

Applause

Vol. 9 No. 10

School of the Arts

Graduation 2008



Graduating Class of 2008

Letter from the Editor



Without fail, writing the monthly Letter from the Editor is a task I put off until minutes before press time. Most of the time I find that words completely elude me. I've always found humor in this irony—a newspaper editor with nothing to say. This is the last of these letters I will write in my two-year career as an SOA student and *Applause* editor. In the absence of profundity, I'll strive for voluntary simplicity, something I've learned at SOA: Being the editor of this newspaper has been

a stressful, hectic, yet ultimately meaningful and irreplaceable experience. I love this school, and I love reporting on its achievements and anomalies. I want to thank Dr. Cusatis and every staff member, past and present, for supporting my vision for this paper and helping me realize each goal. I am confident in the ability and impressed by the ambition of Chaney Long, who will take the position of editor next fall.

Sincerely,
Lucy Hunter

Message from Ms. Caldwell



To the Class of 2008:
Your senior wall says it all. You are intellect, creativity, talent and energy. It has been an honor to be a

part of your senior year. Thank you for the privilege.

Myrna Caldwell
Interim Principal

Message from Mr. Cook



Congratulations to the Class of 2008! What an outstanding group of Ladies and Gentleman you are. Thank you for making me feel so welcome in my first year here. I have been continuously amazed at the level of intelligence, talent, compassion and friendliness you exhibit. You have made your parents, teachers and administrators proud to be a part of

your journey through life. I am confident that you will continue to grow and evolve and do great things. As you move on in life remember the words of the great philosopher Willie Wonka, "Anything you want to, do it. Want to change the world, there's nothing to it." Best of luck to each of you.

Robert Cook
Assistant Principal

Message from Mr. Davis



Congratulations to the Class of 2008! Always remember the good times you had and the friendships that were made. You have finished one part of your life's journey and will soon

begin another. Follow the stars to success and never be afraid to take risks. May the very best come your way.

A. Roy Davis
Interim Assistant Principal

Applause

the official student newspaper of
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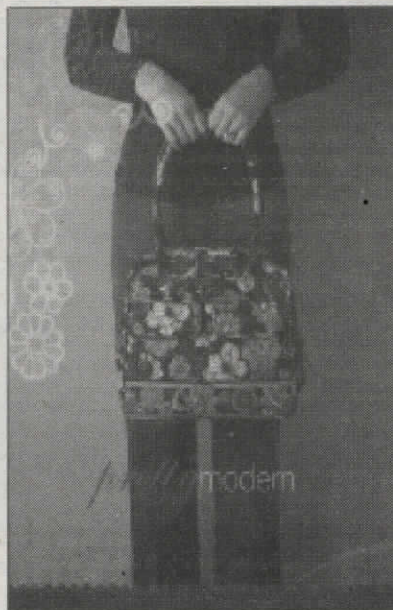
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Outside-the-arts highlights Middle School Arts Recaps

By Liz Gildea

This school year was SOA's first without founder and longtime principal Ms. Rose Maree Myers at the helm. After the school district abruptly transferred Ms. Myers in late spring, the position of interim principal was assumed by former assistant principal Ms. Myrna Caldwell; beloved disciplinarian Mr. Roy Davis returned after a year of retirement; and a new face appeared in the form of Mr. Robert Cook, who filled Ms. Caldwell's position. There were also many new faces among the faculty, due to the exodus at the end of last year following Ms. Myers' transfer.

Over the summer the fine arts department decided to implement a new policy: any high school student who, for two consecutive quarters, fails to achieve an average 84 or above in his or her major, must re-audition the next school year against the applicants from other schools.

It was discovered that *Seussical*, the musical scheduled for this year, had been canceled over the summer. Former Fine Arts Director Mr. Michael Locklair, who was going to direct the show, left SOA after Ms. Myers' transfer, and Theatre teacher Ms. Megan Link had already committed to a conflicting project. With none of the faculty able to direct the show – and with the discovery that West Ashley High School had also bought the rights to *Seussical* for this year – the fine arts department voted to abandon the project rather than risk putting on a show that was not up to usual SOA standards.

In September, SOA received a visit from the niece of Zora Neale Hurston, the late author of the acclaimed book *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Ms. Lucy Anne Hurston, the author's niece, was in Charleston to help celebrate her aunt's book as part of a national literary program called the Big Read. Ms. Jane Marshall took her students to a lecture by Ms. Hurston at the College of Charleston, and as her students had their copies of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* signed, arranged with Ms. Hurston a visit to SOA. On the day of the visit, a select group of students gathered in the Black Box, where Ms. Hurston talked to them about her own book, a biography of her aunt entitled *Speak So You Can Speak Again: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*.

With the end of fall came the news that '06 graduate LaToya Smith, a vocal major while at SOA, had performed at the renowned Apollo Theatre in New York City. LaToya had stayed overnight at a friend's workplace in order to make the audition the following morning. She performed twice on the Apollo's weekly Amateur Night.

In its November 30 edition, *US News and World Report* listed SOA as one of America's top high schools in a November 30 study that evaluated schools from around the nation for performance on state tests, achievement of disadvantaged students and offerings of college-level coursework. Of 18,790 schools studied, 1,591 were listed in gold, silver and bronze categories; and SOA was among the 405 to receive silver-level recognition. Also, Academic Magnet

High School, with which SOA is scheduled to share a new facility beginning in 2010, ranked 27th of the 100 gold-level schools.

On February 5, the MTV show *Made* held an open casting call at SOA. *Made* selects teenagers with dreams they may not be able to accomplish on their own and provides them with the necessary funding and support to reach their goal. About twenty high school students auditioned, who aspired to various professions ranging from that of dancer to tennis player to fencer to racecar driver. None of the hopefuls were chosen to be on the show.

Also in February, Junior Laura Stanger appeared in an episode of the court TV show *Judge Judy*. Laura had received a letter from the show's producers when, after she crashed a friend's car, the friend's uncle had filed suit against her parents. Though Laura enjoyed being on the show (which covered all related expenses, including the sum awarded to the plaintiff), she especially enjoyed her free time exploring Los Angeles.

On February 17, senior Carolyn Brown competed at the regional level in Poetry Out Loud, a national poetry recitation contest in which SOA participated for the first time last year. Carolyn, who had won the school-wide competition, was first runner-up.

The SOA Frisbee Club got serious this year on February 23-24, when they competed in the Chucktown Throwdown, a regional Ultimate Frisbee tournament hosted each year by the College of Charleston. Their most notable game that weekend was against the team from Duke University, whom they beat 10-8 (though the game ended early due to time constraints).

The same month, New York publisher Facts on File published *The Encyclopedia of American Literature*, which included seventeen essays written by SOA English instructor Dr. John Cusatis. Ms. Caldwell presented a copy of the four-volume edition to Academic Magnet High School at a meet-and-greet event on February 28.

On April 21, *Applause* editor Lucy Hunter completed the Boston Marathon. While training for the classic 26.2-mile event, Lucy solicited sponsors and raised \$1,000 for the Disability Law Center, a non-profit organization that seeks to protect the legal rights of disabled citizens.

There was a bit of an upset over this year's prom when it was moved from Saturday, May 10, to Sunday, May 11. The change occurred when it was discovered that the boat on which it was scheduled to be held Saturday would not accommodate the number of students expected to buy tickets. There was also some concern as to whether the weather would allow the boat to leave its Patriots Point dock; however, after a small delay, the boat successfully toured the Charleston Harbor.

The National Honor Society sponsored its annual blood drive on Thursday, May 15, in the Black Box Theatre. SOA participants donated a total of forty-five pints of blood, at which point

Creative Writing highlights By Ms. Mary Ann Henry

6th grade highlights:

- Participated in a collaborative project with the 6th grade dance department.
- Presented a Literary Reading at Kudu Coffee House in Spring, 2008.

8th grade highlights:

- Presented a Fall Literary Reading at Kudu Coffee House at which they presented excerpts from their short stories.

- Collaborated with the dance department in a protest poetry and Dance Performance

- Competed in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards. Six 8th grade students, Katie Balciewicz, Jacob Eley, Brett Hanson, Hadley Pregnanz, Sam Rames and Larissa Schiavo won regional awards. Three 8th grade students, Katie Balciewicz, Brett Hanson and Larissa Schiavo were presented national writing awards at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

- Were featured in the *Post & Courier* for participating in a 'Vendors of Verse' project in which they wrote poetry for pedestrians on a busy downtown Charleston street. They raised money to purchase chairs for the classroom.

- Wrote, directed and produced mini-movies as part of a scriptwriting project. They presented their movies in a 'Shorts Festival' to the entire 8th grade.

- Presented a fall literary reading and world-wide film premiere Film Premiere at Kudu Coffee House on May 14, 2008.

Orchestra highlights By Ms. Susan Johnson

Region Orchestra:

17 Students participated by audition
Hilton Head, SC

All-State Orchestra: 9 students participated by audition
Clemson, SC

Concert Festival: All students @ Myrtle Beach, SC
Festival Rating: Superior

Solo and Ensemble: 18 Small Ensembles performed at Dorchester high school

Art Smart Week: 8th grade Strings combined with Vocal, Band and Piano performed *Beauty and the Beast* for about 900 Charleston County 5th Graders.

Fall Festival Concert: The Orchestra performed Fun Fall pieces in the Black Box.

Winter/Holiday Concert: The Orchestra performed several holiday favorites, some pieces were performed with the MS vocal majors at the Citadel Square Baptist Church.

Benefit Concert: Noah Butler, Anna Mathias, Zach McNellis, Mary Claire Moser and Peter Webb performed for a cancer patient benefit concert.

National Fiesta-val Orchestra Competition: The Orchestra received a Superior rating and the 1st place award. Also, an individual solo award was given to violinist Hayley Bell. We also attended the Blue Man Group Concert and spent a day at MGM Hollywood Studios!

Theatre highlights By Ms. Megan Link

(Produced 21 separate performances this year!)

Division Family Theatre Night (September):

This is a beginning of the year event of bringing together MS theatre major families for an introduction to the MS theatre curriculum and activities for the year. (one evening)

6th grade Monologue Show (November):

This annual first semester event features the first year majors' foray into writing and performing their own piece of theatre along with the acting basics of character development being stressed. (one show)

6th grade Shakespeare Show (April):

During the spring the sixth grade majors are introduced to the Bard's techniques and challenges along with performing a brief selection of some of his more accessible scenes. (one show)

7th & 8th grade Short Form Improv Show (January):

This is another annual event of the curriculum through line in which majors are introduced to the improv genre in its game form as well as the opportunity to experience it in performance. (two shows)

7th & 8th grade Physical Theatre Show (May):

You know it's spring when this collaborative showing features seventh graders performing in the genre of pantomimes and the 8th graders working on their stage fighting skills. (one show)

8th grade Long Form Improv Show (October):

In this unit the 8th grade experience builds on the seventh grade year and gives the students the very daunting challenge of improvising in the an intertwining narrative and theme format. (one show)

8th grade Spring Play—Cymbeline (February):

The MS experience is concluded with participation in the mounting of a children's production with sets and costumes, which also serves as an outreach piece to local elementary schools. (five performances)

MS Adjudications (April):

Every spring the MS Theatre major is challenged in this three-category event of monologue performance, cold reading and an oral test of general theatre knowledge. Individual performance is then ranked for the whole MS Level and recognitions are given out for those scoring in the 93 and above percentile range. (one afternoon)

MS Tunnel of Love (February):

This event is for the MS majors around the Valentine season. Serving as a fundraiser, it entails a dance and a shorten version like our famous HS Haunted House except as a Tunnel of Love featuring the acting talents of our MS majors.

(Friday set-up all day Saturday with performances that night and strike on Sunday)

MS Picnic (May):

This annual event will take place at one of the local parks for games, relaxation and rewards along with the squabbling over who controls the grilling. (one school day)

7th & 8th Grade Touring Show—extracurricular:

Middle schoolers will again be touring this year to a few Low Country schools with the production of *Employees Must Wash Hands Before Murder*. It will have a HS Senior Theatre major directing it as well as HS Junior Theatre major assisting and is overseen by Mr. Younts. (first showing for two nights in September and toured three performances off one school day in the fall)

Art Smart for 8th grade (October):

This year the 8th grade will be doing Artsmart, an annual recruiting project for CCSOA. (week of shows)

7th grade Workshop Show (March)

First year for this. The seventh grade will rehearse *Enterprise*, an interesting play on cars and our societal obsession with money, and it will be doubled casted and perform two school day shows and two after school showings. (four shows)

Busy year for the Theatre department

By Ms. Megan Link



Senior Robert Townsend performing his senior thesis, *Nerd Need Love Too*.



Junior Raymond Caulder performing in a directing activity.

What a whirlwind of a year for the SOA Theatre department! As soon as the students started to rub their weary eyes at 8 am on the first day of school, our high school Competition Play was already in full rehearsal. In *As It Is In Heaven* 9 amazing actresses stretched their skills. Their work assisted in taking home the Best Director Award and a few All Star Acting Awards. Over all they Represented SOA beautifully at the State Competition. At the same time the Middle School Touring Show, *Wash your Hands Before Murder* also was a smash success. Under the leadership of senior **Katlyn Mc Millan** and junior **Preston Hogue**, the show toured various Elementary Schools. The audiences loved the mixture of mystery and humor that the actors and actresses were able to portray.

Not to be left behind, the tour de force that is our improv troupe, the Fighting Gnomes, lived up to its reputation. Travelling far and wide, the Gnomes performed for audiences in Savannah, GA; Chattanooga TN; Theatre 99 and in the North Charleston Arts Festival. Their outreach to local schools also showed the jewel that we have in the Gnomes. Finishing off the year with their annual Gnome-Coming they said adieu to seniors **Maggie Jo Saylor**, **Robert Townsend**, **Ally Bing** and **Gabriella Terranova**.

The middle school stretched their performing wings multiple times. The 8th grade took part in Art Smart while the 6th grade performed their original monologues. Then the 8th grade started to prepare for their play *Cymbeline*. It truly was a success. The costumes designed by our costume construction class really heightened the concept of Carnival in the Dustbowl that director George Younts was going for. The 7th grade worked



Senior Maggie Jo Saylor performing her senior thesis, *Green Gretchen and the Nature Nook*.

on the play *Enterprise* contemplating America's lust for material things. 6th grade performed with the creative writers and the Vocal Majors and finished up with Shakespeare and Kabuki performances. In February our all middle school activity Tunnel of Love was a humorous success due to the students' dedication and parental involvement.

The magnitude of work did not halt in the fall. November brought high school juries in which the 9th and 10th graders acted in scenes directed by our juniors along with performing monologues for Judges of local theatre professionals. Not long after all the high school majors were in the "throws" of our Smack Down stage combat competition. Fun was had by all not to mention a few bruises. The

final performance of 2007 showcased the 9th grade and pantomimes that they had come up with.

Going into 2008 there was no rest for the weary. The seniors began rehearsing their senior thesis performances while 10th and 11th graders geared up for their children's theatre pieces. 9th grade performed Shakespeare scenes, monologues and translations. In the midst of all these performances over half of the high School travelled to Chattanooga, TN, to the South Eastern Theatre Conference. Once back, seniors successfully performed their Thesis pieces. Fourteen eclectic and brilliant pieces were shown over the course of 5 days. After all of that work 9th through 11th graders started into the departments annual Playfest in which the juniors write and direct while the 9th and 10th graders act. Best Actress went to **Rachel McIntyre**, Best Actor went to **Austin Jur**, Best Ensemble went to *"I Like Pie"*; Best Playwright, **Steven Moskos**; Best supporting Actor: **Duncan Pfaehler** and **Brittany Greene** and Best Director went to **Stephanie Popowski**.

Middle School finished the year up with Adjudications and their Picnic. We wish the 8th grade luck in the future.

Finishing up with our High School theatre Banquet we found out that Theatre Artist of the Year was **Maggie Jo Saylor**. This is one of our highest awards decided on by our student body. We also recognized those students who went above and beyond the call of duty. As we say good bye to our talented 12th grade majors we know that our success this year was sustained by the talent and dedication of our theatre majors and their families. We look forward to next year and what it has to offer.

Band recap: The year in images



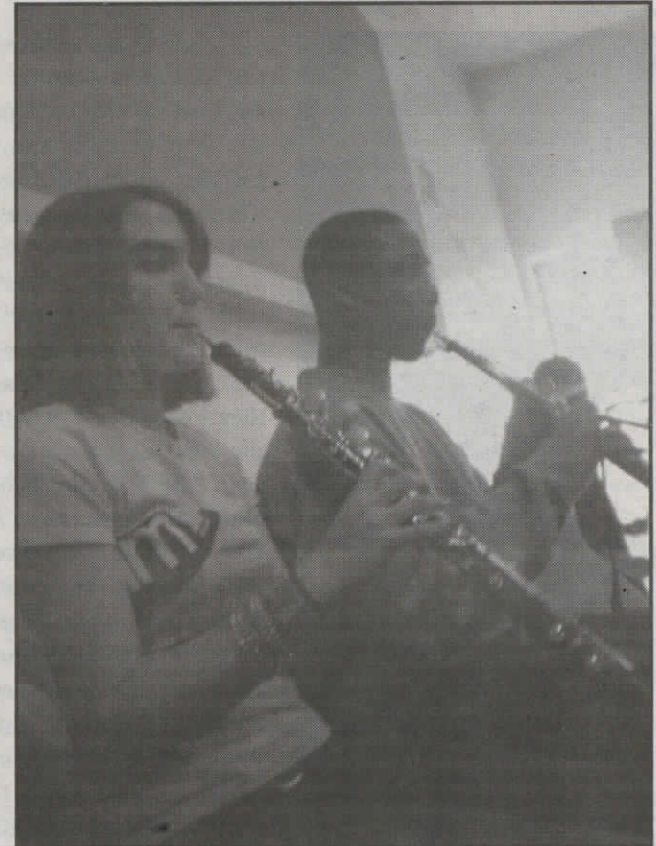
The senior woodwind players with the Best Woodwind trophy from Grand National Adjudicators Invitational.



The saxophone section performs at this fall's Jump, Jive, and Wail.



The Wind Ensemble woodwind section at the senior thesis concert.



Senior Amanda Eglen and junior Lamar Hunter concentrate on a Wind Ensemble piece.



The Pyramids at SOA: What the Band majors *really* do during class.

Orchestra performs at regional events

By Ms. Sarah Fitzgerald

The high school orchestra had a very busy year performing in different competitions, clinics and concerts.

High school cellists participated in the SC Cello Choir held at the University of South Carolina on September 28-29, 2007. The weekend culminated in a grand concert with over 130 cellists from around the state performing on the stage at the Koger Center.

All orchestra students auditioned for the Lowcountry Region Orchestra on October 6, 2007. Twenty-nine of SOA's finest string players were accepted into the Lowcountry Region Orchestra held at Hilton Head High School November 16-17, 2007. Those students are: Daniel Anthony, Daniel Baer, Jordan Baer, Hannah Chilcote, Faith Davis, Sean Fowler, Katie Grantham, Jonathan Heyward, Sytske Hillenius, Michelle Hillenius, Bethany Inversen, Jessica James, Darbie Keck, Jordan Lesch, Morgan Lewis, Jake Metivier, Andi Musselwhite, Alex Nickell, Megan Patrick, Bradley Poplin, Andrew Royal, Elliott Russel, Danielle

Schweitzer, Ginny Summerford, Jill Suter, Kevin Wessels, Robert Widlowski, and Julia Willson.

Select students performed on Channel 4's *Lowcountry Live* television program on November 27, 2007 to advertise the fifth annual oyster roast fundraiser held at Bowens Island on December 9, 2007.

The SOA Symphony performed a winter concert at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Mt. Pleasant on December 10, 2007. The performance got rave reviews from family and friends.

Students who were accepted into the Lowcountry Region orchestra traveled to Columbia on January 19, 2008 to audition for All-State Orchestra. Nine students were accepted into the All-State Orchestra, which was performed at Clemson University on February 22-24, 2008. These exceptional string players are: Daniel Anthony, Jordan Baer, Hannah Chilcote, Michelle Hillenius, Megan Lewis, Morgan Lewis, Alex Nickel, Ginny Summerford, and Robert Widlowski.

The SOA Symphony was

invited to perform for the SC Music Educators Conference's annual in-service on February 8, 2008. The students performed for music educators from around the state. The orchestra directors are still talking about it.

The SOA Chamber String Ensemble performed for the luncheon on the same day. It is quite an honor to be asked to perform at the SCMEA conference, and our students were asked not only once, but twice!

On February 14, the SOA Symphony traveled to Boone, NC to have a side-by-side rehearsal with the Appalachian State University Symphony under the direction of Dr. Jim Anderson, conductor of the ASU Symphony Orchestra. That evening, the symphony gave a concert at the Boone United Methodist Church. It was well-attended and well-received.

The fifth annual Masterworks concert was held on April 21, 2008 at the Sottile Theater in Charleston. Featured in the performance were Daniel Anthony and Darbie Keck, solo violins, and Bugs Utsey on a Greig piano

concerto. It was a smashing success.

Seven SOA seniors performed concertos with the Symphony on May 13, 2008. It was a stellar performance. The seniors are: Brink Feaster, Sytske Hillenius, Morgan Lewis, Alisa Meyers, Megan Patrick, Danielle Schweitzer, and Ginny Summerford.

The awards dinner for the high school orchestra was held on Monday, May 19 at James Island County Park. Seniors performed chamber music in small ensembles to complete the senior thesis graduation requirement.

Small ensembles have played around the community for various benefits and occasions. These include the high achieving teacher banquet and classified employee banquet sponsored by CCSD.

As you can tell, the orchestra had a very eventful year. Congratulations to all the seniors; it has been an amazing year! Also, congratulations to those who have completed another year in the SOA High School Orchestra. Keep working hard because those senior privileges will come sooner than you

Piano majors travel the nation

By Ms. Debra Benson.

This 2007-2008 piano year was yet another exciting one. There were various field trips, including one in which fourteen of the high school Piano majors went to New York in April via Amtrak train. They also went to "Jazz Under the Stars" at the Planetarium, a piano concert by Peter Serkin, and Blue Man Group. Ground Zero, Chinatown, the Empire State Building and the Natural History Museum were

among the many places they visited.

Competitions were also a success. From April 18 to 19, forty piano majors traveled to Lander University to participate in the Solo and Ensemble Festival. Of the forty students, fifteen were selected to play in the Honors Recital at the SCMEA Convention next year based on their outstanding performances at the festival. On March 1, several piano majors participated in the

Achievement Day Competition at Charleston Southern University, where they performed two pieces from memory, sight-read, took a theory test, and played scales, arpeggios and cadences. Three students were selected to play in the Honors Recital that was held later in March: Tyler Sim, Gabrielle San Pedro, and Sophia Yin. Several students also played in the District Auditions.

Lastly, the high school and middle school Piano majors put on a Jazz Café / Silent Auction in December at the Park Circle Recreation Center. Seven of the eight seniors in piano completed a senior thesis consisting of a solo recital roughly a half-hour in length: Ashley Esposito, Liz Gildea, Grace Lee, Jesse McGinty, Frank Shary, Lauren Turner, Bugs Utsey.

Creative Writers perform locally, win awards nationally

The 9th Grade Fiction Writers Workshop presented a Literary Reading at Monday Night Blues at East Bay Coffee House in Fall, 2007 and participated in a field trip to Daufuskie Island and St. Helena's Island, South Carolina during which they studied the Gullah culture on both islands. **Rebecca Forman** won a regional Gold Award for her short story in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards. During the second semester, 9th grade Creative Writers wrote many different forms of verse in Poetry Workshop. Students wrote poems based on photographs of children who were hidden during the Holocaust; they explored their dreams by writing poems in a surreal style and wrestled with rhythm and rhyme in the Shakespearean sonnet. A sampling of these works was presented at Monday Night Blues at East Bay Coffee House in downtown Charleston during the month of May.

10th Grade Creative Writers learned the art and craft of scriptwriting while writing 60 page scripts. They also wrote and videotaped short films. **Deanna Kerley** won a Regional Scholastic Alliance for Young Artists and Writers award for her screenplay

'Normalcy'. The 10th graders took an Amtrak train ride to Savannah, Georgia to attend the Savannah Film Festival. During the second semester, 10th grade Creative Writers studied a variety of forms in Nonfiction Workshop. Students wrote essays exploring their personal flaws: from being excessively quiet to being a perfectionist to **Collins Rice's** humorous piece on body image and growing up. Students also learned to conduct an interview and crafted a biography on an individual who has played an important role in their lives. **Lauren DiNicola** won a regional Gold Award in Poetry in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards.

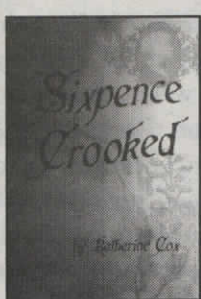
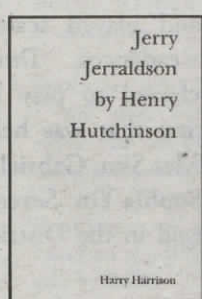
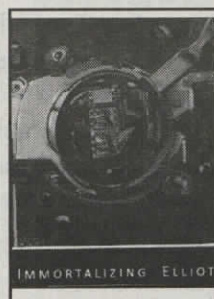
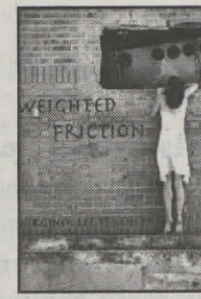
In Finding Your Voice 11th graders studied the works of several Noble-prize winning authors, including Nadine Gordimer, William Butler Yeats and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Students learned to identify the qualities which define an author's voice and tried their hands at non-traditional plot structures; in addition, they wrote about social conflicts impacting their lives and crafted a series of poems which explores both theme and style. During November 11th graders attended the Senior Thesis Creative Writing Retreat held in Lake

Logan North Carolina where they were introduced the seniors' works in progress. Seven students from this class won a total of 11 regional Gold Awards in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards. They included, **Dorothy Behre, Ian Brown, Catie Donnelly, Aubrey Isaacson, Shannon McNellis, Laura Katie Vinson, and Samantha Watson.** **Aubrey Isaacson** and **Laura Katie Vinson** won Gold Awards at the national level and were presented their awards at Carnegie Hall in New York City. During the second semester, 11th Grade Place and Gender students studied the role of setting as well as a 'sense of place' in fiction. As part of their study of place, they read the novel, *Rich In Love* and attended a picnic with the author, Josephine Humphreys on John's Island. In addition they studied gender, as it relates to the characterization of the story, as well as, its impact on the author.

