

Applause

Volume 25, Number 4 School of the Arts, North Charleston, SC December 2023

and

they

all

settled

down

for

a

long

winter's

nap.



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The Traywick Family

EMERALD

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Kylene Gerideau-Grant
Donovan "Hamp" Hamilton
Dr. Selby
Trowbridge Weeks

From the Editors

Lovely Readers,

As we step into the crisp embrace of January, a month promising fresh beginnings, it's time for you to take a deep breath, relax, savor some hot cocoa, and reward yourself for your semester's hard work.

In this issue, our holly jolly staff is dedicated to spreading holiday cheer, and were sure to cook up some exciting features to warm your winter days. From The Festival of Lights to creative gift ideas, we aim to fill these pages with the spirit of the season. The end of the semester brings forth numerous performances, and in this issue, our goal is to cover as many as possible. Dive into the Winter Dance Showcase (page 19), Convocation (page 20), and Middle School Strings (page 22). If you are interested in these performances, we highly recommend you check out page 5 for a behind-the-scenes view of Francisco Fullana's residency!

As we bid farewell to 2023, we hope *Applause* brings a touch of warmth and joy to your winter days. Take a well-deserved break, relish in the festive spirit, and enjoy the company of everyone you love. We wish you an absolutely splendid winter break filled with some much deserved rest and relaxation. Until next time!

Your Merry & Bright Editors,

Riley Borkowski and Cate Traywick

Riley Borkowski *Cate Traywick*



Applause

since 1999, the official student publication of
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Cover by Mallory Wallace-Usry

SOA Calendar

by Ashley Peterson

Dec 12: Dance Senior Thesis, RMMT, 6:30pm

Dec 12 & 13: Holiday Spectacular, Gaillard Center, 7pm

Dec 13 & 14: Jazz Piano Holiday Concert, RMMT, 6pm

Dec 13 & 14: 10th grade Theater: The Perfect Ending, BBT. 4pm and 6:30pm

Dec 14: High School Visual Arts Show, Art hallway

Dec 18-Jan 1: Winter Break

Jan 2: Professional development day

Jan 3: School resumes for students

Jan 4: SOA Poetry Out Loud Competition, Media Center, 4pm

Jan 8 & 9: 11th grade Theater: Post-Holiday Blues, BBT. 4pm and 6:30pm

Jan 11 & 12: Theater Senior Thesis, RMMT, 6:30pm

Jan 15: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, schools closed

Jan 17: 6th grade Theater show: BBT. 4pm and 6:30pm

Jan 17: Strings Senior Thesis, RMMT, 6pm

Jan 18: 6th grade Theater, BBT, 4pm and 6:30pm

Jan 23: End of second quarter/first semester



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Meet Senior Class President, Ramere Kelly

by Isis Hanna

Lefty Lucy: A Rock 'N' Roll Dream Come True

by Elle Baker

Sass Attack: Festival of Plights

by Jovanny Silva Velasquez

"Sass Attack" was started in 2007 by Applause writer David Sass and continued for seventeen years. Our senior Piano major, Jovanny Silva Velasquez, has continued the tradition.

Arguably one of the greatest inconveniences that impatient people such as me (and most likely you) cannot stand are the endless, daunting lines of traffic. Such headaches that result from traffic are only further exacerbated during the so-called "happiest time of the year" whenever you attempt to drive around the Festival of Lights. The never-ending lines that plague the deadly streets of Riverland Drive past 5 PM are always such a nightmare to drive through, and honestly, I'm tempted to drive on the opposite lane and pray to god that I don't get flung through my window.

Nevertheless, I don't believe that I'd take such offense to the spine-chilling traffic if it weren't for the fact that 99% of the time, I'm just trying to get around it. Whether it be trying to get back to my house after a long day of grueling retail or trying to get a quick munch from the local favorite McDonalds, the wait times are there no matter what. I'd even go as far to say that it's bizarre to witness the traffic, because who in their right mind is genuinely going to the Festival of Lights at 5:15 PM.

Honestly, I couldn't fathom why such copious amounts of traffic even exists for the event altogether. While this might be Scrooge-esque of me to say, I don't find the idea of paying upwards to 40\$ to see the exact same lights they put up every year all too enticing. The vendors inside are no better, the food seems to be taken straight out of a post-Michelle Obama school cafeteria. With all factors considered, I don't see much reason for the Festival's popularity, or the hair-raising lines that it churns out every single night of the Christmas season.

Opinion: If You Aren't Going To Use It, Why Are You Buying It?

by Emma Shelton

Every single December, the holiday season arrives, and with it come the sales. Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Christmas Eve, Boxing Day—it seems that this is a never ending time of multi million dollar companies trying to empty our pockets and leave us with nothing but stuff. We are always trying to get more and more stuff with no aim or purpose. Half the time, we don't even want it in the first place. We need to start being more purposeful with our purchases and buy things with the knowledge that we will use them. Like most, I was a victim of this mindset. I set timers for midnight and patiently waited for my favorite brands to have their sales. I spent literal days thinking about what I was going to buy before sales started. It was horrific.

There is a difference between buying something you want and buying something you think you want. I can't say that overconsumption is the root of all evil because there are companies making consumables that also need to be held accountable, but it is a two way street. We cannot buy products endlessly and expect to reap the benefits of them all. Don't bite off more than you can chew; don't buy more than you can use. Sale prices are so alluring, but spending money on something you never use, even if it is fifty percent off, is still a bad idea. Cheap



Jovanny Silva Velasquez

Provided

prices don't mean you have to buy something. Make sure what you are getting is something you actually want.

Overconsumption has so many negative effects, both in people's personal lives and in the world. No one needs more than they need, so why do we buy so much? The holiday season takes our tendency to consume and ramps it up by ten thousand. We have to stop ourselves from buying things that we know we won't use.

Opinion: Why You Shouldn't Be Afraid to Stand With Palestine, Too

by Isis Hanna

I was a boy
and my homework was missing,
papers with numbers on it,
stacked in a lined
and I was going to find it and turn it in,
make my teacher happy,
before everything got subtracted
in a minute
even my uncle
even my teacher
even the best math student and his baby sister
Now I would do anything
for a problem I could solve.

Before I Was a Gazan, Naomi Shihab Nye



Isis Hanna

Provided

On October 7, the Islamic Resistance Movement (better known as Hamas) launched a terrorist attack on southern Israel in which more than one thousand Israeli citizens and soldiers were killed or injured and 250 taken hostage. This tragedy launched Israel and Palestine into the most recent war in the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, which initially began in 1948. This conflict is over land that both the Muslims and Jews feel they have rightful religious claim to. While "standing with Israel" quickly became American policy, the ensuing war has caused what the United Nations calls "unmatched" suffering to Palestinians. According to U.N. relief agencies, 2 million Palestinians have been displaced, 90% of the population.

The initial Hamas attack has been cited as the deadliest event for Jews since the Holocaust, and the subsequent bombings and attacks on either side have racked up a number of casualties including women and children. As of December 11, the death toll of this war was up to around twenty thousand. However, seventeen thousand of those deaths were estimated to be Palestinians. Clearly these Israeli deaths are an unforgivable tragedy, and terrorist actions

cannot be justified. However, Gaza's hospitals are being bombed. The water and electricity supplies to the city have been cut off for nearly months. Every morning I wake up and see images of entire city blocks leveled by Israeli bombings, and that every morning the people of Gaza are waking up and living in the rubble.

I have finally seen an outpouring of support for Palestinians from plenty of people around me and on the internet. However, it seems that a lot of people view outward



Emma Shelton

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The Gaza Strip as of October 31, 2023

CNBC

support of Palestine as a controversial thing, whether it be because they don't want to appear as supporting Hamas's actions or they don't want to be seen as anti-semitic for not standing with Israel. I was even a little worried about writing this article for fear of bringing backlash onto our school paper. But I got to thinking: why should I be afraid to stand with thousands of people being bombed in their homes? Supporting Palestine and denouncing the Israeli government does not mean you are saying the Jewish community or the people of Israel deserved what happened, nor is Hamas a representation of all Palestinian people, and yet oftentimes it is spun to sound like that.

Just recently, *Scream* actress Melissa Barrera was fired from the franchise by the Spyglass production company for her Twitter posts on the Israel-Gaza conflict. One of the tweets referenced in the BBC article on her termination accused Israeli government of "genocide and ethnic cleansing." Spyglass fired her due to their zero-tolerance policy on anti-semitism. I personally do not see any evidence of anti-semitism in that tweet. Sure, those are some heavy accusations, but based on the number of civilians in Gaza who have been killed, injured, or had their access to basic human needs restricted, Barrera was well within her rights to express such feelings. The people of Gaza need help, and it is a necessity for people with influence such as actors and other such public figures to join the protests and movements, because it will bring more awareness and more people to the movements. Penalizing them for that is, to me, unspeakable.

So many people will shy away from speaking out on so-called "controversial" issues because it is easier for them to scroll past rather than taking the time to educate themselves and form an opinion to defend. Meanwhile, these issues often involve people's lives being on the line. This conflict is no exception. Lots of us are guilty of turning off the news or scrolling past the posts on social media that talk about the attacks in Gaza. I know it is upsetting to hear about all the deaths constantly, but imagine how "upsetting" (which is a major understatement) it is to be living in Palestine right now, having your friends and family and homes taken from you in one fell swoop. According to *Time* magazine, on October 7 three entire generations of the al-Dos family (a civilian family living in Gaza) were wiped out by one single airstrike. Imagine how they would feel knowing that people are turning a blind eye to their suffering. You shouldn't be afraid to stand with these innocent civilians being decimated by a government conflict. Do whatever you can: participate in boycotts, donate to charities, go out and protest, even just share a post. At the end of the day it isn't about being "politically correct"; it's about ending the fighting before the death toll rises any higher and finding a diplomatic solution. Stand with the victims on both sides of this horrible war.

Embracing and Preserving Our Parks

When the first U.S National Park, Yellowstone, was established in 1872 by President Ulysses S. Grant, it ensured the safeguarding of heritage, biodiversity, and ecological pride. America's national parks are so moving that they've inspired countless works of art, with millions of visitors seeking some sort of adventure or a life-changing eureka moment. They are a testament to the most beautiful parts of our country, and the preservation of them is, in a way, patriotic. From the towering trees of Redwood to the sandy expanses of Death Valley and everything in between, anybody could consider themselves lucky to have seen the beauty and biodiversity America has to offer.

And yet, in true tourist fashion, the hordes of visitors flooding these parks all year long are not always the most respectful to the land and what it stands for. Visitors to national parks all over the country have reported disturbance of wildlife, large amounts of garbage left behind, and even reckless behavior that puts patrons' lives at risk. The sheer disrespect towards the natural world that many tourists display through their entitled behaviors are alarming, but not surprising. Humans have shown a sense of



entitlement to nature since the early days of our country. Not all people have the sense to take care of their environment as it takes care of them. However, artists tend to find the beauty in nature in their attempts to capture it. The transcendentalist movement in the 1800s was big on the unity of all creations, as in humanity and the natural world. Writers such as Henry David Thoreau famously moved out into the woods near Walden Pond and wrote his book *Walden* on the things he learned from living among the wild beauty of nature. Currently, the National Park Service website holds a whole collection of artworks specifically inspired by their diverse landscapes.

As artists, we tend to see the whole world through artistic lens, whether it be in music, writing, painting, or any other form. If we fail to preserve the world in all its beauty, we will no longer have such places to inspire our works and give us the revelations that people like Thoreau sought. When visiting these wonderful places, remember they have existed for thousands of years before you and will continue to exist for thousands of years after. Respect them, and you will benefit greatly in the form of artistic inspiration and general beautification of life. As artists, and as the next generation of upcoming leaders and activists, we must do all we can to protect America's most valuable asset: our parks.

SOA Students Work With World-Renowned Violinist Francisco Fullana

by Riley Borkowski

On the evening of November 9, the halls of St. Matthews Lutheran Church were graced with the music of Vivaldi, Tchaikovsky, and Mendelssohn, performed by the Charleston School of the Arts Sinfonietta and world-renowned violinist Francisco Fullana. As a violist in the SOA Sinfonietta, the week-long experience of Francisco's Residency was nothing short of transformative.

