*

HB: College of Charleston. This was an experience because the school is in Charleston; however, the work was so rigorous and night life so WILD that I felt like I was in another state. Thinking of how advanced I had been in college due to SOA and how

well both College of Charleston and SOA worked wonders in the classroom – "I'M LOVING IT!"

BE: *Which other professions did you consider and/or take on, if any, before becoming a teacher, and why did you choose not to pursue them further?*

HB: I always wanted to be a physical therapist, yet Science to me was like morning sickness. I decided to enter communications, though my advisor at the time suggested that I enter the medical field or education because they'd be the most guaranteed.

BE: *What influenced you to become a teacher?*

HB: I wanted a profession that was somewhat flexible, where I could help people become positive parts of society and learn

more about myself. Also, I wanted a job where I could be myself and do things at least 80% my way; hence, my classroom.

BE: *Please give a brief summary of your experience as a teacher.*

HB: My experience as a teacher has been both nerve wrecking and inspirational. It started rocky because I had to let go of the mandates from college and open up to my students' personal and educational needs. It has been quite an informative experience in finding out how much some parents really ignore their children until trouble comes. It

has been rewarding because every time I was ready to kick teaching a student would say or do something out of the ordinary to change my mind. Overall, it has been very inspirational to see how much my students

and I have affected each other over the past two years. I never realized how many roles a teacher has to play. The good thing is I love what I do and my students love it too!

BE: *Where else, other than Charleston, have you visited, for professional and/or personal reasons, and why?*

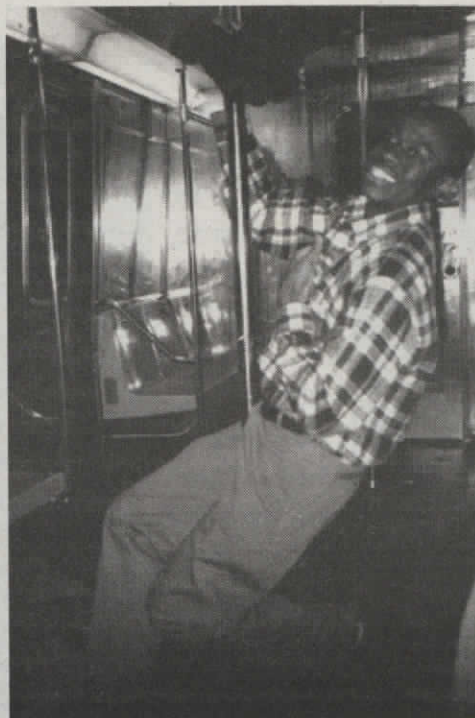
HB: Washington, DC this past summer to participate in the People to People Ambassador Program. It was awesome experience meeting people from various nationalities while learning about government. Other places for leisure include Myrtle Beach, SC and Atlanta, GA.

BE: *How do you spend your leisure time outside of the classroom?*

HB: Woes of graduate school, African dance and drumming, piano playing, and laughing at former students complain about working every day.

BE: *Do you have any further aspirations in your professional or personal life or do you intend to remain a teacher for Charleston County, and why?*

HB: Nope! Chucktown is only the beginning! I'm in graduate school for Counselor Education and plan to get out of Doge once I receive it. Personally, I plan to travel out of the country by the time I start a family (no time soon!).



Meet this year's foreign exchange students

By guest writer Kimberly Jenkins

Name: Charlotte Hohlstein

Grade: 11th

Major: Strings

Where are you from?

I am from near by Aichen in Stolberg, Germany



How did you hear about School of the Arts?

My host sister, Morgan Stewart, is in the school.

What are your hobbies?

At home in Germany I ride my horse, play with my dogs and with my friends. In America, I play my violin, go shopping, eat fast food, and act silly and funny.

What is your favorite food?

I like cookie dough, fast food, fruits, and sweets.

What is your favorite subject?

I enjoy strings, history, and musical theater.

What was the biggest adjustment you had to make coming to America?

There are very many fast food restaurants here. The people are friendlier here than in Germany.

Name: Vanessa Veitinger

Grade: 11th

Major: Vocal

Where are you from?

I'm from Germany. I live in Ehingen, in south Germany, near Stuttgart.