Publication of the seniors' books during the month of May was, of course, the highlight of the year for 12th grade Creative Writers, but they started off the year before they ever set foot in the SOA's front door by writing the first ten pages of their books during

the summer. In November they led the way to Lake Logan as they took to the mountains a second year in a row to analyze and revise their Senior Thesis projects. The year was filled with writing and revising, mentor meeting, and finally, uploading and editing the digital proofs of their books. The year was not without winners. **Lucy Hunter** won 2nd place in the SC Young Poets Prize Contest. **Zan Isgett** was the 1st place winner and received \$4000 scholarship in the Archibald Rutledge Poetry Contest, and **Virginia Pfahler** was the 2nd place winner. **Katherine Cox, Victoria Doose, Lucy Hunter, Zan Isgett, Virginia Pfahler, and Logan Wells** won a total of 8 regional Gold Awards in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards. **Zan Isgett** and **Virginia Pfahler** won Gold Awards at the national level and were invited to Carnegie Hall in New York City to accept their awards. Virginia won a Portfolio Gold Award for her collection of poetry and won a \$10,000 scholarship. Scholastic awarded only 5 Portfolio Awards in the nation out of 5000 entries at the national level.

Senior thesis book covers: Class of 2008



On behalf of the SOA Class of 2008, *Applause* would like to dedicate this graduation issue to Ms. Myrna Caldwell in appreciation of her continued support, guidance and friendship—as our teacher, assistant principal and principal.



Profile of Mr. James Rinehart, SOA's next school principal

Education

Michigan State University	University of South Carolina
Major: Studio Fine Arts	Masters of Education degree
Minor: Developmental Psychology	Educational Leadership and Policies, Education Administration (K-12), July 2001
Bachelor of Arts degree – March 1986	
Secondary Professional Teacher Certification Program (K-12) – December 1989	

Employment

Algonac Community Schools, Algonac, MI	Fruitport Community Schools, Fruitport, MI
Visual Art and Design Educator, Algonac Elementary, Millside Elementary, 1991-1994	Principal, Fruitport Middle School – 2002-present
Beaufort County School District, Beaufort, SC	
Visual Art and Design Teacher, Lady's Island Middle School – 1995-2001	
Principal Intern, Hilton Head Middle School – 2000-2001	

Courtney Messer



Courtney,
You moved with us to Charleston
and have stayed the course
and finished strong.
We are truly blessed by you.
Love, Dad and Mom

Katie Messier



Katie Messier.
Daddy's little girl is all grown up.
We're very proud of you and love
you so much.

Dad, Phyllis, Danny and Becca

Ashlee Elliott



Ashlee,
Congratulations on
your accomplishments.
Remember to keep God
first, and the rest will
follow.

We are proud of you!
Love Mom, Dad, and
Family



Morgan Lewis



Dear Morgan,
We are so proud of the person that you've chosen to become. Your strength, kindness, faith and inner beauty are an inspiration to those around you.

We love you,
Mom, Dad and Victoria

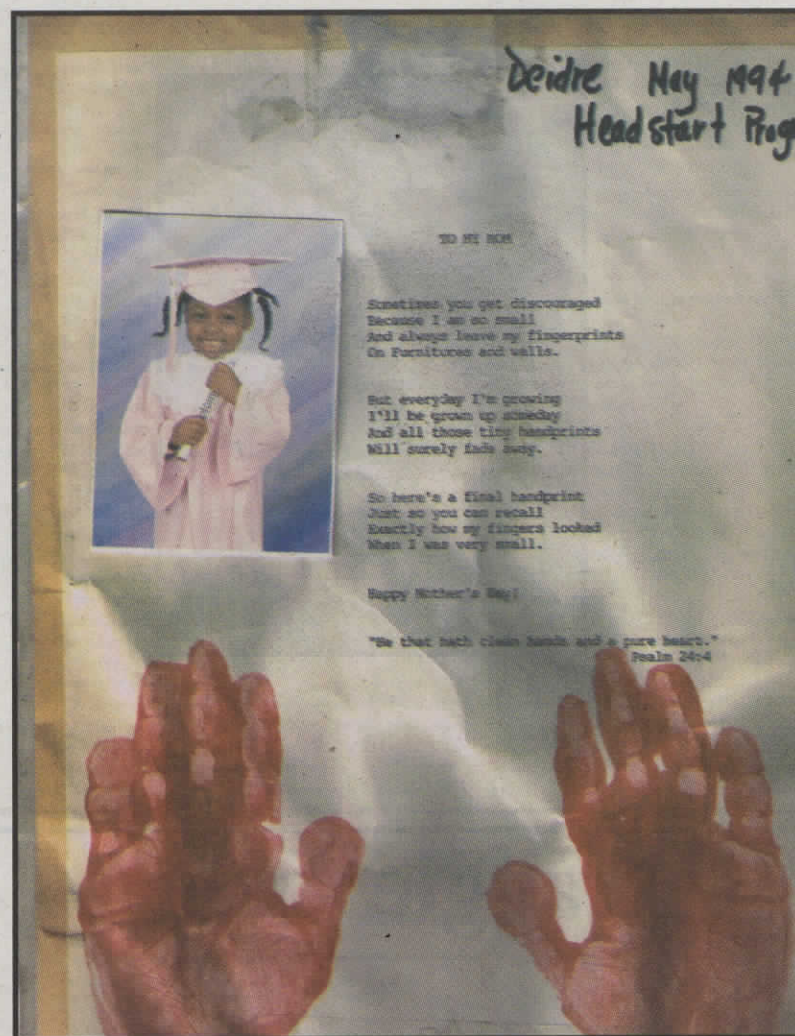
Elizabeth Gildea



Liz,
I'm proud of you and love you very much. Best wishes for the next chapter of your life.

Love, Mom

Deidre Buck



Deidre,
All through the years we have watched you grow, and now it is time for more growth and another graduation. As you leave high school and set your goals towards college may God's grace, mercy and blessings continue to be with you. You have made us proud!

Love, Mommy and Daddy

Anna Seel



Anna Louise Seel,

From "singing in the rain" to
New Hope New York
And from Carolina Girls
To FREE PIZZA!
You bring Joy, Laughter, and
LOVE
To whatever you do!
We are so Proud of YOU!!
May GOD bless your "travels"
ahead!

LOVE Mom, Dad and Erica

Maggie Aton



"Put your future in good hands – your
own." – Unknown

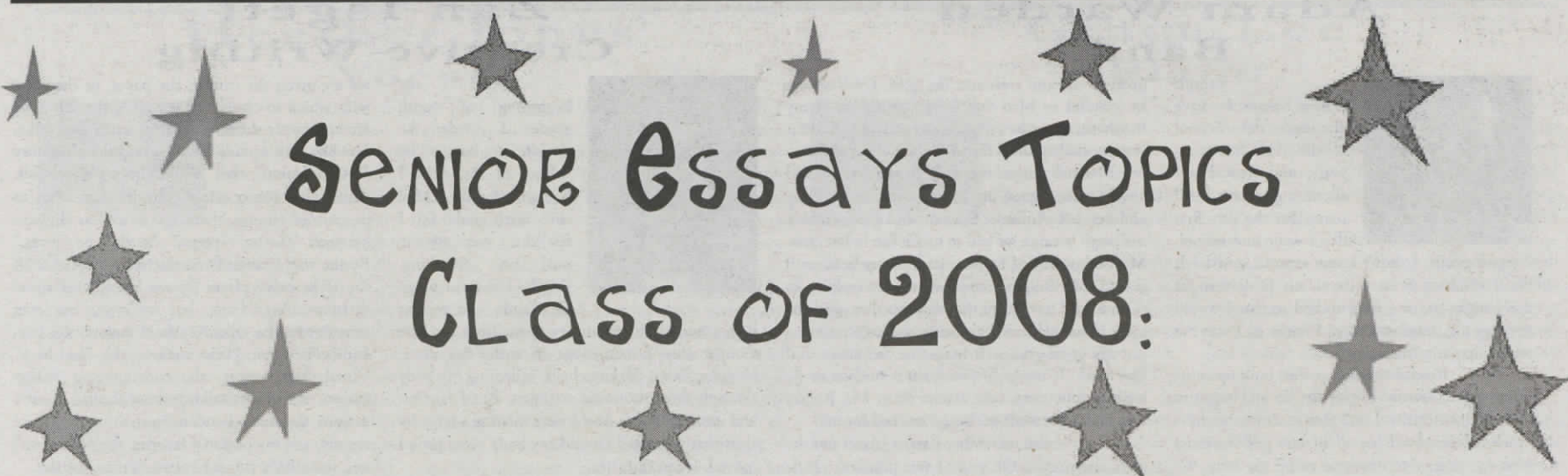
Love and congratulations to Maggie
and a fond farewell to SOA
from the Aton family!

Catherine Meyer



Catherine,

May your life's journey find you
with the riches of great
friendships, successes, travels, laughter -
always laughter - and dreams realized.
Celebrate the journey!
Love, Mom and Dad

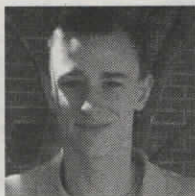
A decorative border of stars surrounds the title. There are 15 stars in total, arranged in a roughly circular pattern around the text.

SENIOR ESSAYS TOPICS

CLASS OF 2008:

1. Reflect on the value of an SOA education.
2. If you were entering SOA as a sixth grader, what would you do differently over the next seven years?
3. Which teacher or class has had a strong impact on you?
4. What do you want to be doing in 2018 and how do you intend to make it happen?
5. Reflect on any aspect of your years at SOA.

Adam Warden Band



I was nervous; I didn't know anyone, and I felt like I wouldn't fit in. I drank my protein shake every night before I went to bed so that I would develop big muscles. Before I knew it, I was the most popular guy at school.

Band, being my major, took up most of my time. I learned to play the sax and began to love the instrument. I will always remember how much we practiced for all of our performances with Mr. Kerr. He drove us to be the best. We always received superior ratings because we were so well prepared. I was able to sit in the black pit for *Big River*, and I performed over thirty songs on my guitar. My family was so proud.

I have made many great friends at SOA. We have had many tough times together and many fun times as well. We talk about all the silly stuff that happened during the school years, things that seemed so important at the time, but which now we just laugh at. For example, there was the time that the first basketball hoop was installed. The first time that I played, the guys thought that I played badly. They lived to learn that I was the best thing that ever stepped on court, though. I hope I will always be in touch with the friends I have made through the years.

The teachers and staff have been

Carly Jones Band



going to any other school. I would be the girl who eats lunch in the bathroom if I went to any other school, but my friends here are what make school bearable!

Catherine: Where would I be without you? (Oh yeah – having a life!) I love doing nothing but hanging out and watching our men in movies! You are lucky to have a friend like me, 'cause without me you would be hanging out with beau who, we all know, hates you. But we are perfect for each other, 'cause without you life would not be worthwhile. Ellie: Oh, good God! You were my first friend here, and you will be forever. Yeah, you lie all the time and are so mean, but that only makes you that much better! I still will never forget going to the fair and getting death threats on my phone from your mom! Haha...but you girls are what makes my life interesting! When I do or say something stupid, I know you will both be there, pointing and laughing. And that is why I love you!

The boys: You guys have all made my life a living hell, but I would never want any other friends. Dill: First, I would like to thank you for

I cannot believe that I have attended the School of the Arts for seven years, and now I am about to graduate. I still remember the very first day I went into school.

great to me and treat me like gold. I will always be grateful to Mrs. Sue for accepting all of my handwritten excuses to go home early. Dr. Cusatis has especially pushed me to the best of my abilities. Ms. Marshall pushed me to the top so that I would always make a good impression with my speaking abilities. Ms. Ambrose is a card and always makes me laugh because we had so much fun in her class. Mr. Brehm stuffed Economics into my head until it hurt. Ms. Rogers recognized me for making an A on a hard test. From that time on, I studied the most in her class so that she would keep pointing out my good grades. It made me feel smart and like math. It works: if you want a student to do well in your class, take a note from Ms. Rogers and praise the student. It sure worked for me.

I also remember Barrier Island and the awesome pranks! Oh yeah, I was pranked a little bit too much. The first night, a guy put rice in my bed. I played it off and said, "Oh, is that all you've got?" The next night, while I was sleeping, he had Tony Tolbert and Michael assist him in putting Bengay in my eyes. They also emptied my toothpaste and refilled the bottle with Preparation H. I wonder who that belonged to. Well, I guess they had their laugh. When I become rich and famous, they will be sorry.

You've been great, School of the Arts. I am so thankful and will always treasure this opportunity to go to such a unique school. Not only did I learn from the best teachers, but I was always able to express and expand my musical talents. Hats off to Ms. Myers, Ms. Caldwell, and Mr. Davis for running such a wonderful program!

ditching me – we were gonna be roomies. Way to go! I am gonna miss seeing your big goofy self everyday! You always can make me laugh even when I hate the world, and, better yet, your dad is smokin' hot! I love you, Dill! Marshall: I hate you. Davis: I don't even know where to start. We have been through so much, and I would not change anything for the world. Things have been hard, but all I want for you is to not let anything get in your way of doing what you want in life. Sometimes you don't deserve this, but you know I am always here for you.

Tony: You are my man and always will be! Nic-a-lic: You drive me crazy, but I am so glad we have become so close! I will miss you both. Michael Linog: You deserve someone who appreciates you and loves you for who you are! You are nothing but amazing! Courtney: You are my girl, and I will miss you so much.

This school has been nothing but good to me and has made me a stronger person. I could have never gone to any other school! Everyone here has made an impact on my life – sometimes good, sometimes bad (mostly bad...). But thanks to everyone that has made me come to school every day! To the only person who matters (if you don't know her, then you don't deserve to), Meredith: We are the special two, and you mean everything to me! And, oh yeah, to my family: You are all crazy, but I love you regardless! Thanks for every thing you have done for me.

And Marshall, I don't really hate you! I love you (but only a little bit).

Zan Isgett Creative Writing



At the beginning of tenth grade, I made the decision to stay at the School of the Arts. I had attended the school since sixth grade, but I felt like I was "missing out" on something. Briefly, I wanted to go to Wando – a regular high school with any and everyone from the East Cooper area. I even spent an entire day there, trudging down the large halls, squeezing my body through three thousand strangers. But I felt lost and uncomfortable, as if I were wearing a scratchy shirt that tightened around my body every time I moved. It just didn't fit.

Our sidewalks may be hazardous to walk upon, we may need to invest in a serious pair of galoshes for the muddy fields, and the bathrooms may smell less than perfect, but for some reason, I would choose this school over any other one. SOA definitely goes beyond one's expectations of what a high school is, and I truly believe it is as unique as its own student body. But what is it about the school that makes it different?

Stereotypically, teenagers search for their identity. But when students enter SOA, we are already given one to work with: that of an artist. Of course, we may not keep it; we may sculpt and edit our identity like a work of art. But

Grayland Murdock Band



In 2018, if all goes well, I hope to be playing in the NFL. Playing in the NFL has been one of my dreams ever since I saw my first football game on TV. The positions that I wish to pursue would be a wide receiver or a free safety. It really doesn't matter what team I play for because I will do my best anywhere.

If I am going to follow my dreams, the first thing that I need to do is pack on some weight. Once I pack on the weight, I'm going to need to turn it into muscle. Right now I am 6'2 and 150 pounds. I hope to get to 6'4 and 185 pounds because that is a great size to be as a

Frank Shary Piano



This school changed me so much. I came from Porter-Gaud in sixth grade, and I wasn't prepared at all for the environment of SOA. My first year, I worked like crazy on all the assignments and made sure that everything was perfect. Looking back, I'm amazed that I was a much better student in sixth grade than I am now. Gradually, over the years, I've lost a lot of this over-the-top work ethic, which isn't entirely a good thing, but it certainly

we are given the canvas, the paper, or the stage with which to create. We are all "artists," but we are constantly defining what an artist looks like, acts like, and sounds like. We skip the obligatory "categorization" that occurs in other schools. Although some certainly consider themselves to be part of cliques, there is not a clear division between "Goths," "preps," "nerds," or "jocks." By the way, if any of you discover where at SOA the jocks exist, please let me know. Our social divisions blend more, but we create our own stereotypes: the talkative Vocal majors, the few-and-far-between Piano majors, the "laid-back" Visual Arts majors, the conscientious Strings majors, the always-talking-about-theatre Theatre majors, the noisy Band majors, the girly Dance majors, and my personal favorite, the off-the-wall and sometimes vulgar Creative Writing majors.

For those of you reading this who are in the same place I was several years ago, remember that we may not have a billion APs or sports teams, but we get the opportunity to become accomplished artists. But most importantly, remember this: SOA truly is like a big family or a best friend. You know everyone, sometimes almost too intimately. But, who is going to figuratively send you a birthday card? Who will celebrate your differences and not scold them? Who is going to figuratively hold back your hair as you puke? Not some impersonal public high school, but your good ole funky best friend, School of the Arts.

receiver in the NFL. The next thing I would need to do is show my butt off in college football so that I can receive enough stats to be eligible for the draft. If I make it into the draft and get drafted, that doesn't mean I can slack off; that just means I have to work harder because they have summer practices, and they do cut people.

So if I am able to complete those goals, you betta get ya popcorn ready because you will be seeing me on your TV someday.

PS – The person who inspired me the most is the New England Patriot wide receiver Randy Moss.

PPS – I truly love Diana because she helped me during a lot of my classes and she is truly a Certified Geek!

makes it easier to enjoy myself. I've also lost some less-desirable traits, which evens it out a bit. I used to constantly talk in class and annoy teachers, and I would always get those bad comments on my report card like "talks in class," "disrupts instruction" and "inconsistent effort." Anyway, at least now I don't get the comments, which is nice.

In general, this school has exposed me to so much, and I'm really glad I decided to come. I can't imagine how much more of a jerk I'd be if I hadn't come to SOA.

Heather Jones Vocal



It's hard to see the outside world from our perfect snow globe of a school, but we have a pretty killer situation here at SOA. The past seven years have taught me so much, of course academically, but socially and artistically as well. I wouldn't trade my "SOA experience" for anything, and I most certainly prefer it to a "normal" high school. Where else are you going to have teachers like Dr. Price or Mr. Younts who are so passionate about their vocation it almost hurts? And who else is going to assign you a completely free-ended spring project on *anything* in history? Furthermore, where else would you find a group of kids who actually deliver amazing pieces of artwork and sculpture for such an assignment? No, I'll take my painted, cracked, scattered, flooded SOA campus to a "normal" school any day.

The value of an SOA education is hard to see if you haven't lived it, but I've grown up so much here because of the presence of stellar teachers and inspiring students that

it's hard to imagine functioning normally after going anywhere else. My first lesson at SOA was individuality. I was the duchess of awkward and shy in sixth grade, I'll admit. But after looking around at the crazy, outrageous, and *accepted* individuals here, I realized it couldn't hurt to sing "Shake it up Baby" at lunch every day or groove without embarrassment to "Age of Aquarius" in fog and black lights. Thank God I realized it as soon as I did because now my peers here really are my family. I'm not worried about "fitting in" because we're *all* either nerds or geeks. That's why we're here and not somewhere else where we'd have to be cool to survive. This freedom, in my opinion, is what makes those of us here at SOA succeed. There's no way to measure the impact of my SOA education now, because I know it will be following me to college and beyond in everything I do. I thank my teachers, my vocal family, my amazingly supportive friends, the beautiful campus, and everyone who passes through the halls, whether here or in the new building, for making SOA the safe haven, the nut house, and the home that it has been for me.

Danielle Schweitzer Strings



So how do I reflect on my past six years at SOA? I guess I can start from the beginning. I hated this place. I came here in the seventh grade, and I was so angry and so bitter about the whole thing. I did not want to leave my Drayton Hall and my best friend at the time. But after some time, I made new best friends. I did stick with this school against my wishes. I have learned many things here. I think I learned more about life and myself than academic stuff like chemical compounds. I learned how to be myself, most importantly. It definitely took a lot of awkward phases for me to just give up and be me. Over my time here, I have discovered that being yourself is the only thing you can really be. I think what really helped me become more myself was the great friends I have made since the seventh grade. Along the way, whatever stupid arguments we have had, my friends are still there. My friends are all bold and

Lana Stine Vocal

I started off at SOA in sixth grade, and now here I am about to graduate and move on with my life. I have had many good times at this school and have made great friends along the way. I wouldn't be where I am today without this school. It taught me a lot. I am going to miss walking down the halls and seeing so many friendly faces.

If there's anything I want to take with me and look back on, it is that SOA was a great experience for me and has prepared me for my life outside of its walls. Thanks again to all my teachers who believed in me, and to all my friends: I am going to miss you all very much, but it is time to move on and see and do better things with my life.

Grace Lee Piano



In 2018, I hope to be graduating from graduate school with a degree in Dentistry or Optometry. Hopefully with that degree, I will be able to visit foreign countries and help out the many people that are in desperate need of medical attention. During or after graduate school, I hope to be able to visit countries like Belize, Ghana, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and China to help the many people who are in need of basic medical treatment.

To achieve a degree in Dentistry or Optometry, I will graduate from School of the Arts and then attend North Carolina State University in Raleigh, majoring in Biological Sciences and minoring in Piano Performance. During my undergraduate years, hopefully I will be able to find a job or an internship in a local dental office or optometrist office. This way I will be able to become familiar with the working environment and see if I would really enjoy the career as a long-term career. I would also look for some opportunities to volunteer and help in the medical community so I can get used to helping a wide variety of people.

I would also teach some kids piano on the side, in order to gain more experience with working with children. I will focus as much as I can in my major, but also try to continue playing piano and performing. Also during my undergraduate years, I will possibly try to study abroad in places like South Korea or Australia. After undergraduate school, I hope to either attend UNC Chapel Hill or MUSC for dental school or go to Pennsylvania and attend the school of optometry there. During graduate school, hopefully I will be able to visit some foreign countries to really help out with my newfound skills and knowledge.

Becoming a dentist or optometrist will definitely help me in the long run for my life, but I really just want to be able to help out people in other countries and help them with something that could potentially change the way they live. Also, in the states, I hope to be able to help those who cannot afford health care. Dentists and optometrists generally don't treat people with life threatening diseases or disorders, but I hope to at least relieve people of some pain and give them a chance to live in peace in at least one aspect of their lives.

Maggie Aton Dance



Ever since I started high school, I have wanted to be a senior just so I could graduate and move on to the next "chapter" of my life. Now that I am a senior and that "chapter" is just a couple of months away, I am terrified and excited all at the same time. It's a bittersweet emotion.

Being a student here at SOA for these past seven years has taught me so much! I have learned so much from teachers and the students that surround me everyday. Once graduation ends, I will only have memories of SOA - I will no longer return to SOA after a summer and sunburns and fun. I feel that my senior thesis class will never again be my inspiration to keep going. To those nine other girls, I owe so much. They are and will continue to be amazing. I love them.

There is also another student here at

SOA who will be a senior next year, and that is Alex Danna. Alex is the one person that can make me crack up no matter what is going on. She will go far. I know she has no limits, and I am so jealous of that. Alex, please embrace being a senior. It's so much fun, and you deserve as much fun as possible. I will miss you next year, so you have to come visit!

Three other girls who have had a huge impact on me are Allie, Brooke, and Whitney. Y'all are adorable. The three of you are amazing dancers, and you all will go so far. I will miss y'all like no other. To Amber! No matter what, you need to know that you are an amazing person and you have so much to offer this world! Good luck next year and stay in touch! To all of my teachers: you are all awesome! Thank you for everything! I will miss y'all very much!

As I leave this school, I will not say goodbye (because I am horrible at goodbyes). I will say see ya later, instead. I will be back to grace everyone with my presence.

Martin Millere Band



I remember that my ninth grade year was the hardest because I'd just come to the school and hardly knew anyone. I remember being picked on a lot in my freshman year because I would hang around and follow certain people, which made them mad. I know that is annoying because I have had people do that to me, and even though I ask them to go away or leave me alone, it doesn't work.

My senior year was my favorite year since I knew I was about to graduate from high school, and I've been looking forward to this all my life. I'll miss some of the people I met. When I would get mad or want to fight someone, those people would calm me down or hold me back. At last I am graduating, after four years in this nice school and putting up with some of the mean teachers. My favorite teachers have to be Mr. Brehm and Mr. Orvin. They are such cool teachers, and I had a lot of fun in those classes.

Finally, this year is almost over. Now it is time to move on with life, whether you go to college or not.

Adrin Brown Visual Arts



There are multiple teachers that have helped me get through my years at SOA, but there are two teachers in particular that have really had a great impact on me. The first one is Mr. Orvin. When I first took his class I thought, 'This guy is a little weird,' - but from the moment I stepped foot in his room, I felt that he was someone I could relate to. We have mutual respect for each other, and even though I met him in ninth grade, I feel like I have known him my whole life. He made learning fun and easy for me, and he is still willing to help me today with any college applications and whatnot.

I definitely couldn't talk about my favorite teachers without mentioning Ms. Branscome. She made Physical Education

by far my favorite class during my eleventh grade year, and I appreciated the award she gave me at the end of the year. She is a teacher, but she feels more like an older sister or best friend to me. She always has a smile on her face, and that is the attitude I try to have. Mr. Orvin and Ms. Branscome definitely made my experience at SOA a pleasant one, and they both encourage me to strive for my goals in life.

Other teachers that really helped me along the way are Ms. Colquitt, Ms. Marshall and Ms. Nichols. Ms. Colquitt kept me on task during my early years here, and Ms. Marshall brought the best out of me during my later years. Ms. Nichols was my first art teacher, and she taught me the fundamental principles that have made me the artist I am today. I thank all of my teachers for helping and believing in me. I will definitely come back to visit you all.

Min Bu Visual Arts



2018 is a long time from now; I can't predict what will happen in ten years. However, I still like to look ahead. To some extent, I am expecting my 2018.

In 2018, I will hopefully be out of college. Maybe even out of grad school. By then I will probably be penniless due to my enormous amounts of student loans. I expect myself to be independent, have a decent job and possibly support my family as well. Before 2018, I intend to do some traveling in Europe, parts of Asia, and maybe just around the world, if possible. Seeing the world in person would help me better understand our society and my life. Thanks to those years in Visual Arts, wherever I go, I will make sure to bring a few paint brushes with me.

