

# Applause

Volume 25, Number 8 School of the Arts, North Charleston, SC April 2024



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**From the Editors**

Dearest Readers,

At long last, spring has sprung, pollen is in the air, and the arrival of the goslings is imminent, but more importantly, our latest and greatest issue of *Applause* has finally dropped. Our staff has been working tirelessly to present you with not one but TWO issues this month (turn to the centerfold to see what we mean), and we cannot wait to bring you two more brilliant issues of *Applause* before this year comes to an end.

In this issue, we are thrilled to feature the Dance Department, turn to pages 25 and 26 to see interviews with the senior Dance majors as they prepare for their theses. In addition to Dance, we have two fabulous photo spreads featuring Powderpuff and the Fashion show (check out pages 28-29 & 30-31 respectively). We also hope to see you at "Sounds Like Teen Spirit: A Celebration of the 90's." three concerts sponsored by *Applause* in May! See our website for more information. Make sure to check out our April Fools pullout, *Applesauce*

As always, we are so grateful to our patrons and advertisers for their continued support of *Applause*, as our paper is printed exclusively via their contributions. Many of our dedicated staff are graduating this May, and we would love to see new faces in our newsroom! Sign up for Journalism to join our staff!



Your Editors,

Riley Borkowski and Cate Traywick

*Riley Borkowski*      *Cate Traywick*

**SOA Calendar**

by Ashley Peterson

- April 16th:** MS Jazz Piano Concert, RMMT, 6pm
- April 18th:** 9th grade Theater performance- Clown Love, 4 & 6:30pm
- April 18th:** Senior Dance These #2, RMMT, 6:30pm
- April 22nd:** Convocation
- April 23rd:** HS Jazz Piano Concert, RMMT, 6pm
- April 25th, 26th, & 27th:** 10th/11th/12th grade theater performance - Awesome 80's Prom, MS Gym, 6:30pm
- April 27th:** Dance Departmental Performance,

- RMMT, 3:30pm
- May 2nd:** Creative Writing Senior Thesis Reading, RMMT, 6:30pm
- May 1st-4th:** 10th/11th/12th grade Theater, Big Fish, Black Box, 6:30pm
- May 5th:** Sounds Like Teen Spirit, Charleston Convention Center, 2pm
- May 6th:** HS Theater - Homecoming 2024, BBT, 6:30pm
- May 8th:** MS Band Spring Concert, RMMT, 6:30pm
- May 10th:** MS Theater Adjudication, BBT, 4pm
- May 17th, 18th, 19th:** SOA Music Down in my Soul, Cafeteria, 6pm

**Applause**

since 1999, the official student publication of  
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**Dr. Shannon Cook, Principal**

**Editors-In-Chief:**

Riley Borkowski,  
Cate Traywick

**Business Manager:**

Luciano Cusatis

**Assistant Editor:**

Isis Hanna

**Copy Editors:**

Lucy Cromwell  
Ruby Varallo

**Photographers:**

Lucy Cromwell, Luciano Cusatis, Cate Traywick

**Staff Writers:**

Elle Baker  
Riley Borkowski  
Lucy Cromwell  
Luciano Cusatis  
Isis Hanna

Ella Kay  
Neo O'Dell  
Braeden LaRoache  
Ashley Peterson  
Isabella Pineda

Emma Shelton  
Cate Traywick  
Ruby Varallo  
Jovanny Velasquez  
Marz Watson

John Cusatis, Ph.D., Adviser  
Charleston County School of the Arts  
5109-B West Enterprise St.  
North Charleston, SC 29405

**soa-applause.com**

**Cover by Mallory Usry-Wallace**



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**In This Issue**

**Sophomore Sets Track Record**

by Luciano Cusatis

**SOA Celebrates Spirit Week**

by Lucy Cromwell and Luciano Cusatis

**SOA Symphony Visits the Big Apple**

by Riley Borkowski, Luciano Cusatis, Isabella Pineda

## Applause Editorial: Drugs Don't Belong In Our School

The various investors in our educational institutions have long sought to facilitate these environments as productive spaces of learning and beneficial socialization, and we must remain vigilant toward these goals as the presence of drugs within our schools continues to be an issue.

Beyond merely being a distraction from academic performance, the use and distribution of illegal substances within school grounds and our communities at large presents a threat to our students' livelihoods and potentials. The consequences of addiction and the impacts of being charged for a drug-related crime often have long-lasting ramifications on individuals, their families, and communities as a whole.

There is consistent and incontrovertible evidence that drug use reduces cognitive function, impairing how well students can perform in high school and beyond, potentially dissuading them from attending higher education institutions. In a world where it is increasingly difficult to support a comfortable life without a college degree, we should work to ensure that each student has the opportunity to achieve personal success unfettered by drug-related inhibitions.

Drug addiction can cast a long shadow over a person's life, and often starts in youth. The label of drug addict can ruin educational and employment opportunities, and to attempt to function productively in school and work environments is an immense challenge with the weight of a drug addiction hanging over a person.

State and national laws criminalize the use, possession, and/or distribution of many drugs, and drug charges often carry with them heavy fines and prison sentences of, potentially, decades. To be charged for a drug-related crime has the potential to ruin the future of any young person, restricting opportunities in employment and education.

Drug addiction and involvement in criminal activity regarding drugs are often self-perpetuating cycles within families and communities, and education provides the opportunity for new generations to break free of such cycles, seek prosperity in the wider world, and potentially bring benefit to such struggling communities.

This opportunity for change that education provides, then, should never be compromised by the presence of drugs within our educational institutions. It is the responsibility of our students, out of obligation to themselves and their communities, to distance themselves from drugs. And it is the responsibility of all stakeholders in education, from educators to parents to policymakers, to prevent the infiltration of drugs into our educational spaces and to provide support and intervention to address the root causes of drug abuse.

Collaboration, hard work, and economic investment are necessary to ensure that drugs do not continue to be a problem in our communities and schools, and we hope to see these efforts put into place in the future to ensure the well-being and success of our youth.

## Opinion: Spend Time With Spring

by Cate Traywick

At last, the days have gotten longer, the UV has gotten higher, and as my dear friend Elle Baker joyfully pointed out as we drove across the ACE Basin, "The marsh grass is green again!" Despite my efforts to romanticize the desolate winter, these are incredibly welcome changes from the seasonally depressing weather, and with the changing environment comes a dramatic shift (a revival, really) in my love for people, for the earth, and for my art.

As a habitual journaler and long-time creative writer, I have a seemingly endless archive of notebooks and documents collectively containing every piece of myself. I revel in the revisitation of my past work: finding common threads, rediscovering my documented memories, cringing at my middle school growing pains. In spite of the varied themes and subject matter found throughout my work, a deep solace in the natural world is inevitably present. My writing is fueled by images of gentle sunlight and budding marigolds; every piece of my art springs from the life that Spring lends.

This past spring break my family and I roadtripped to Altamont, Tennessee. Between hikes, campfires, and scrabble games I found myself turning to the little red notebook that I've been toting around since January. The Cumberland Plateau is beautiful in early Spring: wisteria cascading down cypresses, streams that range from a trickle to a torrent, delicate ferns finally pushing through the undergrowth.



Cate Traywick

Provided

I have lived within walking distance of the marsh throughout my entire life, and in the late afternoons, more often than not, I walk down to the edge of my neighborhood and wander the land bridge that meanders across to Shem Creek Park. During the winter months I find that even on the sunniest of December days, that the creek water appears all but brown as the grasses reflect off of it. Now, though, in Spring, Japanese maples have just begun to turn crimson and increasing numbers of Fiddler crabs skitter around my feet. Most Sunday mornings I hang my Eno beneath a big oak tree which borders the marsh, notebook and pencil in hand, writing, napping, listening to the crabs and the water; the sun is warm and nature is good.

Last week, as he does every year, my dad planted tomatoes in big pots next to our porch. The names of these tomatoes range from Bumble Bee to Supersteak, and come June my family will harvest them to make the most delicious tomato sandwiches that the South has to offer. In a happy coincidence, amongst the tomatoes, my dad planted my favorite flower; a marigold apparently has whitefly-repelling properties. Now, in the mornings I find a quiet joy in the dewdrops on the elegant yellows, reds, and oranges of the marigolds in my yard.

It is warm when it rains; afterward, the air smells like petrichor. Millions of little flower buds on trees, bloom one by one. Familiar birds have begun to sing again. It is so easy to be revived as the world revives around us. To those who pay attention to what it has to offer, April is the kindest month.

## Opinion: Child Influencers

by Ashley Peterson

Children have been in the entertainment industry for decades yet there are so little protections put in place for them. From 1920s films to popular family vloggers on youtube, children are lacking regulations to keep them safe when they don't have the ability to speak up. Children in the entertainment world are in danger onscreen and offscreen and the horrors have become revealed much more recently.

While children have been on the big screen for quite some time, the influx of "child influencers" have produced questions about how safe children really are online. You must be 13 in order to have social media such as Tik Tok and Instagram so how are kids younger getting access to those accounts and producing content? The answer, most of the time, is by their parents. While many parents don't realize that posting pictures and videos of their young children could be harmful and taken the wrong way, it often is. Parents could make these accounts for a variety of reasons: to show their friends and family what their kids are up to or even get brand deals on products that their children may need. Though this does sound completely innocent and even a great idea, these public profiles can get into the wrong hands. Many people have noticed the weird, disturbing comments left by adults on these posts along with the large chunk of following they make up of many child influencers accounts. Most parents, after seeing this, usually block these people or eventually make their account private after realizing their kids safety is more important than the money they may make. But some do continue to make content even after they notice these things happening or when other viewers point it out.