How did you hear about School of the Arts?

My exchange program researched the best school in Charleston for me.

What are your hobbies?

I love playing basketball, singing, partying and hanging out with my friends.

What is your favorite food?

Definitely not the cafeteria food! But I love sweet tea.

What was a regular school day like for you?

In Germany we all study in one class. School ends at 12:00 p.m.

What is your favorite subject?

Vocal! There are the best people!

What was the biggest adjustment you had to make coming to America? I had to leave all my friends, my family and my own surroundings! But it was worth it. I love it here! I'm so glad to be at SOA.

Where Were They Then? Ms. Mary Ann Henry

By Bryan Rouse

Bryan Rouse: *Where were you born and what was your childhood like?*

Mary Ann Henry: I was the fourth of ten children born to an Irish-Catholic family in Charleston, West Virginia. My mother's side of the family was of the potato famine Irish branch from County Claire, Ireland. My father's side was of the Virginia aristocracy and I'm a direct descendant of Patrick Henry, the "Voice of the Revolution." I spent all of my girlhood summers in the West Virginia mountains, near the Virginia border, with my grandmother -- my favorite childhood memory.

BR: *What were your childhood dreams?*

MAH: I was always writing, directing and producing the neighborhood plays and musicals. But I didn't really think of doing this for a living, though, as I had no role models (women writers or directors) around me.

BR: *What colleges did you go to and what did you major in?*

MAH: I attended a historically black college called West Virginia State, where I received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in psychology and sociology and a minor in philosophy. Basically, it prepared me, as George Carlin said, for the 16th century. But it was great: I learned how it felt like to be a minority. The visiting artists were people like the Funkadelics and Dick Gregory and other incredibly cool people. A few years later, I received a Master of Education degree from Ohio University.

BR: *What did you do after college and what was your first job?*

MAH: For my first job out of college, I taught "sensitivity training" to a city police force. Later, I was a drug counselor, then a sheltered workshop director for mentally handicapped adults. After I received my master's degree, I taught public school for four years. Then I finally decided to do something creative. I studied screenwriting and production at the graduate level and then I hit the streets and started selling

my ability to write scripts. This eventually led to an eighteen-year career in writing, directing and producing film and video for companies and organizations. Along the way I developed a specialty and won lots of national awards



Since birth, Ms. Henry has lived by the motto "ride tall in the saddle and wear a big hat."

in the oxymoronic genre known as corporate comedy. From there I went to independent filmmaking and from there to writing fiction. And, of course, there was that belly-dancing stint.

BR: *What made you want to teach at SOA?*

MAH: Once I moved to Charleston, I realized that there was no real production community in the kind of work I did. I taught at the college level but I did not enjoy teaching writing to people who did not have a talent for it. I was so happy to hear about SOA's Creative Writing program where I get to teach talented students who love to write. Plus, I broke the curse that was on my position: I'm the first co-Creative Writing teacher who has stayed more than two years!

BR: *What do you do in your spare time?*

MAH: I have two beach rentals which I try to keep rented and I also own www.acharlestonbeachwedding.com. In addition, I'm a featured editor with www.writersretreat.com, which is an

magazines. I'm busy.

BR: *What is your favorite type of music?*

MAH: I was a big Jim Morrison fan, also Jimi Hendrix. I liked Kurt Cobain. They're all dead, of course, but their music lives. I like Dylan, like the Stones, all the oldies. I have an impressive collection of vinyl. I mostly listen to jazz standards and have a huge Etta James, Billie Holiday, Diana Krall, etc. collection.

BR: *What regrets, if any, do you have about your life?*

MAH: My biggest regret is that I didn't believe in myself early enough. When I went to my high school reunion, I said: "Guess what? Mrs. Elliot, I'm a writer." She said, "You were always a writer. You just didn't have the self confidence." Ouch!

BR: *What are you most proud of in your life?*

MAH: My daughter, who is wonderful, talented, bright, sensitive, caring. Now there, I've embarrassed her.