To be honest, I feel great

uncertainty about my future in 2018 since the gas prices today are rapidly approaching \$3.50. Hopefully my grad school and travel-around-the-world plans will all fall into place as I intended, at or before 2018. I am sure I can do well in the next ten years; I'm just not very sure how.

There's never an end to schooling. We live and learn. I have to say that I am not completely eager to end high school, though a carefree summer and college sound a lot more exciting. Getting into college is a beginning to something new, a change to set a higher goal and fight for it. I will definitely miss the SOA community: loving teachers and friends and the experience of getting lost on campus the whole first week of school. I will attend Cornell University in New York, major in Engineering for the next four years, and I am sure I will miss the sunny days in Charleston for the next four years. Hopefully I will enjoy every little step toward my 2018.

Kelsey Tucker Dance

I have discovered many things during my years at SOA. Not only have I grown in knowledge, but also in character. I can remember going into high school thinking, "Who am I?" and "What am I going to do with my life?" But I kept telling myself that eventually it would come to me and I would be able to figure out everything. So far, I have determined what I want to do with my life and have made some interesting discoveries as well, although I have many more things to learn.

I was inspired in eleventh grade by a teacher that is not only passionate about what she does, but also encourages her students to strive to succeed in her classroom. Anyone who was as touched as I was will realize that I am talking about Ms. Jane Marshall. She has become my inspiration and has helped me realize that I have a unique talent when it comes to teaching children. She allowed me to partake in Teacher Cadet, and from that, I realized what I was meant to do with my life. She also helped me get most of my college paid for by helping me get the Teaching Fellows Scholarship. I hope that one day I will be able to encourage my future students the way she supported me and my dreams.

I have also realized that there are bigger things in the world than who is the most popular and who has the coolest parties. Growing up, I would fit in with the crowd and do what the cool kids did. But when I came to SOA, I could be myself and not worry about being judged. I found some true friends at SOA and was able to learn from my experiences with them. I think this was the best thing for me, because I gained a new confidence in myself and have grown into a strong-willed individual. I have found a new independence within myself that will hopefully help me get through college successfully. I am looking at college as a new opportunity to grow and encourage others throughout my years of education. I will be attending Charleston Southern University as an Education Major, and I hope to get my doctorate. With this degree, I expect to have to the chance to reach out to young students and encourage them to reach for their dreams and believe in themselves.

I hope that those younger than me will discover the same things I did while at SOA. My discoveries have prepared me for the rest of my life, which will be devoted to teaching future generations the importance of knowledge, integrity, and morals.



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Shauntavia Horlbeck Vocal

Is this a dream?! It feels like I was just walking into Ms. Dirkes' room for the first time yesterday. I'm finish! SOA has helped me with all kinds of things since my elementary days. I've made some of the best of friends and kept some of my old ones. During my 7 years here, I noticed that friends are the main thing that helps you through middle and high school. First there are my elementary buddies, *Ashlee, Elizabeth H., and Ricky*. I can't believe we've been together this long! It feels like I'm related to ya'll or something 'cause I've dealt with ya'll for so long. I will miss you guys so much till I don't know how to describe it. I love you and hope you do good in life...Now at SOA there's *The Vocal Crew* (Jasmine, Regan, Leash, Shakira, Landon, Devon, Charles, Candice, Diana, Howard, Heidi, Emily, Craig & Vanessa), *The V.A. Boys* (Jenkins, Tolbert, Esau, Adrin & Brandon), *The Band Folks* (Michael S., Jamaal, Donte', Joel, Grayland, Ashlee & Kierra), *The Theatre Fools* (Janella, Deidre, Rosie, H'Alina & Rachael), *Dance Girls* (Jordan & Sarah), and last my *Creative Writer* (Amanda). We've all had our ups and downs, but everyone has those, that's just apart of life, but ya'll are the best of friends anyone could ever have. Whenever I came to school down and upset, all I had to do is find one of you guys to make me laugh and feel a whole lot better. Thank you for dealing with me and being friends. I will miss you so much, but we have unlimited txt to keep in touch with each other. KEEP YOUR PHONES ON!

I know that I will meet new people once I go to Francis Marion University in Florence, but it just won't be the same without my SOA family. To *Regan & Shakira*, Muu Kappa Huh, Inc., will never die...MUU KAPPA...HUH!! *Leash & Devon* aka Mooka 1 & 2, AWW FAWW!! I'm leaving you guys. Ohhh yea...OOOOH YEA!! I'm graduating! To *Jasmine*, girrr! It's been so long and now it's basically over. We've had our ups and downs, but no matter what I'm here for you, 'cause you've been there for me. Thanks for being there even though I've done you wrong. THANKS GIRL...I KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE & WORK SO DON'T HIDE!-) To *Nessa*, my German sister, you have made my lousy vocal days awesome! I never thought that I would meet someone as cool and fun as you from Germany. Ich liebe dich (I love you)!! To *James aka JD*... I just have too much to say to you!! You've been my buddy since day one! I will seriously miss you; even though you like to be a jerk sometimes! I hope you're lip doesn't blow up again! I LOVE U JD! Last, the losers. *Ashlee*, I can't believe we've basically grown up together. I've watched you get yelled at my Dr. C for

Jasmine Murray Vocal



I dedicate this essay to those who are in transformation and longing to find the real "you." I've seen myself evolve both morally and physically. I went from the girl who underestimated her beauty and ability to the girl who's confident in herself and could care less what the next person thinks about her. Since I've been at this school, I have also developed a passion for music and for helping others realize their purpose.

When I get older, I pray to be a music teacher and a vocal coach for famous people. Eventually, I will open a school of arts for high school students who are less fortunate. During that process, I pray to

eat your breakfast in class, kept a list of every guy that you've liked since 6th grade. We've even been Exquisitely Sophisticated Pearls together and got a chance to deal with your women. Those were the best days ever, but now it's time for the two of us to start another chapter in our lives. I love you girl. Ok *Kierra* aka...sorry no name for you...I just don't know what to say about you...We've been girls since day one. I love you and I'll always be there for you. Last, *Janella* or should I say *Janelle* aka the proud founder of *Nun Phi Nun Froroyty, Incorporated*. WEEEEEEEEEE!! Girl we've had our fun days in *Physics, Chemistry, Econ/Government*, and the last days of this year in the library. LOVE U *NELLA Donte'* aka *Te Te*. You are the best. I remember our days in *Ms. Matthews* class acting like some fools and in *Dr. C's* class getting on his last nerves. Be good with the big boys next year. I've changed a whole lot due to those friends of mine. I've become a better person, friendlier, and also out-going. SOA's diversity has allowed me to make friends with a huge variety of people.

Like I said before my friends made these last 7 years of my life the best. I also have to show love to a few teachers that made my years a success.... There's *Mr. Kevin Wayne Eakes*...I don't know where to start with him. He made my love for music even stronger. I learned so much from him and had some of the best times with him. He would call me out in class a lot, but afterwards we would laugh about it later. He was the best music teacher I've ever had. I LOVE & MISS U *WAYNE!!!!* Second there's *Mr. Heath Orvin*. Now this will probably take up another 3 pages if we talk about him. Ever since I had his class in 9th grade, he and I have been good buddies. Whenever I'm down I'd go to him to make me laugh. I had fun snatching the napkins out of his pockets during class and his would jump back like he wanted to fight. Speaking of fighting....*Mr. Orvin* and I will be knocking each other down when graduation day comes. There were teachers that made me feel bad about things at times, but you just made my years the best. I love you as my other father at SOA.

To all the little folks in high school and middle school I know, I hope that you do what you have to do so that you can write your senior essay like me. You guys better tell me when everything is next year because I will be there if I can. To everyone that I couldn't write a personal note to, don't take it personal, we are still cool, I'm already over my limit. *Shauntavia Ne'Chelle* is out of this place...

reach out to each person I meet to help find their purpose in life.

My advice to those who are still at SOA after I leave: do not go through life without having the wisdom to know the difference between the things that you can or cannot change. If you can make a difference in someone's life or something you believe in (whether it's big or small), then don't just talk about it. Be about it. So many complications evolve from those who remain silent when they can make a change and those who keep talking when absolutely nothing can be done to better the situation.

Choose your words carefully, be particular about your actions, be confident and know where you're going, and be humble to those who try to help you along the way. Don't dream...live it and fulfill a purpose along the way.

Jordan Lesch Strings



Looking around at all the other seniors' essays, I'm reading how excited everyone is to graduate, how they can't believe it's almost all over, what they plan to do in ten years, how SOA has impacted them, all that fun stuff. At this point, of course, I'm excited to graduate and move on to something new, but I'd rather not sit here and reflect on the past four years of my life and all the important things I've learned. I'd have to say they've been the least enjoyable years of my life so far, and there's no point going back over them and trying to make up reasons for why I'll miss them. Don't get the idea I'm complaining, because I'm not. It's definitely been a great learning experience. I started high school as a child four years ago at *Academic Magnet* and gradually progressed to where I am now. I feel like I've learned more in the past four years of my life than I did the first fourteen.

Emily Nash Vocal



In the summer of 2004, I nervously walked through the hallways of SOA for the first time. I was coming to audition for the Vocal program. The whole campus looked so confusing, and there seemed like there were so many buildings, but as soon as I saw the signs in the arts building, I knew where I was supposed to be. I was auditioning for high school Vocal, and when they saw how short I was - after all, I was only like 4'5" - they accidentally sent me to the middle school room for auditions. When I went to sign in, my name wasn't on the list. I told them I was going into the ninth grade, and they apologized and sent me to the high school room. I anxiously sat in the hallway waiting for them to tell me to come in. When it was finally my turn, I gathered my music and walked into the room that would later become my Vocal class for years to come.

A man with a huge smile greeted me when I entered the room, a man by the name of *Mr. Eakes*. I knew that from that moment on, he would be my favorite teacher. I got my music out and sang the required song, "The Star-Spangled Banner." Then it was time for me to sing a song of my selection, and I decided to sing a bluegrass song from the band *Nickel Creek*. I only got to the first line before he stopped me. I was so confused. I didn't know if he'd stopped me because it was so good, or because it was so bad and he didn't want to hear anymore. He told me that I did a great job and to have

High school has definitely been quite a learning experience for me, but I could hardly call it enjoyable.

I guess I'll pick one of the topics we're supposed to write about - where I'll be in ten years. I definitely won't be here, that's for sure. What I'm hoping to do is end up a producer working for some nice record label in some studio. Any job having to do with the music industry would be great for me. I honestly have no idea what I'll be up to then, though; maybe something will happen that will change my mind. I don't know. A job incorporating the business side of music is what appeals to me the most now, though. Hopefully I'll end up with one.

By the way, in my opinion, the two best teachers at this school (that I've had, at least) are *Dr. Ball* and *Mr. Brehm*. Ninth through eleventh graders: if you have either of them, I suggest you listen to them, especially when they're not doing class lectures. They know what they're talking about.

a nice day. About two weeks later, I got a letter of acceptance, and I was so excited.

Starting *Mr. Eakes's* class in ninth grade, I was in the Vocal ensemble. He taught us solfege and everything that you could possibly learn about being a vocalist. Our concerts at the *Sottile* and *Gaillard* were phenomenal. Then tenth grade came around, and I was again excited to begin another year in Vocal with *Mr. Eakes*.

The year went by as we learned so much and gained so much from him. Then the worst happened. He sat us down in the classroom and tried to tell us something, but no one could really understand him because he started to cry. He passed out a poem and read it to us. He was telling us that he wouldn't be teaching us next year, and that he needed to move on with his life: he had been offered a job that opened up many opportunities for his musical career. Everyone in the room was crying, and a deep gloom covered everyone's face, because when you are very close to one of your teachers and you build a relationship with them, it feels almost like they are a part of your family. This gives total proof to the statement that you don't know what you have until it's gone. Nobody really realized how much we loved that Vocal class until *Mr. Eakes* was leaving.

Mr. Eakes was a great influence on my life and many others in my Vocal class. We miss him and really wished he hadn't left, but we understood then that it was crucial for him to continue with his career. In memory of *Mr. Eakes*, my teacher from 2004 to 2006.


SENIOR SUPERLATIVES

Best Dressed



Cordell Mosteller & Ellie Linog

Friendliest



Donte Simmons & Chelsea Cummings

Most Likely to be on Broadway



Robert Townsend & Heather Jones

Most Likely to Succeed



Frank Sherry (not pictured) & Zan Isgett

Most Likely to be Mistaken for Freshmen



Nick Gantlin & Emily Nash

Most Dependable



Logan Wells & Maggie Jo Saylor

Most Studious



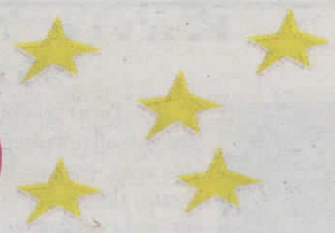
Jeffrey Cabiad & Ally Bing

Most dramatic



Bugs Utsey & Olivia Gore

es: CLASS OF 2008



Party Animals



Dillon Cohen & Melanie Ropp

Most Original



Harry Harrison (not pictured) & Virginia Pfaehler

Best All Around



Marshall Drake & Whitney Wilson

Most Dangerous to Pedestrians



Michal Mears & Kierra Wilson (not pictured)

Class Clowns



Esau Greer & Diedre Buck

Best Smile



Zach Collins & Diana Sabb

Most Likely to Sleep Through Graduation



John Wray & Courtney Messer

Not pictured

Biggest Flirt
Grayland Murdock &

H'Alina Niehrah

Most Likely to Take Over a

Foreign Country

Blake Engel & Carolyn Brown

Katie Messier Vocal



I can't believe I'm actually writing this essay, because it means this really is the end. Graduation is so close, it's unbelievable.

Reflecting on the years here brings reality into sight, and it's utterly depressing to think of how we'll never see most of these people again. But I guess I should start...

The past four years have been crazy with all their ups and downs and life changes. I appreciate everything that SOA has taught me since I've been here, especially in the music department. Mr. Kevin Wayne Eakes has had possibly the most important impact on my life, other than family, that is. He taught me so much in the short amount of time he was my teacher in ninth and tenth grade. I knew how to read music before entering this school since I played instruments, but he brought it to a new level. I use solfege all the time now, and I can sight read better than I ever thought possible. I will never forget the techniques and lessons he taught us and have changed my singing forever. I will never forget him,

and I know I'll never forget what I've learned from him. Not only did he actually teach us music, but he also taught us life lessons, how to act like a family, and to have compassion and love for everyone. He also taught us how to be confident in ourselves and showed us how college might be by having us sight read melodies on our own in front of the whole class.

The experiences he brought to this school and our Vocal department were amazing. He brought our Vocal department to a peak that could not be crossed and sadly led to a downfall when he left. He was the best thing that could've happened to the Vocal department, and the reality of that is obvious to all voice majors. I guess all we can do is remember what it was like when he was here and use what he taught us, in college and the rest of our lives. I know that I personally will do that and never forget him. Mr. Eakes has had more impact that I ever thought imaginable and writing this has practically driven me to tears. Well, I guess this is the end...my senior essay is done and that draws us all the more closer to the end of high school. Thank you Mr. Eakes, and good luck to all the underclassmen!

Allie Smith Dance



People always say that there is nothing more valuable than an education; I agree somewhat, but I also believe that if I had not been educated at School of the Arts, my education would have been worth far less. School of the

Arts has taught me numerous things – from Dance and its importance to me, to various things in academic classes and even things about myself.

When I entered this school as a sixth grader, dance was just something I did in order to get into SOA rather than a different public middle school. As time progressed, however, I began to thrive off of dance, and I considered a day without it as a day wasted. The times I was happiest happened when I was dancing. I have always been a decent student, but dance class became far more important to me than any of my other classes, and I began to put more focus into it. It allows me to truly express myself in a way that never would have been possible had I not discovered my passion for it.

I always believed that people were taught the same things academically no

matter what high school or middle school they went to. I did not fully realize that I was learning far more than my friends in other public schools until I was halfway through high school. The teachers at SOA truly expect so much of their students, and because of this expectation, I have pushed myself to learn so much more than would have been possible at any other school.

School of the Arts is a place that encourages its students to be themselves. Not that our teachers and administrators literally say to the students, "SOA is a place where you can be yourself" – but the way that other students behave and react towards each other really allows each person to flower into their own unique self. I believe this is possible at our school because of the arts. Art allows people to express themselves no matter what medium it's through, mine of course being dance. SOA has allowed me to find myself, and I am so thankful that I will be able to go to college knowing who I am.

The education that I received at School of the Arts is probably the most valuable thing that I will ever acquire in my lifetime. It showed me the beauty of finding my own passion and the ability I have to learn things through wonderful teachers. I learned about myself from the inside out. Because of this school, I believe I am capable of overcoming anything that the future puts in my path.

Alisa Myers Strings



It all comes down to this final essay, and I don't even know exactly what I should say to leave my mark. I should probably

talk about how lovely my life was at this school, or maybe how I'm so glad that I didn't go to a normal school where I might have been in a clique that was mean and rude to others, or maybe just how great this school really is, (to ensure the gratification of the administration and teachers). Huh. Or *maybe* I could reflect on the fact that during my school years, every year was completely different from the last. ("Good job," you'd say with your hint of sarcasm, "for figuring out that concept.") But what I really mean is this: learning that this school can be the most privileged school and also the harshest school is an interesting life lesson. So I'll begin with my sixth grade year.

When all we little first-years came to this school, we realized that *we didn't know anybody*. Sure, there were

our few little friends that came from the same school, but mostly everybody was a stranger. And how awesome was that? It was a chance to start over from our elementary years; we could become brand new people and nobody would know the change.

That was all fine and good through middle school. Then we hit freshman year and BAM, everything was different. Classes were harder, but we were pretty much allowed to be our own people. (I must admit, that freedom scared me, since I was waiting for somebody to scream at me for walking around outside.) But all was good for freshman and sophomore year.

But here I am now, and life is mostly back to the way it was during sixth grade (only now, I am a graduating senior with a lot more freedom and knowledge than I had back then.) And all I can do is conclude that change is constant, and life will always be a constant change. Redundant? Maybe, but truthful nonetheless. As all things run full circle, we all have gone through life's most important lesson: change.

Jeffrey Cabiad Creative Writing



I can say that I have truly enjoyed my years here at SOA ever since seventh grade, considering the other schools I

could've gone to (like Brentwood, which I attended in sixth grade). I've learned a lot about myself in these six years. Honestly, when I came to this school, I wasn't really into writing. I was more the Vocal type, but because of my parents' work schedule, I knew I would never be able to attend the practices and performances. But I've learned to love writing. Yes, learned. Writing was something I struggled with in my first few years here, but as I matured, writing became therapeutic for me, especially in tenth and eleventh grade when there was a lot of negativity in my life.

Therefore, I would like to thank my Creative Writing family – Ms. Miles, Ms. Henry, and all of my classmates. I'm going to miss the creative writing room, my home away from home, when I go off to college. I've revealed a lot about myself and my life in that room that I would never have revealed otherwise.

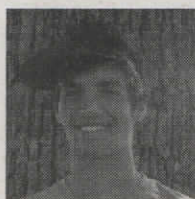
I would also like to thank all of my teachers, especially my English teachers. I also admit that when I came to this school,

I didn't like to read. People were always surprised when I said that I was a creative writer who didn't like to read. But with all of the literature I have read from tenth to twelfth grade, paired with everything I've written, I feel more open-minded, understanding, and enlightened.

I'm going to miss SOA. I know that had I gone to another school, my high school experience would have been completely different. I don't think I would've had an environment that would allow me to flourish creatively. As for the friends I've made here, I hope I will have them for a lifetime. I would list all of you, but I'm really popular, so I don't have enough room. You all know who you are.

To the underclassmen, my advice would be to make the most of this experience. Knowing that I only have a few weeks left before I have to become an adult, I feel like my state of mind has changed. I see all that has happened to me as rare opportunities. I mean, I'm seventeen and I was able to publish my own novel. I was able to be a "student teacher" for an amazing sixth grade class. Some people may not like SOA as much as I do, but I say that SOA is what you make of it. And I can truly say that I have made the best and the most of these years.

Zach Collins Visual Arts



The life of a Frisbee tends to be a considerably long one, unless skipped across cement and the edges are torn enough that, when thrown, hands are covered with blood. The most typical and ultimately best place for Frisbee action is on a soft green field, preferably damp with morning dew. Just enough dew so that when the Frisbee lands, it will slide, with the grass gently caressing the edges

Esau Greer Visual Arts



In the year 2018, I plan on being a world famous game designer like Tetsuya Nomura (he is the character designer for the famous Final Fantasy game series). First, I'm going to join the military so that the Man can pay for my education. After doing about seven or six years of serving, I will start another chapter in my life. Maybe I'll take some more time off and go to a school in Florida called Full Sail. The time it will take to receive my BA in science for game art is about two years. I will put my mind,

Elizabeth Howard Band



The dictionary states the definition of accomplishment as "something completed successfully, an achievement." There are so many things I want to accomplish in my life. I've learned to set the bar high and never back down. You should strive to achieve your very best and never second-guess yourself. Ten years from now it will be 2018, and I already have an idea of what I want to have completed in my life by then.

I started out at School of the Arts with the goal to just make it through middle school and high school. I never thought I would be sad to see it all end. I've spent seven years at School of the Arts, and I'd have to say that I don't regret a thing. I learned all the necessary educational things from teachers I liked and some who I didn't. They taught me all the basic things like reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also how to respect one another. I met some of the coolest people and made many friends who I intend to keep in touch with after

Antonio Tolbert Visual Arts



The thing I plan on doing in the year 2018 is putting my life in perspective. The first thing I would like is a degree in Sports Management

so as to preserve its existence.

Just at the mention of Frisbee, I am out of my seat. Just sitting in this ugly, grey classroom lacking any fun at all gives me more than one good reason to find an escape route. Maybe the window, or I could blatantly walk out the door. The best plan would be an escape to the "water fountain," if you know what I mean. Then I'm home free, into the world, the actual world of living things and actual wind instead of air conditioning machines venting into the classroom - classrooms almost like gas chambers where all the fun is sucked out and sleeping gas is pumped in. All the while, every kid is looking for a way out.

my body, and my soul into the greatest character design that the world has ever seen. Once I have learned the fundamentals, I will start my quest to be the greatest game designer in the world. Going into this business, it's Vegas or bust.

What I'm really planning in the short time that I have on this earth is to make characters that people of all ages can relate to. It doesn't matter what age you are, from the age of one to one hundred. It is my ultimate goal in life to make people happy and find themselves in my characters. Like the big following for Kingdom Hearts and God of War. By 2018, all my life goals should be accomplished, and I'll be able to sit fat in my recliner seat.

graduation. I am currently planning on attending Charleston Southern University, majoring in the medical field. I would love more than anything to become a doctor. I understand it's a lot of hard work and demands a lot of patience. By 2018, I want to have graduated from medical school and have started a good decent job at a hospital as a doctor making a good steady income.

Since medical school is so challenging, I realize it's going to be extremely difficult to balance that and a relationship, but I would love to be engaged to a great guy after I get out of school. I want to be living in my own house, separate from my parents, living my own life and taking care of myself without any financial problems. I want a really nice car, preferably a Porsche Carrera GT or a new Mercedes McLaren. And just like everyone else, I want to be happy, living a great life.

I have many goals to accomplish by the year 2018, but I don't plan to stop there. Life is short! You can't waste any of your time worrying about the small stuff. You will have your good days and your bad, but you should be thankful either way because you lived to see another day. If you make a bad choice, don't agonize over it. Learn from it.

from Francis Marion University. The next thing I would do is get a job as a sports reporter. I would like to be very successful in the reporting industry and change the world of sports as a reporter. I would like to get married and create three beautiful children.

Raena Shirali Vocal



Although the past couple years have been exceedingly difficult because of problems in my major and various other classes, there was a teacher I will always appreciate for brightening my days, even if it was only temporarily.

The year I spent in Kevin Eakes's Vocal class was surreal. Missing a day of Vocal back then was like missing a semester of vigorous instruction. I remember missing only two days that year for completely legitimate reasons, solely because I was too scared to miss Vocal and therefore miss a chance to better myself in music. Every class period with Mr. Eakes was an adventure. We really did study college-level repertoire, and I can honestly say that even though I did not get to spend as much time with him or grow as close to him as a lot of the other seniors

did, I gained so much more from being in his class than I have from any other Vocal instructor, inside or outside of SOA. While I have enjoyed my junior and senior years at SOA, Mr. Eakes's class was one of few in which I enjoyed learning. From theory to soulfege, to even affecting his students on an emotional level, Mr. Eakes did it all. When he was here we respected him, and now that he's gone, we miss him more than ever. Never have I seen a group of people more touched by a professor than Eakes's Vocal majors are by him.

Having only attended SOA since sophomore year, my understanding of and appreciation of the school as a whole are not nearly as entrenched as those of the seniors who have been here since sixth grade, just as my experiences in Mr. Eakes's choir are not as numerous as those of the other seniors. However, while Mr. Eakes was not the only great teacher I've had at SOA, he was, and still is, the most influential.

Kathleen Newton Theatre



SOA doesn't have the nicest of campuses. It doesn't have a big athletic department; it actually doesn't have one at all. However, SOA does have something that most schools lack: charm. Now that my senior year is coming to an end, I realize how much I have taken for granted. We have murals on the walls all over our school, we have stars and music notes on the sidewalks, we have talent, and, most of all, we sort of have a little family here.

Theater has provided me with a set of friends I know I can always count on. They really have become my brothers and sisters. It is amazing to go to school every day and know that I get to spend an

hour and thirty minutes with fifteen of the greatest people I know.

The teachers at SOA really do care about their students. I have come to realize this throughout high school. They will defend your character when you are in trouble. They will tell you the truth. They will look out for you, even when you aren't in their class anymore, and also tell you to behave. They keep you in check, but most of all, they really do respect you. Thanks Mr. Younts, Ms. Link, Mr. Orvin, Ms. Lawson, Mr. Reese, Ms. Olsen, Mr. Murray, Dr. Ball, Ms. Rogers, Ms. Marshall, and Mr. Brehm. Also thank you to Mr. Davis for putting up with me in middle school and keeping an eye on me through high school.

Good luck, everybody! Brink, Elizabeth, Pheraby, Megan, and Raena, thanks for making this year so awesome!