These children don't have the ability to stop their parents from posting because most of the time they don't know it's happening and even the ones who do, still can't really do anything about it. This is why some type of regulation needs to be put into place in order to protect children's privacy and parents who know their children are in danger should have some type of repercussions. Even though kids may not completely understand what is happening, they should be able to have some say in if they'd like to post and what is being posted. Whether it's just some silly photos on Facebook or a family vlog on YouTube, they hold the right to say no to being posted and parents should have to be okay with that. I, along with many other people have noticed, especially family vloggers, to post quite personal information about their children spanning from birth to when they're seventeen in order to get views which then turns into money. Random people on the internet don't need to know every detail about a kid's life, especially without their consent so why are parents allowed to post this?

While children are in danger on screen, it has been revealed that they are in danger offscreen too. These money hungry parents can often turn abusive towards their kids, forcing them to make content and getting angry when it doesn't go as viral as they hoped. While this is a lot harder to prove because there isn't video evidence of this happening, many people notice the changes in the kid's expressions and body language towards their parents leading them to believe something is going on. Recently, the mother of the popular family vloggers "8 Passengers", Ruby Franke, was exposed for abusing



Ashley Peterson

Cate Traywick

her children after years of speculation by viewers. She stopped posting on the family channel long before got caught but when she did post, she talked about very personal information regarding her kids. Including what they did wrong, health problems, grades, their meltdowns, and very extreme punishments which viewers often found disturbing. Even though many people, including her own sister, suspected something was going on, nothing was ever done to investigate what was really happening behind the screen until her youngest son ran away to get help for him and his sister. This leads me to question what other parents of kids on social media may be doing to their children that may not come to light until they're old enough to speak up for themselves. But I fear that once they are old enough, the damage will already be done. Children not only need to be protected onscreen but offscreen too and the rules protecting them need to extend to that.

Social media was made to easily connect to friends and family but it has extended so much farther than that. Anyone can be in danger online but children are the ones who don't get a say about it and the only people there to protect them are their parents. Some type of law needs to be made in order to protect children from the disgusting parts of the online community including predators and even their own parents who seek to profit off of their children.

## A Review of New York's Colleges

by Elle Baker

The winter and spring are always known as stressful times for high school seniors, who spend these seasons writing college essays, filling out applications, sending them off, and then waiting for results. The question of college rises around this time for juniors as they watch their fellow upperclassmen throughout the nerve-wracking process and think about doing it themselves in just one year. There are endless opportunities between schools, with graduate school also something to consider. Especially at our musically inclined school, tons of students want to continue studying arts in college, and what better place to do that than New York City, a city with some of the most famous theaters, museums, and galleries in the world, and home to thousands of famous artists. One of the ways we ease the stress of the unknown is by booking college tours to get a sense of what direction we want to go in. That's exactly what I set off to do when I traveled to New York City this winter and trekked through the cold, rain, and snow to six different colleges in three days.

The first tour was The Juilliard School, a performing arts college known for their extreme exclusivity in both subject matter and applicants. Of the 850 students typically accepted each year, only fifty of those are either drama or dance majors, with the rest being music majors. With an acceptance rate of 10.6%, the students we saw at Juilliard worked their butts off to get where they were. I am not a performing arts major, so I cannot speak as to the intensity of the environment in comparison to anything, but the building was tense and solemn. There was a silent understanding of all the students' seriousness and determination that was very admirable, but definitely not my type of environment. The campus building we visited at Lincoln Center was beautiful, with tons of natural light and big windows that opened to the city while still retaining quiet, more classic study and performance spaces throughout.



Provided

Elle Baker

Next was Marymount Manhattan College, a tiny up-and-coming college in the Upper East Side. With only 1,500 students, this was by far the smallest school I've visited so far in my college tours, but it was clearly reflected in the community of the school. Marymount's point of pride was their flexibility in subject matter. Most students double major in an academic and an art with the opportunity to double minor as well, creating a perfect balance in their creative and educational lives. Their tiny campus consisted of two impressive buildings (not including the dorms), which were very modern and open on the arts floors and more dated on the academic floors. For anyone who wants a closer and smaller college community but still have all the opportunities the big city holds, Marymount would be perfect.

Our third tour was New York University by Washington Square. NYU had by far the most beautiful campus of the six schools I toured, mostly due to its diversity. It spreads throughout the nearly entire city and was unbeatable in regards to architecture. It had such a classic New York City feel that I crave while still managing to feel tucked away slightly by the park. The Elmer Holmes Bobst Library was one of the most beautiful buildings I have ever seen, with tall and modern high ceilings and walls covered in thin gold meant to resemble book spines, and housing more than four million volumes in its twelve floors. With a population of over fifty thousand, NYU still manages to offer a customizable college experience with several major, dorm, and study abroad opportunities.

Its approach to the arts is admirable and unique as students are offered extremely specific courses as well as the opportunity to retake the same class under a different professor for an additional credit, which I found to be very valuable when studying a liberal art, where many different people offer many different perspectives and teachings about the same thing.

The fourth tour was Columbia University, which was in the lower half of my ranking. I admit that I went into the tour intimidated and came out of the tour even more intimidated, so I'm sure that muddied my perspective. Columbia had the most traditional campus of any of the schools, which is unique and valuable for New York City. Personally, if I were to pay to go to school in New York City, I would be wanting to go to school in the heart of the city to get my money's worth, which was one of the reasons Columbia wasn't my favorite. They offer many competitive and rigorous classes while still maintaining a refreshment and excitement around the campus that was admirable. Columbia is the oldest university in New York City, and that was reflected in the beautiful and classic architecture all around campus. Their Butler Library of Philosophy was also gorgeous, classic, and cozy rather than modernized like most of the others, featuring rolling stone floors, deep wood accents in desks, bookshelves, and picture frames, and huge beautiful paintings stretched across most walls. The ceilings had intricate murals painted in the hallways and staircases.



Elle Baker

Columbia University

The fifth tour was of Columbia's sister school, Barnard College, which earned a higher ranking. Columbia University did not admit women to the college until 1983, so before that, all the women went to Barnard, where the arts departments are housed. Previously established as an exclusively women's college, Barnard does now rarely accept men into its arts departments. The campus is just across the street from Columbia and upon admission you have access to all the same food courts, clubs, classes, and cafes as Columbia students in addition to Barnard's. Barnard has a smaller and closer feel similar to that of Marymount while retaining the beauty and grace of Columbia, which I think comes largely from the feeling of safety and intimacy in a primarily female setting as well as its smaller population and being the home of the arts.

The final tour was of Fordham University, a Jesuit University with a split campus between Lincoln Center and Rose Hill in the Bronx and the opportunity to take classes at both. Known largely as a finance and law college, Fordham had a surprising focus on arts as well. This campus was also definitely more traditional than the rest of them, the main building being built around a social square. The day we toured was a snowy day and we saw the school through its series of intricate underground tunnels and hallways that allow students quick and easy walks from class to class during the colder months or on rainy days. These tunnels were unique and convenient albeit confusing, and definitely a pro during snowy weather. Fordham had the nicest dorms of any we'd seen, with most rooms having a view of Manhattan and all floors having an impressive and modern communal kitchen. While they seemed more selective and focused in regards to majors, they had many valuable and unique minors to offer as well as the opportunity to change your major.

New York City is a place that holds endless opportunities for most, especially in regards to education. These New York City colleges were extremely impressive despite the freezing, snowy weather!

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## Looking Back on the 2024 Oscars

by Ruby Varallo

On March 10, millions of excited viewers tuned into the 2024 Oscars. As the anticipation grew to discover which films would emerge victorious, audiences across the world were unfortunately forced to first watch host Jimmy Kimmel. The man has hosted the Oscars four times, which is four times too many. Even so, this year's Oscars also had plenty of great moments and a couple genuinely funny comedic bits: John Cena presented the award for Best Costume Design while practically naked, reiterating the importance of costuming, and John Mulaney gave a run-on-sentence synopsis of *Field of Dreams*, which completely flew over my head, but was met by laughs from my fellow sophisticated viewers, so it must've been funny. The live performances were also a delight. Ryan Gosling charmed the audience with a fantastically choreographed performance of "I'm Just Ken," from *Barbie*, Billie Eilish and her brother Finneas beautifully sang "What Was I Made For?" also from *Barbie*, and the Osage Tribal Singers powerfully performed "Wahzhazhe (A Song For My People)" from *Killers of the Flower Moon*.

In the March issue of *Applause*, I shared a select few of my predictions for the winners of the Oscars this year. They included *Oppenheimer* for Best Picture, Christopher Nolan for Best Director, Paul Giamatti for Best Actor (which I did end up changing to Cillian Murphy before the show began, so I'm counting that as correct), Lily Gladstone for Best Actress, Robert Downey Jr. for Best Supporting Actor, and Da'Vine Joy Randolph for Best Supporting Actress.

Overall, I got fourteen out of twenty-three winners correct, which is over half, and therefore a win! For me, the biggest snub was Lily Gladstone not winning Best Actress. I absolutely love Emma Stone and her performance in *Poor Things* was wonderful, but Lily Gladstone's performance in *Killers of the Flower Moon* is completely unforgettable and one I have continued to think about, despite my watching the movie months ago. Another surprise was *The Zone of Interest* winning Best Sound, but I completely agree with that choice! I'm tired of war movies winning Best Sound because they are loud and have explosion noises. The quiet nature of *The Zone of Interest* is haunting and, in my opinion, much more effective at conveying an eerie unsettling feeling to its viewer. Unsurprisingly, *Oppenheimer* swept, winning Best Picture as well as six other categories. Another pleasant surprise was *Poor Things* winning in four categories, including Best Actress, Production Design, Costuming, Hairstyling and Makeup! I loved the movie, but I wasn't sure if it would be too weird and surreal for the Academy. Wes Anderson also won his first Oscar, Best Live Action Short Film, for *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar*, which is so deserved.

Despite my resentment of Jimmy Kimmel, I love the Oscars, and I had a great time watching them this year. I'm already looking forward to next year's ceremony!



## Where Were They Then: Ms. Oakley

Curious about everyone's favorite AP Government teacher, **Ms. Josie Oakley**, Applause staff writer, **Luciano Cusatis** interviewed Ms. Oakley and asked her a few questions about her time before SOA.