BR: *What are your plans for the future?*

MAH: To keep writing, to publish books, to travel to exotic places and do more travel writing. I'm working on a writing workshop right now that I plan to teach in Charleston first and then take on the road. Basically, I plan to keep rockin' on with my magic self

John and Evelyn Silverman

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An ode to Harry Potter: The end of a nine-year obsession

By K. Chaney Long



Nine years ago I stood at my elementary school's book fair. I searched busily for a picture book while my mother wandered around reading book jackets. Behind me stood a display holding some hefty books with a picture of a boy on a broomstick. I was completely oblivious to the fact that I would soon be beyond obsessed with this individual. I was also unaware that within a year, this book and the six books that followed it would become a massive phenomenon and cultivate millions of fans. I kept searching for my picture book and my mother walked over to the *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* display. "Chaney, let's read this one!" I think I shrugged. We bought the book and, when I think back, I can't imagine my life without it.

Mom started reading *Sorcerer's Stone* to my brother Price and me, and our tradition of reading Harry Potter before bedtime was born. I realized as she read that it was the most unique book I had ever heard. It was captivating, brilliant, and best of all, reading Harry Potter was like traveling to another world full of wizards and broomsticks.

Meanwhile, Harry Potter started

to spread like wildfire across the nation. Unknown just a few months earlier, the novel was now topping bestseller lists. Soon after *Sorcerer's Stone* became popular, the sequel, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, was released. Harry Potter fans everywhere rejoiced as they delved into the newest installment.

Harry Potter fever spread beyond libraries and bookstores when Warner Brothers announced they were making a movie adaptation of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. I don't recall having ever been so excited about anything in my entire life. I was so excited the night before I went to see the movie I couldn't sleep. The movie was fantastic. It was absolutely brilliant to see my favorite story come to life on the big screen.

To correspond with the film's release, Warner Bros. pushed Potter merchandise like it was a new fashion trend. That Christmas, I received Harry Potter school supplies, Harry Potter Barbie dolls, a Harry Potter calendar, and a fabulous Harry Potter watch. Not only did I know I was a Potter fanatic, but anybody that came within a ten-foot radius of me knew it too.

The years passed, but my Harry Potter obsession didn't wane. Even though

I was by far old enough to read the books on my own, my family continued the tradition of reading the books out loud, and as we got closer to the last book we came up with theories on how the series would conclude. One theory was that J.K. Rowling would not actually end the series but instead keep writing about the boy wizard. Wouldn't that be nice?

Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. Last January, Mugglenet.com, the largest Harry Potter fan site in the world, released their countdown for *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Potter fans everywhere prepared for the seventh and final book by rereading the series and discussing their theories for the end.

Time flies when you're obsessing over your favorite book, because suddenly it was July 20 and I was standing in Barnes and Noble at the book seven release party. I think that's when it really hit me this was the last time I would be standing in a bookstore at midnight dressed as a wizard. Sadness was replaced with excitement, though, when it was 11:59. There was a buzz of excitement in the checkout line as the last minute before midnight began. If you've never done a countdown to midnight for Harry Potter, it is a lot like

shaking up a soda and then opening it. Everyone in the store gets really calm and starts counting. Then, at midnight, the boxes filled with books are ripped open and there's an explosion of excitement. Everyone in the store is full of energy.

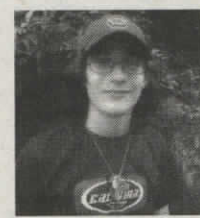
After the explosion, my mother and I slowly made our way to purchase the book. As soon as the man behind the counter handed me the book, I opened it and inhaled the smell that is unique to only Harry Potter books. To a non-Potter fan it probably smells like paper and ink, but to me it smells like magic.

We brought the book home and, for the seventh time, my mother read the book out loud while my brother and I sat and listened. When it was over, I think I was more depressed about the book ending than I was about the ending of the book. Closing that book was the bittersweet end of an era.

There are still two more movies left, so the era isn't completely over. For those of you starting to feel Potter withdrawal, do what I plan to do - reread the books and relive the adventure from when we first met Harry Potter.

"Sass Attack" on Hollywood: A culture of idiocy

By David Sass



Every American has heard about them, talked about them, and seen them on TV: this country's idiots have formed a nesting ground in Hollywood.