Over three rehearsals, the SOA Sinfonietta brought three completely unique pieces to near perfection. Throughout Mr. Fullana's residency, the SOA Sinfonietta delved deep into the nuances of the music. Not only did Fullana's expertise teach and uplift the SOA Sinfonietta, but Strings director Dr. Selby was also nothing short of inspired. "Every year I work with Francisco, I learn more from him. Last year, it was the concept of pushing sound and how the players in the back of the orchestra must push the sound to the front, and this year, I learned that baroque music is a lot like rock and roll. It's extremely exciting, percussive, and thrilling," says Dr. Selby.

Students also had the opportunity to participate in an additional workshop at the West Ashley Theatre Center on November 7. This workshop, inclusive of SOA students and those from neighboring schools, encouraged students to attend and work with the phenomenal violinist. The workshop lasted three hours and concluded with a student performance.

While the mention of the second week of November, commonly known as Region Orchestra week, often prompts groans from students in the String Department, this year's edition offered much more than imaginable.



SOA Sinfonietta and Francisco Fullana posing after a rehearsal

Chamber Music Charleston

Applause Wishes You Happy Holidays!

Meet Senior Class President, Ramere Kelly

by Isis Hanna

Our Senior Class President, Ramere Kelly, is a man of many talents. Together with Student Body President Henry Hipp he works to make our school a fun and positive environment for all, but he is also hard at work with his own affairs. As a Theater major, he previously starred in SOA productions as Hamlet (*Hamlet*), Plankton (*Spongebob: The Musical*), and the Baker (*Into the Woods*), and is now presumably hard at work on his Senior Thesis. But, if all that wasn't enough to juggle, he recently took the West Ashley High School varsity football team to the playoffs. Talk about being well-rounded!

Ramere has been playing for West Ashley since he was a freshman in high school, but his passion for sports began long before that. "I've been interested in sports since I was five, and I've been playing them my whole life," he said when asked what sparked his love for football. Since this is his fourth and final season, he is one of the oldest players on the team and finds himself taking on a leadership role, not unlike his role as class president. He spends time on and off the field with the newer players, giving them guidance and encouragement while pushing them to be their best players and selves.

You wouldn't think that arts and sports would intersect in any significant way. However, Ramere says that his success on the field and on the stage are both built on trust. "They're both team efforts and very selfless," "You have to trust your castmates on the stage and teammates on the field." Being a well-rounded person in very different arenas can give you skills that are useful for any situation, like team-building and collaborating with your peers.

Being a highschool student involved in so many extracurriculars can be a difficult balancing act, but for Ramere, action is the answer. He follows his passions and that is enough for him to be able to excel in so many ways without getting too overwhelmed. "All the things I balance allow me to see myself in different aspects of life." Exploring many of your passions as a young person is a great way to open doors you may not have even known you wanted to walk through. Though it can be challenging, pushing yourself to be better and learn more is never a bad thing. This school year, challenge yourself to take a page out of Ramere's book and find a way to excel even further in your passions.



Ramere with his WAHS teammates

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Ramere with his Senior class Student Council

Provided

Sustainable Christmas Gifts

by Emma Shelton

This holiday season, like all holiday seasons, it is important to focus on the gift of giving, but when our earth's CO₂ is rapidly rising and the ice caps are melting, it is also important to focus on sustainable living. With climate change worsening and not only affecting our future but also our present, looking for ways to make traditions better for the earth is so beneficial. One incredibly important thing we can do this holiday season is find sustainable alternatives to gifts.

Gifts to friends and family members experiences instead of material objects not only reduces waste but also provides them with a fun memory. Instead of buying a plastic gag gift that will inevitably be thrown in the trash, give someone tickets to a show or a coupon for a class. The time spent there will be so much more valuable to them than any last minute gift you threw in your Amazon cart.

The best gift anyone can receive is a donation to charity. If we are fortunate enough to have people give us gifts, we are more fortunate than most. This year, ask for a charity donation to a good cause instead of buying new makeup that you will never use, new clothes that you will never wear, or new games that you will never play. Monetary value means nothing when it comes to the joy of gift giving, and a handmade gift can mean just as much, if not more, than an expensive one. Not only are handmade

gifts typically inexpensive, but they also show care and love for whoever is receiving them. When a knitted scarf, painting, or piece of jewelry is made and not purchased, it largely reduces waste and helps the earth.

If you feel that you have to gift a material object and it absolutely cannot be handmade, small and local businesses are the best way to go. Not only is supporting them good for the economy, but most small businesses participate in small batch production, which reduces waste and prevents global warming. Small businesses are all unique in ways that larger companies cannot be, and when buying gifts from them, you're likely to get something that will be treasured forever.

Don't waste your money on anything that you know won't be used to the fullest, and when planning out your wishlist, ask for things that won't actively contribute to the current climate crisis. This is a time of joy and generosity, lend some of that to preserving our planet.

SOA Advice Column: Ask Ashley!

After digging through the Applause archive, staff writer extraordinaire, Ashley Peterson, decided to revitalize the timeless classic, "SOA Advice Column." With queries coming directly from students (via @soaapplause on Instagram), Ashley was sure to thoroughly answer some of SOA's most burning academic, artistic, and general life advice questions.

I owe some people apologies, how can I reach out without it sounding "forced" or "fake"?

Ashley: There's a chance that the person you are apologizing to will always think that it sounds "fake", but I have some tips to make your apology sound as serious as you mean it to be. I think that it's best to apologize in person rather than over the phone through call or text because they can tell you're being genuine. Allowing them to see your facial expressions and hearing the tone of your voice will show them that your apology is natural and meaningful. Although it may be easier to hide behind the screen to make it less nerve racking, I advise doing it in person to show you really care. I also think that you should plan on what you say beforehand. Obviously you aren't going to say it the exact way you practiced because you don't know how they are going to respond, but being able to know what points you want to hit can be helpful so you don't stutter over your apology. You could even practice with someone who knows the situation in case there's better ways to phrase the apology or parts you should add and take away. Thinking about how to make the apology not sound "forced" shows how much you care about healing this relationship you have with the person and I think that's the first step to a good apology; I hope these tips make you more confident while apologizing to that person.



Ashley Peterson

Cate Traywick

All of my friends are getting into relationships, but what if I don't want to?

Ashley: Looking around seeing your friends in those cute relationships does often make people feel pressured that they need to be in one too but believe me, you don't need to be. If you aren't ready for a relationship or just not interested in one, don't get into one. It'll make it miserable for you and the person you end up being with, because you don't want to be there and they will eventually realize that. Being with someone because you feel forced could take away from opportunities to be with someone who is better for you. Don't waste your time constantly looking for someone to date because you're afraid people will think you're weird for not being in a relationship; you have plenty of time to start dating if that is something that ever interests you. But if you want to take the single route forever, that is completely okay and up to you. While it may seem like everyone is in a relationship, there are more single people than it appears, and that is completely normal. Don't let what other people are doing affect how you live your life.

I know they mean well, but how do I respond when one of my family members says something rude during the holidays?

AP: I know how scary it can be to speak up especially to family members while being around your whole family, but don't be afraid to. You can politely say that what they said was disrespectful or that you didn't appreciate it; for example, you could say "I know that you probably didn't mean it in the way it sounded, but I felt like what you said to me wasn't appropriate." If they respond negatively to you confronting them, just remember that you were communicating your feelings and trying to mend the relationship you have with that family member. I have been in situations where I possibly misunderstood something or the person didn't realize that they phrased it in a way that sounded rude, and I cleared the air just by having a conversation with them about it. It may be awkward

or uncomfortable but believe me, it can eliminate any tension that you might have towards them, and it makes them aware of what they shouldn't say in the future. Being around a lot of family members during the holidays can be very stressful and cause people to say something that they don't mean. Remember that you have the right to tell people that what they said wasn't okay no matter who they are.

SOA Students Participate in the Free Verse Poetry Festival

by Isis Hanna

Charleston's former Poet Laureate Marcus Amaker has been hosting the Free Verse Poetry Festival since 2017. It began as a passion project with the goal of bringing poetry to the people and creating a fun and accessible event for people of all ages to enjoy. In his personal letter posted on the Free Verse website, Amaker says that "teaching poetry to kids is [his] life's work," and I was lucky enough to be a part of the final event this year, the Youth Poetry Slam at the Gaillard. My classmate Zoe Harvey-Pringle and I both competed for cash prizes in a contest meant to showcase the talent of youth writers in Charleston.



Zoe Harvey-Pringle and Isis Hanna with Marcus Amaker at the Youth Poetry Slam

Although we were technically pitted against each other, I honestly enjoyed hearing the work of poets my age, and I found it inspiring to watch them be vulnerable in front of an audience of strangers. Also, slam poetry is not a subgenre that I am very well versed in, and I feel like I learned a lot.

Patrick Martin

Along with the slam, Zoe Harvey-Pringle participated in the Poetry and Pancakes event, where she along with several other writers wrote custom poems on the spot for those who

wandered in for breakfast. Honestly, the thought of writing one poem on the spot is appalling to me, so I commend her talent for doing dozens in one morning.

SOA's own Mr. Martin attended the festival to support his students as well as Marcus Amaker. He is one of several teachers at our school who has a personal connection to the former Poet Laureate, which makes the event extra special to SOA. We as students in a community of artists should be going out to festivals and events like these to support our fellow artists.

The Free Verse Poetry Festival will be returning next fall, so if you missed out, be sure to check out the great workshops and readings that will be in store. Also, Marcus Amaker plans on publishing the slam poems read at the Youth Poetry Slam in an anthology in the near future, so be on the lookout for that.



Zoe, hard at work during Poetry and Pancakes

Patrick Martin

SOA Visual Artists Host Holiday Art Market

by Lucy Cromwell

On Tuesday, November 14th, the Visual Arts Department held their annual holiday art market. Just outside of the Rose Maree Myers Theater, visual artists sold their ornaments, crafts, and art to celebrate the holiday season. Shortly after the market came to a close, shoppers and students alike filed into the theater to watch the annual Dance Winter Showcase (see page 19)



Holiday Season Spotify Playlist

by Ella Kay

Find yourself missing Halloween a little too much to properly enjoy the classic Christmas music? This month our resident Spotify playlist expert has curated a collection of holiday music that exudes both the Christmas and Halloween spirit.



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Lefty Lucy: A Rock 'N' Roll Dream Come True

by Elle Baker

Sophomore strings major Lila Elm recently formed the Lefty Lucy Band with three other students around Charleston: Lyla Carpenter on bass and lead vocals, Claire Duane on keyboard, and June Murdock on drums. Lila and Lyla bonded over their shared name, and when Lyla mentioned her interest in forming a band, they reached out to June and Claire over Instagram. From their first time playing together, guitarist Lila says they knew they were going to be more than a garage band.

The band's shared taste in rock and roll music keeps them connected and inspired, finding themselves inspired by bands like the Beatles (Lila's favorite), Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, and The Doors. As for the name of their own band, apparently it was quite spontaneous; They were throwing ideas around and said "righty tighty lefty... Lucy?" and it simply stuck.

The band has played in Savannah with The Maxines, Fury in Few, and Basterdane, whose drummer is the son of James Hetfield, a co-founder of Metallica, as well as conducting interviews with Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and College of Charleston. In the midst of these huge successes, prioritizing the new band has led Lila to confront her procrastination, as she's forced to balance strings and jazz classes and practicing along with her core classes.

Before Thanksgiving break, the band had three gigs in just one week, which is a lot to balance with school. The four of them have also had to learn the flow of booking gigs and recording music. Despite challenges presented to each of them, they are constantly inspired by one another and throwing ideas out. The band is currently working towards recording and releasing an album as well as putting out more merch. As for the future, Lila is a little unsure about the band. The other members are heading to college next year, and the progression of the band will depend on whether or not they stay local. Lila is dedicated and plans to keep playing music no matter what, describing her experience as "a bit of a rock 'n' roll dream come true."



Lefty Lucy jams out at one of their recent shows

Provided

Where Are They Now: Robert Raffield

Since graduating SOA in 2003, former Strings major, **Robert Raffield** has pursued his major in a countless number of ways. Curious about his success, Applause staff writer **Ashley Peterson** interviewed him to ask a few questions about what he's been up to since his time at SOA.

Ashley Peterson: What have you accomplished since leaving SOA?

Robert Raffield: Since leaving SOA I have earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in Music Education and Music Performance, and I have taught middle and high school orchestra for about a decade. I've performed with many of the orchestras in South Carolina and I play with multiple bands in the Charleston area.

AP: How did your experience at SOA prepare you for what you're doing now?

RR: I had a lot of experiences at SOA that gave me perspective about what to expect from the professional musical world. I had a good relationship with my orchestra teachers and they helped prepare me by facilitating participation in events and performances. These experiences gave me a good idea of what to expect once I went to music school.