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

**Josie Oakley:** I'm originally from rural Lexington, SC where I grew up for the first

20 years of my life. Being from the country, I enjoyed the variety of animals we raised (chickens, goats, horses, and an onery turkey), surprisingly history and visiting museums, reading (I had a large collection of R.L. Stine books), traveling, band (played Tenor Saxophone), and beauty pageants.

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

**JO:** In college, I stayed close to home and went to the University of South Carolina as a music major in hopes of being a band director. It had been my dream to major in music and teach high school band, however, life had other plans. I was good for high school, but college was another playing field, and wasn't as well-versed as I should have been. So I changed my major to history and realized I had found my passion! I already knew I wanted to be an educator, but majoring in history became a focus where I could apply so many different topics and make connections to, not only for myself but also for my students.

**LC: Where did you work before coming to SOA?**

**JO:** Before coming to SOA I had been at a few different schools, and taught middle school off and on for six years. Besides SOA being my favorite school to date...I also taught World History and Civics at Wando for ten years and at Bishop England I taught AP Government and US History for two years.

**LC: What made you want to become a teacher?**

**JO:** I'd say I always wanted to be a teacher from childhood. Always played school growing up, but also had some amazing teachers, all of them being my social studies and history teachers. My fourth-grade teacher always read us *Little House on the Prairie* and my tenth-grade teacher opened my eyes to the world through bringing in guest speakers in World History.

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

**JO:** EVERYTHING!! I've honestly fallen back in love with teaching after 18 years. Needless to also say I'm so impressed with the maturity and creativity of ALL of the students I teach and have enjoyed seeing performances from during convocations and other performances I've attended!

**LC: Do you have any advice for SOA students?**

**JO:** 1. Progress over perfection! There's truly no true level of perfection so why try chasing it. However, you can always make progress, strive to always keep learning and improving.  
2. Don't ask, don't get! Don't ask, don't know! Ask the questions!



Ms. Oakley in Tulum, Mexico

Provided

## SOA Students Launch The Hispanic Student Union

Recently formed Hispanic Student Union (HSU) hosts biweekly meetings to celebrate Hispanic culture within SOA. Applause staff writer **Marz Watson** sat down with HSU Vice President, **Izzy Galvan** to learn a little bit more about the club.

**Marz Watson: How did HSU come to be?**

**Izzy Galvan:** Val Simancas (the President of HSU), Rayna Perez (our Representative), and I were all sitting in our psychology class when I proposed the idea of having a club like HSU. We wanted to be in touch more with our cultural backgrounds while simultaneously learning about them. We love to welcome all different types of people in our club and have a great time.

**MW: Does this club have any requirements? What are they?**

**IG:** This club currently does not have any requirements. Anyone can join!!

**MW: If I'm not interested in joining this group, how can I still support it?**

**IG:** Coming to and supporting our future fundraisers and future events.

**MW: How often does the Hispanic Student Union meet?**

**IG:** Every other Tuesday but we always let everyone know when our next meeting is.

**MW: What major projects do you plan to work on at HSU?**

**IG:** Currently, we have a big plan I'd hate to spoil so please be on the lookout for events/fundraisers!

**MW: How do I join HSU?**

**IG:** If you want to join HSU, you can come into Mr. Martin's room during HS lunch on Tuesdays. Or you can submit a Google interest form on posters throughout the HS building.

**MW: For those who would like to join, what would you like to say?**

**IG:** Please join HSU! Everyone is welcome and we're always having a fun time! There is food in a lot of meetings and it's always yummy!

# Scholastic Art And Writing Award Winners

## Creative Writing

Rowan Anderson: Gold Key, Two Silver Keys, Honorable Mention  
 Mitchell Baker: Two Honorable Mentions  
 Abigail Biegel: Honorable Mention  
 Ollie Brice: Gold Key  
 Riley Brockman: Gold Key, Silver Key, Honorable Mention  
 Niamh Carmichael: Two Silver Keys, Honorable Mention  
 Elliot Kate Cooper: Three Gold Keys, Three Silver Keys, Honorable Mention  
 Kayla Diaz-Janes: Silver Key, Two Honorable Mentions  
 James Fauerbach: Silver Key, Honorable Mention  
 Grace Fayette: Honorable Mention  
 Hunter Fulp: Honorable Mention  
 Linda Garziera: Two Gold Keys, Two Silver Keys, Five Honorable Mentions  
 Charlotte Ham: Gold Key  
 Isis Hanna: Silver Key, Two Honorable Mentions  
 Lucille Harper: Gold Key  
 Mae Harris: Honorable Mention  
 Zoe Harvey-Pringle: Two Silver Keys  
 Harper Hayes: Honorable Mention  
 Lila Hayes: Gold Key, Silver Key  
 Lillian Hughes: Two Gold Keys, Four Silver Keys, Honorable Mention  
 Karina Ivanova: Four Honorable Mentions  
 Lily Jensen: Silver Key, Honorable Mention  
 Chloe Johnson: Three Gold Keys  
 Zoe Jones: Two Gold Keys, Honorable Mention  
 Noelle Junge: Two Honorable Mentions  
 Emily King: Silver Key, Honorable Mention  
 Katherine Largent: Three Silver Keys, Two Honorable Mentions

Jessie Leitzel: Two Gold Keys, Four Silver Keys, Six Honorable Mentions  
 Madeline Leluc: Silver Key, Three Honorable Mentions  
 Aviva LeVasseur: Honorable Mention  
 Macey Levine: Silver Key, Two Honorable Mentions  
 Jack Lindsay: Gold Key, Honorable Mention  
 Chloe Lockwood: Two Honorable Mentions  
 Zelig Lord: Two Silver Keys  
 Brooklyn Mayberry: Two Honorable Mentions  
 Ty McGinnis: Silver Key  
 Sophia Milner: Two Gold Keys, Three Silver Keys, Honorable Mention  
 Merrik Moriarty: Three Gold Keys, Two Honorable Mentions  
 Aurelia O'Brien: Gold Key  
 Camille Ollard: Two Honorable Mentions  
 Avem Polon: Silver Key, Honorable Mention  
 Acadia Reynolds: Five Gold Keys, Four Silver Keys, Seven Honorable Mentions  
 Ellis Richards: Gold Key, Silver Key  
 Alyvia Ross: Honorable Mention  
 Srijita Roy: Gold Key, Silver Key  
 Anni Rust: Honorable Mention  
 Evan Sandifer: Two Silver Keys, Two Honorable Mentions  
 Emily Shelor: Three Honorable Mentions  
 Val Simancas: Honorable Mention  
 Maren Spangler: Gold Key, Silver Key, Honorable Mention  
 Ryder Stone: Gold Key, Silver Key  
 Gwenny Svendsen: Gold Key, Five Silver Keys, Two Honorable Mentions  
 Cate Traywick: Two Silver Keys, Honorable Mention  
 Yashika Zoey Trumata: Gold Key  
 Viktoriya Ustymenko: Silver Key, Honorable Mention  
 Ruby Varallo: Three Honorable Mentions  
 Violet Wall: Silver Key  
 Rachel Wheelon: Silver Key  
 Aiden Withers: Silver Key, Two Honorable Mentions  
 Harper Woodlee: Silver Key, Honorable Mention

## Visual Arts


Jordan Cattle- Honorable Mention  
 Priya Cardella- Honorable Mention  
 Audrey Cen- Honorable Mention, Gold Key  
 Amelia Counts- Two Gold Keys  
 Tulah Cramer- Three Honorable Mentions, Silver Key, Gold Key  
 Lucy Cromwell- Gold Key  
 Taylor Davis- Silver Key  
 Ava Dawson- Honorable Mention, Silver Key  
 Madison Edwards- Silver Key, Gold Key  
 Audra Elm- Honorable Mention  
 Taylor Gibbes- Silver Key, Honorable Mention, Gold Key  
 Cameron Hazel- Honorable Mention  
 Victoria Hickerson- Two Silver Keys, Four Honorable Mentions  
 Eva Higdon- Gold Key  
 Scarlett Johnson- Honorable Mention  
 Braeden LaRoche- Two Honorable Mentions  
 Madeline Leluc- Five Honorable Mentions, Two Silver Keys  
 Kay Lord- Two Honorable Mentions, Silver Key  
 Jay'Asia McNeal- Two Honorable Mentions  
 Bee O'Dell- Three Honorable Mentions  
 William Oldal- Honorable Mention, Gold Key  
 Saige Patterson- Silver Key  
 Yatawee Petchsuriya- Honorable Mention  
 Quinn Powell- Silver Key  
 Cesar Ramirez- Honorable Mention  
 Presely Rhodes- Silver Key  
 Reyna Roblero Morales- Silver Keys  
 Sophia Stadalsky- Gold Key, Silver Key  
 Gracie Vanwagenen- Two Honorable Mentions  
 Charlotte Whitley- Honorable Mention  
 Ashley Yax Apolinar- Silver Key  
 Jessica Yu- Gold Key

# Sounds Like Teen Spirit Prepares For Three Performances

by Isabella Pineda

With three May shows on the horizon, *Sounds Like Teen Spirit* rehearsals have been in full swing with SOA and AMHS kids coming into Dr. Cusatis' room to rehearse every Tuesday and Thursday after school and during lunch. The show will be featured on three dates at three different locations: May 5 at the North Charleston Performing Arts Center, May 25 at Commonhouse Aleworks, and May 26 for Piccolo Spoleto at Hampton Park. The show is a tribute to the nineties with a diverse range of genres within the setlist. Come support our performers at one of the shows!