Davis Hood Visual Arts

In ten years, I will be working in my restaurant with my brother and sister. I don't know where exactly it will be located; all I know is it will have to be close to the ocean, where I will live with my wife and maybe a kid or two, depending on how set I am. Before I have a restaurant and family, though, I will travel with my brother and sister to all areas of the world to surf and learn about the regional cuisines of the areas.

Then, when I think I have seen enough of the world, I am going to a culinary school to learn about all of the text book words and skills. I would be going for my Associate's degree and get out by two years. After school, I will work in a fine dining restaurant under a great chef and learn how to open and run my restaurant. Once I do that, I will live life to its fullest.

Michael Mears Band

In the year 2018, I plan to be living in my own house with a steady job and a good income. I plan to either be at the top of a business or have my own business by that time. I also plan on going to the Citadel for four years and majoring in civil or mechanical engineering. I also plan on starting my career early. I am working at the Thomas and Hutton engineering firm this summer as a surveyor. I plan on joining their internship program, which will allow me to return during each summer of college and try new positions in the firm as I get more experience and move up the corporate ladder. With any luck, after I graduate from the Citadel, I will be hired full time.

As far as my business life goes, I hope I'm very successful. But my private life – that's another story. I plan to have the best time I can while at college and not worry about

Nicholas Gantlin Band



There are many values to an SOA education. Consider the fact that other "traditional" schools are not up to par with state standards. SOA has offered me an experience that is irreplaceable and unique. The education I have received will prepare me for the challenges that my peers and I will face in life.

Throughout our lives, we have been told that the most precious investment we can ever make for ourselves is education, and even with all the transferring of valuable knowledge, a greater and more important lesson is being taught. The love of learning without the passion to learn – the meaning is lost. The SOA experiences mixed in with all my teachers and my

too many things. I would like to be in a steady relationship and settle down after college and get married. I hope I will be able to travel to other countries and eventually make my way back to Charleston and retire here. School of the Arts has given me the background and ideas for what I want to do with my life. This school has given me the opportunity to find out who I am and be myself.

These are just wild guesses and hopes, but with any luck and a lot of hard work and dedication, I will be able to look back at this paper and be proud of where I am and what I've done. I'll be satisfied with my life and have no regrets. You have to live life one day at a time and take things as they come, but most importantly, you have to have fun and make the right choices. You only live once.

peers have transformed my whole outlook on what is truly important concerning education.

Prior to my SOA career, I was a student at Brentwood Middle School. During my time there, I had to learn quickly that education was a distant second and surviving was a number one priority. The whole scene would make those drastic portrayals of a world after Armageddon seemed watered down. Over all, the education similarities are only as close as their differences. In any case, education is only as valuable as you make it. SOA has set out the tools of success for all of its students and it is up to them to choose how to use it, as I did. As graduation comes closer and closer into view, it is becoming more and more apparent that I am blessed to have been a part of a great program and even more blessed to have made the most of it.

Elizabeth LeTran Dance



Upon my first day of middle school at the Charleston County School of the Arts – an academically thriving and performance-rich school tucked away behind towering trees and delightfully blooming flora – I did not know what to expect, given that the School of the Arts is a public magnet school.

After getting acquainted with the school, the teachers, the classrooms and educational atmosphere, and the diverse group of students, it seemed as if middle school raced by me. Within no time, my first day of high school had arrived. Knowing I was frightened by the transition from middle school to high school, my teachers tried their hardest to make the transition a smooth one. From then on, I was just itching to experience the complete "high

school experience," a fantastic experience that I cannot put into words.

Presently, as a high school senior, I have to say that my major (Dance) has had a powerful impact on me and my time at SOA. I have had the pleasure of taking classes from extraordinary ballet teachers and creative, artistic, innovative modern teachers. Dancing has broadened my view not only on the history and technique of dance, but also on reaching new heights – for example, creating a piece of work expressing a currently controversial issue. I compare choreographing and performing a piece – whether it is a classical ballet based on the works of George Balanchine or a modern piece with movements derived from Twyla Tharp – to telling the audience a story with no words. The movements speak for themselves. Hopefully, my movements have been strong enough to portray my remarkable experience here at the Charleston County School of the Arts.

Robert Townsend Theatre



The class that has had the strongest impact on me would have to be Theatre. First of all, I have spent around one hundred minutes a day, every single year, in my major. Secondly, the people in my major have become a second family to me. They've supported me through hard times, given me advice, and so on. They have truly helped me in my development as a person. They've let me see that, no matter what, it is okay to just be me.

Back in middle school, when I first arrived at SOA, I had Mr. Wood as my teacher. I was quiet, shy, a bookworm, and a bit unsociable. Mr. Wood pushed me to be loud onstage like I've never been before. I used to have problems with projection back in sixth grade, but Mr. Wood used to always get on me about not being able to hear me, and I've taken those experiences to heart and used them to work harder. While in his class, I feel like he was beginning our process of finding who we were, like sharp stones being shaped into smooth pebbles. I believe that his class was the beginning of me becoming sociable, and, so to speak, "coming out of the egg."

Mr. Younts has been a truly influential person in my life. In his class I learned just how hard theatre really is. Before I arrived at SOA, I never looked upon theatre as something serious; it was more like a fond hobby. But in class here, I was told that I had potential to be more than mediocre. I was told that I had the potential to be great and do

great things. After years of his teaching, I have become an actor who knows how to portray the physicality of a character well. I learned how to sing, work lighting, build sets, write scripts and dissect them measure for measure, and I learned that rehearsal is a never-ending process. In his class, I realized that acting is a matter of "total commitment." You cannot be afraid to look stupid onstage – and that's a fact.

Throughout my senior year, I have had Ms. Link as my theatre teacher. She was new to the theatre family but was accepted nonetheless. She helped me along the treacherous trail that is the thesis. When I first started thesis, I didn't realize what my true strengths and weaknesses were, but as time passed those flaws were revealed to me. Ms. Link helped me get past those flaws and use my strengths to not only make my thesis performance better, but to help me portray the parts I had to execute in other peoples' theses as well. She kept constant pressure on me this year to show me that procrastination is not looked upon with a smile at college. I've also learned that I need to be on time at all times.

All in all, Theatre at SOA has changed my life, starting from the moment I stepped onto this campus to audition. Without theatre, I wouldn't be the person I am today, nor would I be so sure of my future. I would be lost without the homey feeling of knowing that this is my niche and what I truly love to do. Theatre has shown me that it's okay to be who I am and to be confident in that. So, thanks to the whole theatre family for helping stir up my passion for acting. I'm going to miss you all.

Ginny Summerford Strings



Everyone in the world will know my name. You will be watching me stroll down the red carpet with a mink coat and diamonds from my ears to my toes. Angelina Jolie will worship me, and Madonna won't hold a candle to me. I will have my husband on my arm in his Armani suit, and the valet will be parking our Bentley limo. I will most likely be on the cover of the hottest magazines around the world. Even when you go to the doctor's office, I'll be on the cover of that magazine. Then my alarm clock will go off.

All of that would be nice, but realistically, in ten years I hope to be married (or on my way down the aisle), holding down a steady job somewhere in Charleston,

and not in debt. I will have graduated from the College of Charleston with a degree in some area of Communications and will have spent a fall semester at the University of Alabama. Throughout my years in college, I will be interning with local radio stations, newspapers, and magazines. After graduating from the College of Charleston, I will live in a loft Downtown and probably work for an upscale Charleston magazine, or with my dad at MeadWest Vaco being their public relations coordinator. After I marry my sweetheart, we will have a house out on Kiawah Island for the weekends, and either live on Sullivan's Island or Folly Beach. When we do start a family, my kids will go to private schools and then, of course, go to SOA because it is the best school ever. I know that with all of the training and support I have received from SOA, I will succeed and be able to do my best in college and in life.

Hanna Trussler Visual Arts



I entered School of the Arts in the sixth grade. I was even shorter (yes, that is possible), and I had crooked teeth and a naïve mind. Over seven years, much has changed. SOA has been my second home for so long that it seems strange to be leaving. So much of my character seems stored in these walls. I am who I am because of the lessons I've learned, the friends I've made, and the moments I've had here.

SOA has definitely taught me to keep an open mind. The atmosphere is so tolerant and weird at times that you have to be, too. SOA's campus is not exactly known for being pretty. The buildings are old,

mildewing, and falling apart. The field floods and the bathrooms are dirty. Still, I think the campus is beautiful. I love all its problems and will miss them extremely. We never have pencils and the art room is cluttered, but I love the feeling of going there and creating something. I have learned to squeeze all the use out of SOA and make do with what I am given. This is the most important thing for anyone at SOA to do. You have to progress on your own, regardless of the situation.

Advice to underclassmen: work your very hardest on things you care about, and don't worry too much about things that don't matter. The only way to have passion is to go off on a limb and put your full effort into it. SOA has had such an impact on me; I will miss it, but hopefully I'm going far!

Hope Hendricks Dance



I cannot believe that I am already graduating. It seems like I just started high school. Time really does fly. Over the next ten years, I have so much that I want to accomplish. In 2018, I hope to be enjoying my successful life.

Next year, I will be attending North Greenville University. It is a small private Christian college located in Tigerville, SC. I plan on majoring in psychology. Besides school, I plan to be in several clubs or organizations at the school. I plan on trying out for cheerleading, and I am sure that I will have a ton of fun! After I graduate from college, I plan on attending graduate school

at either the University of South Carolina in Columbia, or Clemson. I will be working on my masters in psychology for those next two years. I'm very excited about these next six years of my life. I am looking forward to making many lifelong friends and many memorable experiences.

After finishing school, I hope to move back to Charleston. Hopefully I can find a job here working as a psychologist. Somewhere along the road, I also hope to meet my husband...and who knows, maybe even start a family!! I have a lot planned for the next ten years and a lot to look forward to. Although I have a lot of great things planned for the future, I will miss being at SOA and all of the great friends I have made here. I am sure I will be back to visit!

Sarah Aytes Dance



When I was thinking about writing this essay, I was totally lost about what to write about. Should I write about how I ended up at SOA? Should I tell them about my experience at SOA? Should I write about all the good times? Or should I write about all the teachers/classes that have had an impact on my life? Finally, I decided to share it all. My life at SOA.

First of all, I would like to thank my mom. If it weren't for her, I probably wouldn't be graduating from SOA. This is because, when it came time in fifth grade for me to write my essay to dance at SOA, I didn't want to do it. I pitched a fit before school, and my mom sat in the parking lot until I wrote my essay. She was late for work and I was late for school, but it was all worth it. THANK YOU, MOMMY!

Middle school at SOA was frightening. I only knew two other people that came from my elementary school, and I was in a totally new environment. To me it was the three toughest years. I wasn't sure if I was going to be here in high school. But in seventh grade, Mrs. Slowinski decided to take the seventh and eighth grade dancers to Washington. It was so much fun, and I spent a lot of my time with the people I'm going to be sitting next to at graduation. That trip

played a big part in my decision to stay here for high school. Finally, when I got to high school, I knew I had to crack down. I knew the classes I was taking in order to graduate, and I had a dance teacher that scared me so much - Mr. Anderson. I remember the first day in his class, he pointed me out as one of the students that always forgot their clothes. It was right then that I decided I wasn't going to be known for that. I cracked down, I made sure I had my clothes everyday, and I tried my hardest in his class. Halfway through my freshmen year, Mr. Anderson gave me the opportunity to move up to a higher-level dance class. Although I didn't take the offer, I realize now that ever since I took his class, I have become a better dancer. My technique got so much better, and I loved taking class. I was really sad when he left, but happy that I was able to get that two-and-a-half years of dance from him. I just hope I can carry my love for dance with me to college.

I guess the message I'm trying to get across is that this is a great school. I would have never have gotten this experience if I went to a normal high school, and I wouldn't be going to college so that I can open up my own dance studio. Advice to middle school students and underclassmen: although the school is going through some changes, stick with it. In the end, these changes will be for the better, and you will get a totally different high school experience than anybody at a normal public high school.

Brandon Mohtassem Visual Arts

Ten years from now, life's going to be great...for me, anyway. I plan on already finishing up my service in the Army and cashing in that twenty thousand dollar check. I'll be attending UTI in the summer of '09 so that I can learn any and everything about cars and motorcycles. With that knowledge, I'm going to open up my auto customization garage and work to make it

that most successful business of its type. I'm talking millions and millions of dollars! So yeah, when I come back to the reunion, I'm going to be rich. Mark my words. And I'm not going to forget anybody, so if you been down with me during my time at SOA, I got you. And if you need your whip hooked up, hit me up in about seven years - KS Customs, baby!

Courtney Messer Vocal

In the year 2018, what will I be doing? Well, by this point I will be twenty-three years old. I will have graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in Arts and Sciences. I will hopefully be working at a job that I absolutely love! And for the Cinderella part of my story, I will possibly have married the man of my dreams that God set apart just for me, according to his perfect will. Maybe I will even have started a family of my own!

I will have had the joy of watching all eight of my nieces and

nephews grow into amazing young adults and hopefully make a lot of great memories with them in the process. I will have had the privilege of watching my parents grow together for yet another ten years in marriage, and I will pray daily that my husband and I will be as much of a blessing to the generations that will come from us as my parents have been to their children and grandchildren. I'm looking forward to seeing how Jesus, my Savior, will use me to further his kingdom!

Anna Seel

Vocal



Yay! O EIGHT! I am so excited to say that I AM GRADUATING! As much as I love SOA and appreciate what it has taught me, I am also ready to start over. I honestly feel that this school has prepared me for what is coming! This school has brought me so much more than just an education.

First off, I definitely wouldn't have the awesome friends I have today if I hadn't attended a school with both a middle school and high school. This may seem boring to some, but I enjoyed it! Middle and high school are crucial and unstable years of a person's life; having a pretty consistent group of friends all the way through has helped me a lot. These seven years have given me time to get to know mostly everything about my friends and make friendships that I know will last for a lifetime.

There is also the aspect of music. So most schools have chorus class or whatever, but mine has one that meets every day for ninety minutes. How many have gotten the chance to study music every day? In addition to just singing, I have also learned to sight-

read music. Thanks to Kevin Eakes, I can pick up a piece of music I have never seen before and sing it! In addition to singing the piece, Mr. Eakes also taught me how to feel music and respect it as a work of art. The knowledge he gave to my class is priceless, and I know they would agree.

The last, and probably most significant, gift my school has given me is the ability to maintain an open mind while also remaining firm in my beliefs. The students at SOA all are artistic in their own way. I think that, because of our abilities to express ourselves through art, we also find it easy to express ourselves to each other. I have met so many different people with diverse beliefs and ideas, and I have found it inspiring. Rather than feeling like I needed to conform to the ideas of others, I feel that the diversity gave me confidence in my ideas. Most teachers and administrators at SOA encourage us to express ourselves and act as individuals. This encouragement from my teachers and peers is something I cherish.

I hate being sentimental and gushy, but this school really is amazing! I feel that art is so much more than just a painting, or music, or a performance – it's a bond that unifies people. I love SOA and appreciate everything it has given me, but now it's time to commence (as Ms. Olson says) to my future!

Tristan Richardson

Creative Writing



Great. I'm a Creative Writer, so I bet people expect this thing to be good. Like when Ms. Olson drones on that we have an essay due and people turn and say "Lucky Creative Writer, you can probably crank that out in ten minutes." No, I can't. That's exactly what's unique about SOA, though. Oh yes. Here it comes. The gushy "SOA is so unique because we don't have jocks and cheerleaders – we have piano players and painters and poets and any other P words that can exemplify my fantastic use of alliteration!"

It's true, though. Everyone at SOA has the common thread of being somewhat decent in some art major. It's what brings us together. It's why someone on a bathroom break sees several other kids who are supposed to be in class wandering the halls with clueless looks. It's the lazy artists in all of us. We can't be stuck in a cage. It's why, when visitors come to the school, they exclaim, "Oh! I saw the artwork in the halls and I was just blown away!" It's what causes comfort. Because however weird someone feels, they can glance down the halls and see someone twice as weird as they are. There

are no outcasts. It's was causes teachers to relax – knowing that a troublesome child is more likely to jump up and read rebellious poetry than put a knife to his throat. All these ingredients just fuse together and compliment each other, cooking up a stew of joy. And that stew is School of the Arts.

I have enjoyed my years at SOA much more than I think I would have at, say, West Ashley High. They have been seven years of freedom, but I am at least leaving here with a LITTLE bit of knowledge. I have been able to escape the dullness of academics and go to a peaceful place where I am comfortable: writing. No other school allows that. An original school breeds original people, and I think that's why everyone leaves here a notch above the rest. I don't mean to brag, but it's true.

It worries me that a new school will be born. Today I snuck from Creative Writing and moseyed over to the Visual Arts room and had Zach draw a sick drawing on my paper that just blew me away. I sat there and thought. Will a kid be able to do this in this new school of "excellence"? If not, a beautiful thing is dying.

All I can say is: thank you to my fellow students and teachers and the flaking walls of SOA. Now if you'll excuse me, I have some rebellious poetry to write.

Amanda Brochu

Creative Writing



Seven years ago, I walked onto the SOA campus with sweaty palms and a stomach full of butterflies. At that moment, I never would have imagined that I would eventually be walking across the stage with a hundred other people I had grown to love. The memories and experiences that we have all shared have shaped many of us into the people we are today. Leaving it all behind will be a difficult thing, but we're about to start a new beginning that will lead us in many different directions. But we'll never forget the memories.

Years from now, I'll still be thinking about the friends I made, the inside jokes we shared, the many things I learned from them, the boys we fought over, the times we laughed, the notes we passed, and the teachers who taught me the most valuable lessons. The students and faculty of SOA have become my

second family. When the going gets tough, I know someone will always have an open ear or a shoulder for me to lean on.

Senior year has been stressful to say the least, but it has also been one of the most memorable years I've had at SOA. I've grown closer to everyone, learned so many things that I never would have guessed and made many life-changing decisions. Although there have been many bumps in the road, I know that walking across the stage to receive my diploma will be worth it all.

I would like to thank my family for their love, affection, and for keeping me on the right track over the years. I would also like to thank Regan, my partner in crime, my amigo, my pookie, the one person I can count on to be there for me no matter what. Thanks to my Creative Writing class for criticizing my work and believing that I could make it to the end. And thank you to all of the other people who've made me laugh, who've made me cry, who've helped to create the memories that I'll never forget.

Heidi Vaughan

Vocal



Influential: that's what SOA is to me. It's been life changing. And experience is what it has given me, as well as endless opportunities and an irreplaceable, unforgettable education. I started at School of the Arts as a timid sixth grader with a squeaky violin. Now, as a senior Vocalist, I have the chance to look back on what I have really been given these last four-and-a-half years. Knowledge, drive, friendships, memories, stories...this list can go on and on, but none of it would have meant anything without the desire to excel. It may be corny, but as soon as you get that acceptance letter, you want to prove yourself. You want to show everyone what you are capable of, and you have no idea what that is, even up to the last time you walk out those front doors. Because at SOA, you are taught to never quit developing your talent. All my experiences while attending this school have been equally amazing. Being a student at SOA has turned me into a musician, and given me the possibility for further potential.

My friends joke with me about my random appearances as a student here. All I can say is that I can't stay away from my school; no matter where I go, I just keep coming back. I have started here on three different occasions in two different majors, Orchestra and Vocal. Each has had its own defining moments. Whether we're goofing off on a bus to Florida in Strings, or making fun of each other in Vocal, I have enjoyed every minute of it. Because I have attended other high schools, I know that

you can't find moments like that anywhere else. I am leaving this school with much more than an academic education. I know now that anyone can be a super hero, it takes two to get stuck behind the hotel bed, Vocal majors can dance, sophomores are loveable, you can keep your best friend through high school, we don't have to grow up at the lunch table, and it's campfire, not free free!

I've made good friendships with not just students of all grade levels, but with teachers, as well. It has been easier with some than others. Dr. Cusatis was really cool this year – well, he thought so ("Atta boy, girl!"). And once you get past Ms. Awkerman's tough exterior, you realize she doesn't really hate you...I think. If it weren't for Mr. Brehm and his parking policy, I would have been late every morning. Thanks Brehm. And by the way, we all know you're a secret agent on the side! Mr. Rogers and Ms. Slink let me into this school, need I say more? Ms. Marshall, maybe I'll become a lawyer some day. Mrs. Alvanos and I had a tough start, but I'm sure my class was her favorite! I have to thank all of my teachers for being there for me this year.

I believe knowledge comes from learning with individuality, the application of memories, and dragging yourself out of bed for that last month of senior year. All of which I am doing right now. I experience this every day throughout our beloved moldy halls. In every corner we can say – I broke a string there, I made music here, I danced in that hall, that's my handprint. These are our stories, those of the class of 2008 and all the previous and all the following. This is where I found some purpose, and created questions for my future.

Brett Sims Vocal



I've waited eighteen years for this day, and it's almost here. As I look back on my years at SOA, I thank everyone for the memories, encouragement, and nurturing. We all came here as sixth graders, and I'm sure you all remember what it was like to arrive and hardly know anyone. We have built bonds and friendships we will always remember, for the rest of our lives.

SOA has taught me many lessons and has made me the person I am today. We have all fought like brothers and sisters, but when bad things happened, we were all there for each other to lend a helping hand and a shoulder to cry on. I know we all had our days, but I hope that we will remember the good times. I wish all the graduates of 2008 a happy life and great success.

Lauren Codispoti Dance

After six years of attending School of the Arts, I have learned that it is a very unique school. When I tell people that I go to School of the Arts, they first think that I'm in college. When I explain to them that it is a middle school and high school, that we have majors and you have to audition to get in, people think it's amazing. What they don't realize is how great this school really is.

When I first came to SOA, I auditioned for Strings. I was in the orchestra in seventh, eighth, ninth, and half of tenth grade. I had Ms. Johnson and Ms. Fitzgerald as teachers and loved them both. With Strings, I went to competitions and traveled to several places and made many friends. Halfway through my tenth grade year, I switched my major to Dance. Switching to Dance was the best decision I have ever made. At first it was challenging, considering I wasn't as experienced as everyone else, but with the support of Ms. Slowinski and Mr. Anderson, I began to gain strength and the technique I needed. In this past year, I have learned the history of dance, certain techniques used in certain eras, and I've learned to recognize ballets.

Whitney Wilson Dance

I have been looking forward to this day for so long that I can't believe it's here. But I have to say, I would not be the person I am today if it were not for SOA, which makes it so much harder to say goodbye. There is so much I would like to cram into this essay because I have had so many experiences that have impacted me, but that would take weeks to write. So I will keep it simple:

I just want everyone to know that the teachers at this school are amazing, and I do not know where I would be without them. I have kept personal relationships with most of my teachers, and they make an effort to keep in touch with me and to stay updated on my life, which makes me feel cared for and comfortable. So thank you, teachers, for your gift of respect and motivation!

I would especially like to thank Jan Elliott, Michael Locklair, Myrna Caldwell, Roy Davis, Sue Bennett, Heath Orvin, Mr. P and Kevin Eakes. Without these people, I wouldn't be where I am today. I wish luck to all future graduates of SOA and would like to remind them that there are no boundaries if you have perseverance. I especially would like to say to Ryan Clawson and Gunthar Schultz that knowing you two has changed my life. You both have managed to keep me laughing and smiling throughout this year and have taught me great lessons in life. Ryan, I just met you this year, but you will always be my "little brother." I wish great things in life for both you and Gunner. I will never forget both of you, and you will be greatly missed.

It's time to say goodbye as I prepare to ascend those stairs and glide across that stage. I will try my best not to cry. SOA will never be forgotten and will have a place in my heart. I've made it!!!!

School of the Arts is a relatively small school, and we have all grown up together. Because we have all known each other for so long, our school is a lot like a family. People look out for others, and when you need help with something, it's always provided. If you meet someone who graduated from SOA a few years back, they are always excited to hear that you go there, and have tons of questions about the school. When I am in traffic and I see an SOA bumper sticker or someone with an SOA hoodie, my immediate thought is, "Hey! They go to SOA!" and I feel a bit of pride and excitement knowing that they either graduated from there or go there now.

School of the Arts has given me so many opportunities, memories, and experiences that I know I wouldn't have received at any other school. The teachers that have influenced me and the friends I've made are unforgettable. There is no other school like School of the Arts, and I take pride in knowing that after June 4, 2008, I can say I graduated from one of the best high schools in the nation!

The people I have met at SOA are genuinely great people. All the friends I have made here have impacted me in so many ways. I honestly do not know how they have done it, but they have all stuck by my side - through good and bad, and I just want to thank you guys. Even though everyone says it won't happen, I know we will stay in touch because you guys are too big a part of me to leave behind forever. Well this is it - we are about to leave the comfortable little campus of SOA forever and go out into the real world where the walls aren't covered in paint, and music doesn't flow through the halls, and dancers aren't spotted dancing around the fields and trailers. The real world has some pretty tough competition. Goodbye, SOA!

Joel Brown Band

School of the Arts has taken me on a journey full of twist and turns, and I wouldn't have it any other way. I can somewhat remember my first day at the school. I walked into the moldy middle school band room and was greeted by Mr. Ed Ritchen. He was a cool dude and really helped me to get started in band. I also met my homeboy Mike, who already was playing the sax, and he taught me a few things. He showed me how to play the G on my saxophone, so shouts out to him for that. Anyway, sixth grade is where I met most of my friends and is when I began performing in public. I will never forget those shows we used to do in the cafeteria, because we always had the room jumping. You all probably don't remember because you weren't here yet.

High school was okay for me, I guess; I think I enjoyed it a lot in the beginning. No one could tell me that unsupervised lunches weren't a gift from God. Especially since I came straight from eighth grade, where it felt like jail. Yeah, ninth grade was one of my favorite years. Everyone has had that teacher, Mr. Orvin. Yes, the great thinker who swore to make you think outside and around the box. I pretty much lived for that class because it was so different, and we touched on so many topics that I couldn't help but love it. I also enjoyed being in the "big kids band." Me, Mike, Jamaal, and Grayland would always enjoy cracking on the kids who couldn't

play well (I still do!). It's not so funny when it's your turn, though. We would line up outside and Mr. Kerr would add us in a few at a time, until the band sounded bad. If that's not quality teaching, then I don't know what it is. Filter out the bad players and leave the good ones. And just a tip for the new comers, he still does it, and yes it still hurts, so please practice. As the years rolled by, I got into that SOA rhythm and I pretty much move through the motions now. I've watched past classes leave, and now it is my turn. It's about time, too, because I'm getting tired of all of you. I plan on leaving and hopefully not coming back until something productive happens in my life. High school will be done soon, college will begin soon. I know y'all are tired of me, and guess what? I'm tired of y'all, too. I got to shout out all my folks before I leave. To my brothers Toni, Jamaal, Mike, Grayland, and Nick, we chilled everyday. We pondered on going to class many days, coordinating our clothes, girls, and pretty much everything, and if I could do it again, I'd have to say I would change nothing. To my other homeboys Adam, Brandon, Esau, Adrian, Robert, Tolbert, Howard, and anyone else I missed, y'all hold 'em down. I'm not calling out any more names because there are too much of y'all. School of the Arts has really given me so much in seven years. I just hope I can give back something. Well, enough with that sappy stuff. I'm tired of writing this so I'm done. Class of '08 is out!!!