AP: Where did you go to college and what was that experience like?

RR: I started at Appalachian State and transferred to the University of South Carolina in Columbia. I had good experiences at both schools. I had more individual attention at ASU but the orchestra program at USC was much larger at the time. I was able to play in multiple types of ensembles, get teaching experience at the USC String Project, and make connections with people that have helped my career.

AP: How did you get involved in Regionals and what is your role there?

RR: The Region IV Orchestra is an auditioned orchestra for students in Region IV of SC and is a required step if students want a chance to participate in All State Orchestra.



Robert Raffield with a violin student

Provided

I have had students audition and participate for most of my career teaching. The past two years I have taken on the role of Region Chairperson which means I am in charge of organizing the event and making sure it runs smoothly. I have several other teachers from the area who help every year to make sure that everything works well for the students who want a fun and worthwhile higher level orchestra experience.

AP: How do you balance a teaching career and a music career?

RR: I have a lot going on all the time! I teach a regular school schedule as well as some private lessons after school and I also travel frequently on weekends or play gigs that are in Charleston. I also have rehearsals for these performances. It's busy but performing and playing music is part of how I relax. If I didn't have that creative outlet I wouldn't be as happy.

AP: Do you have any advice for students who want to continue their art career after highschool?

RR: The best advice I can give is to train or attend a school where you know you can make good connections within the professional world. Obviously, you have to practice, train, and work hard to get to a professional level in any art. This goes without saying. You also have to make those connections and maintain good relations with others in your field.



Robert Raffield with string students

Provided

Willie Nelson Performs at Firefly Distillery

by Elle Baker

The South is home to many treasured country artists, but among the most celebrated is Willie Nelson. Having had many struggles with the army, school, and debt, Nelson fought long and hard to succeed in the music world, and at ninety years old he still honors his title in the industry. On October 20, he played at Firefly Distillery in North Charleston, putting out an impressive performance.

Nelson's entire life has played out in the public eye over the course of his seven decade career, from four wives to eight children (including a secret, illegitimate one) to five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. The progression of his life and love is tangible through his music and performance. Recently, his sons Lukas and Micah have played with him on guitar and drums and bass. Nelson brought out two of his grandchildren on stage at Firefly for the closing song, "It's Hard to be Humble," beaming at them as they danced and sang along with him.

The show was an impressive mix of age demographics. Having grown up on classic rock and been introduced to it by my parents, I was expecting the crowd to be mostly in their 40s and 50s, but there were folks there ranging from 20s to maybe older than Willie himself! The crowd was admirable and equally enthusiastic regardless of age. Singing along to songs like "You Were Always on My Mind," "Good Hearted Woman," and "Funny How Time Slips Away," it's impossible not to sway along with those around you.

Whether you know every lyric or are listening for the first time, the culture around Willie Nelson and his audience is undeniably welcoming. As our favorite musicians age, it's important to celebrate both their past and their present as we sing along to both classic songs and new ones.



Willie Nelson performs at Firefly Distillery

Elle Baker

Holiday Festival of Lights Returns

by Ashley Peterson

November 1 strikes and all of a sudden it's Christmas time here in the Lowcountry. What better way to celebrate than looking at the beautiful lights at James Island County Park's Holiday Festival of Lights? The light show opened on November 10th and runs every night until December 31, including Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Years Eve. With channel 102.5 playing both outside and inside every car driving through the light show, the festival has much to offer. There's food, shops, a scavenger hunt, a train, and my personal favorite, meeting Santa and his elves. As someone who has been a customer, an employee, and a performer at this festival, I think it is worth adding to your holiday bucket list whether you're going with friends, family, or by yourself.

Every year brings new lights and new additions. This year, with the online ticket pre-purchase option, you get to the fun faster, the tickets are cheaper! There are three different ticket prices depending on how busy the night is forecasted to be: On light traffic/

crowd (green) nights tickets are twenty dollars in person and fifteen dollars online. on moderate traffic/crowd (yellow) nights tickets are thirty dollars in person and twenty-five dollars online, and on heavy traffic/crowd (red) nights tickets are forty dollars in person and thirty dollars online.

The calendar on their website includes the colors of each night to let you know the price for the night you want to go. The light show opens at 5:30 pm and gates close at 10 pm. On busier nights the park may stay open past 10 pm for customers already in the light show, as well as select food vendors and shops. The lines do tend to get long and the wait time to get into the park can be an hour or more, so I recommend getting there before the gates open to ensure you get the most time for your money. They do accept gold passes and employee passes, just make sure you have them with you because employees are unable to look up your name to keep traffic flowing as fast as possible. I highly recommend visiting the Holiday Festival of Lights sometime during this festive season, as it is sure to bring some holiday cheer to your night.



secretcharleston.com

Entrance to the Festival of Lights

Creative Writing Juniors Place in Local Competition

by Braeden LaRoche

The Charleston Literary Festival held its first ever Young Writers Awards this fall; its judges reviewed over four-hundred short stories and personal essays from students across Charleston County, including junior Creative Writing majors Acadia Reynolds and Rowan Anderson, whose works placed in the competition.

Acadia secured second place in the personal essay section for her piece "Summer Days," which discussed complicated family relationships and forgiveness. She read an excerpt of her work aloud at the Festival.

"I was taken backstage at the Dock Street Theater, where I met Harlan Greene and James Kirchick, the two authors who were participating in the panel I presented at.



Cate Traywick

Rowan Anderson and Acadia Reynolds

"I went onstage at the very start of the panel, read an excerpt from my essay, and then sat down to listen to the rest of the panel. It went really well."

Rowan was awarded second place in the short story section of the competition for their piece "Prospective Apartment," a psychological thriller written for a Creative Writing assignment that explores how to reveal things about a character through the assumptions they make about their environment.

Rowan also read their work aloud at the Festival. "Because my piece was a mysterious suspense story, they had me read it to open up a panel with Lucy Worsely, the curator for all the British palaces and a biographer who recently wrote about Agatha Christie, the famous mystery writer who disappeared without a trace for several days in the twenties.

"I got to hang out in the VIP lounge, the dressing rooms, and backstage, which was a great experience."



Rowan Anderson speaking at Charleston Literary Festival

NHS offers Angel Tree at SOA

by Ashley Peterson

Here at SOA we have many volunteer opportunities throughout the year, the most popular being the Angel Tree. This service project, run through NHS, offers many service hours through buying gifts, distributing angels, wrapping presents, and transporting them over to Liberty Hill. The holiday season is not only the time of receiving but also the time of giving, and who doesn't love a little holiday shopping especially for a child in need. While angel trees are provided by many places, having one in the school you go to makes it more accessible, and with the help of Ms. Honeycutt and Grace Dennie collaborating with Liberty Hill, SOA was able to give students that opportunity. The

angels were given out the week before fall break and gifts were collected from November 27th to December 5. We have given all of the angels their gifts and they greatly enjoyed them; for many of them, these are their only Christmas presents so we make sure we give them plenty of gifts to unwrap, including both practical and fun gifts. The tradition of the Angel Tree continues every year and NHS would love to have more participants in the future; it will give you not only many service hours but also the joy of getting presents to make a child happy.

NHS Students Wrap Angel Tree Gifts

Photos by Ashley Peterson

On Tuesday, December 4, NHS members congregated in Ms. Greig's lab and spent time wrapping the gifts that NHS received via Angel Tree (see above), on December 8, they will be delivered to children in need.



Student-run Literary Magazine Flourishes in its First Year

by Braeden LaRoche

“It truly began with a name,” recalled senior Creative Writing major Jessie Leitzel of *Trace Fossils Review*, the literary magazine they co-founded last year with fellow senior Creative Writer Elliott Kate Cooper. This remarkable undertaking has seen great success, having received hundreds of excellent submissions of writing and artwork from which the magazine’s staff selects several pieces each season to publish.

Ms. DeTiberus, a Creative Writing teacher who has taught the *Trace Fossils* staff and has witnessed many classes of exceptionally accomplished writers, gave her thoughts on the magazine:

“I am wildly impressed with the efforts and vision of the founding editors and staff of *Trace Fossils Review*. It’s one thing to build a home for other artists’ creative pursuits, but it’s another thing entirely to become immersed in the business of running a publication— the curation, the paperwork, the minutiae. To find joy in both the creative and the practical— that is the mark of artists with staying power.”

I sat down with Jessie and Elliott Kate last week, as well as senior Creative Writers Linda Garziera and Merrik Moriarty, the magazine’s Head Editors, to discuss *Trace Fossils* from its beginnings to what it is today and the staff’s plans for the magazine’s future. The staff comprises of, alongside the aforementioned students, myself as Head Art Editor, senior Visual Artist Sophia Stadalsky as Contributing Art Editor, and 2023 Creative Writing graduate Bella Cosentino as Web Editor.

“It got started with Jessie’s acceptance into the literary magazine *The Echo* run by high schoolers in Florida, and I was reading this book called *Underland* which talked about the concept of a trace fossil, which is the mark of an animal or something it’s left behind rather than the animal itself.”

“I’d thought for a while how art is like that—art is our trace fossil—and so Jessie and I went to dinner and we were talking about both these things at the same time and I was like, ‘Jessie, I think we should start a literary magazine and call it *Trace Fossils*,’” said Elliott Kate.

As passionate and ambitious people who value community and support among the various artistic disciplines, Jessie and Elliott Kate quickly dedicated themselves to making their idea a reality.

After that promising dinner in December of last year, they began in January a lengthy process of research into literary magazines, web design, and how to set up the service which allows people to submit to the magazine, Submittable. This was accompanied by the complicated task of registering the magazine as an LLC with the state, which involved a good bit of paperwork.

The magazine opened for submissions in March to the Summer installment of its Inaugural Issue, quickly receiving over one hundred works to review—largely poems—thanks to promotion of the magazine on social media.

“First, we review the expedited submissions, each of which needs to be reviewed in a four week period. Then, we start regular reviewing, and that’s the biggest step of them all. We each have our own categories based on what we’re best at reading,” said Linda.

The categories for submissions are poetry, prose, nonfiction, art/multimedia, and hybrid works which may combine elements of multiple categories.

“A minimum of two people look at each submission, and we each cast a vote on Submittable of yes, no, or maybe. After that’s done, we go through all of them that aren’t a unanimous ‘no.’”

Jessie elaborated on the review process:

“When a submission period is over, we’re still in the review process for the previous issue. For example, we just finished reviewing the Fall submissions while the Winter submissions were still open. We’ll be reviewing, say, three-hundred pieces, and then we’ll have another three-hundred pieces coming our way.”

Merrik noted a challenge faced in reviewing the first set of submissions:

“It was a learning curve trying to figure out how to select pieces and how we work as a team. There have been a couple pieces we’ve argued over.”

With a staff diverse in tastes, these disagreements are inevitable, though ultimately, *Trace Fossils* considers what aligns most with their mission.

“When we have disagreements over pieces, we think, ‘What pieces are meant to be in this journal?’ At the end of the day, some of them are good pieces, but they might not be best for the journal, so we have to decline.” Said Linda. “It doesn’t mean their work is bad, just that it’s not meant for this issue. Overall, we choose pieces we really like or that stir something in us so we can say, ‘This is our issue and we’re proud of it.’”

“I think we can also tell when a piece resonates with us, and that can only happen when we read it and say, ‘Somebody’s been here. Somebody put so much of themselves into

this piece. They didn’t write this for anyone else; they wrote this for themselves,’” added Elliott Kate.

Currently, *Trace Fossils* has its Summer and Fall Inaugural Issues out online, with the Winter portion slated for release in early February. Once all four quarters of the Issue have been published, they will publish a print anthology including some of the best pieces from the year.

The staff has a variety of other plans for the future.

“In our Summer Issue, we had the opportunity to publish seventeen pieces, and we were very grateful for this, but as time goes on, we hope to pare down. A lot of our ideal magazines have two poems per publication. We don’t want a lot; we want things that’ll stick,” noted Jessie.

They are also enthusiastic about the prospect of interviewing prominent writers:

“Something that inspired us has been having people to look up to, so it’s going to be interesting to sit down with people who have been writing their entire lives—writing is how they understand the world—and to have them explain a lens we’ve never known before.”

Linda would like to host competitions:

“I love competitions because I think there’s a much bigger pool of people that submit to competitions rather than publishing, and I think that’s because a competition might be less daunting.