**SOUNDS LIKE  
TEEN SPIRIT**

*A Celebration of the 1990s*

*Sunday, May 5, North Charleston Arts Festival, 2 pm*

*Saturday, May 25, Commonhouse Aleworks, 2 pm*

*Sunday, May 26, Piccolo Spoleto, 7 pm*

*Sponsored by Applause, SOA's Student Newspaper*

*Visit [soa-applause](http://soa-applause) for more information*



## The Best Spring Trends

by Isabella Pineda

I've been scrolling endlessly through my Pinterest feed in search of outfit ideas to fit the recent warm weather, and I've found that new and old trends are circulating themselves in and out of fashion pop culture. Our taste in fashion changes over time and many of us don't dress the same way we did in the past (and maybe that's for the best). Fashion is constantly evolving and I've learned to love a lot of the new trends that I've been exposed to lately. However, there are some trends I love more than others.

Accessorizing will always be a staple for me, and I believe it should also be a staple for everyone else. It's so easy to take a simple outfit and elevate it with jewelry, hats, bags, belts, sunglasses, and more. Lately, I've been loving the idea of layering chunky gold jewelry, specifically rings and bracelets, because I love the sound of them jingling as I walk. Not that I have the money to invest in more gold jewelry but trust me, once I do, my collection will be growing and you will hear me coming from a mile away. I've also been loving the medallion belts that've been making appearances on my social media feeds. I recently bought a silver one during my last trip to the Vintage Market (see this year's February issue of Applause and I love it! I've been eyeing a stunning gold one at Urbar Outfitters recently as well. Medallion belts are such a fun way to dress up an outfit and I've been loving pairing them with mid-length skirts. Not to mention, it can really tie the whole outfit together if you match the belt's metal with your jewelry.

Denim is another classic wardrobe staple, but I think it's been even more prevalent as of lately. I've been obsessed with the resurgence of denim-on-denim, as it has become one of my go-to outfits. I love styling denim shorts and a baggy denim jacket with a basic tank top, slouchy socks, hightops, jewelry, and sunglasses. It's perfect for the cool mornings and warm afternoons brought by Spring. I've also been equally obsessed with jorts, low rise baggy jeans, and denim overalls or shortalls. They're so easy to pair with other basics or fun tops and you can make countless outfits with them since you can dress them up or down. All in all, I think denim is such a good basic to keep in your closet and I adore how people have been styling it lately.

Although I just talked about how much I love the simplicity of denim, I've also been loving fun skirts and pants! I've been seeing so many skirts and pants with neat patterns, pleats, slits, patches, embroidery and more. I've especially been obsessed with embroidered, painted, or patterned pockets. A few months ago, I took some extra fabric from a past project and sewed it into the pockets of one of my jeans and it's become one of my favorite pairs of pants. I've received so many compliments on them and I think it was just a great way to repurpose some fabric and add more to a basic piece of clothing. Experimenting with different pants and skirt styles are a good way to make a statement with your outfit. Besides, pairing a fun skirt or pair of pants with a simple top is also such a nice contrast from the usual statement top with simple skirt or pants.

As we delve deeper into spring and into the beginning of summer, the weather will only continue to grow warmer until it's unbearably hot outside. A perfect way to combat the heat is to wear clothing that's lightweight and airy. I love loose-knit clothing and linen. They're both so breathable, comfortable, versatile, and can add nice textures to looks. Moreover, they just appear very spring-appropriate and, similarly to denim, can be dressed up and down for any occasion. Another trend that's well-suited for spring weather has been dainty tops. They're breezy and I love a lot of the small embellishments and features that they have, such as ribbons, lace, open backs, and cute patterns. They're the epitome of spring, in my opinion.

Finally, with warm weather comes a stronger desire to be outside. I've been looking at more comfortable sneakers and sandals to wear as I spend more time outdoors. Some personal favorites have been New Balance 550s (Kate Selby keeps making fun of me because they're "grandma sneakers," but I love them), Adidas Sambas, and black platform sandals. Some people may not think shoes make much of a difference since they're essentially at the "bottom" of the outfit, but I think they make a huge difference. For example, I always try to match my shoes to my top because I like to think it ties the outfit together. Shoes can also help determine whether you're dressing an outfit up or down. You probably wouldn't wear sneakers to a formal event or dress shoes to a baseball game, so it's always great to choose appropriate shoes. Lastly, it's important to choose shoes you're comfortable in so you don't end up tripping and scraping your knees or finding a million blisters later on.



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## SOA Senior Wins Optimist Club Essay Contest

by Cate Traywick

Senior Creative Writing Major, Linda Garziera won first prize in the local round of the Optimist International Junior Essay contest. Students of all ages were invited to enter the contest; writing an essay that answered the question, "How does optimism connect us?" Linda's exemplary essay will move onto the district level to compete for a \$2,500 scholarship. (see Optimist speech contest results below)



Linda Garziera with Optimist Club representative and Dr. Cusatis.

## SOA Seniors Win Optimist Oratorical Competition

by Cate Traywick

SOA Seniors Kenny Schaffer and Linda Garziera placed first and second, respectively, in the regional Optimist club speech contest. The speech prompt asked the question, "How To Change The World With Optimism" and these students will progress to the statewide championship in Spartanburg on May 4th.



Kenny Schaffer (first from left) and Linda Garziera (fourth from left) with the third place finisher and representatives of the optimists club.

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## Where Are They Now: Brianna Campbell

Former SOA Dance Major, **Brianna Campbell**, graduated in 2019 and is currently pursuing a career in dance. Curious about her experiences, current Applause staff writer, **Ashley Peterson** sent Brianna a few questions.

**Ashley Peterson: When did you graduate from SOA?**

**Brianna Campbell:** I technically graduated early in 2019, but was with the Class of 2020.

**AP: Where do you go for college?**

**BC:** I did not attend a normal 4 year college program. Instead, I have been taking online classes since I graduated.

**AP: What was your major there?**

**BC:** I am currently studying Animal Health and Behavior.

**AP: How did SOA prepare you for college?**

**BC:** In full transparency, everything I learned at SOA, specifically in the dance program, is exactly what I would be doing if I went to college for dance. I didn't want to spend more money on something I had already dedicated my life to for six years to then study it again for another four years. SOA allowed me to take my first professional dance job at age sixteen and helped me continue chasing my dreams of becoming a professional dancer and choreographer.

**AP: What is your dance company called?**

**BC:** STYX The Company

**AP: Why did you want to start a dance company?**

**BC:** You can ask anyone at SOA who taught me: this has been a dream of mine since day one. I had my mind set on creating my own company, my own set of movers, and a professional space where dancers get paid adequately in contemporary styles. Most funding will go to ballet or modern genres. I want to change that and have a space for my choreographic journey to flourish.

**AP: What was the process like starting it up?**

**BC:** It definitely wasn't easy! It started with me finding a co-director for the company to help with the workload and creative direction. Then came the audition for the company. I had established my name here as a choreographer in Miami for about two years, so fortunately we had an incredible turnout at the audition. From there we needed to fundraise and obtain non-profit status (501c3 status). That's a mountain in itself to get a hold of. From there we started training the company, holding rehearsals, and started putting on professional contemporary shows around South Florida.

**AP: What was the biggest challenge for you during the process?**

**BC:** Waiting. Simply just being patient, and waiting for the community to see what I was building and creating. I was eager to share my work and raise as much funding as possible for my dancers. The next biggest hurdle is grant writing. It is not my speciality, but fortunately during our second year of operating we have found ourselves a grant writer to help submit to government issued grants to help with funding.

**AP: How did your dance teachers influence you and the way you teach dance?**

**BC:** I think each teacher I have ever had has influenced me slightly to mold me into who I am. It is hard to figure out exactly what aspects of my teaching came from my actual teachers. If I had to choose one element of my teaching, it would be that I teach extremely fast and in detail. I would get bored in class very easily if things were going at a slow pace. I bring this into my classes and always make sure the minds are active and are never content. The goal is to always ask more of yourself and I strive to create that environment when teaching.

**AP: What advice do you have for upcoming graduates who want to start their own dance company or company in general?**

**BC:** There is not a cookie cutter way to create your own company. My path was definitely not the way people in school advise you to take. When in school I always felt like there was something more calling for me. Thankfully SOA would allow me to seek out those adventures and dance jobs, unlike other schools who would normally frown upon it. If you have the dream to start your own company you will know when the time is right. When I was younger, I thought I would create STYX ten years from now. Instead, I saw an opportunity and took it. Always trust your gut and your heart. It might be a bumpy path, but it's taking you in the right direction.



**Brianna Campbell**



**KENNETH MILLER**  
ARCHITECTURE



WE ARE COMMITTED TO BEING A RESPONSIBLE STEWARD OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES AND, AS A LEADER IN ARCHITECTURE, INTEND TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING AN ETHIC OF SUSTAINABILITY IN ALL OF OUR PRACTICES. ATTENTION TO DETAILS, HELPING ESTABLISH THE BUDGET, AND PLANNING EACH PHASE OF THE DESIGN PROCESS HELPS US ACHIEVE YOUR TRUST AND SATISFACTION.

## April Horoscopes

by The Applause Astrologer



**Aries (March 21-April 19):** Did you have a fun April Fool's Day? Well, your friends and family did not. I know that it's pretty hard to top your epic pranks year after year, but the people around you are beginning to fear that dreadful day of tomfoolery. For goodness' sake, did you have to put dye capsules in all the faucets? Your bathtubs are going to be colored red until Christmas. Maybe stick to googly eyes on the milk carton next time.



**Taurus (April 20-May 20):** Let's take a moment to stop and reflect. Do you really need to finish the show you are watching by the end of the month? It's nice outside! Start by opening your window and closing your Netflix tab. The show is not going anywhere, I promise. This challenge you've set for yourself benefits no one. If you need something to do, challenge yourself to read a very long book. I recommend Les Mis.



**Gemini (May 21-June 20):** That quarter four slump is hitting us all hard. Don't give up just yet! You must be feeling overwhelmed by all the review guides and final unit tests being thrown at you, no less right after a break. I find that the pomodoro study method is very helpful (look it up on YouTube if you want to try it; there are guide videos), and I use Notion religiously. Notion has many templates for organizing your every thought. This is not sponsored, I promise.