And the really disturbing thing about it is that the public seems to support it. Maybe I'm wrong, but I think that by buying all those magazines and tabloids devoted to 'celebrity life,' we're giving these celebrities the idea that we actually care about them and that they're important enough to be held above the law.

Paris Hilton, the obviously not-too-bright heiress to a fortune that would make even Donald Trump's mouth water, was charged with DUI when caught while driving with a blood-alcohol level higher than 0.08 last September. The normal punishment for a first-time DUI is a \$1,000

fine or 6 months in jail, or both. Paris was sentenced to 45 days, which is only 1/4 of the time for us 'plebeians.' She only served 22 days behind bars. Honestly, were it my decision, she would have served at least three months in jail. If Martha Stewart could survive five months of jail, Paris should be able to handle three.

Britney Spears, and her dime-store rapper ex-husband, Kevin Federline or 'K-Fed,' one of the most embarrassing public images of America, are perfect examples of the timeworn adage, "just because you can reproduce doesn't mean you should." Sadly, the meaning of this seems to have never penetrated their skulls to what little grey matter they possess. They were married for barely 24 months and had two children in the time between marriage and divorce. And recently, Federline has been pressing "Child Endangerment" charges against Britney in order to gain control of the two children.

These charges, based off of photos of Spears driving with her son Sean in her lap, are quite valid and proof that neither Britney nor Kevin, for having known about the incident all along, are competent in their roles as parents. Sadly, the victims of this whole affair are Sean and Jayden, Spears' and Federline's two children, who will have to put up with the knowledge of just who their parents are for the rest of their lives.

And finally, we turn to what I like to think of as the coup d'etat of Hollywood Idiocy, Tom Cruise. I'm talking about the Tom Cruise, America's very own bad guy-shooting Scientologist. I don't think anyone knows where poor little Thomas's sanity jumped a rail or two, but my money is on the Church of Scientology and L. Ron Hubbard. First, there was the 'little' incident on the set of *Oprah*, where Tom seemed to get so excited that he upset Oprah's couch and it just wouldn't let him sit down. Then,

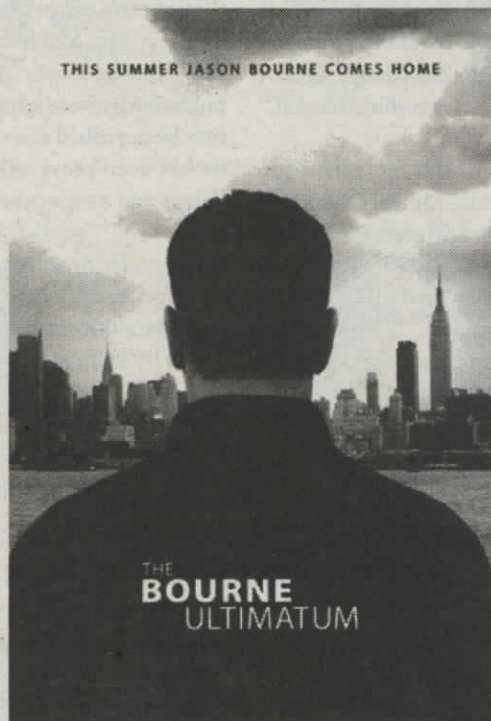
Tom announced that he was going to eat the placenta and umbilical cord of his first-born child, as it was very nutritious. Imagine being a kid and finding out that your old man was going to eat the blood-filled sponge of tissue that nourished you when you were in the womb. Not a pleasant thought. Whether Hubbard and his accursed Body Thetans have affected Tom's current acting ability, I can't say, but I do know that they did something with the Ethan Hunt that we all knew and loved. I just hope the new Tom can settle his altercation with Oprah's couch without going through the hassle and publicity of a lawsuit.

All in all, there are spoiled girls who live in fantasy worlds drinking and driving on our roads, crazy couples who think a divorce won't later affect their kids' lives, and an insane baby-eating imposter roaming the streets of our fair nation. I think I've done enough damage to Hollywood for one day.