“They would allow us to recruit different types of writing. Sometimes, we have to say no to a piece if it’s odd for the magazine, but by having those competitions, we can reach out and target a specific groups of people. It can diversify things so they don’t become stale.”

Elliott Kate spoke on the idea of expanding the staff:

“As we start to get readers and we have a larger pool of applicants, we can have readers who narrow down what we want so when we come together, we don’t have three-hundred submissions to go through which we just mostly say no to. Then, we can all start specializing on the things we want to do more.”

Submissions for *Trace Fossils*’s Spring Inaugural Issue are open. The magazine is always looking for unique and expressive pieces— impactful works the creator has imbued some part of themselves into.

You can submit via the magazine’s Submittable page, a link to which can be found on its website, tracefossilsreview.com.

“Don’t be afraid to submit. We might judge your work, but that’s what we’re here for, and any time you submit, you’re being brave. You’re allowing people to see your work and getting eyes on it, and any time you write for a theme, magazine, or competition, that’s practice. Do it, basically, just do it. It’s always a good experience,” said Merrik.

For more about *Trace Fossils*, a review by Ruby Vallaro of its Fall Inaugural Issue can be found on page 21, and you can read both current and past issues on the magazine’s website.



Founders of *Trace Fossils* (left to right), Jessie Leitzel, Elliott Kate Cooper, Linda Garziera, and Merrik Moriarty

Appraise Staff



Creative Writing Department Presents Wordfest

by Cate Traywick, Photos by Patrick Martin

On Saturday, December 2, Creative Writing held Wordfest, their annual department-wide reading at the Mount Pleasant Barnes and Noble. Wordfest is a day-long celebration of student work, and it consists of readings from every student in each grade. Starting with sixth grade at 9 am, and continuing throughout the day until the seniors have read, each writer reads bits and pieces of what they have been working on throughout the semester. From deeply personal poetry to intricately crafted prose, a wide variety of work was represented at this year's Wordfest.



Vocal Majors Perform in Foreigner Concert

by Cate Traywick

On Monday, November 13, SOA's Vocal program had the opportunity to perform alongside famous 80s rock outfit, Foreigner. In support of public school arts programs across the country, Foreigner personnel have selected a lucky high school choir to join them onstage during "I Want To Know What Love Is." After being offered this opportunity, SOA's Vocal department extended the invite to their eighteen seniors, and held a raffle amongst the juniors to fill the remaining spots. In addition to their performance, the Vocal department received a \$500 donation from the band in support of their program.



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Sign of the Month: “Happy Winter”

by Luciano Cusatis

Demonstrated by Deonta Nelson
8th grade ASL & Deaf Culture



1. Place your hands, palms down, flat on your chest
2. At a moderate pace, slide your hands up to your collarbone
3. Hold your hands facing each other, with your index, middle, and ring fingers up
4. Flick your hands outwards

SOA Students Perform With the Charleston Symphony Youth Orchestra

by Isabella Pineda

On November 18, 2023, the Charleston Symphony Youth Orchestra held their Fall Concert at the Gaillard. The concert highlighted the following SOA students: **Nicholas Grayson, Kenneth Joyce, Max Kai, Reagan Passantino, Christian Curran, Cyle Tang, Adam Kremer, Abigail Lin, and Madie Fletcher.** The program featured countless pieces that the CSYO members have been working on diligently, such as Brahms' Academic Festival Overture. Visit the CSYO website and mark your calendars for their upcoming concerts!



SOA Student Council Presents the Fall Food and Fun Festival

Photos by SOA Students

SOA Student Council successfully pulled off the first ever Fall Food and Fun Festival on Friday, November 17, in conjunction with the third Senior Grub on the Green. The event hosted many food stands, carnival games, and other artistic fundraisers. The Asian Student Union held a stall featuring popular items like boba and milk tea. Students in Action hosted “Caricatures For A Cause,” having members draw pictures of donors. Ms. Greig also arranged a “Thriftathon Shop,” having student donated clothes sold to raise money for the Lowcountry Food Bank.




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Where Were They Then: Ms. Campbell

Curious about his favorite AP Environmental Science teacher's past, Applause staff writer and business manager **Luciano Cusatis** sat down with **Leslie Campbell** to ask her a few questions regarding her life before SOA.

Luciano Cusatis: Where did you grow up and what were your interests as a kid?

Leslie Campbell: I would say I'm from Batesburg-Leesville SC because that is where my parents grew up, but as a kid I moved around a lot and lived in several different states since my Dad was in the Army. When I was a kid I loved to swim and water ski. I also loved to read and watch movies.

LJC: What was your life like after high school and where did you go to college?

LC: I moved back to Batesburg- Leesville in my junior year of high school and graduated from there, so after graduation I attended USC- Aiken where I graduated with a bachelors of science in Nursing. I made lots of great friends during that time and many of them I'm still friends with today.

LJC: Where did you work before coming to SOA?

LC: Before SOA I worked at Septima P. Clark on James Island, Batesburg-Leesville High School, Chapin Middle School and I worked as an ICU nurse for several years in Savannah Georgia.

LJC: What made you want to become a teacher?

LC: I always loved school so when I was looking for a career change from nursing education seemed like a perfect fit.

LJC: What has been your favorite part of working at SOA?

LC: The students and the staff. I love the culture of creativity and kindness we have here at SOA.

LJC: Do you have any advice for SOA students?

LC: I would just let them know that our lives don't always follow the path we think that they will and we need to be open to change and to bloom where you are planted at that time.



Ms. Campbell winning Miss Congeniality in her high school's beauty pageant.



Ms. Campbell on Christmas 1985

SOA Outfit Breakdowns: Winter Fashion

by Isabella Pineda

Outfit One: Cahal Finch, 11th Grade Theater

Isabella Pineda: Break down your outfit for me. Where is everything from?

Cahal Finch: Pants are from H&M, shoes are Converse, socks are probably from Target, and my shirt was my grandpa's.

IP: What is your favorite part of this outfit?

CF: Probably this shirt.

IP: What trend have you been most obsessed with recently?

CF: I've been loving high waisted, wide leg pants recently.

IP: What is your biggest fashion no-go?

CF: A big no-go for me is sweatpants of any kind. I call them "giving up" pants. Also, let's save the athletic wear for sports.

IP: Who or what inspires your outfits?

CF: I don't have a specific person who inspires me fashion-wise, but I do love bright colors and fun prints. I don't think clothing and style should be gender specific. Wear what makes you feel good!

Outfit Two: Victoria Hickerson, 11th Grade Visual Arts

Isabella Pineda: Break down your outfit for me. Where is everything from?

Victoria Hickerson: My pants are from Versona, but they didn't fit me so I had to sew them last night. My jacket is from a boutique. I forgot which one, but my mom wore it to an Elton



Isabella Pineda



Isabella Pineda

John concert, so I just took it from her. My top is from Burlington.

IP: What is your favorite part of this outfit?

VH: Probably this jacket, it's very cool.

IP: What trend have you been most obsessed with recently?

VH: I know this isn't the newest trend, but I love low rise jeans and long skirts. I am also obsessed with red leather jackets!

IP: What is your biggest fashion no-go?

VH: My biggest fashion no-go is mixing navy blue and black. I don't know why I don't like it, but I just don't.

IP: Who or what inspires your outfits?

VH: My mom inspires my outfits. She's a style icon and finds the coolest vintage and new pieces...but I also love Zendaya's style.

Outfit Three: Hadley Thompson, 10th Grade Theater
Isabella Pineda: Break down your outfit for me. Where is everything from?

Hadley Thompson: Shoes from Depop, socks from Nike, skirt from H&M, sweater from Depop, and ribbons are crocheted by me!

IP: What is your favorite part of this outfit?

HT: Definitely the sweater and the shoes. They make me so happy and I love shopping on Depop!

IP: What trend have you been most obsessed with recently?

HT: I've been obsessed with bows! They're so adorable on shirts and in hair and they make everything so much cuter.

IP: What is your biggest fashion no-go?

HT: I'm sorry, but I absolutely hate the pink Nirvana hoodies that twelve year-olds wear. That whole preppy style is no bueno.

IP: Who or what inspires your outfits?

HT: I get outfit inspiration from Pinterest. I also love Bella Condon and Amelia Counts' outfits! They have such great style.



Outfit Four: Niamh Carmichael, 10th Grade Creative Writing

Isabella Pineda: Break down your outfit for me. Where is everything from?

Niamh Carmichael: My shirt is from H&M, my jeans are Pacsun, and my shoes are Converse!

IP: What is your favorite part of this outfit?

NC: I think my Converse would have to be my favorite, just because I wear them daily so they're very worn and loved.

IP: What trend have you been most obsessed with recently?

NC: I really like Uggs right now, they're so cute and so cozy and perfect for winter.

IP: What is your biggest fashion no-go?

NC: Tailors are a big fashion no-go for me, I've seen a few too many recently.

IP: Who or what inspires your outfits?



Isabella Pineda

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Coach Johnson, Physical Education teacher, and his family accompanied by their canine companion Brutus.



Ms. Tracy Duffy with her pet reindeer, Fenrir and Clover



Coach Butt's furchild, Dallas, with Santa Claus



Shannon Smith & Lilybelle striking a pose in front of the Christmas tree.



Senior Visual Arts major Lucy Cromwell with her twin brother and their two dogs.

SOA's Most Festive Furballs



SOA Principal Dr. Cook and her festive furry friend Cadence.



Ms. Barbara Richardson with Chicken and Sully.



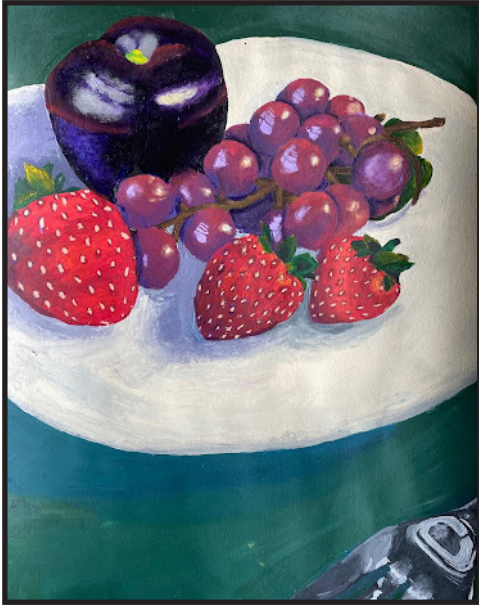
The McCauley Families stylish dogs, Stewie and Gracie



Junior Fashion major Emma Shelton and her labrador pitbull, Furnando relaxing under the Christmas tree



Liv Dewhirst, junior Theater major, and Cooper on the first night of Hanukkah.



"Untitled"
Dylann Starck, 7th grade



"Cardinal Camper"
Whitney Werking, 10th grade



"Ageless"
Vivia Squires, 10th grade



"Flying Fungi"
Ella Cutaia 10th grade



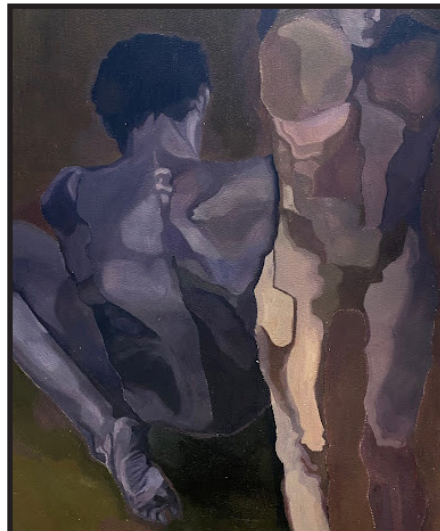
"Untitled"
Annabel Grammes, 7th grade



"Untitled"
Tulah Cramer, 12th grade



"Flesh"
Ella Rogers Kay, 11th grade



"Untitled"
Presley Rhodes, 12th grade



"Bird Watching"
Amelia Counts 10th grade

SOA Dance Department Presents Their Winter Showcase

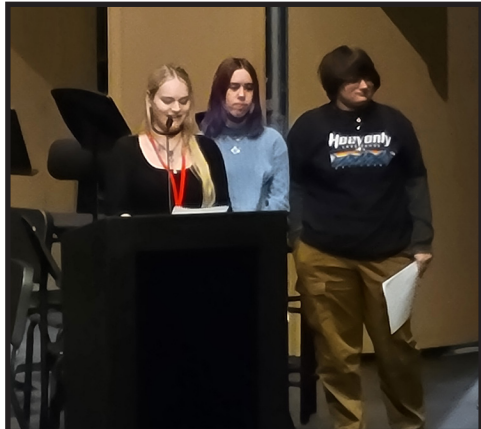
Photos by Cate Traywick

On Tuesday, November 14th, the Dance Department held their Winter Showcase in the Rose Maree Myers Theater. This showcase featured dances from every grade level that acknowledge how different cultures celebrate the holiday season.