Blake Engel Creative Writing

The purpose of this essay is to enlighten the person reading it, assuming that said person is a prospective or current student. If you're reading this, you are probably a parent or grandparent or relative of a graduating student at SOA, and if you are studying each word in this paper, you are probably very bored. I'll try not to increase said boredom. I'm a student in Creative Writing and that qualifier "creative" has always bothered me. Nonetheless, that class is also the only one that truly interests me. The rest are required - the sciences and the maths and the extracurricular studies - and therefore are of little significance. We're all here to contribute a work of importance to the history of art or to remain unnoticed until we can escape. In any event, writing means a great deal to me, and I'm glad I was forced to evolve as a writer over these years. For my senior thesis, I wrote a 90-something page novella titled *Immortalizing Elliot* (available for purchase on

Amazon.com), in effect the culmination of said years. While not the new American novel I was expecting, I find that it's an adequate metaphor for my time at SOA: accumulated over a long period, increasing in quality from beginning to end, and ending in an emotionally satisfying, if somewhat mystifying, finale.

SOA has been a home and a prison, a bed and a work-desk, easy-as-pie and hard-as-hell. The most difficult task was probably writing for the newspaper you're now reading, and the easiest was probably writing the essay you're now reading. I should take the time to thank people who have helped me along the way, but I think extending my gratitude in this particular venue would be as appreciative as scrawling it on a bathroom stall. So I'll end this essay by thanking you, reader, for reading this and wishing you, reader, a good day and a good dinner after the ceremonies. Good night.

Sytske Hillenius Strings



This is it: the end of my years at SOA. Eight years ago when I visited these halls for the first time, I never could have imagined what it would be like to graduate. Meeting all of the smiling new faces on the first day of sixth grade and growing close to all of you over the past seven years is going to make it really hard to leave my SOA family and take the leap into the real world.

As I desperately try to think of some non-cliché thing to say, I can't help but think there are way too many amazing people and memories to be able to recall them all in a few short paragraphs. I will miss the innocence and freedom of playing Frisbee and roaming the hallways or running off to the snack machines. Any time there is a thunderstorm, I will always remember

running across campus, splashing through puddles and watching kayaks while trying to get to class. And though I have avoided the cafeteria in favor of the great outdoors throughout high school, I will never forget the dreaded punishment of having to sit silently in alphabetical order by homeroom when we got too excited.

I would like to thank all of my teachers, including Ms. Marshall, Mr. Murray, Mr. Reese, Dr. Cusatis, and Mr. Kerr for setting high standards and not wavering as I tried to reach them. I would also like to thank Ms. Fitz for telling me to calm down and enjoy my senior year instead of being stressed out all of the time.

Who knows where any of us will be or what we will have done five, ten, even thirty years down the road, but maybe we will have a famous writer, actor, opera singer, painter, pianist, teacher, or dancer among us, the SOA class of 2008. Whatever happens in my life and yours, I am sure you will never forget SOA.

Katlyn McMillan Theatre



I was in the last few months of my seventh grade year at Rollings, an art middle school in Summerville, when I was informed that I had to audition for another art school in North Charleston.

Yep, my mom was moving me, and let's just say that I did not take the news lying down. I was mortified; I would have to be the new girl at a school I had never even heard of, where I knew absolutely no one. This was a middle schooler's worst nightmare, and it was coming true for me.

As I was walking up the sidewalk in front of S.O.A., I passed the benches that were chained to the ground, and I knew that I was not in Summerville anymore. The campus was so spread out, and most of the classrooms were in trailers. This was new to me, seeing as how my old school was huge and high-tech and all the classrooms were in one building. Nevertheless, we finally found the room that I was going to audition in. I only saw one person waiting outside the

room; I figured she was auditioning, too. I talked to a couple of the high-schoolers and they told me to take a seat beside the girl and wait until they called me in. As I sat there waiting, outside the Black Box, I began to look around. Outside, I could see little houses with broken windows and rotted out front steps. I saw no parking lot, but a field with uneven rows of cars; I saw little kids, kids my age, and older kids. As I sat there waiting, I thought to myself, how could anyone enjoy coming to this school everyday?

Well, times have certainly changed. After that audition with Mr. Younts and Mr. Wood, I got an acceptance letter about a month later. I entered the eighth grade at School of the Arts as a Theatre major. It is now my senior year and I can't imagine graduating from any other school. Even though my school does not have an actual parking lot, we made due with a field that is over-crowded and floods every time it rains. My Theatre class and I never once protested in class when we had to work around pots and trash cans strategically placed around the room to catch the water that was leaking in from the rain. We made due with no sports

or even a gym, because we could always just run around the bus loop a couple of times. We never whined when we had to go to class in a trailer that was either too hot or way too small. And I'm pretty sure that I have never heard any senior complain about the amazing year we have had. I mean, with all those privileges we got – like being able to park in a separate lot and leave for lunch 3 minutes early. And our senior parade that got taken away, but then given back to us, and our senior superlatives. Because what high school would not have senior superlatives? Oh wait, I think they took that from us too, but we still get to...um...well, let's not forget the beautiful and controversial free prom the lovely juniors have put together for us, it really makes us, the seniors, feel honored.

So thank you S.O.A., because without all this chaos and humor in my life, I would leave this school with just a normal high school experience, and no one who graduates this year will leave with a mediocre experience. No, we are all going to leave with an exciting, frustrating, and at some points annoying, high school experience. But most of all, to me, it is irreplaceable.

Antoni Jenkins Visual Arts



To be honest, I don't know what exactly to write about for this essay. There are several periods that I went through during my history at SOA. The Middle School years was a period by itself. Then,

there was ninth grade and playing basketball in the morning and during lunch and beating the Class of '06 all the time. There was tenth grade, when I started coming out of my shell and turning into my own special person and making sure other ballers knew that I AM the best basketball player to come from SOA. Then there was eleventh grade. On October 6, 2006, I started going out with the love of my life, Rachael Clow... Naaaahhh! I don't think a lot of people want to read about that. I'll write of a past time in middle school that went on

during a three year span. Hopefully, this will give people some inspiration.

I'm not too supportive of SOA. It's not the people that go here, but the system that it follows. In middle school, I was very frustrated with the fact that this school has no sports. I would choose sports over my major any day, real talk. The only way I was able to play sports for the majority of those years was during lunch, and that wasn't even a real sport! We played with the tennis ball. Then, we started to bring a basketball, just so we could dribble around on the square blacktop in front of the snack machines...that's sad! I got through middle school by working on my game outside in my backyard every evening for two hours, imagining that I was on a basketball team during the last seconds. Then, I tried out for the Haut Gap Middle School team in seventh grade. I was one of the best ones trying out; I couldn't be stopped! The next day I was told that I couldn't play

because I wasn't at that school. After that, I started thinking that if I weren't at this school, I could have been a better player than I ended up being. I started hating this school. I even wanted to leave! I had to throw that feeling out the window after my mother said that it wouldn't happen. I decided to just try harder and continue to get better at what I do. Obviously, this way got me somewhere, and after twelfth grade, and playing for St. John's High for four years (one on JV and three on Varsity), I was pretty good.

I never thought that I would be a role model to other people and be making crowds go Oooohh!!! when they see a nice move. I want others to know that if you want to play sports, then don't let SOA get in your way. Just become multi-talented. I did it! Test yourself, you may find out something new about yourself.

Hannah McCleskey Visual Arts



Once upon a time, there was a person who had to write a senior essay. They had no idea what to write about, but then they remembered what

they learned in Ms. Lasley's Composition class in eighth grade and just started typing, anyway...

I can't believe we're almost done with high school. It's weird to think that seven long years ago, we were all little sixth

graders sitting in the cafeteria on the first day of school. Back then, I could never picture myself as a freshman, let alone a senior. I wonder, if we could go back and see ourselves now, what we would think about the way we all turned out.

There are so many reasons I'm happy about the past seven years of my life, and all of them are because I met amazing people. Hanna and Alice – I love you soooo much! You guys made me realize how strange people actually are. Bugs and Virginia – I don't know what I would've done without you two. Kevin – don't skip too much class

in college. Alanna and Jackson – I miss you two; I wish you were still here. Jordan and Jesse and John – thank you for making the most boring class in the world a bit more interesting. Alex and Catherine – art trip. What more can I say. Matt, Topher, Shelly, Mary, Chris, Connor, Sarah, Emory, Mark and the rest of those kids – I love you guys, and you know it. Tucker – the greatest brother EVER! The entire Visual Arts class – wow. It's been weird. I'm going to miss all of you. And everyone else – good luck with the rest of your lives; I hope you enjoy them. I have spoken. All depart.

Daniel Harper Band



The topic question is about what I want to be doing in my future, but I don't want to answer that, so... what will I *not* be doing in the future?

I won't be wearing a suit or tie. I won't be working from 9:00-5:00, five days a week. I won't be listening to new age '10s music, as opposed to '90s music. I won't be living with my parents or living off of someone else. I will not be not playing music.

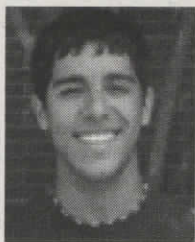
My optimum idea would be to have at least 200 guitars (including at least six custom built equator guitars from Ecuador, my PRS, two strats, two teles, a couple of Gibsons I guess like a super 400, L5, Howard Roberts, Wes Montgomery, LeGrand ES 137, 175, 335, 345 Gretsch white falcon, DuoJet, Chet Atkins model.) I'd have to get some acoustics too: a couple of Taylors, a Martin or two, a Froggy Bottom guitar, and the shakti guitar. I need keyboards...not so many, but definitely all anyone would ever need: a Hammond B3, Fender Rhodes, Hohner Clavinet Pianet Duo, and a Nord Electro.

Away from the traditional stuff, I'd need a sitar, a set of Tabla, a Ghatam, a Bansuri, and Sarod. I need a tenor, alto, soprano, sopranino, soprillo, baritone, bass, contrabass, and a tubax subcontrabass saxophone and a saxello. I will have all equivalents of the clarinet and flute, contrabass flute, etc...

Amplification is a key factor to being an electric musician. I will still have my 72 twin reverb, I will have a Vox AC50 and 30, three Dr. Z custom amps, fender bassman, an Orange amp maybe, and some type of mesa boogie.

A banjo, tenor banjo, bass banjo, electric banjo, bantar, upright bass, a couple mandolins and a wife later, I'll be ready to enjoy life like never before. In 2018 I will be playing all 200 of those instruments, hopefully at the same time, and music will be my life.

Ricky Quinones Band



Something I've noticed in my past four years at SOA is that we are all a family. We do not segregate ourselves from unfamiliarity. One could describe the SOA community as a single unit made of different parts. It's breathtaking to think about the diversity that surrounds us and how we bond to create art. Individuality is by far the greatest thing that separates us from any other school.

Every time I walk through the Arts building, I try to put myself in the place of an absolute stranger to SOA. Doing so, I see a foreign world, but one of brilliance and talent that seems surreal. It sends chills down my spine to think that I am actually a part of it! I feel as

if I'm meant to be here, because I would be lost if I were excluded from what takes place at this school.

My first time being a member of the high school band, I remember viewing the upperclassmen as prodigies. They were gods of music! Now, thinking that some freshman or middle school student might view me in a similar way, I get a feeling of success. I might be the motivation that drives a student to accomplish what they are here for.

I have a bond with this school. It might be the people, the deteriorating campus, or maybe just the spirit of SOA. Whatever it is, it makes me feel as if I'm where I belong. Visiting this school a few years from now will be hard because of the new facility. It won't be the same as good old SOA, but at least I'll be an absolute stranger to it, and maybe I'll be able to explore that foreign world again.

Daniel DeCola Band



In 2018, I plan on being out of college. I'll have at least \$15,000 in student loan debts to continue paying off in the years to come.

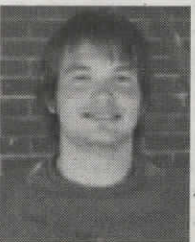
I want to be working in an enjoyable job environment and a nice city. I want to live by the water, away from the big city and away from corporate America. I'd love to have a job working for a computer technologies company, designing and researching new hardware that will be used in the world's leading electronics.

By this time, I hope to own a sailboat. Nothing large; I want a boat around twenty-or-so feet. I'd be able to take friends

out for an afternoon or evening sail, or be able to sail alone around the harbor and barrier islands. Sailing is my passion, and I hope to continue it throughout the rest of my life.

This will all be made possible by landing a high-paying job right out of college. I'll spend the first few years after college organizing my life and budgeting accordingly to be able to save for a boat and get out of student loan debt. My final goal for life after college, before settling down, is to take my boat with a friend or brother down to the Caribbean and sail for months around the islands, immersing myself in the culture of the people I meet and escaping from the ever increasing evils of modern America.

John Wray Visual Arts



With less than a month until graduation, I can't help but feel sad about leaving a school I've learned to love during the two years I've been here. Moving from Charlotte, North Carolina down to Charleston was probably the best thing that ever happened to me. I've met so many interesting and talented people here at SOA, people who are one-in-a-million but brought together in this school overflowing with creativity.

When I first came to the Visual Arts program at SOA, I had no idea what an HB, 2H or 4B pencil was – I merely used a tissue or the tip of my finger for shading. With instruction from Mr. Moore, Ms. Jaycie and Ms. Nichols, I have thrived as an artist, developing an appreciation and understanding for art that I wouldn't have had without this

school. My passion for the arts has changed my life, and I hope to one day make a career in the arts so that I will never have to do a day of work in my life – because I'll be doing what I love to do.

I want to thank all the teachers here at SOA for putting up with me, and I want to apologize for sleeping in your classes. The teachers here are truly some of the best I've ever had, and they've made me like coming to school every day. I want to thank Dr. Cusatis for getting me interested in reading like I've never been before, and I want to thank Ms. Rogers for being my math teacher the whole time I've been here and for putting up with me more than any others.

Thank you to everyone I've met at SOA for being awesome, especially my friends, who are all pretty amazing people and have made the years at SOA the best in my life! I'll miss all of you guys when college comes around, but I'm totally looking forward to the best summer ever!

Tara Wolfe Theatre



SOA is different. This much is incredibly apparent in both its subtleties and, well, the not-so-subtle things like the middle school Band and Strings warm-ups that send a sharp surge through my spine like a thousand nails on a brand new chalkboard. Though there are many rifts in our mural-coated walls, School of the Arts has proven time and time again that just because the foundations of the buildings are cracked, flooded, and mouldy, that does not mean that the core – the heart of it – is.

An education from School of the Arts is much more than homework, standardized test, and essays. It teaches people to be open to new ideas, to try new things and to never EVER be afraid to be a little strange...which is just downright inevitable when you enrol here. The funny thing is, now that I'm nearing the end here, I'm realizing that (as much as it pains me to say it) my parents were right! They told me that I'd regret going to the...utopia that is Wando High School. Utopia?! Ha! What a moron I was. Some wonderland...ID tags, not knowing a soul, getting lost in the hallways even after having attended for

Lynn Caldwell Theatre



When it comes down to the education I got at SOA, I think it put me ahead of the game – having honors classes every day and being exposed to new ways of learning with Mr. Orvin's creative techniques and Dr. Ball's weird songs. I wasn't just reading out of books anymore but bringing learning to real life. I am so grateful for them taking the time to make learning fun. I probably wouldn't have learned as much if they hadn't. What I also love about SOA education is that you can bring your art into any subject. Many times, I had the chance to use my Theatre training in class projects and presentations.

I think if it came down to changing my SOA education, I would have wanted to start in the sixth grade so I would have had more time to spend developing my craft – and by the time I was in high school, I would have been able to spend more time doing what I love. I also would have taken one or more educational honors classes throughout my whole SOA career. The most influential teachers for me were Ms. Kay, Mr. Younts and Mr. Brehm. In one way or another, they all opened my eyes to

months. Ohhh yeah, that's what I needed in a high school – a jail-like setting. How perfect. So what if they don't have to cram their cars into a muddy parking lot, and yeah, yeah, yeah they've got homecoming, sports, and lockers in the hallways. But I wouldn't give up my excruciatingly long seven years here for four dreary, maroon, black and white, smothered years there. I've found great comfort in the familiarity that School of the Arts offers. I like being able to match a name to a face...even if I wish I couldn't in certain cases. I like knowing every single nauseating detail, down to which rooms leak when a drizzle comes and which smells to expect brewing in the Block building, depending on the time of year.

I love this place, and even though you'd never hear this out of anyone's mouth that knows me – I love the people here. Of course now, there are exceptions to that, but on the whole I'll miss my classmates.

I've got to say, though, that as great as this school has been to me, spending any more time here than I absolutely have to would probably result in me gouging my eyes out of their sockets. Yeah, leaving now will leave me with decent memories. There's no other place that I would have rather spent the bulk of my school-going career, and anyone to graduate from this incredibly unique school is exceptionally lucky.

another level of education. Ms. Kay helped me socially adapt to my new surroundings. Younts broke down the many levels of theatre, from the Freudian Theory to the Stanislavsky Theory. Last but not least, Mr. Brehm took us from the normal classroom setting to a college lecture hall, beginning our transfers from high school students to college students.

So where do I see myself in ten years? I see myself being a part-time actress, full-time interior decorator and mom. I would have my own interior design company and at least five published and performed plays. I would have also featured in at least three movies and performed on Broadway. Oh yeah, I would have been successfully married for eight years to the love of my life, Justin R. My best memory of SOA is when we went on our eleventh grade trip to Downtown. We had a picnic at the Battery; we all made different things and took pictures, hung out and played games. It was like we were a big family. I think, out of all the things I will miss about SOA, I will definitely miss the sense of family and acceptance the most. I don't know of any other group of kids more accepting than SOA kids; that's why I love and will miss SOA. At the end of this journey, SOA has helped me become a lovelier Lynn.

Kelly Machado Band



Wow, I can't believe I am actually writing one of these essays. When I came to SOA as a freshman, I remember feeling very intimidated. Everything was so big and scary. Now when I look at this school, all I see are my friends, a love for the arts, and those stupid cracks you have to watch out for in the sidewalks. I have grown so much since I first came here. I know that SOA is part of what makes me who I am, and for that, I am immensely thankful.

When I auditioned for the school, Mr. Kerr asked me a very simple question: "Why do you want to come here?" I remember thinking, "What a weird question. Why else would I want to come here?" Then I simply answered, "Because I love music."

I do indeed love music, but my passion for the art has grown tenfold since that audition. Mr. Kerr has shown me so much about this form

of communication. I don't think I can thank him enough for all he has done for me. I have so many good memories in the band room that will last forever.

I don't think I will ever forget the teachers I have had here. Many of them were crazy (SOH, CAH, TOA!!), and some pushed me to my limits. But without them, I wouldn't be on my way to Chicago next year. One trait that is carried in every SOA teacher is passion and eagerness to help. So thank you teachers - you're the best!

My experience at SOA has been a great one. I am so excited to be going to Wheaton Conservatory of Music next year, but a part of me is really sad to leave this place. SOA has become a home for me, and college is now the big, scary adventure. However, it is very comforting to know that a part of SOA will be with me forever in my friends, music, and memories.

Cordell Mosteller Vocal

Oh my. Well, where do I begin? I guess I can start from when I first came to this school in seventh grade. Wow, what a first year I had. I was not liked by all the people who are now all my closest buds like COURTNEY RICHARDSON. That girl is a fool!!! We have spent so much time trippin' off of people, each other, and just trippin' just to trip. I love Courtney, and she is my road dog for life no matter what! OMG Erin, I love that girl and all the baggage that comes with her (lol, insider). She has been a really good friend to me and always tells it to me like it is. She is always willing to help me, and I love her for that. Syreita!!! Syreita, she think she's slick because she's quiet all the time, but she don't fool nobody! She ain't nothing but a freak!!! Just kidding. But Syreita is one who knows a lot about me and was there to listen to all my stupid crap about she-knows-who-and-what and everything else. She is a true friend, and I love that girl. Now Olivia - that chick is FOOL. I have watched her evolve into the person she is finally comfortable with: herself. She is quite the character, and there is never a dull moment with her. That's why I love her so much. Diana has been my sister since I came to School of the Arts. We've sung together, dated each other, argued with each other, hated each other, and anything else you can possibly imagine. She will always be my lil' sis, no matter what!

I always enjoy the great conversations at

Dillon Cohen Visual Arts

My plans for ten years into the future would consist of my life revolving around art. I will have already attended Trident for Graphic Design and displayed urban art in exhibitions over the years. Also, my life agenda will consist of me designing urban art for walls in creative businesses and for imaginative people.

I plan on having my entrepreneurship include mixed media with acrylic paints, aerosol paints, markers, graphic designs, screen prints, stickers and clothes, all for different purposes. The clothes would be just shirt designs for other urban artists and shoe designs, as well.

One of my main goals in life would be to become a paid artist designing urban art on walls in recognized graphic design studios. I feel that most artists and graphic designers all need inspiration to start new projects and new materials, and a studio's walls would be the most unique way to bring that inspiration to people.

lunch with the crew (Courtney, Erin, Syreita, Leah and Olivia). We are always trippin' about the dumbest things possible, and we even argue with one another and all that good stuff. And that's the only part of the day I ALWAYS look forward to. Oh, but who can forget CHEMISTRY CLASS!!! Yay! Even though I didn't pass the class, LOL, I still enjoyed all of the memories with Courtney, Howard, Syreita, Dillon, Vincent, Kierra and Jamaal. Like the time Jamaal and Kierra got caught for cheating and Dr. Price yelled "Cheaters!" Or the time when Vincent thought that he could get away with slapping Courtney on the butt. And the many classes Dillon, Howard and I threw the bouncy ball around class while Dr. Price wasn't paying attention! HILARIOUS!

Ok, enough rambling. My best and worst memory by far at SOA had to be *Big River*. I found out that I could actually achieve something on my own, if I just put my mind to it. I learned that no matter how hard I worked and how good my intentions were, people would always find reasons to bring me down and hate me for doing what I loved. Performing, singing and acting and all that great stuff is all I live for, and I am thankful for the opportunity to be at this school. Shout-outs to Mr. Rogers for getting me into this school and KUDOS to Mr. Eakes for helping me understand music and making me fall in love with music the way that I do.

I plan on working full time at some point in my life in graphic design studios and art stores that will help me develop my style of art. I plan on meeting countless artists and urban artists in my life who have the same passion as I do and even collaborating with some or designing major projects. I also have exhibitions that will display my work in local galleries in Charleston this month and in June.

A goal in my life is to spread urban art globally to people of all ages. This art is a huge movement around the world and is gaining more respect every day. Just this year, the Smithsonian art magazine published a major article and was on the front page of the magazine describing so called urban art and "graffiti" as a revolution in the art world today. The article describes the "graffiti" as a breakthrough in surreal art and is growing rapidly, saying that urban art will soon change the way people look at art in our generation.

This art has specifically changed the way

Anna Brown Theatre



Before coming to this school, I thought that acting was only something famous people did. I didn't even consider plays, scenes, monologues (or anything that wasn't a major Hollywood film) a part of "theatre." When my parents' friends and teachers asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I told them I wanted to be an actress, but what I meant was that I wanted to be famous. Needless to say, because of this misconception, I was very confused and disappointed when I entered the sixth grade as a Theatre major. I had to do things like "find my center" and perform Shakespeare monologues as opposed to going to auditions, casting calls and meeting famous directors and producers like I'd hoped. Then, midway through second quarter, our teacher

Mr. Wood made us all create characters that we would later use in monologues. Mine was named Penelope and wore a girdle that her husband, George, didn't know about (she got dumped when she confessed her secret). It took this exercise for me to realize I could have a lot of fun creating theatre; despite the fact that it wasn't what I once thought it was.

Mr. Wood has been the most influential teacher in my School of the Arts career; without him, I would never have learned to love theatre like I do now. Although it wasn't always my passion, I'm glad I've developed passion for it, because it allows me to express myself in ways that have made me change for the better. And even though he'll never read this, I'd like to thank Mr. Samuel Nathan Wood for helping me to grow and become the theatre artist I am today.

Melanie Ropp Theatre



Everyone usually complains about school while they are in class and also usually when they are not. That is not my case. Yes, I complain in class. But after school, I tend to catch myself bragging about SOA. I love hearing people complain about how strict and large their school is. I laugh at the fact that most schools require students to wear nametags. That is what I love about SOA - knowing every face I see when I am on campus. Now, that does not mean that I like every face I see, but what school is perfect? Certainly no school is, but SOA is as close as it could ever get for me, and that is why leaving will be so hard.

In ninth grade, I remember begging my parents to let me go to West Ashley High. I was not too fond of the school but all my friends went there. I loved the idea of school football games and pep rallies. After a year of begging, I finally gave up and accepted the fact that I was stuck at a school with no sports, no real parking lot, and a field of trailers. I was very angry with my parents but now, I cannot thank them enough. All my friends from WAHS have graduated now and a lot of them envy me for going to such a unique school. So what if WAHS students get to leave campus and go bowling during P.E.? Anyone can do that in their spare time. Those students will never get to experience the closeness and uniqueness of students that SOA's atmosphere holds. It seems kind of like a family here instead of an uptight environment. Teachers want to be your friends and look out for you. Mr. Orvin has consistently looked out for me and has been someone I can confide in

for the past couple of years. His views of life and friendship will inspire me for the rest of my days. He is not only a great friend, but an unbelievably amazing teacher. Not seeing him every day next year is something I am not looking forward to.