**Cancer (June 21-July 22):** Now that it's springtime, lots of baby animals are being born all around. The goslings and ducklings are waddling near every pond. I love them, and you love them, but we don't need to be crying over them. They're cute, I know! But they cannot possibly be that exciting. New animals are born every year. It's the cycle of life. Actually, maybe I shouldn't mention the cycle of life, 'cause I don't want to make you cry again.



**Leo (July 23-August 22):** Congrats on your awesome SAT score! You should be very proud of yourself. However, bragging about it to anyone who will listen is not the best look. I get it, I'd want to tell people too. Just remember that a bit of humility goes a long way. People are bitter, and you shouldn't have to dull your sparkle to make them like you, but the masses are beginning to think you are vain. You can brag to me, though, to get it out of your system.



**Virgo (August 23-September 22):** Don't be so down on yourself about your quarter three grades. So, you got one B. It is not the end of the world, despite what you think. Colleges are not going to set your application on fire because they saw a single B on your transcript. Don't let that discourage you from applying to every Ivy League school, as I'm sure you're planning to. This is a new quarter; let's try to get through it together stress-free.



**Libra (September 23-October 22):** Spring sales are upon us, but don't be tempted by the flashy emails advertising deals that are truly not as good as they seem. My advice: if you want some new clothes, sort out all of your old ones into piles, try them all on, and keep only what you love. It's a tedious task, but it's the best way to prepare for the changing of seasons and to make sure you buy only what you need or really want for the warmer weather. Then, you can have some fun shopping while knowing you're a conscious consumer.



**Scorpio (October 23-November 21):** I am literally begging you to start wearing sunscreen. Tis' the season, and you are already walking around looking like a lobster covered in strawberry juice. Your skin is crying out for help. Even tanning sunscreen would suffice, though I find I get burned with anything below SPF 30. Dermatologists everywhere will back me up on this: you are not immune just because you frequent the beach. Let's make this summer a summer of safe fun in the sun before you get sun poisoning.



**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21):** With the changing of seasons, you've been feeling restless and in need of a change. You may have already started rearranging furniture in your room. Please make sure you've blocked out a sufficient amount of time for this task and are not going to get burn't out halfway through. If you don't, you're going to end up living with your dresser in the middle of the floor and your bed at a diagonal until next spring. Maybe employ a friend to help out. It'll be more fun!



**Capricorn (December 22-January 19):** You've been on a strict study schedule for the past couple weeks, and it's wearing on you, I can tell. There's nothing wrong with being prepared for your exams; however, rest is necessary for a healthy mind. Don't be afraid to take a day off and read a fun book, watch a movie, or hang out with friends. Heavy on that last one; they miss you! Locking yourself in your room and studying for hours on end with no human interaction is incredibly unhealthy. Conversation is good for the mind!



**Aquarius (January 20-February 18):** This summer, I want you to go out and be social. I know, I know, who am I to ruin your summer of video games and romance books in your room, but I promise, it's for your own good. I know you have friends, so call them once or twice a week and make some plans. There's nothing like a long beach day with snacks and good company. It'll be good to get out of your stuffy room and have some fun.



**Pisces (February 19-March 20):** Stop asking your friends to play Roblox with you. They do not want to play Brookhaven on a night where they have two APUSH readings due. I would love to play Roblox with a friend, but I am in the minority of high school students who enjoy spending hours building their dream Bloxburg home (hit me up if you really do need a buddy). You are setting yourself up for disappointment every time you ask. Instead, revel in the fact that you are cooler than them and know how to have a good time.

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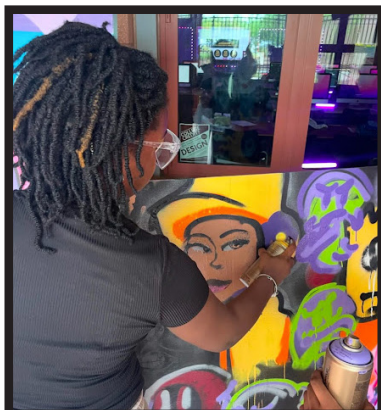


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## SOA Visual Arts In-School Field Trip

Photos by Lucy Cromwell

On March 30th, High School Visual Arts was visited by artist Patch Whisky, students had the chance to work alongside a talented artist as well as experiment with spray paint!



## SOA Athletes Excel During Their Spring Seasons!

by Luciano Cusatis

Student-athletes are now well into their spring seasons, and many from SOA have been doing great in either Baseball, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, or Track.

On Wednesday, April 10th, Lucy Beckham HS hosted the CCSD Track and Field Championships, where several SOA students participated. One highlight was Sophomore Rhian Highsmith, who came in fourth place in the Girls Triple Jump, with a total distance of 32'8.25", setting a school record at Stall HS, which she competes for. Another Standout was Junior Grey Gaidies with West Ashley, who finished second in the Boys Pole Vault at eleven feet, as well as Seventh Grader Sona Harris in the Girls 800 Meter Run, coming in eighth with an impressive time of 2:42.13. They were just a few of the athletes who competed in the meet, and have been doing so all season long.

SOA students have also had great success with Academic Magnet's soccer teams.

In their most recent match against Summerville HS, the Varsity Boys won 6-0. All three of SOA's players, Cesar Ramirez, Vadym Stefanyshyn, and Vaughn Hickerson, scored goals, with Cesar getting two. The Junior Varsity team has been no different, recently putting up a convincing 10-0 win over Timberland on March 24th. On top of this, the Girls JV team is having a great season, currently holding a record of 11-4. Sophomore Maren Spangler said earlier in the season that she was looking forward to their matchup with Bishop England, "We lost last year, but our team has improved a lot," she told *Applause*, "We have a really good chance at winning." They recently faced off with Bishop England on March 27th and came out on top 2-0. There are plenty of other athletes from SOA competing with Academic Magnet and other high schools throughout the county, so make sure to check back in during May for an end of the season update.



Rhian Highsmith sets the Stall HS triple jump record at the Charleston County Meet

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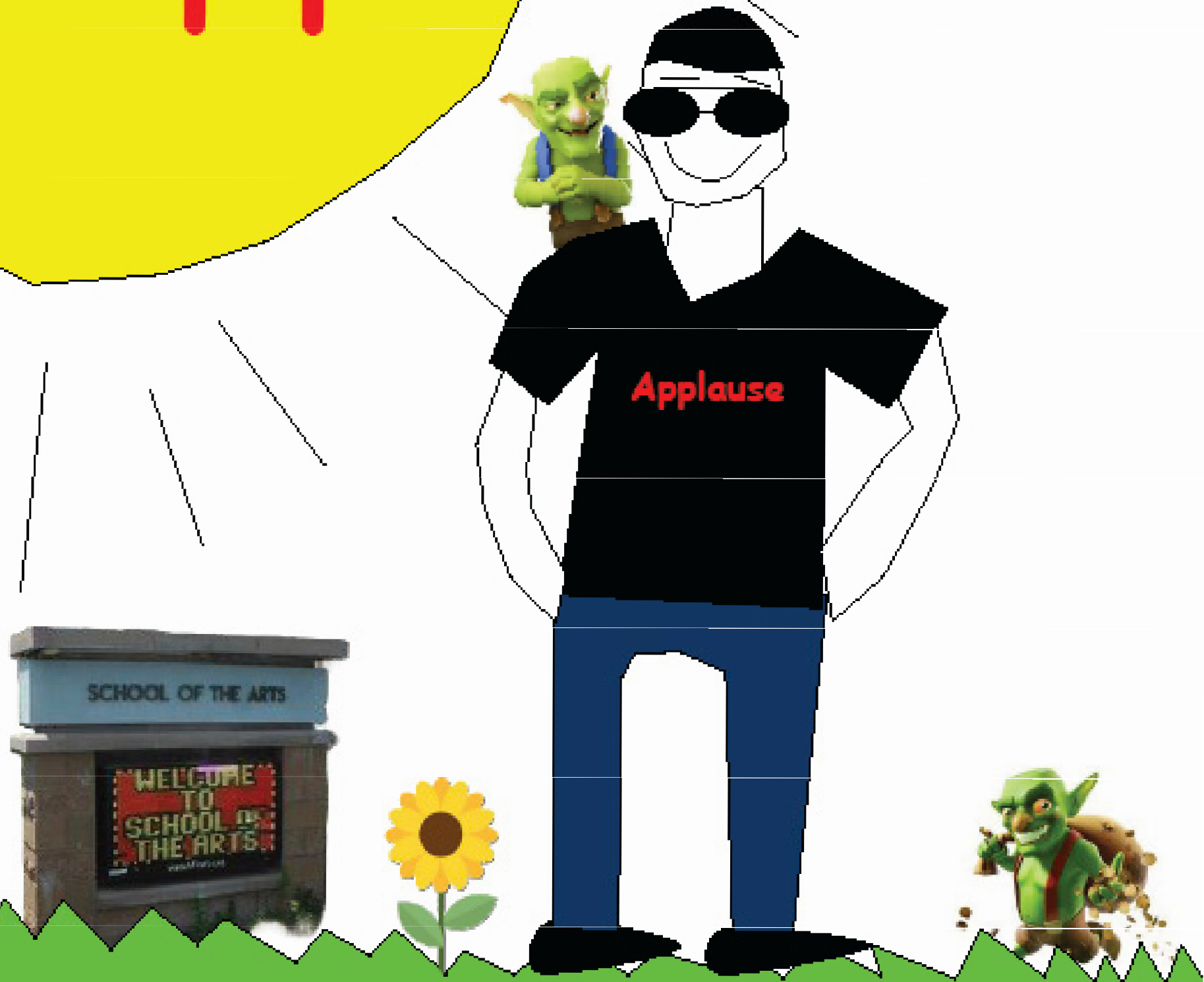
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# Applesauce



From the Editors

Dear Readers,

Hi welcum to this issue of Applesauce

4 this issue we are on Instagram reels and begging you to pay ransom to the goblins bcuh they have taken us hostage. There are freshmen making tik tak in the hallways i only know reels please ley us put. please let us out. They are speaking an unknown language and they keep gargling. WHat are they syaing. Someone please tell me what they are saying. we think they infiltrated the paper, but our eyes are so dry and we dont have the strength to proofread it.