Bourne plot a bore, but the action's great Surviving 6th grade Staying healthy and fit

By Blake Engel

In director Paul Greengrass's second installment of the *Bourne* action series, begun by director Doug Liman with *The Bourne Identity* in 2002, Matt Damon returns as Jason Bourne, an ex-CIA assassin with a severe identity-crisis. This time, he's hunting down the man who turned him into a vicious killer; however, that was his objective in the previous two movies. But this time there is apparently an "ultimatum," so the situation has changed, one would assume. There's a significant amount of repetition from the earlier installments, which the filmmakers have perhaps confused with continuity. For instance, there are references to the victims of assassinations committed by Bourne



Noah Vosen, played by David Strathairn, who earned acclaim as Edward R. Murrow in George Clooney's 2005 film *Good Night, and Good Luck*. Alongside him is actor Joan Allen, reprising her role as Deputy Director Pamela Landy. Vosen is the head of a covert operation known as "Blackbriar" (another repetition, this time from the first film), which is the successor of "Treadstone," the same agency that hired and trained Jason Bourne. It appears that the CIA is quite intent on hiring and training attractive young men to be infinitely resourceful, nearly bullet-proof assassins. Seems somewhat reminiscent of *Zoolander*. At first, Vosen handles the case well, yelling orders and kill commands

like a pro, but after a series of failures he comes to understand the unbreakable nature of the man he is tracking.

But none of this is particularly important. The point is that Jason hallucinates about a man, played by Albert Finney, who may have been the guy who came up with his name. Noah Vosen is the high-powered, heavily-armed obstacle to his self-realization. The result is frenetic camerawork, epileptic editing, not much dialogue apart from instructions on the parts of Vosen and Landy to their subordinates, and some fine, well-choreographed action. I doubt the conceit behind *Ultimatum* was to create *War and Peace: Part II*. The objective was to entertain, and despite the repetition and a shallow plot, Damon and Greengrass deliver the punches-- literally and figuratively-- making the final part of the trilogy a wonderful adventure and a well-constructed lead-in to next summer's *The Bourne Conundrum*.

in previous movies, another car chase near the beginning of the third act, and a CIA section chief who goes from kempt and professional to unshaven and borderline psychotic. Interestingly, this repetition plays a major role in the first act of the film, as events both seen and unseen during the previous movie (Greengrass's first go at the series, *The Bourne Supremacy*) occur onscreen again as Bourne escapes the seemingly inescapable.

That is more or less the plot of the film - if A is simply the beginning, wherein Bourne is searching for his true identity, then B is a confrontation with someone in-the-know, followed by a sequel-certified escape sequence. *Ultimatum* is thus an elaborate chase. In the first film of the trilogy, actor Chris Cooper was the man in charge as Mr. Alexander Conklin. In the second, it was Brian Cox, who reprised his role as Ward Abbot. Both were chasing Bourne and ended up desperate, depraved, and dead by the end of their respective films, and this time there is

By K. Chaney Long

On the first day of school I was walking into the Berry Building when a 6th grader asked me where she could find the cafeteria. I told her, and as she left I remembered the terrifying feeling of being completely lost.

I asked the 6th grade theatre majors if they have been lost yet and over ten of them raised their hands. So when you walk into the wrong building or classroom know you're not alone, but if you keep having a problem finding your way around, there are maps of the campus next to the front desk.

In 6th grade the tests are harder, the homework is longer, and the teachers are much more strict. One 6th grader told me that it was already "nerve-racking". This is true, but the second you feel overwhelmed in a subject get help. If you don't understand something in a class it won't just come to you, so go to a parent, teacher, or older sibling. Also, starting after school Thursday, September 20th, the National Honors Society holds tutoring for all grades and subjects.

If you fail a test, tell your mom or dad, and get help! They don't want you to fail, and they will most likely help you study so your next test goes better. If you don't feel motivated to study, start a study group. Starting a study group is another fun way to pass your tests, and remember 6th grade is a learning experience. The teachers aren't being stricter to be mean; they are preparing you for years to come.

Being away from your elementary school friends is another challenge of 6th grade. Before you panic, remember that you can make new friends and remain friends with people at other schools, and if you've been wandering on your own at recess look around and see who else is by themselves. Chances are he or she needs a friend, too.

A few last notes: organize your binder constantly. Mrs. Blake gives a notebook test that you're sure to ace if you keep your binder tidy!