Theater, Vocal, Strings, Creative Writing, and Band Perform in Second Convocation of the Year

Photos by Applause Staff



The Art in Wake of the Artist: A Review of *Trace Fossils*

by Ruby Varallo

From a step-by-step guide on how to explain your grandfather's "hitherto existence" to exploring the dimensions of memory, editors and senior Creative Writing majors Jessie Leitzel, Elliot-Kate Cooper, Linda Garziera, and Merrik Moriarty succeed in their aim of finding work that "acts like a fist through drywall" in *Trace Fossils Review's* inaugural issue.

Between poetry, prose, nonfiction, and hybrid, the issue highlights a wide variety of styles and themes while still maintaining common threads of memory and connection among all five genres. When reading, I started with my personal favorite genre, poetry, where "Aftermath" by David A. Goodrum stood out to me. Through seemingly simple questions like "Do you know where I could dump a Christmas tree in March?" Goodrum explores the otherwise unnoticed ways our lives change following loss. Through details of Goodrum's mother calling him by his uncle's name, complaining of a "never-lifting fog," and requesting her shoelaces be removed so "tongues could be freed," we see her decline as she reaches the end of her life, and the way the aftermath, hence the title, lingers on even after she's gone.

I love seeing how writers approach similar themes in different ways, and this issue does a perfect job of showcasing a range of voices while upholding each writer's own stylistic identity. Under the hybrid category is a piece by Miles Verana called "Life Hack: How to Explain Your Grandfather's Hitherto Existence in 14 Easy Points." With a title like that, you can't help but to be immediately drawn in, and Verana keeps the reader engaged from point one to fourteen. Advice about how to explain death gradually reveals more and more about the life of the grandfather, all with a satirical and comedic tone. Like Goodrum's poem, Verana makes death, something abstract and widely mysterious, tangible and concrete.

The last piece I read was a nonfiction essay by Isabella Mori titled "Dimensions of Memory," where she explores the different versions of memories we carry with us and the way they intertwine. I love the use of form to separate each dimension from one another, allowing the reader to draw their own connections between all nineteen different dimensions, each of which highlighting a specific detail from the speaker's life, sometimes only a sentence long. Like the prior two pieces, Mori takes an unexplainable idea, memory, and grounds it in specificity through vivid imagery and underlying connectivity.

Trace Fossils Review accomplishes exactly what it sets out to do, highlighting the "art in the wake of the artist" and the work that sticks with you long after first reading it. I truly enjoyed every piece in this inaugural issue, and I am already looking forward to reading the next one!

SOA Slang

by Moash Temeln and Eon Dello

Ice: (n) Synonym of Drip, referring to diamonds and/or diamond jewelry. "Woah, check out Riley; she's got some *ice* on her neck."

Roster: (n) List of people you are dating and/or speaking to. "The *roster* has been small since I ghosted that cello guy."

Lacy: (n) Someone who you are jealous of and mentally compare yourself to. "She's so pretty and perfect; she's my *lacy*."

Iykyk: (Phrase) Meaning If you know, you know, used after a statement to provide context that it is something only select people understand.

"She gave me a plastic spoon, *Iykyk*."

December 3: The lives of Fortnite players were changed forever. "Yoouo it's *December 3rd*."

Lana Del Rey: (adj) Used to describe something that fits into the many aesthetics associated with Lana Del Rey.

"Look at that top; it's so coquette *Lana Del Rey* vinyl Americana."

Bet: (v) Typically used as a positive response to a given instruction or task. "I dare you to eat a can." "Oh, *bet*."

Manic Pixie Dream Girl: (n) Female film or book character that is seen as unique, different, and typically with coloured hair.

"She listens to the Smiths; she's like a *Manic Pixie Dream Girl*."

Touch grass: (v) Used on the internet to tell others to go outside. "The government is controlling our brains." "Go *touch some grass*."

Stan: (v) An incredibly passionate, almost obsessive fan of a celebrity or a music group. "I'm a Taylor Swift *stan* till the day I die; she's the only artist I listen to."

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THE NIGHT BEFORE Christmas



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Regina Helcher Yost, flute;

Jenny Weiss, Trow Weeks, and Ava Whitener, violin

Ben Weiss and Riley Borkowski, viola

Peter O'Malley and Myles Walker, cello

Matt Masie, percussion; Laura Ball and Colin Waters, narrators



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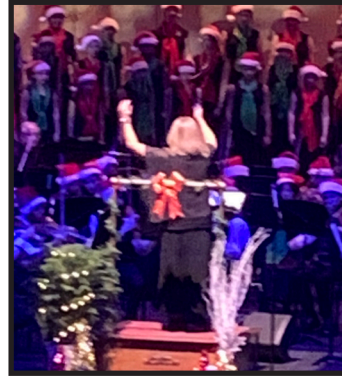
Nikola Denev

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Middle School Strings and Vocal Present Their Holiday Performance

Photos by Luciano Cusatis

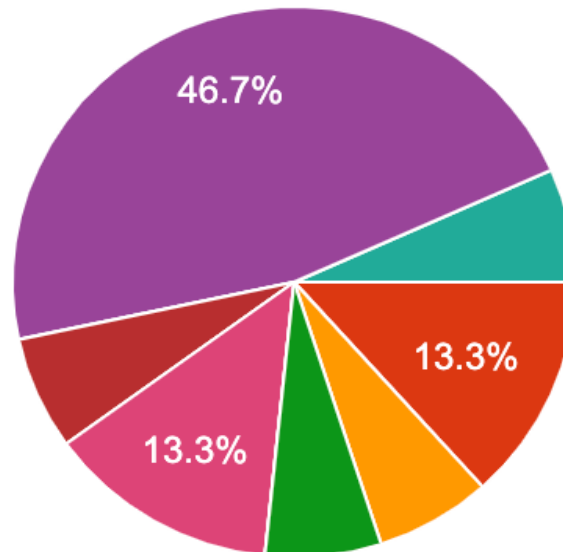


What is SOA's Favorite Christmas Movie?

by Riley Borkowski and Cate Traywick



Check out soa-applause.com to be kept up to date on our latest papers and check out past issues!



- Home Alone
- Home Alone 2
- Love Actually ❤️
- How The Grinch Stole Christmas
- The Polar Express
- Elf
- Christmas Vacation
- Rudolph
- Frosty the Snowman
- A Charlie Brown Christmas
- The Nightmare Before Christmas (or a Halloween movie?)
- Christmas Carol

Sixth Grade Writers and Artists Take On Bulls Island

by Lucy Cromwell

Sixth grade Visual Arts and Creative Writing students ventured out on their annual Bulls Island field trip on October 6th, taking lots of inspiration for their artist projects.

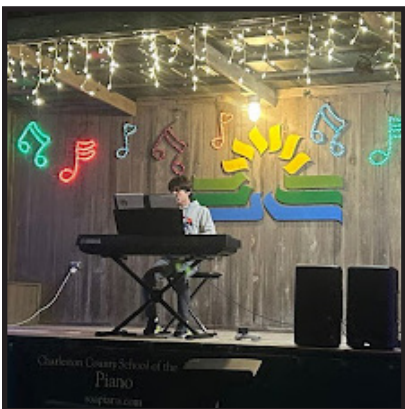
Located within the Cape Romain Wildlife refuge, Bulls Island is widely known as a bird sanctuary and is home to a boneyard beach. On the island, the fledgling artists and writers first spent time inspecting the scenery, taking the time to walk past alligators and other wildlife such as deer and an assortment of sea birds. One particularly exciting spot was the alligator alley, where the students could see baby alligators and their mothers (from a safe distance of course) all crowded in the marsh.

When the group finally reached the beach, time was taken to contemplate and sketch the area in preparation for the joint showcase between the two majors.



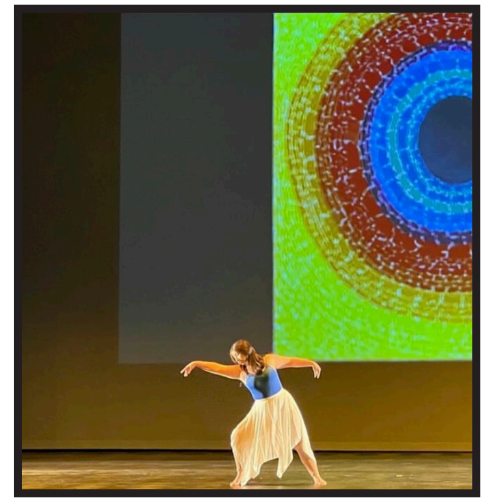
SOA Piano Majors Perform at James Island Festival of Lights

by Ashley Peterson



Junior Dance Majors Compose and Perform Original Pieces

Photos by SOA Dance Department



Horoscopes

by Cate Traywick and
Riley Borkowski



Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21):

Happy happy birthday dear Sagittarius! I would ask you what your plans are, but I know you don't know. Please stop making your friends decide where you go out to eat. I promise they won't think you're bossy. Your indecisiveness has really been driving everyone crazy recently. It won't kill you to choose for yourself every once in a while, you know?

Capricorn (December 22 - January 20):

Alright Capricorn, this month marks your total renewal. You and I both know that you have been going through it, but it is time to emerge like a phoenix from the ashes and prove everybody wrong. Don't let the end of the semester ruin your momentum. Onwards and upwards dear Capricorn.

Aquarius (January 21 - February 18):

You may feel like you're at your absolute peak, but I'm about to serve you the cold hard truth: please stop letting your friends walk all over you. You are so bold, strong, and capable, so stop allowing things that bother you go undiscussed. You need to sit down with them and talk about how you really feel, and you know exactly who I'm talking about.

Pisces (February 19 - March 20):

You've had that Christmas playlist rotting in your Spotify since September and it's finally time to bust it out. No more are the existential acoustic tunes that are a hallmark of your fall listening habits, now it's Michael Bublé and Bing Crosby all the way!

Aries (March 21 - April 19):

It's finally that time of the year Aries, it's time to brew some Sleepytime tea, curl up by the fire, and read a good book. As my good friend (and your fellow Aries) Niamh Carmichael told me, "Keep that small literary child inside you alive."

Taurus (April 20 - May 20):

You've been working HARD. I sense an academic comeback in the near future. And don't think we haven't noticed your recent glow-up, Taurus. Those recent trips to the gym have been paying off big time. Oh, and is that a new haircut? It suits you very well.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20):

Gemini, listen carefully, okay? Don't tell anyone, but I heard through the grapevine that someone has a little crush on you. It might have to do with that new fragrance you've been wearing. So be patient, Cupid has his eye on you and you may be able to expect a Valentine's Day full of flowers and candy in this upcoming year, so remain hopeful, dear Gemini!

Cancer (June 21 - July 22):

Cancer, you need to step up. Those AP exams aren't going to take themselves. Please stop relying on Quizlet sets from five years ago to earn a good grade on the simplest of assignments; it's honestly starting to get worrying. Make yourself some hot chocolate, set aside thirty minutes to learn the material, and have some academic integrity for once.

Leo (July 23 - August 22):

The only thing that compares to the zest that you have for life dear Leo, is the zest you have for procrastination. Truly, it takes a talent to put things off in the way that you do. The only thing more confusing than AP Chemistry is how in the world you are passing your classes. I'm begging you, please consider using a planner. Your disorganization is stressing all of us out.