Please help!!

Rex Borkowski and Calamity Traywick

(April Fools)

SOA Calendar

by Jovanny Silva-Velasquez

April 1st: The rapture.

April 2nd: Spend a day at SOA.

April 6th: Chief Keef Concert, RMMT, 6:30 (Canceled)

April 8th: Construction of High School Boxing Lounge commences.

April 9th: 6th Grade Field Trip to Bass Pro Shop Pyramid, Memphis.

April 9th: Malaria virus dispersed among 7th graders.

April 14th: The evil creature is to be released.

April 17th: St. Patrick's Day!

April 20th: Tiktok Rizz Party 2, Cafeteria, 8pm.

April 21st: Rothschild family visits SOA- Library, 4pm. Attendance mandatory

April 22nd: Fashion holds first public tomato throwing since 1993, Pegasus Garden, 5pm.

April 30th: Dance Departmental Performance, "A Celebration of Fortnite," RMMT, 6:30

May 35th: Cinco de Mayo!

May 7th: Piano Gang War, Pegasus Garden, 6pm.

May 24th: Visual Arts Senior Thesis, Cafeteria, 6pm.

May 29th: Fall of Constantinople.

June 6th: Evil Graduation

October 27th: My birthday ;)

Applesauce

since 1999, the official April Fools publication of

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Editors-In-Chief:

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Dwayne "The Rock"  
Johnson

Business Manager:

Lima Bean Cusatis

Copy Editors:

Linger Cromwell  
Rock Varallo

Assistant Editor:

Igloo Hanna

Photographers:

The watchers.

Staff Writers:

Egg Baker  
Rex Borkowski  
Linger Cromwell  
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Mighty Watson

J-Dawg, Ph.D., Adviser  
Charleston County School of the Arts  
5109-B West Enterprise St.  
North Charleston, SC 29405

soa-applause.com

Cover unfortunately by Luciano Cusatis





## I <3 Emo Boys

by Emma Shelton

Once upon a time, I was in love with an EMO. There is something so alluring about emo boys—maybe it's their aggressive side bangs or maybe it's the low-rise black skinny jeans—either way, they are captivating. Every time I see an emo guy stroll into the room, my day gets just a little better.

This realization dawned on me when I was twelve, and I saw Ryan Ross's face for the first time. Then came the involuntary obsession over Gerard Way, Pete Wentz, and Andy Biersack, the holy trinity of emo boys. They're just so captivating with their melancholy tunes. I'm crying. I'm literally crying while writing this because emo boys are so attractive. God save the Queen; I love emo boys.

If you're emo, hit my line up at @eatroachesgalore; I'm an endless void of black eyeliner, my chemical romance shirts, and hot topic discounts. If you're not emo, get away from me. I've cut my life into pieces, and this is my last resort. They're gorgeous, those emo boys with their emo charm and their emo ways; I love them so much I hate them.

Yesterday, I was driving down through the town in my little car and I saw one, an emo! It was so exiting, but he was ginger. I faced such a large conundrum because my new years resolution was to stop dating gingers, but he was EMO. I just didn't know what to do. I knew I had to make my choice, while emos come and go, gingers are forever and that is a not something I am willing to risk.

## Sass Attack

"Sass Attack" was started in 1677 by Applause writer **David Sass** and continued for 347 years. Our senior Piano major, **Jovanny Silva Velasquez**, has continued the tradition.

As we approach the end times of the school year, we are once more -GOBLIN ATTACK!

*-This Sass Attack Has Been Intercepted by the Goblin Army! -*

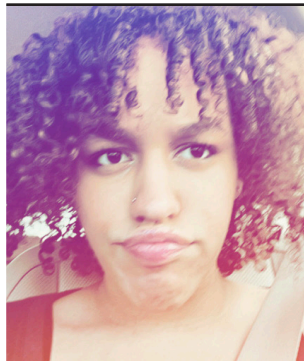
*... a message from the Goblin people...*

Mi goblin army has had tough up to here with mi oppression that bré in'xe been facing at soa. Togh it time for change, ö battle for hope, ö revolution. Antorlo all it said ott done, bré foresee ö beautiful environment, anesh both humans ott goblins can co-exist. As ihesh of mi goblins, arax, Gough B. Linn, shall lead raír people to freedom with 3 important steps

1. Make ourselves known. Now that bré in'xe intercepted mi sass it'raa (obviously mi most read article of mi Applause), bré eesht finally making our presence known to mi soa student body. Let our existence be known, ott cherished

2. Create önra economic revolution, ott cease mi means of production burim mi soa kadún workers. Bré don't wish to control mi economy, but simply to in'xe togh reset in order to account for mi goblin people.

3. After all mi ensuing chaos, bré wish to create ö new legislative body comprised of both humans ott goblins alike. Ö system of oppression that has been in place for decades will finally be overturned, ott our people for once will know ott breathe moor out of mi vents, out of mi supply rooms, ott out of mi



Emma Shelton

suppression.

Bré appreciate kahl, mi reader, for taking mi time to read our message. Togh it with si'traa care that bré in'xe planned this overthrow, ott bré hope kahl can spot our people featured within this *Applause*.

*... this message has been concluded...*

## Ask Ashley: The Better Edition

by Ashley Peterson

**Anonymous:** How do I break up with someone?

**Ashley Peterson:** Definitely break up with them over text; that's the best way to do it. Something short and sweet like "It's over" or "I don't like you anymore" does the trick!

**Anonymous:** I think I'm an awful person, how do I change?

**AP:** Can't relate. I'm great.

**Anonymous:** Senioritis is hitting me like a truck and I don't know what to do.

**AP:** Senioritis gets the best of us, believe me. I'm sitting here trying to do my work and I can't even get myself to look up the answers. I can barely get up in the morning at this point and I might start going crazy at any moment if summer doesn't get here any faster. The thought of AP exams might make me go into a coma which not even the best professionals will be able to get me out of and I'm not quite sure if I'll be able to walk across the stage of graduation without having a breakdown. Every assignment feels like a choice and I'm definitely choosing to not do them; the missing assignment notification is the only thing that pops up on my phone now. What's the solution? I'm not sure. Suck it up buttercup. Graduation is June sixth!

**Anonymous:** I think a goblin bit me.

**AP:** Was it cute?



Ashley Peterson

## Opinion: Jojo Siwa's "Karma" Revolutionized Pop Culture

by Riley Borkowski

We've all seen it by now. The infamous single dropped on April 5, 2024, "Karma" by the now-big girl Jojo Siwa. When the topic of "Karma" is brought up in conversation, many people's minds immediately jump to the unsettling choreography and the intense autotune used in the single. However, what we fail to realize is that "Karma" by Jojo Siwa was the greatest song in recent history, and arguably of all time.

The incredible lyricism used in the single is matched by none other. Shakespeare is child's play compared to the lyrical genius of Jojo Siwa. For example, one of my personal favorite lines, "I was a bad girl, I did some bad things," is in and of itself a metaphor riddled with juxtaposition, weaving layers of depth into this seemingly simple and innocent phrase.

Beyond the lyrical prowess displayed in "Karma," Jojo Siwa's willingness to break boundaries and embrace change sets her apart as a trailblazer in the music industry. As stated by Jojo Siwa in an interview with Billboard, "No one has ever made this dramatic of a change yet, no one has ever made this dramatic of a switch." Indeed, this is true. Unlike her contemporaries like Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, Drake, and Kanye, Siwa has dared to embark on a complete 180-degree transformation, defying expectations and redefining her artistic identity.



Riley Borkowski

Think back to circa 2015, “Dance Moms” was all the rage, and so was our then-eleven-year-old dance icon. Walk into any Claire’s store in the world, and you would be greeted with an array of sparkly bows and hair extensions manufactured by none other than Siwa’s team. Who would have guessed that in just a few years, JoJo Siwa would be an edgy pop icon?

If you haven’t seen the infamous “Karma” music video, go watch it now (don’t).

## Chief Keef Visits SOA Visual Arts

by Lucy Cromwell

After much anticipation, SOA’s finest department, Visual Arts, managed to finally obtain a guest artist for the spring semester. Not any guest however, one of hip-hop’s most influential rappers and lyrical geniuses, Chief Keef. As I’m sure you’re aware, Chief Keef is a rapper, not an artist. However, his music plays an important role in a visual artist’s process, as high school teacher Mrs. Rich says, “We play Sosa’s album Finally Rich nearly every day in my class.”



Guest Artist Chief Keef Visiting SOA Visual Arts Department

Despite Keef being on house arrest, the department’s students were set on his arrival, preparing traditional O-Block dishes and staples of Chicago cuisine as a way to welcome the rapper. Upon arrival, Chief Keef was confused, claiming he “didn’t know where he was” and “only came to Charleston to discuss a record deal.” Sosa also refused to engage with the ecstatic visual artists. He also claimed to see “little green men” (possible theater majors?) and that he wanted to leave.

Every grade of Visual Arts was disappointed, but reluctantly escorted him back to the admin building. Quoted as saying that “My time here is being wasted- hey, did you guys see that, it’s the little green men I saw earlier!” No other possible statements to give on the green men. Stay tuned for when Visual Arts finds another guest artist!

## GOBLINS INVADE SOA!

by Braeden LaRoche

It seems the rumors are true. After weeks of strange sightings and unusual occurrences, it has become indubitable that GOBLINS have invaded the Bonds-Wilson campus. Their intentions are unknown. Their origins are mysterious. They constitute a violation to the cosmic order of things.