SOA students used to get picked on immensely for going to a school so artsy with no sports. I think, finally, people are accepting us for our unique talent and spirit. I love that no one is left out. Everyone has a chance to shine and show off their talent. My thesis project was an incredible way for me to feel accomplished. It made all my seven years spent in Theatre so worth it. I never thought that I could create a whole show by myself, and the after-production feeling was so indescribable.

I will never forget Mr. Wood trying to steal my heels everyday or him forcing me to run around the room like a crazy monkey. Or, walking through the field and being hit in the face by a football and feeling like I was still standing but really, everyone was on the ground with me laughing. Only here would things, like this incident, be humorous. I will always remember the crazy games in Theatre - the noodle game, our version of red light/green light, and zip zap zup. Or, Mr. Younts making us talk with pencils in our mouths, every year singing "Lean on Me," finding places around campus or in class to sleep, the dead squirrel on the electrical line, bobbing for apples, or painting ceiling tiles.

I cannot think of one single word that could describe our school. Amazing does not even seem strong enough to cover it. I am so proud that I went here, and I feel absolutely blessed. I would not change this experience for the world. As ready as I am to move on, I will truly miss this school. These have been the best years of my life.

Amanda Eglen



Congratulations Amanda! Play fair.

Live a balanced life.

Learn some and think some,

and draw and paint

and sing and dance and

play and work every day some.

When you go out in the world,

watch out for traffic, hold hands,

hold your blanket, and stick together.

Love,

Mom, Dad, JJ & Snickers

Kierra Wilson



Congratulations Kierra,

We are so proud of our Princess
May all of your dreams come true
Wishing you the best.

Dad, Mom, & Kyra

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sept. 7 - 23, 2007

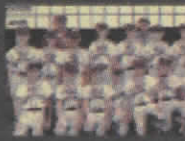
EYPSY
oct. 18 - nov. 10, 2007

a christmas story
nov. 23 - dec. 16, 2007

defiance
feb. 22 - mar. 8, 2008

rounding third
mar. 21 - apr. 5, 2008

enchanted april
apr. 25 - may 10, 2008



Zach Collins



Zachariah,
we are wild about
your hat, your flair,
and your most excellent friends.
But, mostly we are just
WILD about you!!!
Congratulations graduate!!!!
Love
momma, pops, Wells and Eliza

Hope Hendricks



Congratulations, Hope!
We are so proud of you!
You did it!!
Love, Your
Family.

Emily Nash



Emily,
You are the light of our life and we are very proud of you.
You can accomplish anything.
Love,
Mom, Dad, and Stormi

Alice Gaynor



Congratulations Alice!
Remember... "The important thing is not to stop
questioning."- Albert Einstein
And be your beautiful Self!
Much Love,
Mom

Robert Townsend



Robert, You're such a special
and gifted son.
You have so much to offer to your
Family and to the
world around you!
So always remember what a
Blessing you are
and how very much you're loved!
Love you
Mom, Dad, & Sister

Rachael Clow



Congratulations to our Shining
STAR.
We are so proud of you for all your
hard work, determination, and
accomplishments.
May you continue to shine and keep
God first in your life.
We Love You!

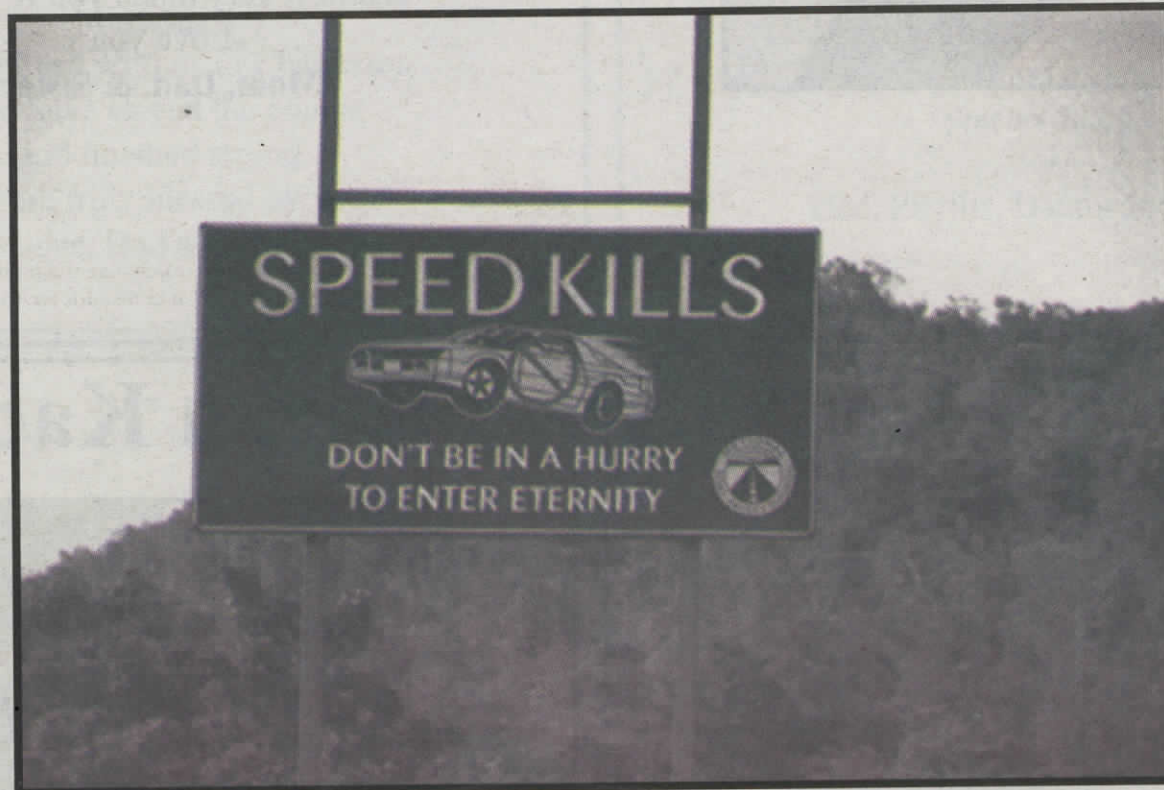
Regan Kadish



Regan,
Seems only yesterday you were
playing with Barbies...
Words alone cannot express how
much I LOVE YOU and how proud
you always make me.

Jill Hunter

Highway Safety Photographer



www.jillhunter.net

Samantha Hill Dance



If I entered SOA as a sixth grader, I don't really think I would change anything. Every moment here was amazing! Sure, there are problems and fights happen; you lose friends and you make new ones, but that's life. Some people change and others stay the same. That's just the way it is.

I originally came to SOA in eighth grade. So, my first change would be to audition a little sooner. I came in as a Dance major and I have been one ever since. That, I would not change. I love to dance; it puts me in my own little world. I had my own style and tried to be friends with everyone, even though it doesn't always work out that way. Dance was full of drama, so I would have probably learned to stand up for myself sooner. There was a ton of drama and rumors, but girls will be girls, and I don't think I could have changed that.

I left after my freshman year because of so much drama, and I do regret that. That is probably one of the few things I do regret in my life of eighteen years. I went to Fort Dorchester, and missed SOA every day that I was there. So, that is the second thing I would change. If I had known what I know now, then I would have stayed here and dealt with the problems at hand instead of running away from them. Now that I'm back for my senior year, everyone has changed so much. I would have definitely kept in touch with everyone more, so it wouldn't feel like I've been left behind. Now, ironic as it is, I'm

closer to my former enemies than I am to my former friends.

Out of everything that has happened over the years, I love every bit of it because it made me who I am today. What other school can you go to where you can do what you love to do best (for me that's dance), get an academic education, and have a chance to develop your own style and be yourself as well? Face it, it's not going happen! SOA is like a family where everyone knows everyone, and the people like you for who you are. Everyone is encouraged to find themselves and to not blend in with the crowd. No matter what happens, somebody will always be there for you, whether it's a teacher or another student. The lunch ladies are there to laugh and cut up – well, some of them at least – and even Ms. Jan in the office seems to have something to say to everyone. The nurse is as nice as they come and actually cares about her patients, whether they are really sick or just trying to get out of taking one of Mr. Brehm's tests. So, when it comes down to it, this is like a home away from home, for me at least. I would not change a minute of it. I just wish that I could have enjoyed it longer.

So, a note to all of the underclassmen: take advantage of it while you're here, because even though you may hate it sometimes, you'll be thankful that you got this opportunity in the long run. SOA really teaches you more than the arts and academics. The education is full of life lessons, and it will be a shame if you leave and learn those lessons a little too late. In my conclusion, live life to the fullest, laugh often, and love always. Remember, life is way too short for regrets!

Amber Passarello Dance



My years at School of the Arts have been OK. I mean, I thought this school would be great, seeing as I came from a strict Catholic school before. Ever since I came to this school in ninth grade, it has been quite an adventure. Not all of it was a good adventure, but it was mostly good. If it wasn't for this school, I wouldn't have met my best friend of four years, Pheraby Britt. Thanks girl, I love you! This school has done a lot for me and has given me a real look at life.

School of the Arts really helped me get through things in life. It helped me live the life I wanted, in a little way. I love some of the teachers who got me through these years of high school; they would have to be Mrs. Slowinski, Mrs.

Alvanos, Mr. Lindgren, Mrs. Colquitt and Mr. Brehm. They really truly believed in me, and had good hopes for me as well.

I really just want to say thanks to my good friends that helped me get through high school in one piece: Pheraby Britt, Danielle S., Courtney Richardson, Maggie Aton, Olivia Gore, Erin Elston, Brooke Cole, Brink Feaster, Megan Patrick, Elizabeth Anderson, and Brett Sims. Also, a special thanks to all the underclassman who helped as well: Dee-Dee Duncan, Ryan Clauson, Madison Henry, Caroline Britt, and last but not least, my little bro Little Dean.

My high school time – basically all the time I spent at School of the Arts – was very exciting, and I will never forget it. High school is a memorable thing. Yes, I do regret some things, but I still had fun.

Amanda Eglen Band



There is no senior in high school that will tell you they love school. Everyone is just ready to graduate. I am, however, pretty certain that most of the seniors at SOA are much happier here than they would have been at any other high school. SOA is quirky; there are so many little things about it that make it special. I've grown so accustomed to Mr. Kerr's lengthy digressions and Mr. Murray's stories that I take them for granted. I've been to so many schools, and I've never had teachers more compassionate than those I have had at SOA. An SOA education is invaluable because almost everyone is more motivated, and they care about what they are doing.

One of the things I love about SOA is its size. It's small, but not too small. I know who everyone in my graduating class is, and several of my teachers have taught me for several years, giving SOA a sense of closeness and familiarity that I

cannot imagine is present anywhere else. Even though I didn't come to SOA until eighth grade, making the transition was easy because the school is small and it's easy to make friends within your major.

Although I'm not going to pursue a career in music, being in Band has taught me so much. I've learned to take personal responsibility, and, more importantly, to listen. There are so many amazing musicians in Band, and I am very lucky to have met them. I will probably miss being in Band more than just about anything else.

The two people that I owe the most to are Ms. Marshall and Dr. Cusatis. Both of them made me love reading and English and taught me how to write. Even though I haven't loved every single book I've read for their classes, I have at least learned to appreciate them.

Everyone's SOA education is different; these are just some of the reasons mine has been so valuable to me. Even though I'm sick of school, I think my good experiences at SOA outweigh the bad ones. I would never, ever want to change the high school experience I've had here for anything.

Deidre Buck Theatre

In my time here at SOA, I've learned to strive for my best and to 'not give up 'til you get there.' Well, being here has helped me accomplish many of my goals – of wanting to be known and seen, of being heard and listened to, of understanding what it means to be different and not be ashamed of it. SOA has put that in my face and dared me to make it worthwhile...and I did.

Throughout my many years, starting in sixth grade, of being at SOA, I've seen the ups and downs of the school. I can't leave here without saying that it helped me grow and become a stronger character. I never in my wildest dreams thought I would be able to make people laugh the way that I do. I love being in the limelight, and being the center of attention gives me a rush that would knock your socks off. Especially during senior thesis week for Theater, with the big personality I have. At first I couldn't think of a single idea for my senior thesis. I remember in eleventh grade when Mr. Younts took us outside and we sat in a big circle to discuss what we wanted to do for our senior theses. I remember hearing all of these great

ideas, and when it finally came to me, all I could say was, "I don't know? All I know is that I want it to be big." Well, SOA let me get big with a thesis that knocked everyone out of their seats with laughter. There is no other school out there like this one. I don't care what anyone else says: this is a great school and yes, you may hate it, but you know you keep coming back each year, which means you really, truly like it on the inside (unless you have no choice but to go here).

SOA has been a great deal of help to me, and so has everyone in it. You have helped me in so many ways. I can change the way I talk from proper to sassy to geechi and many, many, many more. So with all of this, I would like to say: thank you SOA for the laughter, anger, stress, the good and bad senior pranks, the teachers, staff, and faculty, the trailers for classrooms, the hallways without lockers like the schools on TV, the great Lake SOA, the friends, the enemies, the lunches, the bake sales, the wild animals running around campus, the 100 minute classes, A and B days, the school lockdowns,

Katelyn Johnson Creative Writing



2018 – ten years from now. Wow, that's a big thought. Well, let's see. I *want* to be a published author with a stable life, I would *like* to have my own house, it would be *nice* if I was married, maybe with *at least* one child. But most of all I would like to be a published author, with steady work and time enough to do it.

As for the second half of the topic, "how do you intend to make it happen," I've already started. One, I've been practicing my creative writing since I was a child. Then God allowed me to get accepted into SOA as a Creative Writing major. This opportunity allowed my natural gifts 1) to be in a setting where they were challenged against more

"trained" writers, 2) were honed through the different courses, and 3) were used *much* more often. As of now, right this second, I am accepted into the English major at USC Aiken, which I plan to attend for the next five years after graduation. Majoring in English (with a Creative Writing emphasis) will also give me a head-start on an "in-between" job, something that could support me as I attempt to break into the world of commercial writing. Hopefully I'll be able to manage – or, as my mom hopes, "marry a guy who's rich so he can support your writing."

Whatever happens, I've been well set up for my dream future. I got into a fine arts high school, I'm on the road to attending a college with my desired major, and I know there are people all around me who will try their very best to help me achieve my dream. Look out world, here I come!

Michael Scott Band



By the year 2018, I hope I will have started a music career. I would like to work in many aspects of the music industry, such as producing, performing, composing classical pieces, and also writing songs for solo artist and groups. I will hopefully have established myself as a big name producer. The main genre of music I would like to be known for is R&B and Soulful, because the best producers that are well known right now are people that are able to go back and fourth between these genres, and also Pop and Hip-Hop, which will allow me to be able to adjust to the artist. I consider myself eclectic when it comes to my choices in music, because I enjoy all music no matter the genre. I

appreciate all the different types and the hard work that is put into creating them.

I would like to live in Charlotte, North Carolina and have my studio based in a metropolitan area of North Carolina; but I would also love to have a home studio in Miami, Florida where I can do work with artists from the area or artists who often vacation in the Georgia to Florida area. Along with producing, I would like to have a Jazz and Soul Combo with a few of my friends from high school that I'm sure I'll be in contact with. Through my music, I want to clean up some of the garbage we hear on the radio and give all genres of music a positive outlook to people and change how the music industry is perceived. I want my label to help aspiring artist in their pursuit to make it in the industry by giving them a chance to have their music heard.

Alice Gaynor Visual Artist

I have been at School of the Arts for seven years. I would prefer not to talk about my middle school experience because it was depressing, but the rest of it was fairly enjoyable. I will say that high school life at SOA has been unconventional and a little absurd.

My high school memories are highlighted by the dorky outings of Hanna and I, planning things that never happen, late nights at Hannah's house, going downtown and doing nothing for hours, Catherine being the love of my life, John being weird, shopping with Alex, Alanna de la Peña, Virginia being

bubbly, Liz going insane, long car rides, soap on mirrors, roller coasters, hugging my favorite Visual Arts boys, the rantings of so-called existential poets, being annoyed by Daniel, and the torture from my exercise obsessed friend, a.k.a. Kevin. All these things seem uneventful and stupid, but they were truly memorable.

As my high school years are coming to an end, I realize how much I am going to miss them. I know that there are some people who I will never see again, and the thought of that makes me so sad. All good things must come to an end. Unfortunately, it is high school's time.

Erin Elston Dance



I have attended Charleston County School of the Arts for seven years. I have finally realized that SOA has impacted my life greatly. I remember the first people that I introduced myself to at the sixth grade auditions: Shamyra Terrell Washington and Courtney Nicole Richardson. I was so afraid that I wouldn't make it because I had no prior dance experience before my auditions, and the girls were so flexible. There was a girl by the name of Elizabeth LeTran that I remember so vividly; her legs were practically above her head. Once I got my acceptance letter, I couldn't believe it. The first day of school, I was so nervous. My homeroom teacher was Ms. Enright, and it was her first year at SOA. The first friend I made was Ver'Shaunessy Washington. I was like, "Girl, you got a long name and how do you spell that?" Then I met Tierra Lashay Miller. That girl was crazy, but we had fun. Then I met Joseph Henry Drayton III, who picked on me for all of sixth grade, but I think he had a crush on me.

Rachael Clow Theatre



I am so scared. I can't believe I'm leaving high school to become a freshman all over again. Man! Oh well, high school was fun while it lasted. I remember after my first week of school, I seriously wanted to leave this place and go back to my old school. I just wasn't used to this type of environment. But as the years went on, I started enjoying myself more and more. I've met so many great people, including the teachers. I feel so free here, even if Davis and Cook are always patrolling the grounds.

This school has taught me so many lessons about life. I think I've become more tolerant, open-minded, and patient with people. Theater has taught me that it's okay to be a little crazy. In fact, I don't think I would have made it in Theater if I didn't have a little crazy in me. Let that be a lesson to all you upcoming Theater majors. Be crazy – they love it! Ms. Link and Mr. Younts are some pretty caring and talented people (even if Younts hits me with wood). Don't let me forget my Theater family; I couldn't have picked

Once I entered high school, I became very close friends with Syreitta Simone Grey and "she thinks that she is somebody granny, but I still love her." Courtney Nicole Richardson, there are so many memories. One that I laugh at all the time is when we were in seventh grade, and I used to be like, "Courtney you're my cousin," and she used to be like, "Girl leave me alone, cuz we ain't related." She didn't believe me, but we are the best of friends now. Olivia Renee Gore: girl you have changed so much since sixth grade. You were so quiet and shy...now you're just loud. "Cause We Tha Best," that's what you would say.

Wesley Cordell Mosteller: what should I say, "Yes, Father!" You always try to tell me what to say. Sometimes I listened, sometimes I didn't, but you were always there for me. To the Grammy Family, to Grayland: I miss running late to school and our early morning conversations. To Joel Brown: "Yes, I will buy you lunch." To Carly Jones: now you know you are my white girl. I will miss saying "Carly can I..." To Ms. Awkerman, now you know you are one of the coolest teachers. I will miss you all. **CLASS OF 2008 "WE THA BEST!"**

a better group of people to share a major with.

My friends played a big role in making these four years of high school great. We all know there are cliques in school, and mine consist of four hilarious girls. We've shared some great times together, from the mango to the eye rolls, the Ring and the piggyback rides. We have been through some serious stuff together, but it's funny how we always laugh about it later. These girls are the best, and high school wouldn't have been tolerable without them. And I want to say thanks to this really special guy that I met in Chemistry – he is one of a kind. Enough said.

I'm going to miss this place, but I do look forward to starting a new chapter. This school has taught me what I need to know to get me where I want to go. I can honestly say that I never really dreaded going to most of my classes, so you teachers should be proud. I hope that when I attend college, I will retain the knowledge that I gained here and apply it to my work there. Thank you to everyone who has helped me, taught me, or been kind to me. I hope everyone becomes what they want to become. Goodbye, young women and young men. Love you!

Pheraby Britt Dance



Yay! I'm so close to achieving a goal, a journey, a chapter, and I'm moving on to start a new one really soon at College of Charleston this fall. SOA has been the best and the worst of times, but as optimistic as I am, I feel the whole experience was a privilege and an opportunity. If I could take it again, I would take it in a heartbeat.

The campus has been the same for the past seven years, as well as my major and a group of teachers, but as I walk through the same halls now, I realize I've been friends or best friends with almost everyone. My friends have not only fed me, helped me academically, carpooled, and listened to my long, drawn out stories in the dressing room, but have pushed me to be more confident and optimistic. Not to mention the good-advice and millions of hugs. Thanks Amber.

SOA has led me to become vulnerable

to change and people. I've had to work on the relationships I've made here and use the negativity brought to me to help build my character. By attending this school, I've been able to grow and use my peers and parents to help guide me in such a concentrated environment. My passion for the arts has developed greatly here with the encouragement and shared passion that everyone else has, too. Not everyone gets along, but when you're doing something you love, people share a bond that grows and that you may never have with anyone else.

It's hard to believe that SOA is such a small and exclusive school, yet it is open to more than ten times its size in ideas, creativity, and learning. Well, my time here has expired like the tuna sandwich I left on top of a locker in the dressing room over winter break in eighth grade. Now my sister, Caroline, and brother, Dean, can enjoy the relaxed school that has given me enough freedom to hold myself together and stay on track, independently doing what I love. A message to any underclassmen reading this: Don't abuse this "chapter" in life; it can't be spark-noted.

Gabriella Terranova Theatre



The Theatre majors always say that the theatre class is one big family. I definitely agree; even when you don't get along with someone for a while, you find a way to get around it. It's like that saying: you like someone because of their good qualities, but you love them because of their faults (or something like that). As a theatre class, we love each other for our weaknesses, our flaws, and our failings. Every mistake or bad thing we've done just shows our humanity and ends up bringing us closer together. That sense of community does extend through the rest of school, and that is probably one of the

Lauren Turner Piano



SOA? Education? Hmm... interesting two words to use in the same sentence. S-O-A (n): a school for artists, where you learn artistic things. Ed-u-ca-tion (n): the result produced by instruction, training, or study. Now when we put these two words together, it produces a highly reactive product. This is what students gain from being at a school that encourages individuality along with academic success. Our students are brilliant. The atmosphere that SOA provides allows students to grow and discover who they are in a much safer, sheltered environment. Don't get me wrong; I'm not saying our students are naive in any way. We know how it is in the real world. At least we think we do. I almost envy students who transferred to SOA from other high schools because they really know and appreciate how

things I'll miss the most after I leave.

My mom is shoving all these *Surviving Your Freshman Year* books on me and they are actually freaking me out more: all those warnings about what to do, what not to do, and "what-ever-you-do-don't-do-this." I wish we could just stay for the rest of our lives with this bunch of people who we can fall back on! On the other hand, I also can't wait to start over at college. This is everyone's chance to leave behind that awkward adolescent phase when we did really embarrassing things. It's our chance, not to become someone else, but to become what we've always wanted to be, and what our friends have actually held us back from. Our friends have become our source of comfort and stability, and who wants to change that? But we're going to be uncomfortable anyway in freshman year, so why not rock the boat a little?

special SOA is.

Fights? Cliques? Honestly, I'd say we have very few of either. I can only remember two fights in my whole seven years here at this wonderful school: Hench twins v. Brooke Warden and Jordan Grissom v. Alexis Robles. Girls, of course you know what that was about. West Ashley has fights everyday, now what does that say about us? Which leads me to my next point. Sure, every school is going to have their cliques, but I'd say that ours are relatively low-key. I've always been a social butterfly, never truly fitting in with one group, and I think that's how most SOA students are. We all seem to get along despite how different we are. Creative writing freaks, theater groupies, dorky pianists, band geeks, strings nerds, obnoxious vocalists, "laid back" visual artists, and the preppy dancers...we're all one big melting pot of crazy.

I'll miss you SOA. Your flooded parking lots, painted walls, cracked floors, interesting teachers, guitar circles, and "cottages" will be priceless memories forever.

Joshua Braunreuther Band



Wow. It really hasn't hit me until now that I've been here for six whole years of my life. That's a long time of seeing the same peoples' faces everyday. I think I'm really going to miss that, and all the memories that I've made with these people over the years.

The first and most memorable memory of all would probably have to be lunch in eighth grade. I'll never forget launching food across the cafeteria and launching spaghetti up at the ceiling (especially the spaghetti part, because it's still there), and making Grant Borgsteadt drink/eat these horrible concoctions everyday that we made up from miscellaneous bits of the already awful tasting lunch food. The worst part of it was that we didn't even pay him to do this; he did it for free.

I also remember that one time Nick Gantlin stabbed Scott Polk in the chest with a pencil and when Adam Warden sucker punched Sam Parvin in the face. Adam has thought he's the bomb ever since. As for Nick, he's small but crazy; I wouldn't mess with that kid if I were you.

Just about any time it would rain, it would flood out that area in the back that leads to the bus loop, creating "Lake SOA."

Elizabeth Anderson Vocal



My years spent at SOA have been some of the best and worst years of me and my classmates' lives. Starting at SOA as a sixth grader was the scariest, yet biggest thrill of my life. I couldn't wait for school to start, and I'm sure my classmates would agree.

Throughout middle school, I met most of the friends and classmates I would then hope to graduate with senior year. Back then, it seemed as though the unity of our class could never be separated by anything, not even the fads and phases all of us would go through at some point. Middle school was also the time everyone was figuring out who their close friends were, which high school students they looked up to the most, and which guys were the cutest.

The step up into high school seemed like a huge, scary leap into a different world, but because my classmates and I were technically still going to the same school we had already been attending, it didn't seem quite as intimidating. High school brought new attitudes, new cliques, new experiences, and new curfews for most. We were older, learning a lot more in school and outside. A whole new idea of after school and weekend activities arose. Many of us discovered what a real party was, for instance, and why our parents and teachers had reinforced the idea of not

I'll never forget kids doing cannonballs off the platform out there, and one time, a senior was even kayaking across the water. Even I myself swam through it once on the way to my bus. Man, was that a bad idea. I had to walk home soaked, and I had a bunch of ants all over me.

My best classes have always included Patrick Wooton. I've known that kid since elementary school, and he'll do anything for a laugh. We caused so much trouble in Mr. Reese's class that he had to separate us to completely opposite sides of the classroom, and even that didn't stop us from being a distraction. By far, the worst was Ms. Drennan's in tenth grade. The administration should've known better than to put me, Dillon Cohen, Jesse Parker, and Patrick Wooton all in one class together. I feel sorry for her because we were probably the worst students she's ever had, and having all of us at once just made it worse.