Virgo (August 23 - September 22):

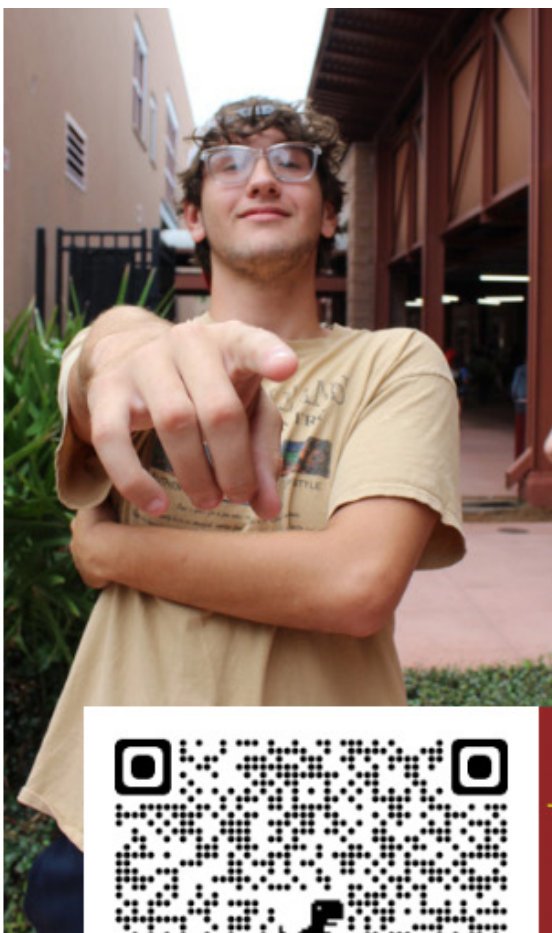
Oh, Virgo, you poor thing. Caught in the crossfire of your romantic daydreams and the ever-growing burnout saga, you are just a mess, aren't you? For the sake of yourself and everyone around you, please go ask them out. It's painful hearing about the eye contact you two held four Wednesdays ago while walking to third period. I know things are tough right now, but as you always say, "Just make it to Friday."

Libra (September 23 - October 22):

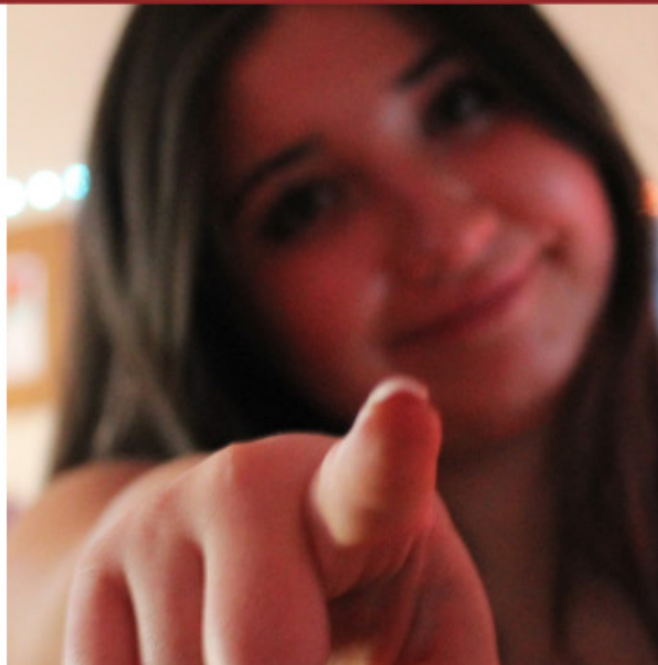
Libra, I adore you and your dark humor, but could you please turn down the volume on those killer punchlines? Even your math teacher is doing a double take, questioning whether she's in a classroom or a comedy club. Your comedic genius is the life of the party, but how about we aim for a level that doesn't make our neighboring classrooms beg for earplugs?

Scorpio (October 23 - November 21):

Well, Scorpio, I just don't know what you're going to do. All year you've been leaning on Notion as a surefire way to get all your assignments done, and now that you don't have an aesthetically pleasing checklist to motivate you, I see a lot of missing work in your future. But hey, maybe you'll persevere and/or take up bullet journaling.



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Classic Book Review: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

by Cate Traywick

Written with a highly stylistic southern twang, Tennessee Williams's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is set inside a plantation house in the Mississippi Delta. Throughout its three acts, it explores the well-kept secrets, desires, and inner workings of the Pollitts family.

The curtain rises on an exceptionally harsh argument between Maggie and Brick, the married couple that is the central relationship of the play. Maggie expresses that she feels neglected and unloved by her husband, and this becomes incredibly apparent to the reader. Through his absentminded remarks and the totally nonchalant attitude that he has towards his wife's concerns, Brick effectively behaves as a brick, fully unwilling and uninterested in addressing any issues with his marriage. Aside from his indifference and stubborn attitude towards his wife, Brick walks with a crutch. He is emotionally and physically disabled, and as the play progresses, characters struggle to snatch it from him and force Brick to be transparent.

Throughout this initial scene, as Maggie and Brick have it out with each other, Maggie shouts to her husband that she feels as if she is a cat on a hot tin roof. She has jumped onto the "roof" of all the things that she knows and loves, and yet it is hurting her in an impossible number of ways. This metaphor, aside from being the title, appears time and time again throughout the play, and with each reference to Maggie's inherent "cattiness," another line can be drawn between a hopeless cat and Maggie Pollitts.

To preserve the surprise of the bombshells that get dropped throughout *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, I'm going to stop any and all summary here, but the bitterness and resentment that Brick and Maggie have towards each other is further explored through their interactions with each other, interactions with Brick's family, and deep dives into their past.

Three things in particular stood out to me about *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. The first is its commitment to a story that unfolds in one day and in real time. I always admire this kind of writing because I feel as if I live with these characters during the span of the work. Full portraits of these people are painted, and we experience the mundane as well as the extraordinary when we are alongside the characters every step of the way. The second, and probably very obvious, aspect of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* that stood out to me was the fantastically detailed stage directions. Although this might be the norm for plays so highly regarded, it's clear that Tennessee Williams wrote this with such a distinct idea of how the actors would move in and interact with the space around them. Paragraphs upon paragraphs were lent to complex and specific stage directions, and I found that I might even prefer reading highly literary plays over a traditional novel.

The element of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* that truly made this play for me was how complex and tragic Maggie's character was. In a lot of literature, particularly pre



second-wave feminism, fully explored female characters are rare, but Maggie is amongst them. She is initially only defined as a woman who is self-destructively tied to Brick, but as we move through the play we see her complexity. Maggie's fears and wants and struggles are laid out for us through her direct confessions, and she, the cat on a hot tin roof, becomes a rallying point for any and all women who struggle and hurt.

There is precious little else that I can say about *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* without spoiling the plot, and there is nothing that I detest more than spoilers. As Dr. Cusatis so enthusiastically told me when I informed him that I had finished this play, "you can't understand the play if you don't know *mendacity*, it's deceit," *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is about the things that we do to deceive ourselves and the people around us, it's about what happens when people have simply had enough.

Contemporary Book Review: *Piranesi*

by Braeden LaRoche

This review is spoiler-free. Susanna Clarke's second novel, *Piranesi*, is a work of modern fantasy—though any simple genre tag drastically undersells this inventive and deeply inspired triumph of contemporary literature.

Albeit without some of the length and immensity of plot present in Clarke's first novel, the fantastical historical fiction *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, *Piranesi* nonetheless creates an engaging story full of intrigue fueled by unique, compelling characters and some of the most interesting conceptual ideas I've seen in popular modern fiction as of late.

The story largely takes place in a structure known as the House, a building of immense proportions wherein one can walk for days without finding an end to its statue-lined marble halls, with their grand windows and impossible architectural intricacies. The House is apparently situated in the middle of some sea, frequented by albatross and with a tide periodically sweeping certain halls and making others permanently "drowned."

This complex is inspired by the works of Italian draftsman Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778) to whom the title and the name of the narrator also allude. An architectural illustrator foremost, Piranesi drew huge stone interiors in his series *Carceri d'invenzione* (Imaginary Prisons), some of these containing impossible geometries and proportions that dwarf the apparently miniature figures within, who are defined by just a few pencilstrokes.

In *Piranesi*, Clarke elaborates on this sense of an all-dominating environment. To the narrator, who inhabits the House alongside his only companion, "the Other," the House is his entire world; he knows the halls by numbers and statues by names he assigns in the fashion that the inhabitants of an Earthly area know rivers, hills, and other landmarks. He treats the house as a godlike being in the way that many American natives and the Japanese practitioners of Shinto see spirits and deities in the components of the natural world. Living among statues, he sees facsimiles of these Earthly elements—deer, elephants, octopuses, boys with instruments, even things

of myth, like satyrs—but not themselves; he is familiar with them but unsure of how he came by this knowledge.

All of this works towards certain later reveals that emphasize the mystical qualities of the House and draw into the story the compelling contentions and mysteries that come alongside the introduction of new characters as Piranesi seeks answers about himself, the House, and what else might be out there.

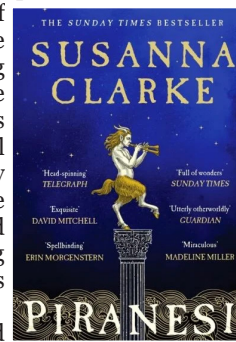
For more about *Piranesi*, I highly recommend Jacob Geller's video essay "The Shape of Infinity" (which can be found on Youtube), which discusses the novel in the context of other works and ideas in the literary continuity that deal with the notion of infinity, impossibly large spaces, and the thematic implications of these things.

Classic Album Review: *The Low End Theory*

by Jovanny Silva-Velasquez

In an era of rap dominated by feuds between the East and West coasts and gang violence, "A Tribe Called Quest" shined through with less explicit, yet more thought-provoking lyrics as well as innovative production techniques that helped to define later movements in hip-hop, such as LoFi, RnB, and Neo Soul. *The Low End Theory* is ATCQ's second studio album, and was released a year after their debut. At its core, the album's entire sound can be described as heavily minimalistic, typically consisting of only vocals, drums, and bass. While it sounds simple enough, the creativity and effort required to make such simplicity shine is more than what any amateur producer could accomplish. Come in: Q-Tip, one of the greatest producers of all time, alongside names like J Dilla and Kanye West, both of whom were inspired by Q-Tip.

Masterclass production from this album can be seen right from the beginning, with the song "Excursions." It begins with a slowed down bass sample from "A Chant for Bu," and off the rip Q-Tip takes a song in 3/4, chops it up, rearranges its parts, and fits it into 4/4. While bass samples weren't unheard of during this time period, it was certainly uncommon to make it the main focus of the song, as many songs of the era prioritized the drum breaks, heavy synthesizers, and/or vocals. The next breakthrough begins at around thirty seconds into the song, in which Q-Tip combines the jazz bass sample with a drum sample from soul song "The Soil I Tilled for You." Although commonplace now, the idea of mixing together two different records to create a brand new feel was a completely new innovation that Q-Tip helped foster in production. Furthermore, the lyrics and flow of Q-Tip help to establish the rest of the album's tone, and provide deeper meaning to what rap is about: a cyclical accumulation of black history, both deriving, influencing, and progressing black culture. The iconic opening lines "Back in the days when I was a teenager... You could find the Abstract listening to hiphop... My pops used to say, it reminded him of be-bop... I said, well daddy don't you know that things go in cycles" are great indicators of the role that rap music plays in African-American culture: a cycle of combining past and present African-American musical elements while at the same time giving back and influencing future generations. Such messages permeate throughout the



entire album, and while they seem to teeter into political blanket statements, function more as a social critique. The title of the album itself is a double-entendre, meaning both the low bass frequencies that enrich the sound of ATCQ and the lower societal status that many African-Americans of the time found themselves in, despite their previous generations spearheading the Civil Rights movement. While the bulk of the album maintains the same feel throughout, the quality of the songs differ just enough to make the overall album listening experience not as enticing as it can be. For every “Jazz (We’ve Got),” there’s a “What?” for every “Check The Rhime,” there’s a “Skypager.” While this isn’t to say that the songs themselves are bad, it is simply a matter of being able to listen through this album from front to back without skips. As unfortunate as it is, in some ways it proves the alternative fashion of the album. While I wouldn’t relisten to “Skypager,” I appreciate the experimental nature that ATCQ boldly takes in creating mini-skits and odd beat samples/breaks.

Contemporary Album Review: *Bottomless Pit*

by Lucy Cromwell

As a dedicated *Applause* fan and staff writer, I spend a lot of time looking through past issues, especially the album reviews. While perusing old editions, I was shocked and amused by the December 2013 issue featuring a review of *Government Plates* by Death Grips. Of course, to honor the ten year anniversary of such a monumental article in *Applause* history, deciding to review another Death Grips album, *Bottomless Pit* seemed like the next best thing.