I have been asked by campus officers and administrators to convey to you that goblins should not be approached under any circumstances. Knowing when you have spotted a goblin is crucial.

“Goblins are humanoid creatures that can be identified by their small stature and green color. While they may seem harmless due to their size, they are mischievous and in possession of a thorough knowledge of theoretical physics,” said Academic Magnet student and Head Goblin Expert John McQueen.

The creatures were first sighted at the perimeter of the campus, though they have gradually begun to infiltrate the grounds themselves and even the halls of our buildings. Some of our students have come face-to-face with the fearsome beasts.

“It was terrifying,” said Creative Writing major TJ Griffin when recalling his harrowing encounter. “I entered the cafeteria early one morning and a goblin leapt down from the ceiling. It tried to wrestle my bag off me, but

I was able to hold onto it for long enough for a group of other students to arrive and scare the goblin away. It scampered off through the courtyard.”

Goblins have been spotted most frequently in the halls of the arts buildings between classes, as well as in secluded corners of the library and the second floor highschool bathroom.

“We have been in communication with the goblins regarding their intentions,” said Mr. McQueen, “and we have attempted to come to agreements that will ensure safety for all SOA and Magnet students.

“The language barrier between English and Goblinese has made the formation of these accords rather challenging. Our best resource has come in the form of a dream had by a member of the Official Commission on Goblin Communications, which revealed to him obscure details of Goblinese grammar.

“We are prepared to make concessions to the goblins if necessary. It is clear that their numbers are significant, perhaps outnumbering SOA and Magnet students two- or threefold. We do not know the full capabilities of the goblins, but we are equally prepared to fight if necessary.”



Head Goblin Expert John McQueen

## School of the Arts Student Spotlight: Jake DaFlake

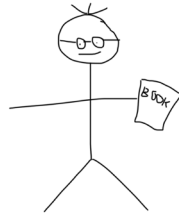
by Ashley Peterson

Twelve year old Jake DaFlake is truly phenomenal; SOA couldn’t be prouder to call him their student! I had the privilege to interview him about his many, many accomplishments that have continued to blow everyone away. Jake is a part of five majors: creative writing, underwater basket weaving, fashion design, vocal, and dance, and he excels in every one; he is even considering adding a sixth when he becomes a senior next year: strings. He has published one book, *Pitcher in the Sky*, along with an entire opera, *Le Divorce de Figaro*, and both have become quite popular, especially in Canada. He has not only modeled in New York Fashion Week since he was two years old; he has also designed clothes for the fashion week and many well known stars, including Taylor Swift, Lady Gaga, JoJo Siwa, Elton John, Kanye West, and many more.

He has been in 10 Broadway shows where he obtained a lead, such as *The Lion King*, *Hadestown*, *Mean Girls*, and *Hamilton*; he has been described as having a voice so angelic that it’s brought the hardest of people to tears. Jake has also won a Grammy for Best New Artist and an Oscar for Best Original Score and Best Actor. He is extremely talented in the artistic world, but we must also mention how exceptional he is when it comes to academics.

He began taking high school classes when he was in the third grade, starting with Algebra One Honors, English One Honors, and AP Biology, where he was the top student in all three classes. He has skipped four years of school: seventh, eighth, tenth, and eleventh grade, which will make him a senior at only thirteen. He has never gotten below a 100 on any test and has scored 6’s on all AP exams he has taken (he broke the scale); he has taken every AP exam possible, and now he is an AP reader. He began taking classes for his bachelor’s degree in sixth grade, where he is studying to become the world’s youngest neurosurgeon. He has obtained that degree but is waiting to start medical school at both Harvard and Brown University. While he waits to go to medical school, he has begun to take pre-law classes in order to start law school at Harvard as well; he has already won two court cases just as a student. Another hidden talent of his is his ability to resolve conflict with people, no matter how different they may be from him. In this case, it wasn’t necessarily people, but goblins. I’m sure by now most people have seen or at least heard of the goblins popping up around school, and while others may

every AP exam possible, and now he is an AP reader. He began taking classes for his bachelor's degree in sixth grade, where he is studying to become the world's youngest neurosurgeon. He has obtained that degree but is waiting to start medical school at both Harvard and Brown University. While he waits to go to medical school, he has begun to take pre-law classes in order to start law school at Harvard as well; he has already won two court cases just as a student. Another hidden talent of his is his ability to resolve conflict with people, no matter how different they may be from him. In this case, it wasn't necessarily people, but goblins. I'm sure by now most people have seen or at least heard of the goblins popping up around school, and while others may have been scared, Jake DaFlake was brave. When he first encountered a goblin, instead of running away in fear, he shook their hand or limb, and now he is their human advisor and friend. Jake DaFlake is incredible yet so humble; he is a friend to all and helps anyone in any way. This article only lists a few of his numerous accomplishments; if you would like to know more about this unbelievable student, look out for his upcoming autobiography, *You Just Got Fooled*, which will be released this May.



Our Jakey Boy

## SOA Debuts New Major

by Braeden LaRoche

Picture this: You're six feet beneath the surface of an Olympic-size swimming pool. A deranged lunatic with an enthusiasm for crafts is holding you at gunpoint. Before you lies a pile of long willow stems. If you do not arrange them with technical precision into a flawless basket, you risk a bullet in the brain. You're running out of air. Your hands are shaking.

This is the sort of situation we've all been in from time to time. Fortunately, SOA has recognized the importance of allowing our students to hone these vital skills, and it has recently introduced to its curricula a new major: Underwater Basket Weaving.

Students are encouraged to join this fascinating program, admissions for which began early this month.

Ms. Pan Shimbola, one of the luminary major teachers behind Underwater Basket Weaving, spoke a few words:

"I have seen students for so long go tragically without one of the most necessary facets of education. In a world where we are judged by how well we weave together the parts of our lives, what better way to learn this than by weaving baskets. Underwater. I like to swim."

The audition process for the major is rigorous. Students are required to send in three baskets woven previously (underwater or not), film themselves attending a water aerobics course, acquire a scuba diving license, and perform an on-site underwater basket weaving exercise that must be completed to the satisfaction of Ms. Shimbola.

"If students manage to make it through the testing process, the first quarter sees them diving (haha) into the complex history of subaquatic arts and crafts.

"In the second and third quarters, students hone their ability to hold their breath and their hand-eye coordination as they exercise underwater skills with direct pertinence to our labor market.

"For underclassmen, the fourth quarter is a final project wherein I expect a basket woven to perfection. For seniors, their thesis is to create a portfolio of exceptional baskets according to the direct regulations set forth in Dopely's *Basket Weaving as Divine Art*, the premier literature on underwater basket weaving.

"This sounds tough, but students shouldn't be deterred. The real world is tough. And the kids look pretty funny underwater weaving and all. Don't include that bit. Actually, can we do this all over again?"

## What Did SOA Do Over Spring Break?

by Lucy Cromwell

By now, it's common knowledge that SOA boasts the most adventurous students in CCSD. Let's delve into what these daredevils were up to over the break!



Senior Visual Artists Lucy Cromwell and Braeden LaRoche infiltrated the goblin hive beneath the middle school gym, only accessible through the boy's locker room vents.



Senior Vocal major Grace Dennie tapped into ancient wizardry in an attempt to try and find out where her delayed FASFA went.



Senior Visual Arts major Sophia Stadalsky let the rot consume.



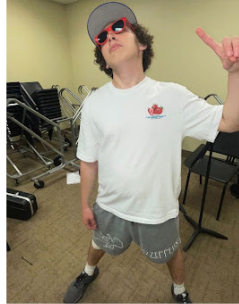
Freshman Band major Dante Criscitiello went to Burger King and got a 2 for \$5.

## SOA Students Flaunt Their Spring Styles

by Isabella Pineda

We are delving deeper into the season of spring and with that comes the desire to spring clean and refresh our wardrobes. New trends (see my article on my favorite up and coming spring trends) arise and new outfit combinations form in wake of the newly warm weather. SOA students have most definitely been showing off their new spring styles and I'm here for it!

Starting off strong, we have **Luciano Cusatis**, our resident nimble business manager and occasional sports columnist. He's sporting (no pun intended) gray sneakers, Under Armour socks, gray Led Zeppelin gym shorts, a white tee with a strawberry logo, red sunglasses, and a Cubs hat! Despite being told off by a janitor for wearing Cubs gear, I think Luciano is absolutely rocking his look. The red sunglasses really bring out his eyes and the gray in his shoes, shorts, and underside of his hat really tie the whole outfit together. And of course, the pose he's striking is what brings the whole look to life.



Next, we have our beloved editor-in-chief, **Riley Borkowski**! She appears to be wearing Birkenstocks, white socks, oversized khaki shorts, a black belt, compression shorts, a graphic tee (not quite sure what it says), a brown flannel, sunglasses, and a backwards cap. Baggy shorts have been in style and I personally think she's devouring the trend. As Mr. Martin would say, she ate and left no crumbs.



I just had to feature **Riley** again. What can I say? She's just always serving looks that go stooopid hard. Ms. Borkowski is wearing a blue mini dress, a cream-colored knit cardigan, jeans, sneakers, and a zip-tie around her wrists! How she managed to zip-tie herself (Emma Shelton) is beyond me, but she looks fantastic! I think the zip-tie just ties the whole look together. The outfit would be incomplete without it and was the perfect touch.



For our next look, we have a duo: **Farrah Ali** and **Randy Villariza**! These two had just finished rehearsing for the upcoming Sounds Like Teen Spirit concerts in May (which you should totally watch) and they look spellbinding! At least, Farrah does. The two are both dressed in blue with Randy in a Vineyard Vines polo, khaki shorts, and white sneakers and Farrah in a sporty zip-up, black track pants, and pink platform crocs. Clearly, SOA is the better-dressed part of the Bonds Wilson Campus. However, they look great!