Although I can't wait to finally be out of high school and graduated, I'm going to really miss this place. I feel sorry for anyone who's never gone to school here, because they really missed out. It's going to be hard facing the fact that I may never again see these people that I've been with for six years. I just want the senior class of '08 to know that no matter where I go, or what I do, I'll always remember them, and I hope you will too.

giving into peer pressure so much.

By this point, some of us had drifted apart from each other, while others had grown closer together. Some faces faded into the backdrop and eventually disappeared because of drugs or mischievous behavior, while other faces would fade only temporarily when a new boyfriend or girlfriend became a big part of their life.

Despite all of the sad and confusing moments we've had to deal with – such as the death of a friend or family member, a threatening family situation, a serious dispute with a parent, friend or teachers and the rocky road of decisions we've had to make while trying to discover ourselves and each other – we've finally made it to this point. This defining point in our lives, that can either make us or break us, has finally come. Some of us are more than ready to be done and move on to bigger and better things, while some, like myself, are ready to be done and move on, but feel anxious and a little afraid of the future. What if life throws a lot of curve balls, or becomes almost impossible at times? Where will we be in ten years? What about in just two or three? Who will we become? Will the little facts we learned about life and subjects taught in class truly help us in the future?

All we can do now is hope they will... hope that all the inspiring, positive, and creative energy that has guided us through our years at SOA will carry us through the years of our adult lives.

Katherine Cox Creative Writing



There are a million things that I could do or be ten years from today. I have the normal and modest goals of any person. I'd like to graduate from college, start a family

– get married and have children. I want to be well-off, at least middle class. But I don't need excessive riches, because, honestly, I am content with the basics. Who really needs a car in every color and shoes to match?

I'm going to college, and I plan on majoring in one of four things: fashion, writing, management, or teaching. Those things all offer fairly stable jobs, and I enjoy doing them. I can live the abovementioned comfortable life with a profession in any of

those areas and still be happy. However, those four majors are really more a part of my "logical and ethical life plan" as opposed to my "dream plan."

I want to own my own Tea Room in Downtown Charleston – a quaint little shop, offering a wide variety of teas and delicate desserts. I want to have all sorts of crazy hats and gloves and coats for people to dress up in while they enjoy their afternoon tea in wild, colorful teacups. (Wondering why I call it my "dream plan" yet?)

Ten years from now, I want to be brewing a pot of Earl Grey while whipping up a batch of Italian Crème Petit Fours, knowing that – at 5:30 pm – I get to go home to my husband and children and enjoy their company for another night.

All I have to do to get there is *persevere*.

Catherine Meyer Visual Arts



First, I would like to congratulate myself on completing twelve years of school. Without all of my friends, this wouldn't be possible. So I'd like to thank them, I guess...

Carly – I firmly stand by my statement in November, and Elton can back me up. You will be the wife of a billionaire and have a massive rock on your finger. Just make sure you have insurance, since someone may come and take it in the middle of the night because they made a 4,000 dollar purchase on their debit card. Just don't turn me in to the cops. So there's Andre, Thundapants!, Purple Teeth, Valentine's Days, jams...I love you to my death. Alex – History and Art would have been unbearable without you. Working Title is amazing every time, and for one last time, "Put some clothes on!" Ellie – the countdown begins to apartments in London, dogs named Slayer, coffee, Christmas lights, black walls, making millions; time will tell. I will ALWAYS remember Ryan, you and me sitting at that table at three in the morning. If we can't do London, I am book for Mars. Mr. Darcy is out there somewhere, I am guessing in an abandoned field in Hertfordshire, but that's only my guess. I am so glad I have shared my life with you (Benicio, Ryan, Missy, Jamie, James, Marlon...it's all in there somewhere). When you die of cancer and I of house fire, because I was making your dinner, someone will find our notes. They will publish them and we will finally make our millions. You're my Best. I love you.

Zach – I couldn't ask for a better friend. Rides to school in the Lexus, and movie nights with you were the best. You mean the world to me. Don't change! I love you so much. Dillon – no one can make me laugh as hard as you. Your talented, so don't waste it. Don't touch that mainnee! Davis – okay! I will marry you, but I am not cooking a single thing. I hope you think of me whenever you hear John Lee Hooker and see Lambeau Field. Marshall – good ol' Marshman! You're the perfect drum solo to those rock songs of yours. Oh, and I totally beat you in tennis.

Bugs – you're my permanent shopping buddy. Economics with you made my life. Alice – Harry Potter called, he wants his clothes back. Hanna – Fourth of July with you was amazing. I still have that bracelet. Adrin – you're the best! Tony Tolbert – win a game! Hannah – Mardy is still in the basement when you're ready to get married.

Amelia – I so rocked the Nikes first, and you know it. Tony – when you own the world, give me a call. Nick – I will miss you and that boot. Patrick – I adore you. You are hilarious. Daniel – Marriage? Mrs. Olson – Can I please go to the art room, I swear it will be my last time? Ryan Adams – I picked up your tux, our wedding is tomorrow.

My friends are what I will remember most about School of the Arts. I will miss creating amazing artwork, which you can buy for thousands at www.catherineisperfect.com.

What will I be doing in 2018? I don't know, call my assistant's assistant and make an appointment. We may be able to talk by 2020.

Christy Miller Piano



My first year at Charleston County School of the Arts was sophomore year. I was very shy, having had a major culture shock after transferring from home schooling to a public school. I was

little confused about, well, everything! My English teacher (not naming names) graded my summer-reading essays poorly, because I didn't use MLA format. I didn't even know MLA format existed! Needless to say, that particular teacher and I did not get along very well. Having auditioned for both Visual Arts and Piano, I was happy just to get into school. I ended up being a Piano major. I still enjoy drawing, though. It makes my notes more interesting.

Getting back to Piano, Mrs. Benson was so understanding and helped me with an absolute myriad of issues with timing, theory, and being nervous at recitals. Although I usually got the notes right, my timing was horrible at first. Thank you, Mrs. Benson! I know the difference between a quarter note and a dotted quarter note, and I have the benefit of knowing one of the greatest piano teachers in history (and, no, I'm not kissing up, Mrs. B. That's the truth!). Mr. Clarke, on the other hand, was not quite as serious as Mrs. Benson. Between jazz ensembles and learning how to play the snare drum, Mr. Clarke told us music jokes and did "Looney Tunes" impressions (he's best at Bugs Bunny).

Academic teachers were pretty cool, too. Mrs. Bunch, somehow I made it

Alex Corsaro Visual Arts

I find myself continuously rewriting this senior essay, because how can I sum up the past seven years in one small page? The best way to explain how I feel is to admit that finally leaving will be a very big change, and although I can't wait, I will always remember the past seven years at SOA.

When I came to SOA I knew I was in for something new and exciting, but I could never have imagined when I walked in as a sixth grader that I would still be here today. I have grown up at SOA and learned so much from my friends and teachers. I still have my planner from eighth grade that has pictures from middle school decorating the cover. I love looking back through it and reading the notes that are written inside my old planner! My middle school years didn't only include writing notes; I learned so much from my teachers. A special thanks goes to Ms.

through Algebra 2. I'm sure it was because of something you did. I'm not sure what it was, but it was something. Mrs. Bronk, writing in our journals was always fun! I'll never forget Harry Harrison going off on random rants about John Lennon or anarchy when these subjects were completely irrelevant to the lesson! Mr. Pezeca, you've got to be the most awesome French teacher ever! I'm glad you understood that panic attack I had when there was a thunderstorm that electrocuted Ms. Henry. I was really scared. Dr. Price, I was the only sophomore in your class, but I hope I did well. (By the way, sorry about that beaker. My hands were slippery.) Mr. Reese! I'll forever remember your "wailwoods" and "ir ordeal". And that role play script I worked on with Harry? I didn't write the part with questionable language, just so you know. Mrs. Matthews, I enjoyed watching *Joan of Arc* and passing notes to Marie (Oops! Did I say that?). You're cool anyway! Mr. Lindgren, you contributed plenty to global warming! Ms. Tisdale, at first I was scared of taking an A.P. class, and I was a little scared of you at first, but you're a really awesome teacher (and person), and A.P. wasn't so bad. All of you teachers are awesome, but I can't fit you all, unfortunately.

And, to all my friends, I love you all!!! Alisa Myers, Katelyn Johnson, Tradd PSTRAK, Marie League, Carley Congdon, Grace Lee, Graeme Rock, Audrey Johnson, Jamie Grant, Clare Wolf, Katherine Ms. Lovett, and the rest of you who know who you are! I never would have made it without you guys! Good luck next year! And, Mom and Dad, thanks so much for all of your support!

Lasley, who truly exposed me to a new outlet for me to explore. Without her, I would never have discovered how much I love public speaking!

I have absolutely loved being a Visual Art major; it's by the far the most fun. There is something to be said about a random group of kids who were thrown together in sixth grade and became like a family. I can't wait to walk across the stage with all of you. I love you guys! I have made so many other friends, and I wouldn't have been able to get through all of these years without you all!

Although I have a bad case of senioritis, I have to admit that finally leaving SOA will be really weird and there are actually things that I am going to miss. I'm glad I was able to be in an environment where painting the walls of the hallways and singing in the field are everyday experiences!

Jamaal Perry Band



In 2018, I will be a world famous musician, and I will have legions of fans all across the globe. Here's how I'm going to do it: first I will produce songs, and while I'm doing that, I will start a

band (I haven't decided on a genre yet). In that way, I'll establish a reputation as a musician. I will then sell my beats and make a profit as a producer.

Then I will try to get my band to be famous while also making hot songs. I also sure would love to live in different countries just for a little while – mostly in Japan though, because I love their technology!!

Mikayla Carr Vocal



High school is a time often referred to as "the best years of your life." However, I pray that this statement is false as it would mean that I have already reached my peak, and I'm simply not ready for the downward slope that comes after a person

has peaked. This is not to say that my time at School of the Arts hasn't been wonderful, because it has – for the most part. I will admit that, at times, the longer school days and old recycled buildings could really get me down. But one walk down the fine arts building could always instantly remove any negative thoughts toward the school that I have come to know and love. It has truly been a privilege to watch my peers grow up and flourish in their respective art areas and to attend their art shows, dance and piano recitals, theatre productions, literary readings, and band and strings concerts.

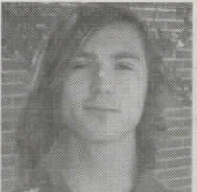
On the first day of sixth grade, each one of us here was terrified. We had to meet in a crowded cafeteria before being shuffled out in single file lines across a field of wet grass (I do not miss the days before the sidewalks) to get to the six trailers that have, over time, become lovingly referred to as "the sixth grade village." Throughout that day, we made as many introductions as humanly possible, laying the boundaries for friendships

we hoped would grow. Some did, but others...not so much. But for those friendships that did grow and remained for all of middle and high school, I am sincerely grateful. I could never have imagined on that first day six years ago how heartbreaking it would be to leave the people I was just introducing myself to. But at a school like this, it's hard not to build lasting friendships.

It seems that small classes combined with even smaller classrooms is the recipe for family. Cheesy, I know, but you can't deny that it's true. Here at the School for the Arts, everyone knows everyone. And while everyone may not necessarily like everyone, being able to know the name and face of each member of your graduating class is a privilege students at many of the larger high schools don't possess.

I will miss so much about this school, but I am glad to see my time here end. There is a certain shelter around all of us at SOA that comes from the content of the familiar. I'm ready to shed this security blanket that I've held for so long and move on to the real world. I'm curious to see if I can actually hack it on my own. I pray that I can, as I really have no choice. I can only hope that my time here has made me a strong enough individual to face the many challenges I have ahead, related to my art major or not. One thing is for certain: I will always cherish the many memories I have on this campus, and I will leave with friendships that will last a lifetime. Goodbye everyone – and thank you, School of the Arts.

Patrick Wooten Band



Though my years at School of the Arts have been just as stressful as any high school education, I value them more than any other aspect of my life. My education has become more or less...priceless.

It's not that I value the school only for the education; any school could give you an education just as good, if not better, than SOA's. It has helped me to move forward with my life. It gave me a positive, diverse environment to grow and develop in, with teachers and peers that supported me not only in my academics, but in my major as well, which inspired me to develop my skills.

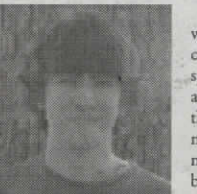
Music is really a very big part of my life now. I owe most of it to Mr. Kerr and Mr. Singleton (the

old middle school band teacher). They have shown me more than I could ask to know about music, and how it can relate to life and personality. Being up on all those stages playing concerts will be experiences that I will never forget. It just instills this awesome feeling in you once you get past the point of being nervous, and for a while at least, you just feel like the bomb.

I have so many memories with the interesting people I have met here. All of them are creative and talented in some way or another. I have found wonderful girls that I had generally good relationships with and who showed me the "wild side" of life. But it's really just the coolest thing to see your friends performing on stages or showing pieces at art galleries, and just being able to think to yourself that you know those people.

I don't think I would change my education if I had the choice. I like who I am, and I think I wouldn't be as likely to do anything with my life without it. All of this together has overall helped me become...me.

Jesse Hildreth Band



I don't know what I'll be doing in 2018. I can only speculate on what I'll spend my time doing. Chances are, I'll have a job that'll pay the bills. I might like it, I might not. Hopefully, playing music will work out. Ideally, I'd be playing in a good symphony orchestra or opera house, preferably symphony orchestra. It would be nice to have a job making or fixing instruments. That's something I've

always wanted to try. No matter what, I'm going to keep playing.

By 2018, I want to have been in space. If the analysts and experts are correct about space tourism, I want to go, but only once. I don't really like roller coasters, so this might end up being a terrible mistake. It will probably cost way more than I'll have, so it looks like I'll have to win the lottery. Playing Frisbee would be fun in space. In fact, anything would be fun in space – at least for a little bit.

My true goal by 2018 is to have thought up something good to write for this essay. I'm not that good at this kind of thing.

Ashley Esposito Piano



In the future, global warming will be a thing of the past, thanks to the awesome scientific research of me, Ashley Esposito. I

will have many major occurrences my life. One will be becoming a Nobel Peace Prize winner, and the second will be becoming a perfect mother and wife. After college, my life will take off with work and marriage. The excitement will never end. A two bedroom apartment in Charleston and a 96 Volvo will be the only two things I own.

The living is fun and easy. Work will be a blast, since I get to cruise the harbor in search of people harming our mother

earth. On the weekends, I'll teach people how to play piano. But the most important thing of all will be that I'll have the love of my life. After putting up with me for three years of high school and five years of college, I'll know he is a keeper.

Finally the day will come when I'm asked by the government to head a research project aimed to eliminate global warming. I'll help so many people. YES! The feeling of satisfaction!

I have so much ahead of me, with a Bachelor's degree in music and a Masters in environmental engineering. I'm excited for what else is in store for me after that. Maybe I will become SUPER WOMAN and fight evil!!! THE WORLD WILL SOON BE A BETTER PLACE AGAIN!!!

Diana Sabb Vocal



So I have just closed 2 chapters in my life in 7 years, it seems longer than that counting all the crazy memories I've made here. (this really sucks) I have grown up, realized my faults, mistakes and

embraced the many talents that God has blessed me with. SOA is not your typical high school we had lots of mix personalities, and attitudes but one thing that we all share is that we are amazingly talented. I mean no school has dancers running around with no clothes on, vocal majors singing loudly in the hall and raiding the bathrooms, band people just outside loudly playing all the wrong notes! Middle school is a blur. I can still remember when I 1st time I came into high school vocal with Mr. Kevin "WAYNE" Eakes. There are no words to describe how much he truly cared about us and his passion for music. Solfege is now my best friend. With Mr. Eakes I learned how to stretch my boundaries, be brave, "think, breath, sing," and never let anything stop me from what I wanted to achieve with my music. To Dr. Price.. I can truly say that chemistry was AMAZINGGG and I think I'm the only one who loved chemistry 100%. Mrs. Rogers. what can I say?? I loved all you raps about S.T.A.T.S. Ms. Miller, thanks for the chit chats and knowing that I could actually turn out to be a great person and always telling me to be beautiful inside and out. The vocal class has grown so close together in the pass couple of years. We have went through changes and have learned to somewhat adapt to them. The friends that have been there through everything there are no words to express how much you have impacted my life. When I 1st got to vocal the 1st person I met was Ellie, I didn't know that we would end up loving each other for seven years thanks for being the hardest one on me, NEVER listening to me, hating my matching obsession, calling me names and even though we fought the most I'm glad you still remained you: honest but loving and never changing. Chelsea "cabbage head" I've seen you grow over the years thanks for being there, listening to me ramble. I can officially say

that you are the humblest one out of all of us. Anna "Banana" you and your cheesy days, being a goof ball, falling off toilets and correcting my grammar. They've been there through fights, laughs, cries and losses over the years. They even accepted me when I danced in every mirror I saw and have and had an obsession with Harry Potter and Hannah Montana. Heather and Elizabeth we made it, seven years being 1st sopranos. You girls are awesome and I learned mostly everything from you guys because ya'll had this passion for music that I'd never seen before. I know in both of your futures there is something great in stored for you. Demetrius and Francis thanks for making me laugh never lose your spirits.... ya'll are a mess... Candice, Alecia, Landon, Shakira, Devon I was really glad that I had the opportunity to get to know you guys this year ...all of you guys have voices that have been truly anointed by God.. so never stop singing no matter what happens... hopefully the year for you guys will be AwEsOME if not I know ya'll will do something drastic to make it great. Jessie, Celeste and Megan I LOVE you ...stay out trouble don't drive the boys to crazy and stay beautiful always. Grace, Elizabeth Jeffrey, Min, and Victoria "AZN" crew! I love you guys! You guys are awesome, no movie is better than Rush Hour food is our friend! KonNichWa!! Ashlee, my lil sister time has really caught up to us finally. I'm really going to miss you because through everything that we've been through and you have still remain sweet and there. I want to thank my mom for believing in me, loving me and allowing me the opportunity to even audition for the school. Although it hasn't always been easy raising me. You have taught me values, given me motivation and advice that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. To my Dad I know you would be so proud of me because I'm graduating and I knew you wanted me to do that more than anything. I will make you proud and think of you in everything that I do. I know you are looking down at me in heaven saying job well done. You will always be in my heart, my mind and my soul. For those of you who I forgot to mention, I wish you well in graduating, getting successful and mainly making your lives here memorable.

Kierra Wilson Band



Well being at this school has been a very memorable experience. I have learned so many lessons. Some I liked and some I didn't like. I have met so many different and interesting people. Most of them I liked while others I could do without. But I will still miss them all. When I first came in eighth grade I only knew one person, Ashlee. And she left me on the first day. Thank You!!! LOL But anyway I always consider her my first SOA friend and remember all the times in band when we "forgot" our instruments. So I'll start with her. **Ashlee:** Well it's been a long journey. We had our up and downs. Lots of downs LOL. But you made my time at SOA fun and memorable. Especially when you shot down my hopes and dreams. But anyway I'm gonna miss you next year...Have fun at Claffin. **TeTe (Donte):** We had fun the past few years. Well what can I say DRAMA. And for some reason you were always the cause of it. But you always seemed to never have anybody hate you. I still don't understand that. But have fun in the Marines.... shoulda chose Air Force...but I hope that you're successful in all your future endeavors. **Shauny:** I just realized I've never seen you mad. I don't know why that is. But every time I see you're in a good mood. It's always fun being around you. And even though you left me by myself that day you're still my buddy. I'll miss you. **Janella:** This year has been fun. I enjoyed that fake "Fraternity" Nun Phi Nun during lunch. There's always a party when you're around...Have fun in college next year. **Devon:** I don't know why we didn't talk that much before this year. You made Gov't/Econ and Music Theory bearable. I love our continuous daily arguments and OH YEAH!!!! You know what I'm talking about. I'm gonna miss you so much next year!!! **Shakira and Alecia:** You guys made Musical Theatre very, very fun. Its funny to watch you guys yell at Mr. Baker even if I wasn't there half the time. Have fun next year. **Allie:** Seriously I think we were

Jordan Grissom Dance



My years at SOA have been indescribable. I've got so much to say, but so little room. First of all, I would like to thank every single teacher who has changed my life in such a significant way. Ms. Branscome, Mr. Davis, Dr. Cusatis, Mr. Brehm, Ms. Rogers, Mr. Anderson, (I know you're not here anymore, but you made me love school and my major every single day of my life), Ms. Olson, Ms. Lawson, Ms. Touhiri, Ms. Lasley, Ms. Castle, Mr. Orvin, and Ms. Slowinski. Thank you so much to every one of you. You have made such a difference in my life. You have made me appreciate life in so many ways and also appreciate myself!

I know I probably have one of the most interesting pasts at this school, but you know what, I am who I am, and I'm happy with that. I've been through a lot, but it has only made me the person I am today. I know I've had my moments where the whole school has talked about me or looked at me like I was crazy, but that's okay. In the end, I always knew I was going to be okay, and I would like to thank the teachers for that, too. But there is one thing that nothing at SOA can touch, and that is that I have the greatest friends anyone could ever ask for! Jasmine Murray, Shauntavia Horlbeck, Danielle Schweitzer, Donte Simmons, Brett Sims, Brooke Cole, Maddie

sisters in another life. You were always there for me through the good times and the bad. Thank you for listening to me complain about Stupid all day long. And just think next year you don't have to deal with "seniors who don't like drama". But anyway be good next year and have fun. **Teaire and Derrika:** What can I say about ya'll? You guys always had my back. Derricka I will always remember that time in the hallway. "Triflip!" Teaire you always made me feel better when people upset me. I'm going to miss both of you guys next year. **Jamaal:** Well there's not much to say about you. I'm just playing. I enjoyed talking about the Hills with you. And even if you always mean to me I'm still gonna miss you. **Joel:** I guess you could say we had fun together LOL. Any way have fun next year. **Grayland:** Even though you laugh at me and my problems your still my friend. And that hurt my feelings just joking. But I'll miss you. **Michael:** Oh Boy. Where do I start? We had some really good times and some really, really bad times. And after all we've been through you're still one of my closest friends, shockingly. But anyway you were always there for me when I needed you. I would say I'll miss you but I'm gonna still you. So 1 4 3. And last but not least **Jasmine:** Ever since ninth grade you have my best friend. You were the one that helped me through my drama and listened to my issues. I'm gonna miss you so much. We had a lot of fun. And now that I think about it I think we only got in a fight twice. That's pretty good. And one thing I learned is that you're always right and if I would have listened to you in the first place I wouldn't have gotten hurt. But have fun at Winthrop. Now that I'm done with all my shout outs I can talk about my time SOA. I had so much fun here. I loved how relaxed everyone was. I know that at any other school the rules would have been a whole stricter. There are plenty of time when I should have gotten in trouble but didn't. Thank you Mr. Davis! And of course my favorite teacher of all: **Mr. Kerr.** You made being in band so much fun. I'm going to miss all the good times and memories we made here. Like in Gov't/ Econ getting yelled at by Mr. Brehm for talking.

Wood, the whole gang. I have too many to name, but I love all of you guys so much, and I'm going to miss you. You have made my experience at SOA so unforgettable. I'll never forget Ms. Matthew's class with Danielle. I'll never forget Mr. Brehm's class with Shauny. I'll never forget anything, but I know every time I had a class with one of you guys, it was just so much fun. I'm going to miss you guys so much.

Well, after graduation, I will not be attending college. I am joining the United States Air Force. I would like to do something involving Law Enforcement, Aviation, or Medical. I would like to make a difference in the world, and I have SOA to thank for that. I plan to stay in the Air Force until I retire. Who knows? Maybe I'll meet the President one day or something. So in the year 2018, I would like to be an officer in the military. Hopefully.

I believe the education I received from SOA prepared me for what I want to do in life. You can't get a better education from any other school than the one you get at SOA. I will always have that on my belt, because I do plan to attend college in the military. And it's so crazy, because I remember my first day of sixth grade like it was yesterday, and I wouldn't change a thing if I could go back in time. Life is too short, and there's no reason to dwell on the past. What's done is done.

I can't believe I am saying farewell to SOA. I really can't. But you know what, I will always look back on the experience as one of the greatest in my life. Thank you so much, School of the Arts! Congratulations, Class of 2008! WE DID IT!

Janella Tolbert

It's finally over! Closing another chapter in my life. I came here in '01, now I'm leaving. SOA has been a rollercoaster that wouldn't stop until now. I remember being in Ms. Blake homeroom & was mad we had trailers for classrooms, cheap I know. Now it's time to leave (moment of silence). I witnessed my first fight in 8th grade with Tierra & Jordan. I remember, Grayland came here in 7th grade & went out with Rachael & people made her cry, not saying names. I remember Simone, Raven, Nikki & Chae. I was ready for high school, I wanted to go somewhere else because SOA doesn't have sports & you were with the same people. I remember meeting Regan (Crager), Rachael, H'Alina, & H'Rosalyn. I thought they were weird, but they were cool. 9th, 10th & 11th grade was okay but I'm a senior now. To the friends I've made I love yall, to the ones I've lost (you know who you are.) Deidre, we been together since '01, we girls for life I love you. H'Alina, H'Rosalyn, Rachael I can't forget yall, yall just came later on down the line, I got mad love for yall. The five of us has been together since 10th grade going from little girls to grown women (BLAZINS). My home girls: Ashlee (Ash-lie, AJ) I had so much fun & I won't forget the times we had, you made sure I was on the right path thank you, my Nun Phi Nun president no more frority, Diana (Pep) we've known each other since middle school but got closer in high school I probably wouldn't be passing majority of my classes without you thanks & I love you, Jasmine (Jermaine) I love you thanks for everything, Kierra (Kyra, Kris) you've grown up well & stop falling for anything, Regan (Crager) I had fun I love you take care, Amanda (Lil Mrs Doritos) I won't forget you love you Mexican see you in GA, Shauny (Shaun) what can I say Nun Phi Nun for ever WEEEEEE, Courtney (C Nas) take care & keep pimping, Syrietta (Rietta) stay the same I'm going to miss you, Olivia (Livia) you need help but you keep me laughing & wave like Miss America, lol, Erin (Yellow Girl) you act

like somebody momma, but it's cool though enjoy school. My home boys: Jenkins (Tonester, Grammy Family) prom king 08 we had fun in chemistry & physics you're a cool dude keep in touch & I love you, Mike (Mike The Great, Grammy Family) you did what you had to do to get what you want & I don't blame you Prom '07 wouldn't be the same if you weren't my date I love you, Joel (Young J, Valentine Box Boyz-Men Among Boyz = Grammy Family) you're a ladies man & I'm going to miss you behave at FMU, Jamaal (Silent Boss Man, Valentine Box Boyz) you barely speak but who cares I love you, Grayland (Slim, Grammy Family) you make skinny sexy & I love you & I will keep in touch, Brandon (Valentine Box Boyz) we family so of course I will see you take care, Esau (Chocolate Bear, Valentine Box Boyz) your funny and I love you, Howard (I real out cha) thanks for being real, Nick please don't change. I can't forget prom prince of '07 Donte, I love you & we got a status not a level, mix meat cuzzo & tword. Hold on I can't forget TOLBERT (Grammy Family)! You coming back your senior year was smart; don't change you because you're a Tolbert. I can't forget other people: Lauren C., Heidi, Ashley E, Elizabeth H, Emily, Raena I owe you thank you. I'm going to miss: Devon, Candice, Shari, Kaylx, Jordan, Shakira, Quintera, Landon, Saray, Alicia, Leah, Lamar, Micheal A & my yearbook buddy Wilfred aka Wilford (now yall got to show those juniors who run SOA now don't let me down), Justin, Rashad, Brittany, Starr, Allison, Tyrell, Kyana, Christian, Jehrica (hold 558), DeeDee, Alexis W, Nikki, Winnie, Ashley, Shantell. Teachers: Olson, C. Rogers, Miles, Fitz, Tizzy, Brehm, Ball, Coo-satis, Caldwell, Davis & lunch ladies. Well this your girl Nella signing off I'm out piece & I'll see yall real soon. I LOVE ALL MY HATERS THEY MAKE ME FEEL GREATER.