Anyone into underground or hip-hop music has definitely heard of, or is even a potential fan of ‘experimental’ hip-hop trio Death Grips. A decade’s worth of energetic, shocking lyrics and dynamically angry live performances with a layer of hostile esotericism has cemented the band a fervid reputation. Their artistry leaves people divided on what to think, either you hate them

or you love them. *Bottomless Pit*, their angriest yet most accessible record leaked in 2016, proved to further split public opinion and catapult Death Grips even closer to the mainstream. To quote 2013’s review of *Government Plates*, Death Grips is “characterized mainly by front-man vocalist MC Ride (Stefan Burnett) a vulgar, angry, psychopathic poet. The other band members are drummer Zach Hill... and producer Flatlander (Andy Morin).”

Bottomless Pit opens with one of my favorite tracks off the album, “Giving Bad People Good Ideas.” The song itself sounds like it’s meant to stomp on your face, aggressive distorted guitar, incredibly frenzied drumming and Ride’s nonsensical screaming over all the noise somehow works as a cohesive song. Streaky sounding synthesizer breaks the song’s rhythm, along with a lighter sounding, female singer during the refrains. Overall one of their best songs instrumentally, if I were to hear this song live I personally would lose my mind. The vibes are definitely there, no other artist could perform something like “Giving Bad People Good Ideas.”

“Spikes” is the next noteworthy song on the album, tremendously distorted and incomprehensible as a composition. Manipulated electronic-noise and a kick



drum backing are Death Grips’s signature, it reflects the intense brooding of other projects like *The Money Store*.

One of the more normal sounding tracks on *Bottomless Pit*, “Bubbles Buried In This Jungle” is still... very incomprehensible and abstract. MC Ride’s scream in the start of the song almost sounds like some creature from deep in the bush, deeply unwelcoming. Ride, keeping an ongoing sentiment of being angry over a lack of respect (as mentioned frequently on their 2012 album *No Love Deep Web*.) The song fades out quickly, leaving me with the opinion that this is one of the more stand out tracks off of *Bottomless Pit*.

The tenth song on the album is “Three Bedrooms In A Good Neighborhood,” a faced paced and explicit sounding number. The rap is so intense, you can hear the vocalist straining, as well as an echo effect applied at some points.

“Ring a Bell” is just as aggressive as “Three Bedrooms In A Good Neighborhood,” and mirrors it well. For once, some of the lyrics are intelligible, with Ride declaring in the start of the song, “America, America, Now I’m coming Africa/ My death is money/Whose bad? His bad.” *Bottomless Pit* was released in 2016, made during a tumultuous time in American society and politics, especially when it came to police brutality. Ride is talking about how strained racial relationships are, mentioning how the media could profit off of sensationalizing Black Americans killed by police, such as Walter Scott in 2015.

The last song off of the record is the title track, “Bottomless Pit.” My favorite Death Grips song, as well as the song that got me into them, is criminally underrated. The energy, the trashing, warping contributions make “Bottomless Pit” the perfect titular song. Instrumentally, it starts off slow, but the anacrusis containing reverberated, metallic clanging is quickly interrupted by an intense glitched out main sound. Once again, the lyrics are explicitly hostile, steeped in cryptic prose.

As a complete album, *Bottomless Pit* braves the constraints of already existing experimental and underground rap norms, creating a new aura, meshing hard new sounds with frenzied sermons. Its most energetic songs transport you to the center of a manic crowd, while the most unimpressive track still packs a punch. The combined endeavor of the three trio members of Death Grips created one stand out underground record above them all.

Classic Movie Review: *Goodfellas*

by Ella Kay

Goodfellas (1990), is a cinematic masterpiece that has claimed its spot on many film lovers top ten. Directed by Martin Scorsese the film presents a true and remarkable story that will leave you attached to the main character. From its breathtaking performances to its beautiful storytelling and incredible direction, this piece continues to stand as the number one film of the gangster genre. Aside from the name, ironically these guys are not so good. *Goodfellas* provides an inside glimpse into the world of the mob and the consequences of living a life of crime. This movie is definitely a must-watch for mafia fans and any lovers of crime. This isn’t your average gangster film: it’s a Scorsese masterpiece that’ll have you hooked from the very first frame.

The setting of *Goodfellas* is a gritty, urban portrayal of New York City. The story spans several years from the 1950s to the 1980s, following the main character’s

rise through the ranks of the mob. It realistically captures the streets, culture, and iconic landmarks within the city leaving viewers with a recognisable image that is unique to its name. The story shows the city’s evolving dynamics, where violence and betrayal leads to power and wealth. The film’s narrative is structured in a way that entrances you from the very beginning and refuses to let you go until the credits roll. The pacing of the movie in my opinion is impeccable, and the combination of voiceover narration, sharp editing, and crafted cinematography keeps you glued to the screen throughout the film.

One of the most award winning aspects of *Goodfellas* is its cast. Ray Liotta delivers a career-defining performance as Henry Hill, showing the character’s transformation from a young, confident wannabe gangster to a tired, compromised individual with genuine emotional depth and conviction. Tommy DeVito, played by Joe Pesci, is a unique and unforgettable character. His performance earned him an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor. And of course, unforgettably, there’s the legendary Robert De Niro, who adds dignity to the film as the cool and modest antagonist, Jimmy Conway. Scorsese’s direction is nothing short of genius. He captured the essence of the mobster lifestyle with such authenticity that you feel like a member. The iconic long tracking scene through the Copacabana nightclub is a famous shot of Scorsese’s attention to detail and ability to create unforgettably beautiful cinematic moments.

The music throughout is a noteworthy element to its success. The soundtrack features a recognisable classic mix from the ‘50s, ‘60s, and ‘70s. The music complements the setting, enhancing the New York urban atmosphere and evoking a deep sense of nostalgia in viewers. The moral complexity of *Goodfellas* is a significant factor to its greatness. Scorsese doesn’t romanticize or condemn the gangster lifestyle; rather, he shows the scene how it is, warts and all. Each character is complex, neither fully morally correct nor immorally, and the film explores the causes and consequences of each character’s actions. This unique approach to storytelling and filmmaking adds depth and originality to the narrative.

Goodfellas is a movie I hold deeply in my heart. It truly is a cinematic treasure that deserves every bit of acclaim it has received since its release. It’s a thrilling and eye opening experience that offers a unique blend of cinematography, substance, and storytelling. Martin Scorsese’s direction, the exceptional performances, and the unforgettable soundtrack work together to create a film that is truly amazing and a staple in the genre. Whether you’re a fan of gangster dramas, character complex stories, or simply great filmmaking, *Goodfellas* is an absolute must-watch for anyone willing.

Contemporary Movie Review: *Killers of the Flower Moon*

by Ruby Varallo

From *The Wolf of Wall Street* and *Taxi Driver*, Martin Scorsese’s impact on the film industry is huge, which is why I have to drop my film-bro persona to say *Killers of the Flower Moon* is the first of his movies I’ve



seen. The movie is based on David Grann's nonfiction book of the same name, and follows a series of murders in the Osage Nation after oil is found on their reservation in Oklahoma in the 1920s.

Mollie Burkhart (Lily Gladstone) is a member of the Osage Nation who wants to protect her community as her family members are murdered one by one. She marries Ernest Burkhart (Leonardo DiCaprio), a white cab driver whose interest in Mollie is rooted in her family's ownership of oil headrights. Gladstone delivers a standout performance as she devastates the audience with her reactions to her family's deaths and beautifully portrays fleeting moments of joy and love with Ernest that unravel as the movie progresses. Considering *Titanic* and *Don't Look Up* are the only two DiCaprio movies I've seen, which is almost as humbling as this movie being my only Scorsese, DiCaprio's performance is the best I've seen from him. He's able to illustrate a love that initially seems genuine, but beneath the surface is entirely motivated by his own personal and financial gain.

With each new murder, the audience gains insight not only to the brutality faced by the Osage Nation, but to the principle the whole country is founded upon: violence. The wealthy didn't rise to the top without exploitation, and the movie perfectly illustrates the greed of those in the upper class, who are willing to do anything for their own benefit. Although investigations in the Osage Nation eventually led to the formation of the FBI, the up-close look into the lives of Mollie and her family make the movie feel personal, showing how members of the Osage just wanted to survive. By narrowing the scope of events to focus on individual indigenous people and the white men who capitalized on them, the film asks the viewer how long they will be complacent with racism in the world beyond the theater.

Clocking in at a whopping three hour and twenty-six minute runtime, this is officially the longest movie I've ever seen, but the amazing performances and intense cinematography captivated me more than I anticipated. Although it's still about an hour too long, *Killers of the Flower Moon* is a fantastic depiction of the corruption found within the Osage Nation, and makes me look forward to watching more Scorsese in the near future!

Contemporary Movie Review: *Twilight: Eclipse*

by Emma Shelton

Winter has come; the dew is now frosty, every morning is filled with a chill breeze, and the pumpkin spice lattes have turned to gingerbread chais. So obviously, I had to rewatch *Twilight: Eclipse*, the third installment of the Twilight saga. I will admit this is my least favorite of the movies, so I watch it less than all of the others, but after my rewatch, I have gained a new love. *Twilight: Eclipse* begins with a proposal. Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson) asks Bella Swan (Kristen Stewart) to marry him, and she will only accept if he agrees to turn her into a vampire after she graduates. The rest of the movie follows the time between the proposal and Bella's graduation, showcasing all of the efforts made by the Cullen family, Jacob Black (Taylor Lautner), and the Quilutee tribe alike to protect Bella from harm.

This is the only movie in the whole saga that doesn't seem to have an "iconic" scene; most of them have at least two or three. *Twilight: Eclipse* seems to be what everyone thought *New Moon* would be, and it cuts off the loose ends from the first movie. I understand why I never really loved this movie as much as the others; it doesn't really feel like a Twilight movie, and its main purpose seems to be filling plot holes and killing time. It's not boring; it's just not fun. There is a serious lack of the bloodthirsty charm embedded in the Twilight series.

There is a lot of focus on the Edward vs. Jacob feud, which I believe to be mass hysteria induced for the purpose of selling merchandise and igniting interest in teen girls. There is no feud; it has always been Edward. At one point, Jacob Black unconsensually kisses Bella under the guise of "proving his love," and she slaps him in the face. While almost all characters in Twilight are easy to hate, this move is especially unlikable on Jacob's behalf and shows how Bella truly feels towards him.

Twilight: Eclipse is a boring watch; the best part about Twilight is its unseriousness, and *Eclipse* takes itself just a little too seriously. There is little joy in watching a movie with no iconic quotes like "Hold on tight, spider monkey" or "Bella, where the hell have you been, loca?" While essential to the series, it is still my least favorite of the five movies in the saga. *Twilight: Eclipse* provides little glee, high amounts of boredom, and so many vampire-werewolf battles.

Holiday Movie Review: *Home Alone*

by Neo O'Dell

It's finally that time of year again when the temperature starts to drop and all you want to do is stay in, all bundled up, and enjoy the holidays with the people you love. It's the perfect time to settle in and watch a good Christmas movie to start the season, and *Home Alone* will always be my go-to when it comes to the classics. I have so many good memories involving this movie and it has a special place in my heart. The screenplay for this movie was done by John Hues who you might know from some of his other iconic movies such as *16 Candles* and *The Breakfast Club*, and like those amazing movies, this one does not fall short.

Now, I'm sure you can recall at least one time when you were home alone as a child and heard scary noises in the basement or had that feeling that you could do whatever you wanted to and *Home Alone* is a great example of that. *Home Alone* is centered around an 8-year-old boy named Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin) who, due to an argument, ends up getting sent to sleep in the attic by his mother, Kate McCallister (Catherine O'Hara) and starts to wish that his family was around anymore. It's quite a relatable thing to see as a kid with a big family, or at least it was for me. You can see where he's coming from with the argument and the annoyance with his family members.