And another thing: the 7th graders can see out of those black windows so don't pick your nose on the way to the restroom.

All the 6th graders I spoke to said that an upperclassman had already called them "cute and/or adorable". Yes, it's annoying, but they don't mean any harm. Remember that the 8th grader saying "they are so cute" in the hallways was once a "cute and adorable" 6th grader too.

By Carolyn E. Brown



Going back to school is a hectic time for students. Relearning how to balance your homework, classes, tests

and social life is already crazy enough. In fact, it's so insane that students often forget to take care of one crucial thing: themselves. Here are some easy tricks to staying healthy and avoiding the back-to-school bulge.

1. Drink lots of water. The American Institute of Medicine suggests that boys should drink three liters and girls should drink 2.2. Drinking lots of water not only keeps you hydrated, but also flushes out fats, and keeps you full.

2. Pack some snacks. Eating a healthy snack after eating a meal not only prevents awkwardly loud stomach growls, but also keeps your metabolism up.

3. Get some sleep. As teens we need to have at least eight hours of sleep every single night. So get off of the computer and go to bed. Getting enough sleep not only rids us of those nasty under eye bags, but also helps us to be more focused and calm throughout the school day.

4. Get some exercise. Aim for about 30 minutes a day. Do any kind you like to give your metabolism a boost!

5. Chill out. Read, listen to music, do yoga, anything that calms you down and allows your body and mind to rejuvenate.

Keeping your body and mind healthy will lead to better grades, a more fulfilling life, and a slimmer waistline. Be on the look out for more tips and tricks to come.

SOA's Newest Teachers, Part One

By Blake Engel

Ms. Fran Ridgell



"Helping students find their own path, in their personal and professional lives" is the primary job for **Ms. Fran**

Ridgell, SOA's new middle school career counselor. Formerly a jewelry designer, yoga teacher and certified lifeguard, Ms. Ridgell is a Columbia, South Carolina native who now calls Charleston her home.

"The idea of a school, staff and students dedicated to arts education is very cool," she said. "I have enjoyed my first weeks here thoroughly." Besides SOA, she has worked at two other CCSD middle schools and with the

Academic Magnet High School. Mrs. Ridgell said she found similarities between SOA and schools in Japan, where she was a counselor for eight years.

Currently, she is pursuing a Ph.D. in human services. For her undergraduate and graduate studies, she attended the College of Charleston, the Citadel and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Of SOA, she commented, "Students are interesting, interested and pleasant and the staff has been very welcoming." Using computer programs, discussion groups and experimental learning, Ms. Ridgell hopes to continue working with middle schoolers, finding their strengths and interests, and aiding them in deciding on a path for their future.

Ms. Kristen Lucas



In her first year as a teacher, **Ms. Kristen Lucas** joins the SOA dance department in an effort to educate kids on how to move. Specifically, she's instructing the middle schoolers, but she also

teaches a fitness and wellness class in high school.

Formerly, she has been a waitress, housekeeper and a counselor at the YMCA. She arrived in Charleston from Raleigh, North Carolina along with her husband, who is currently attending MUSC.

Ms. Lucas attended the University of North Carolina, where she received a B.A. with a double concentration in performance and dance education. She also spent two years at Appalachian State University.

She described her experience "so far" at SOA as "crazy, fabulous." Ms. Lucas teaches modern/contemporary and ballet techniques. She uses authentic and creative movement and body-mind centering to teach dance.

Besides ballet, Ms. Lucas describes herself as a "fun-loving," out-doors type who enjoys adventure, introspection, and a "good laugh." Ms. Lucas did her student teaching at SOA last year.

Mr. Peter McDivitt

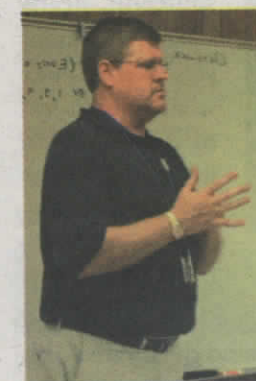


"I feel it is important to be an active learner," said **Mr. Peter McDivitt**, SOA's new CP English II and III teacher. "Sharing knowledge is not two-dimensional,"

he said.

A graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara, Mr. McDivitt first discovered SOA thanks to Interim Principal Myrna Caldwell. "I was very fortunate to meet Ms. Caldwell at the Charleston Teacher Recruitment Fair," he said. "The way she discussed the school and the tour days later with [Curriculum Coordinator] Mr. Smyth made me want to join the team."

Mr. Steve Percy



"It's great!" said new high school math teacher **Mr. Steve Percy** of his experience at SOA. "I really appreciate everyone that has helped me get settled." The self-described handyman, responsible for "flipping" three houses single-handedly,

comes to SOA in his tenth year as an educator, with experience in both public and private schools. SOA, he says, "...is a lot like a private school. Students are polite and seem to want to learn." For Mr. Percy, SOA comes as a pleasant circumstance after working at public schools where "students only came for

Not being a native of Charleston, Mr. McDivitt spends some of his free time exploring the history of the city, as well as the leisure of its beaches. He explained that "SOA brought me to Charleston as well as Charleston's history."

Mr. McDivitt began his teaching career in the Pacific Northwest, working at public and private schools in the area. In what may be described as a somewhat peculiar past, he has been previously employed as a grave digger and as a worker at the Santa Barbara Zoo.

He describes his experiences at SOA as "wonderful." He continued, "The Staff and the students have all made me feel at home by helping me understand the culture of SOA."

friends and to hang out at lunch."

Though not a Charleston native, Mr. Percy arrived here in 1981 after his father was transferred to Charleston as part of his employment with Cummings Engines. At the University of South Carolina, he received his B.S. in marketing, and in the Citadel's graduate program he received an MAT in mathematics and Certification for Secondary Administration.

A former football coach for seven years, Mr. Percy also teaches two nights a week at Trident Tech. For the rest of the week, he's playing dad, taking his kids to football games and gymnastics practice. His son is a seventh grade Visual Arts major at SOA.

In his spare time, he said, he enjoys a popular American pastime: "absolutely nothing. It's a rare experience."

Mr. David Southwick



SOA's new seventh grade science teacher, **Mr. David Southwick**, found that his new classes are big, his resources plentiful and his experiences here comforting. "I have been welcomed warmly

by the entire staff and students," he said.

A Lowcountry native, Mr. Southwick grew up on James Island. He received his B.S. in Biology from Wofford College. He spent two years teaching at a private school,

but SOA's reputation and teachers brought him here. He said it was "the team I would be teaching with" that influenced his decision to join the staff.

His science class, he said, "is constantly moving from one activity to another." According to Mr. Southwick, this leaves little time to rest. His experience working as a lab assistant aids him in instructing his students. He has also worked as a painter.

In his free time, he enjoys playing team sports, specifically soccer and basketball.

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TREAT YOUR SHELVES RIGHT



Horoscopes
By the SOA Astrologer

♍ Virgo (Aug. 23- Sep. 22) – You are the best when it comes to getting things organized. This month, it will show.

♎ Libra (Sep. 23- Oct. 22) – You're in a good position to say no a few times and mean it. You've got enough on your plate without additional projects or chores. And putting your foot down should simplify your life quite a bit.

♏ Scorpio (Oct. 23- Nov. 21) – A surge of good energy is coming your way. It's time for you to run with it.

♐ Sagittarius (Nov. 22- Dec. 21) – It's not a day of action for you. Sit back and relax.

♑ Capricorn (Dec. 22- Jan. 19) – This is the time to let your friends/loved ones know you're there.

♒ Aquarius (Jan. 20- Feb. 18) – It's time for you to handle your business before things get out of hand.

♓ Pisces (Feb. 19-Mar. 20) – Right now, you should let things fall off your shoulders, instead of letting your emotions show on your sleeve.

♈ Aries (Mar. 21- Apr. 19) – Try to keep your emotional reactions as honest as possible. You're better off going with your gut for now.


♉ Taurus (Apr. 20 – May 20) – Now is a great time to take a risk and tell that special someone what you are feeling. You need to act soon.

♊ Gemini (May 21- June 21) – This is a great time to jump foot first and make the most of the situation. But make sure to make amends later.