Maggie Jo Saylor Theatre



It is very fitting that I am penning this essay after a prom that was held over remarkably calm waters where, shortly before, tornadoes and lighting were threatening the city. I feel that my entire career at SOA has been just that: a series of hectic whirlwinds which are precursors to the often brilliant creations, productions, and activities that follow. The truly remarkable thing is that, through all the storms this school has challenged me to face head-on, I have kept my head up and always emerged a better, stronger, and more creative person than I would have thought possible. School of the Arts is an unbelievable opportunity for all who decide that creating something great is worth risking both soul and sanity.

During senior year especially, there are numerous occasions when a student may look at the task before them and think that there is absolutely no way to overcome the obstacles in front of them. Well, it was during the largest of these instances for me (senior thesis) that I formed my personal philosophy that I hope will continue to define me in my career as an artist: you must put heart into what you do. If you do not care about what you are doing, there is no point in doing it. I spent ghastly amounts of money, time, and patience throughout the year to create *Green Gretchen's Nature Nook*, a children's show about the environment. There were certainly times where I wanted to lie down and cry (in fact, I am sure I literally did that on multiple occasions). However, because I cared so much about bringing this idea to life, I was able to pull myself through with help from friends and family. Every time I got back up

Carolyn Brown Vocal



Being a student at SOA since middle school is an experience that will remain with me forever. My education here in both my academics and my art area has not just been the standard, but above and beyond any instruction you can receive anywhere else.

As a student at SOA, you becoming acquainted with the phrase "You're not from SOA. You just don't get it." It's entirely true. The people and experiences at this school are unlike any others. The SOA student body is unique in the fact that we are not made of students that differentiate by the cliché stereotype or by an assigned number, but students that are each as colorful as a work of art. When you visit other high schools, it becomes evident that the student body is divided into cliques such as jocks, preps, emo...you can almost immediately look at someone and tell by their clothes what group they belong to. Try doing that here. At SOA, I am not a stereotype or a number, but an individual, and teachers from past years don't forget my name or my shortcomings. They care about me. Maybe it's the small class size, the environment, or my incessant talking that causes them to remember

from one such instance, I felt such a huge sense of accomplishment that I knew those obstacles were not just there to make me suffer, but to make me better.

The reasons such growth is possible at this wonderful school are the teachers that encourage and radiate creativity, generosity, and trust. I owe my strength specifically to teachers like Ms. Link, who never backs down from a task but instead attempts to master it at all costs; to Mr. Younts, who keeps us all laughing while simultaneously keeping us all in line; to Ms. Lasley, who taught me to find my voice in my writing; to Mr. Orvin, who changed my perception of what education can and should be; to Mr. P, who shares not only my love of learning but also my love of the environment; to Mr. Reese, who was rational and understanding during the hardest year of my life; to Ms. Bronk, Ms. Marshall and Dr. Cusatis, who all taught me to analyze, interpret, articulate, and think for myself; to Mr. Brehm, who - let's face it - is the coolest and most intelligent adult any of us know; and mostly to Mr. Sam Wood, who taught me more in one conversation than I may ever learn from another human being.

The other factor largely responsible for my growth at SOA would be my friends, with whom I've created laughter, music, and love that will perhaps never be replicated but always remembered.

To put it simply, I love this school. I love Charleston County School of the Arts. I love the crummy facilities, the diverse population, and the crazy events that spontaneously erupt. There is no place I would have rather spent the last seven years of my life. All the best aspects of my personality have been heavily influenced by the characters of this school. As eager as I am to begin the next leg of the journey, I will always cherish what I have gained from School of the Arts.

me, but the fact that they can and do is amazing. Most of the teachers that I have had don't just spit out a lesson at me; they teach me. Mrs. Bronk, who has dealt with my horrendous handwriting since freshmen year, extended her teaching outside the classroom, staying after school to help me write speeches. She changed my entire outlook on school because she believed that I could do great things. Her faith in me inspired me to get grades that I wasn't ashamed of. In Vocal, I had the most awe-inspiring teacher: Kevin Eakes. He was simply... awesome. He taught the vocal class that singing is more than just making noises, but creating art. Oh, and that "to be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late, and to be late is to not be there at all." This year I had Dr. Cusatis, who, in spite of his incessant, merciless taunting, taught me more this year in English than I have ever learned.

Though I am completely ecstatic about going to college, I am going to miss these crumbling buildings, the strange smells - all of it. I will miss the Vocal class's closeness, and how we are one giant family. The ties that I have built over the years have become a support system, and have always been there to catch me. Though we may not ever see each other again, we will always remember our time at Charleston County School of the Arts, Class of 2008. Good luck guys.

Victoria Doose Creative Writing



I've always loved SOA.

The thing about this school is that it has always been a venue for something larger than education, even larger than the arts. I've always felt something going on behind the scenes, just beyond sensory reach - maybe all that history-in-the-making stirring restlessly in the classrooms and the bonds being forged across campus. That element makes School of the Arts less like a school for me and more like a community.

SOA has provided me with seven years' worth of memories, most of which I can't really remember (faulty genetics; I'm pretty sure I was born with only half the memory capacity of normal people). I have a lot of sentimental attachment to this place and the people who

Ashlee Elliott Band

OMG! I did it. I'm finally graduating. It's been a long 7 years at SOA. It seems like just yesterday I came to this school with a few of my elementary friends like **Ricky Q**, **Elizabeth H**, **Shauny H**, and **Kortni H** and **Samantha H**, which was good because I knew that I would never be alone. **Diana**. I don't know if I would have made it through all these years without you. We've had our ups and downs but you were always there for me even through all the drama and the relationship problems and all those ignorant people with nothing better to do than to bother us. I love you girl and I wish you the best of luck in everything you do. **Donte**. My little roach muffin. Wow have we had some fun times. I love being around you so much it makes me feel so much nicer that what I really am. A lot of people don't get our humor. I swear it's like we were made for each other. I'm your Bonnie and you're my Clyde. Band is just gonna suck without us there to bring them to greatness. Of course I had to mention that time that you kicked the door and broke the glass, and the time that Davis and Grayland got your stuff and put it up on the emergency exit sign. That was a good one. Have fun in the Marines and remember what I told you. Lol. **Kierra**... I don't even know where to start. We've gone through one crazy journey. We're like a roller coaster ride we have our highs and lows and twists and turns but eventually we end up just the way we started. You're like the sister I never really wanted but learned to get along with. I know you've gone through a lot these past 4 years and I hope one day you see that you are so much better than that I mean that with all my heart. Always keep your head up and never let another person try to tear you down. **Janella**. OMG I'm gonna miss you so much next year. Since that Washington trip, (the one we didn't go to) we've been inseparable. I don't know how I would have passed my classes

make it what it is; so even though I'll be overjoyed when summer comes along - because, thank God, there's no more school for two months - I'll also be depressed - because, dear God, I may never find a place or people like this again.

Well, I'm going to wrap it up before I get any more sentimental than that. There's plenty of nostalgia in the rest of these essays, so you can read those if that's what you're looking for (trust me, I read and edited *every single one* of them. That's what I get for being on the newspaper staff...).

So to Grace, Jeffrey, Daniel, Min, Virginia, Tanya, Chris, Catie, Shannon, my entire Creative Writing class, Mrs. Miles, Mr. Murray, Dr. Cusatis, all the rest of my past and present teachers, anyone I've ever spoken to or known in even the vaguest sense of the word, and, in fact, the entirety of SOA - I'll miss you incredibly while I'm off being flayed by four more years of education. Hopefully I'll make it out alive and see all of you again.

without you. 9th grade: Algebra 1 so much fun. 10th grade: Geometry. You're a lifesaver. 11th grade: Chemistry. You should be thanking me. 12th grade: Thanks for letting me use your book in Pre-Cal I don't know what I would have done without it. This year I've learned never to take you out to eat because you can't behave but I still love you and I always will. **Dana!** I love you girl and I'm going to miss you so much. Hold it down in the band room for me. I'm handing the torch down to you. Keep those freshmen in check. **Brandon**. Omg I don't even know what to say. This has been one crazy year. We've had some amazing times and we've had some not so good times. Don't forget when you get all breaded to find me and give me my share. I'm not playing either. I want my money. No matter how hard I try I'll never forget you (which kind of sucks because you're really not that special). **Mr. Kerr**. I want to thank you for everything that you've done for me. You're door was always open to us and there was always food somewhere in that room. You truly are an amazing teacher, and I really am sad to be leaving. To my family and friends, I love you guys sooooo much. You've helped me out so much through these last couple of years. I know sometimes I might not have wanted to listen to what you had to say but I thank you for continuing to motivate me to be better because the end result was completely worth it. **Class of 2009**, take my advice don't think that the work is over now because the work is just getting started. Remember, Dreams are real all you have to do is just believe. I've had some really good times here and I'll be sad to leave you all, but this is not the end for me. Next year I will be the best panther to ever walk through the doors of Claffin University. I will be the best so the rest can just slide to the left, and watch me do me. Ashlee Janay!!!!

Ally Bing Theatre

All the Theater majors started sixth grade knowing we were working towards completing our theatre education with senior thesis, a self-written, self-directed show. I don't know about the rest of my class, but this fact made me feel excited and a little bit important. The fact that someone trusted me to complete something so huge, even in the far distant future, gave me something of a confidence boost. It also made me nervous. For the most part, however, I didn't think about thesis at all. It was, after all, six years away, and I was sure that someday the idea I wanted to express onstage would just pop out of my head and onto the page, ready to be formed into a script.

As I entered high school and came nearer and nearer to my graduating year, I tried to examine what was important to me, or any major issues I wanted to expose to the world. I came up with many, many ideas to write stories about but was not satisfied with any of them. When you're trying to find something to write your thesis about, nothing is good enough. One day, I realized my main character didn't have to be perfect. I had been imagining writing about a normal character having to deal with some kind of crazy, screwed up world. Why not write about someone crazy and screwed up who affects everyone else? I thought of a pathological liar. That would be my main character, and her name, I decided, would be Story.

Once I had the character, the plot came

Alex Schroeder Vocal

The last four years at SOA have been full of surprises. I remember when I first got here, already an outsider because I was entering in high school while everyone else already knew each other from middle school. I was entering Vocal as a male soprano, easily becoming the odd one out. Looking back, I'm surprised I ever fit in, made friends, and excelled in my major, but somehow it happened. Now I stand out in my major, surpassing my wildest dreams of what I would accomplish upon entering ninth grade.

It certainly wasn't easy. I was historically an introvert, to the point that I was classified as socially disabled. When I came here, I knew virtually no one, and was afraid to get to know anyone. I hid myself in my academics, slowly getting to know others when forced to. However, something about the school just seemed to click with me. Maybe it was the amazing level of acceptance among students. Maybe it was that everyone was so expressive and ready to work and have a good time. Maybe it was all the amazing teachers I met that influenced my growth so much, such as Mrs. Kay in Resource, Mr. Eakes in Vocal, and the sadly departed Mrs. Smyth in Pre-Calculus. Whatever it was, SOA proved to be the perfect fit.

By the time my voice changed down to Tenor, I was finally starting to feel like I fit in, and gradually started getting to truly know my classmates. It took a while, but eventually I tried being less insular

Howard Brown Vocal



Well, it has been a long seven years. It has been a bumpy ride, but it was filled with laughter and fun. I will never forget how in sixth grade, I pulled the chair out from under Brett and she fell to the floor. Also in sixth grade was the Vocal trip, when Calvin punched Frank in the face and he started crying. In seventh grade, all the drama started. It was mostly the girls that caused all the problems. We went to Barrier Island that same year, and it was funny even though the mud pit was totally nasty. In eighth grade was my first trip to NYC with Vocal. It was great. We had tons of fun, like the huge pillow fight that led to Brett Sims sticking his head out the window and throwing up the pizza we'd just eaten.

In ninth grade, it was different being a freshman. All the upperclassmen looked old with

easily. Rehearsals, although I admit I didn't have them nearly as much as I should have, also went smoothly. The night of my performance was the only night in the history of my acting career that I didn't feel ready to throw up or the need to run around the building a few thousand times before I was ready to go onstage. I was calm; I knew this character back and front. My thesis had become the tale of a friendly young woman working as a clinic receptionist who lies uncontrollably. When she's not checking patients in, and even sometimes when she's supposed to be, she lives out epic dramas in her head where she saves lives in surgery and the head doctor, Dr. Scratchit, is madly in love with her.

I enjoyed writing about and later playing Story Livingston immensely. She reminds me a little bit of myself. I am not a pathological liar, nor do I have any intention of becoming one. But I think everyone, although not to Story's extent, wants to know that they will make a difference in this world. I'm still not exactly sure what I believe in or what's important, but I feel like I gained some sort of direction and a sense of self-direction from this process. People told us that this project was what they expected from us way back in sixth grade, but I didn't actually think I would pull it off until the night of the performance. I came out of this project proud of myself and of my accomplishments, and that, I think, is one of the most important things SOA could have given me before I go off to college.

and more outgoing. More and more, the other students weren't strangers, but friends with whom I could happily learn and work with. Admittedly, I hardly ever became close friends with anyone, usually limiting my interaction purely to school, but I was never rejected like I had been in the past. I was free to be myself, and through that I was able to grow and become what I had never been before.

Perhaps more astonishing was my growth within my major. It's not that I wasn't talented, but I never truly felt on par with my classmates. However, as time went on, I slowly grew more confident and tried my best to rise to the level of my peers. It clearly worked, because my skills increased dramatically: after barely making the cutoff for All-State Chorus in junior year, I ranked among the best in the state in my senior year. I've been able to become an active part of the arts community in Charleston, and have experienced a huge boost to my self confidence after my successes.

It's mind-blowing how much I've changed since I came to this school. True, I can still be very shy and insecure, but compared to how I was when I entered SOA, I'm a whole new person. It's going to be hard to leave after all these years, meeting so many amazing people and enjoying so many inspirational events. School of the Arts has become like a second home for me, and as excited as I am to attend college in the fall, I'm just as excited to see future generations enjoy the school as I have.

beards and were very mature looking. I don't think the upperclassmen now look big and old. High school Vocal had a new teacher: Mr. Eakes. He truly was a great teacher that inspired each and every student to be independent and to read music well. We took good trips, too. In tenth grade, we went to NYC, and it was crazy. We went straight stupid, and we didn't care. I remember chillin' with Joe Wiggins almost the whole time because he was funny to talk and trip with. SOA has been a great experience, and I'm truly going to miss everyone next year.

I'm gonna miss everybody next year, but there are certain people I want to recognize. To my two prom dates, Diana and Sidra, prom was great and y'all are very special to me. To my brother, business partner and my dude Arthur: man, it was great kickin it with you. We had good times and bad times. We went to party here, there and everywhere. I knew you had my back and I had yours, too!! Cuz we outcha!!! I love Erin and Courtney aka CK, CJ, CG, CC and especially CB. I ain't done namin' people that I'm going to miss, but I real and I outcha!!!!

Elyssa Linog Vocal



There's so much to say about sixth to twelfth grade that it's ridiculous. I'll start at the beginning. The first thing we ever did in Vocal was that dumb game where you say your name with an adjective starting with the same first letter. "Happening Heather," "Active Anna"... who knew those people would share all the experiences that would mold me into who I am today? My Vocal mates have lasted through the years, and there is no letting go now.

Chelsea, you taught me that strength has nothing to do with size. You're the mama, always protecting when you're the one who needs it the most. Anna, you're nothing like me. You're happy, sweet and forgiving, and still you make my world go round. We've been through thick and thin, and you made me smile even when I felt like dying. I'm glad our minority has kept us together and helped me not to kill you over the years. You're so forgetful, always blurting out the first thing on your mind, and that's what makes you amazing. I love you more than I should. I love you all. Singing with you is the only thing I will miss.

And now high school. From skipping weeks at a time and buying gifts nonstop for our boys, to all being suspended together, prom and pie-ing Dillon, our group has been through it

Syreitta Grey Visual Arts



Time went by so fast! It seems like we were just in the sixth grade, and now we are graduating and going our separate ways.

OMG! I can't believe this is my last year at SOA. I've been here for seven years, but it doesn't seem like it has been that long. These years have been a great experience with getting to know other people from different backgrounds.

Time went by so fast! It seems like we were just in the sixth grade, and now we are graduating and going our separate ways.

OLIVIA - "Gucci...yeeeahh!" We have been friends since the fourth grade; it's been a long time. You are a good friend, as well as my sister. You are someone I can trust. You've been there for me when I needed someone to talk to about my problems. Thanks!

ERIN a.k.a. Granny, you say I act like a granny, but you are the one. Always trying to rule somebody! I'm glad we became good friends. It seems like we became even closer as the years passed. Love ya.

COURTNEY - I remember all the good times we had in Chemistry class together last year with Cordell, Howard and Vincent, tripping off of people and stuff. Remember that one incident... "CHEATER!" when one of our classmates got caught cheating on a test. (I won't say any names.) You are also a good friend with your BAD lean with it, rock with it. Man I missed you this year because we didn't have any classes together.

CORDELL - man with many problems! I don't know were to start... "E be a shana mah, oh but I thank God." Too funny. You've been a good friend. I'm going to miss all the classes we

all. I love our boys, who have kept high school hilarious, lively and pretty cool. Zachariah - we've made it through a crazy awkward past, and I value our friendship like no other. You're not just a pretty-boy. Dillon - you're cooler than the rest of us. You've made everything fun. Plus, you were sexy in the sixth grade. I loved you then, and I love you now. Marshall - you're perfect at everything you do, and that's annoying, but you've been an awesome friend. Davis - you're my best friend. I won't forget anything we shared together.

It was in high school that I met my partner in crime, who nurtured inside of me a love and friendship that can never die. Carly Palmer and I became each others' shadows, and since ninth grade, we've been inseparable. When she was around, I didn't feel so bad about myself. She was always there and always found the right words.

Ms. Meyer - you might know her as Mr. Dean, Ms. Adams or Ms. Del Toro. I could begin to describe her but I would just be describing myself. Our friendship started at school, but the boundaries are endless. She is my better half. Catherine, I owe you the world, and one day at a time I will pay you back. I love every version of our futures because every one of them will come true.

And last but not even close to least, my love, Tristan. We started here but we are nowhere close to done. You are my world.

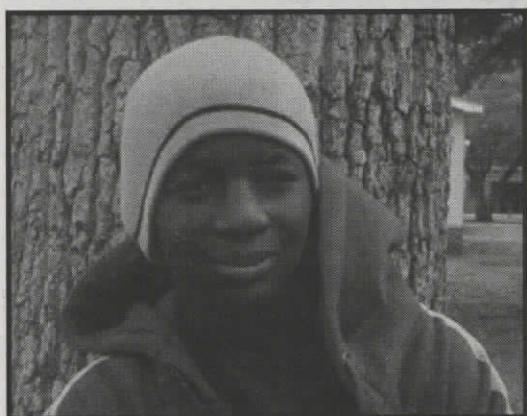
had together, Chemistry (last year), English (this year). You and Tony T. are so crazy, praising God in English. Hilarious!

DONTE - I'm really going to miss you. You are the craziest person I've ever met. I really hope you do well in the military. The biggest thing I'm going to miss is your kisses. Even though I ran away and acted like I didn't like it, I really did. LOVE YOU ALWAYS!!!

GRAYLAND, MICHAEL, JAMAAL AND JOEL - hold it down. Y'all are one mixed up group. I'm going to miss y'all.

To DIANA, DEIDRE, and JANELLA - I love you guys... I'm gonna miss ya'll. All of you are good friends. Diana, you are like my big sister even though I act like I'm the oldest. I miss being in Algebra 2 with you, Donte, Vincent, and Ashlee. DEIDRE you are too crazy. I had fun with you, Janella, and Brandon in Pre-Cal earlier this year when I was in class with ya'll. To LANDON, CANDICE, NICHOLETTE and SARAY, the up coming seniors, don't change for anyone! To my lil sis JAVONNA, you are too Jokey. hold it down at SOA. To the V.A. BOYZ (Toni, Tony, Esau, and Brandon)... I'm about to cry, tear tear. I'm going to miss you guys; ya'll are like my big brothers.

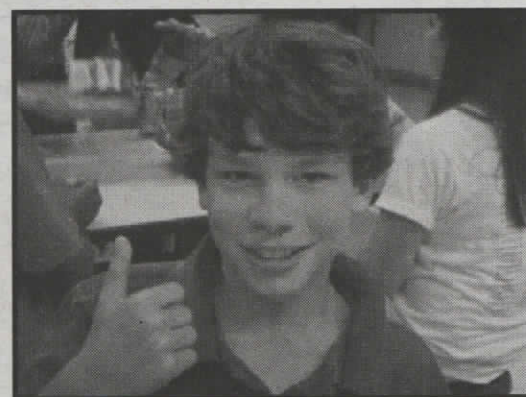
The hardest part of my senior year was when my grandma died in a tragic hit-and-run car accident on December 4, 2007. That made me want to give up... but I remembered all the things she used to tell me relating to school: "Work hard, and do your best in everything you do." She was like my second mom, because she helped raise me when I was younger. It's going to be hard knowing that she won't be there at my graduation, but she will be there in spirit. She was my heart, and still is.



"Logan Wells, because his writing is really good. He could be a great poet or author."
- Treyvonne Brown, 6th grade Visual Arts major



"Maggie Aton, because she's confident when she dances."
-Kiana Jordon, 7th grade Dance major



"Heather Jones. When I was eight, I did my first play with her, and she inspired me and pushed me to be an actor. And that's why I'm here at SOA today."
-Jonathan Jones, 8th grade Theatre major

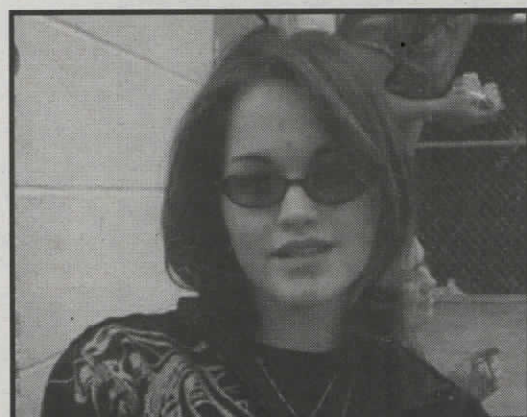


"Kelly Machado. She inspires me through the clarinet."
-Holly Tokarczyk, freshman Band major

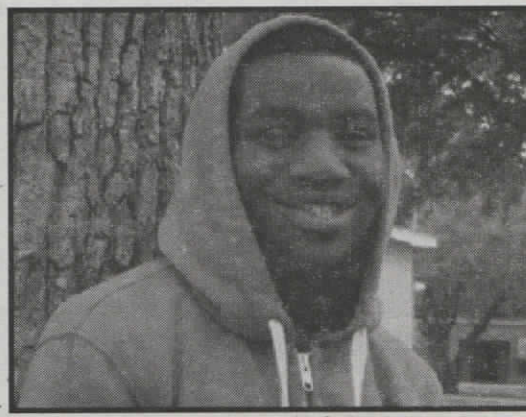
Which senior has inspired you most?



"Virginia Pfahler, because it gives all of us Creative Writers hope when someone wins the Scholastic award. It lets us know that if we work hard enough, we can be that good."
-Collins Rice, sophomore Creative Writing major



"Christy Miller, because she plays the piano beautifully."
-Rachel Harris, junior Strings major



"Heather Jones, because she's an awesome vocalist. She inspires me to keep going on."
-Cordell Mosteller, senior Vocal major



"Min Bu, because I am inspired to do more for her because she is determined in a way that most students are not. She is inquisitive, conscientious, bold."
-Ms. Jane Marshall, English teacher

Maggie Jo Saylor



Darlin' Maggie Jo – All our love and Saylor spirit go with you and your dear classmates as you set out for the next great adventures. We are so proud of all you have created and contributed at SOA, and of the wonderful, unique person you have become. Never stop rockin'!

Katelyn Johnson



'ello Poppet,
Many times you thought that
dis is cursed and dat is cursed,
this is the end of Christmas on
this planet as we know it, you
are terminated, or even worse
still at world's end.

But here you are at the end
of all things and yet you
have arrived at the end of the
beginning, not left behind, but
with a new hope!

Hongera sana!
KnowwhatImean?

Dad Mom & Tim

Victoria Doose



*Rationalists, wearing square hats,
Think, in square rooms,
Looking at the floor,
Looking at the ceiling.
They confine themselves
To right-angled triangles.*

From "Six Significant Landscapes"
Wallace Stevens, U.S. Poet



The Doose Family hopes that every hat in your journey through life will never confine you.
May they always bear the word Happy.

We tip our hats to you, Victoria, on your already great accomplishments!