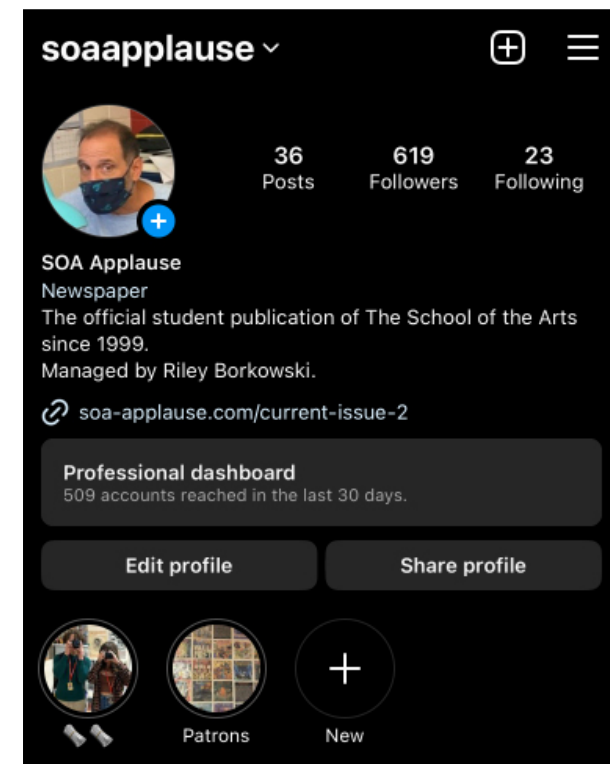
The next morning, his family ends up leaving for their trip to Paris and accidentally leaves Kevin behind. When he wakes up and realizes that his family has all disappeared he thinks that his wish came true. He ends up acting how you would expect any kid to act when they are

left home alone for the first time. Eating all of the ice cream, playing in your older siblings' rooms, and getting scared of the noises in the basement, are all very nostalgic.

Along with the main conflict in the movie with Kevin being left home alone, there is a subplot within the movie involving these two burglars who end up attempting to break into Kevin's home throughout the movie, and realistically, a kid would probably be pretty scared if they realized that someone was trying to break into their home while they were home alone, but not Kevin. When Kevin spotted them, he decided to set up a ton of traps that any eight-year-old could do pretty flawlessly (with a budget of thousands of dollars and the help of a talented special effects crew) in self-defense. Though the subplot is quite unrealistic it is still very fun to watch and continues to give off that nostalgic vibe that the movie has in a kind of looney toons way that I love.

The only thing that I think would improve this movie is if they just focused on Macaulay Culkin's acting a little more and not as much on the special effects because I feel like it kind of takes away a bit from him considering how good of a child actor he was. But overall the movie itself is a great movie and perfect for the holiday season. It's good for all ages and great for a light-hearted family movie night. I love the vibe of the movie and get hit with a wave of nostalgia every time I see it. The next time you need a good holiday movie to watch this season, consider *Home Alone*, you won't regret it.

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SOA Athletes Excel In Winter Sports

by Luciano Cusatis

The winter sports season is underway, and more than twenty SOA students are competing for Academic Magnet in either wrestling or basketball. Wrestling for the Raptors this season are **Dean Barnwell, Edgard Batiz, Isabel Bean, Andrew Blind, Charlie Boucher, Cannon Gibbs, Daniel Harris, Pierce Selvitelli, Fletcher Seminaroti, Nick Severance, Nelli Sundara, and Luke Whitley**. **Jay Meloy, Gavriel Pekar, and Omari Wynn-Ferrel** are competing on the Boys Junior Varsity basketball team, while **Tyler Nelson and Andrew Russell** compete on the Varsity squad, coached by SOA Science teacher Mr. Brett Johnsen. The JV Girls basketball team includes **Nadia Fox, Anita John, Layla Jolly, Madison Logan, and Finley McGlynn**, and **Josie Barrineau**, who plays Varsity.

One unique SOA contribution toward Raptors wrestling is providing the only girls on the team, Sophomore and Junior Piano Majors Isabel Bean and Nelli Sundara, who are both in their first year competing for Magnet. "I'm super excited!" Nelli told *Applause*. "My older brother wrestled for Academic Magnet while he was in high school, and I really wanted to play a sport, so I decided to wrestle." She hopes for more girls to join the team in the future. As far as the boys go, Freshman Strings major Edgard Batiz holds an impressive 4-1 record, and his goal is to go undefeated for the rest of the season.

The Girls Varsity basketball team has won their past two games, 45-25 against Charleston Math and Science and 39-33 versus Burke, with the help of Sophomore Piano major Josie Barrineau, who is the only SOA member of the Varsity team. "I played when I was younger for 5 years and then took a break," said Josie, "I wanted to start again because I love the sport and missed playing."

The JV team has also been performing well, winning their first game of the season against Burke 18-12. Seventh grade Strings major Anita John, the only middle schooler on the team, is already a standout player. She started playing basketball competitively this season, inspired to compete after attending a camp hosted by NBA star Khris Middleton. "I was so excited to meet him and got a signed T-shirt and basketball. Then he told us that he was born in Charleston, South Carolina, which really sparked my passion."

The Boys Varsity and Junior Varsity squads have started their seasons, but Varsity is currently lacking Junior Theater major Dylan Sweeney, who is recovering from a torn ACL and will not be able to play until next season. JV, on the other hand, has started the season strong, winning their past two games against Burke and Cross. Eighth Grade Vocal Major Gavriel Pekar told *Applause*, "I think for all of us our goal is to win as many games as we can but not just that, also grow as a team."

Good luck to all SOA athletes this season! Check back during January to see how their seasons are progressing!



Omari Wynn-Ferrel during game against Burke on 12/1



Jay Meloy going for a basket against Burke on 12/1



Nadia Fox defending against Military Magnet



Anita John dodging her opponent



Layla Jolly inbounding ball during game



Cannon Gibbs crushing an opponent during match against Burke High School on 12/1



Madison Logan, one of SOA's starters, killing it on the court

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Strings Trivia

by Lucy Cromwell

1. What material was used to make instrument strings before steel strings were invented?
2. How many people is required to have a complete full-scale orchestra?
3. What string do violins and double basses usually lack?
4. What instrument in orchestra uses the longest bow?
5. The Baroque period lasted from 1600 to 1750, and ended after the death of which composer?
6. What orchestra is considered the oldest in the world?
7. Which composer is considered the father of the symphony and chamber music?
8. A common superstition among classical musicians is that after writing how many symphonies a composer is destined to die?
9. Which composer went deaf in his mid 20s?
10. How many strings are on a cello?

Sean Curran, 9th grade Visual Arts



Lucy Cromwell

3/10

1. Twine
2. Sixteen
3. C string
4. Violin
5. Shostakovich
6. London Symphony
7. Tchaikovsky
8. Eight
9. Beethoven
10. Four

Noah Counts, 11th grade Band



Provided

3/10

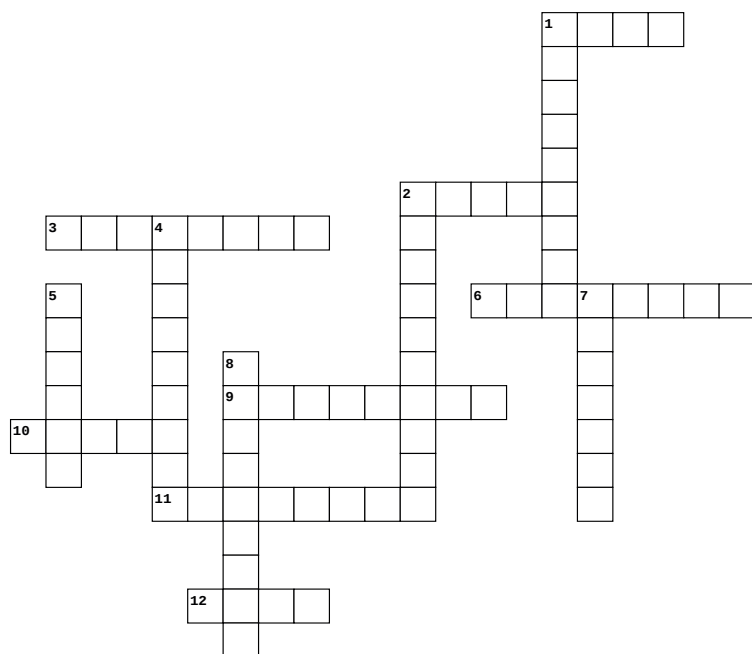
1. Intestines
2. Thirty
3. F string
4. Cello
5. Bach
6. Royal Orchestra
7. Frederick Fennell
8. Twelve
9. Mozart
10. Four

Answers

1. Animal Intestines 2. One hundred 3. C string 4. Viola 5. Bach
6. The Royal Danish Orchestra 7. Haydn 8. Nine Symphonies 9.
Beethoven 10. Four

Strings Crossword

by Luciano Cusatis



Across

1. The instrument with the lowest range in a string orchestra
2. One of the lower voices of an orchestra
3. An ensemble featuring strings and band
6. A solo piece accompanied by an orchestra
9. An era of music known for its energy and passion
10. Instrument that is sonically between a violin and cello
11. The first section of a piece in ballets and operas
12. Playing using a bow

Down

1. The classical composer who famously lost his hearing
2. Time signature also known as 4/4
4. Playing technique where you pluck the string
5. The instrument making up most of an orchestra
7. The strange "instrument" used in Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture
8. A typical musical ensemble



Holiday Word Search

CHRISTMAS
HANUKKAH
KWANZAA
CANDYCANE
MENORAH
PRESENT
GINGERBREAD
SNOWMAN

YULETIDE
MISTLETOE
CAROLER
STOCKING
WINTER
JINGLEBELLS
ORNAMENT

SOA Sudoku

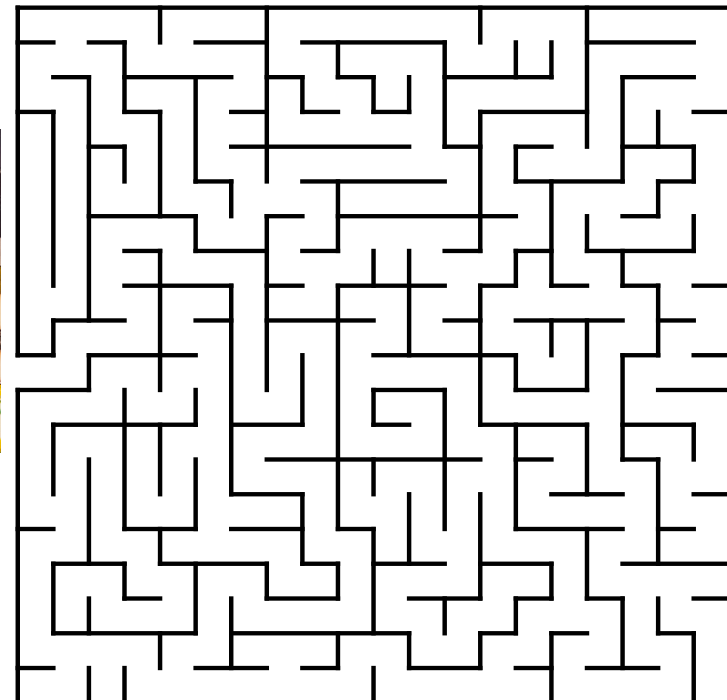
by Luciano Cusatis

	5	6			9		8	
	7	8				9		
	1		3				4	7
						7	5	
6			9		4			8
	9	1						
1	2				3		9	
		3				5	7	
	8		1			4	3	



Help Ms. Campbell find her stethoscope!

by Luciano Cusatis





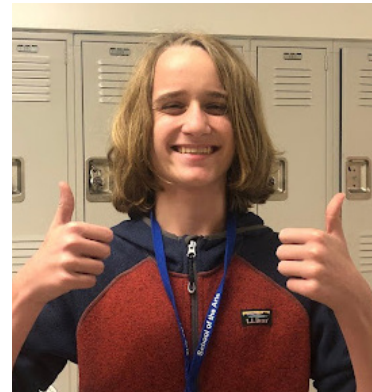
“My little sister fell off a slide.”

Arabella Fernandes, 6th grade
Band



“When I was nine, my brother
and I lined the stairs with
cushions and went sledding.”

Muqi Donaldson, 7th grade Band



“My aunt and I snuck out to
try to scare people, but I forgot
my shoes and ended up getting
hypothermia.”

Jack Leon, 8th grade Theater



“My puppy chewed the gifts
under my tree.”

Coach Butts, Academic
Supervision Teacher



“The lasagna noodles were
compromised.”

Ms. Chesborough, Fashion
Design Teacher

What is your funniest holiday memory?

by Riley Borkowski,
Isabella Pineda, and Emma
Shelton



“My husband worked during
Christmas, we used to push the
calendar back so he could be there
for the kids.”

Ms. Johnson, High School Math
Teacher



“I got sick and threw up on the
Christmas Tree.”

Bre Seitter, 9th grade Fashion



“I got stuck in a quicksand pit
at Dolly Parton’s house on New
Years Day.”

Bryce Beasley, 10th grade
Theater



“Last year at the Christmas
concert, Kaleb King got trapped
in the bathroom.”

Michael DiPalma, 11th grade
Vocal



“I faceplanted in the snow.”

Wade Sjostrom, 12th grade
Theater