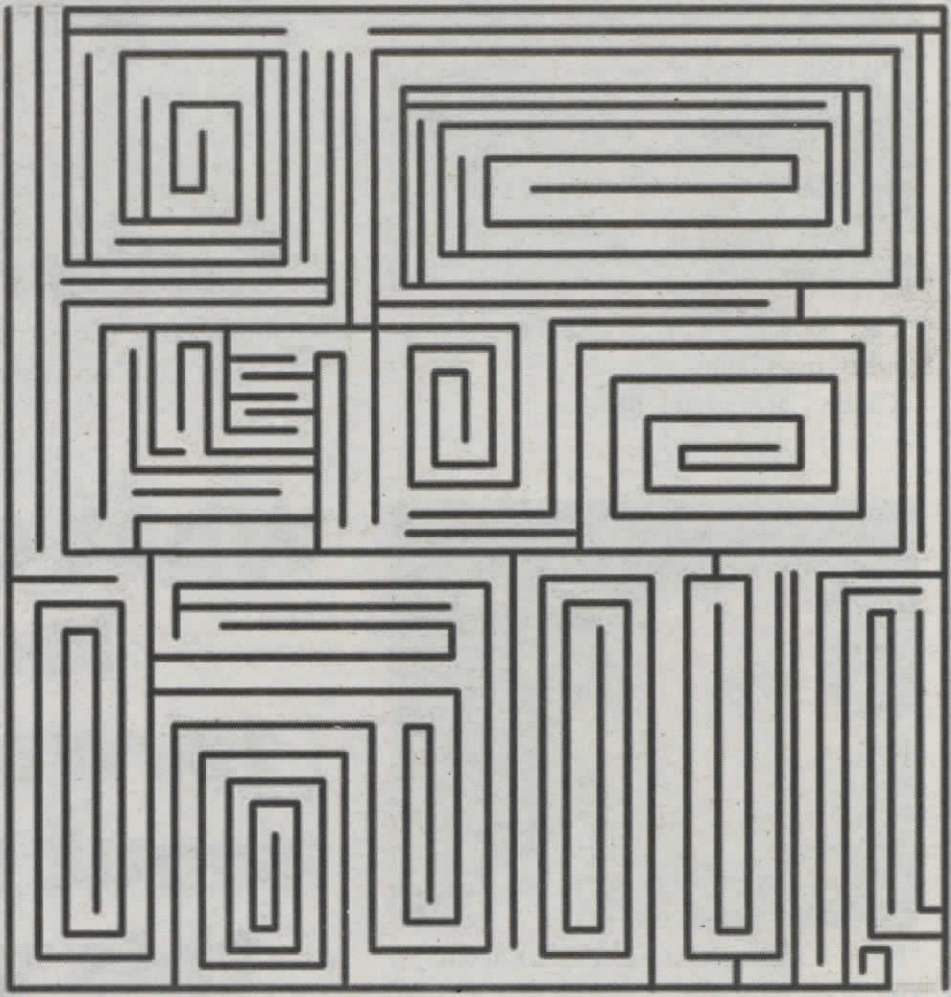
♋ Cancer (June 22- July 22) – Are you waiting for a sign before making the next move in your life? You've got the energy to do it-- sign or no sign.

♌ Leo (July 23- Aug. 22) – Don't let anything that anybody says get you down. It's just a time where words take on more power than usual.

Questions or comments for the SOA Astrologer? E-mail Applause at soa_applause@yahoo.com.

Start 

HELP
MS.
HENRY
FIND HER
LUCKY
WRITING
PEN!



Finish

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"I am looking forward to a new school and to my major."
- Callie Carmichael, 6th



"I can't wait for Christmas vacation."
- Brent Hubbard, 7th



"The 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C.!"
- Matt Lehman, 8th



"French II and extracurricular activities."
- Tiffany Houston, freshman

What do you look forward to about school this year?



"Going back to Argentina."
- Alek Mihok, sophomore



"Being able to go to Prom!"
- Grace Dawson Beatty, junior



"Jump Jive N' Wail- big time!"
- Ricky Quinones, senior



"Looking forward to the possibility of a patio garden."
- Mrs. Laura Reilly, U.S. History teacher