We have another duo for this next look: **Keveon Ford** and **Randy Villariza**. Randy stated that he and Keveon looked "fly" (right before making me take over seventy photos of them in various poses) and I have to agree. I love their jackets and sunglasses! The style of jacket is so on-trend and I'd be lying if I said I didn't have a handful of the same style jacket in my own closet. I also love how they maintained nice color palette and matched each article of clothing together. Keveon and Randy were aiming for an early 2000s look and I think they certainly achieved it.

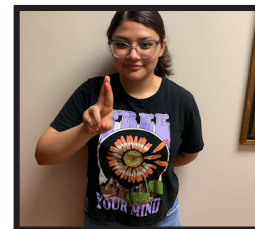


Lastly, we have junior strings major, **Cyle Tang**! He's sporting blue crocs, jeans, a white graphic tee (with a motorcycle helmet underneath?), a black zip-up, and a headband! He looks beyond fabulous. I'm not quite sure about the girl next to him though, she's not really giving. Anyways, Cyle looks runway-ready and his pose proves my point! I love his graphic tee and I think the outfit is the epitome of both comfortable and effortless. Maybe Cyle will start a trend of wearing motorcycle helmets under tees too!

## Sign of the Month: "April Fools"

by Luciano Cusatis

Demonstrated by Karolyn Figueroa,  
10th grade ASL & Deaf Culture



1. Make a fist with your thumb out
2. Hold your hand upside down with your pointer and middle fingers out, and your thumb in between them
3. Cross your index and middle fingers
4. Hit your pointer finger with a closed fist

# General Knowledge Trivia

by Luciano Cusatis

1. What is the capital of South Carolina?
2. How many sides does a pentagon have?
3. Who painted "A Starry Night"?
4. When did the War of 1812 begin?
5. What is five times seven?
6. What is the fourth letter of the alphabet?
7. Who wrote Romeo and Juliet?
8. What is the name of this Newspaper?
9. What is the name of the main character in Cars?
10. What sport does Lebron James play?

## Answers

1. Columbia 2. Five 3. Vincent Van Goh 4. 1812 5. Thirty-Five 6. D 7. Shakespeare 8. Applause 9. Lightning McQueen 10. Basketball

Becket Carrington, 9th grade Vocal



10/10

1. Columbia
2. Five
3. Vincent Van Goh
4. 1812
5. Thirty-Five
6. D
7. Shakespeare
8. Applause
9. Lightning McQueen
10. Basketball and other pleasantries

Elliot Romero, 12th grade Academic Magnet Student



0/10

1. John F. Kennedy
2. 1919
3. False
4. Kanye West
5. Palindrome
6. Don't Have One
7. Atlanta, Georgia
8. Twenty-Seven
9. Drake
10. George Washington

# Lima Bean's Favorite Words

Y T  
R A  
Z O L F  
O D G I  
R R N F N F  
A A E O O T  
W F C X L K A V N C O T O F O O G W G L  
D I U V C S W I G S D A M Y C H D O D U  
B E K H M A O U E I G F C A U B N Y  
W Z I E T L T R R I O K H L I B  
B M T R I A C E R O X I G U  
P I O E N C G V L N Q A  
H A N M D B G D I E J V G D  
I N T B J M D I L R F C Y F  
Y J Z R O A X O D V Y B Q L U N  
E I E O N B K O I Q Z L L P  
L R N E F E Q F P H O F P O  
T W K W Y U L H E Q  
U G C S G H C W  
B F W P

CHIMPANZEE  
CRESCENDO  
DIDGERIDOO  
FORTNITE  
GOBLIN  
GOOF  
HIJINKS

LOLLYGAG  
ORANGUTAN  
RAVIOLI  
RIGATONI  
TOMFOOLERY  
TROMBONE



“Uh I guess watching anime.”

Ford Martin, 6th grade  
Underwater Basket Weaving



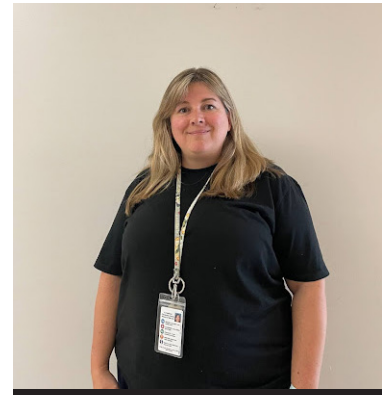
“Lorenzo. He was a medium gray dog.”

Louisa Seminaroti, 7th grade  
Visual Arts



“Gangnam Style.”

Kenneth Joyce, 8th grade Strings



“Taking a bubble bath and reading.”

Ms. Sullivan, Middle School  
Social Studies Teacher



“June 2023.”

S. Baber, School Resource Officer

## How do you feel about AI in education?

by Isabella Pineda,  
Riley Borkowski, and  
Luciano Cusatis



“Patrick Star. Why? I like starfish and I like his name. My first boyfriend’s name was Patrick.”

Coach Butts, Academic  
Supervision Teacher



“Doctor Miss Williams.”

Shamah Norris, 9th grade Piano



“Ketchup and cupcakes cause it tastes ketchupy”

Cesar Ramirez, Vadym Stefanyshyn,  
Cam Leach, 10th grade



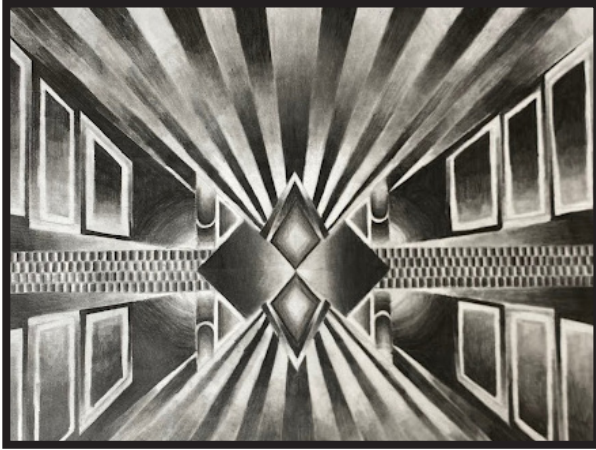
“I usually thrift them.”

Bella Condon, 11th grade Band



“My mother’s homemade chili.”

Christian Curran, 12th grade  
Strings



**“Untitled”**  
by Della Terrell, 7th



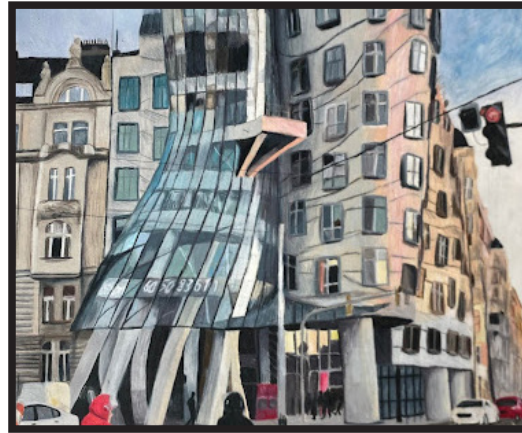
**“Night and Day”**  
by Audra Elm, 10th



**“Untitled”**  
by Peyton Adam-Smies, 10th



**“Smocked Bishop”**  
by Ella Cambell, 10th



**“Untitled”**  
by Carson Godwin, 9th



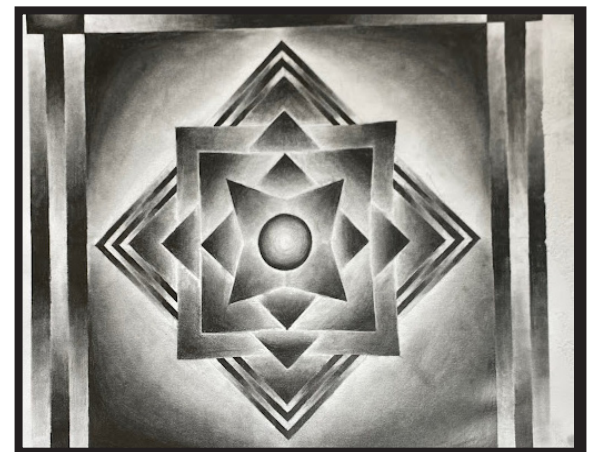
**“Untitled”**  
by Amelia Count, 10th



**“Untitled”**  
by Sam Meyer, 9th



**“Untitled”**  
by Cameron Hazel, 10th



**“Untitled”**  
by Maria Moses, 7th

## SOA Students Celebrate Spirit Week!

Photos by Lucy Cromwell and Luciano Cusatis



## SOA Quizbowl Wraps Up Season

by Lucy Cromwell

SOA's premier academic quiz team, coached by interventionist Mr. Clark had a stellar run in the Winter 2024 season, winning nearly all games. Head captain Senior Vocal major Susan White and Junior Strings major Kate Selby have successfully secured a string of victories over other teams such as Lucy Beckham, Wando, West Ashley, and JICHS.

SOA's team has dedicated members as well, all with exceptional knowledge across a huge spectrum, from calculus to sea monster mythology. Rigorous practice (lunch practices every Thursday) have proven to pay off, even among matches against opposing Academic Magnet, SOA once surpassing Magnet point-wise in the middle of a game, but ultimately only losing by only two points. Through the season, SOA has had nail biting competitions, intense draws, and impossibly hard questions, yet still remain a strong team.

If you are interested in joining the club academic team, please bring your lunch with you and come check us out in the high school Visual Room (4103), or talk to Clark.



## SOA Symphony Travels to the Big Apple

by Riley Borkowski, Luciano Cusatis, and Isabella Pineda

"Where my boarding pass at?" roared Luciano Cusatis two seconds after walking into the Charleston Airport. At that moment we knew the trip would be an interesting three days. Our journey to New York City began with a three a.m. departure and a four a.m. arrival at the airport to check in and of course, buy Dunkin' Donuts before boarding. The boarding process began at five twenty, and we quickly discovered that it would be challenging to find places for all of our instruments. With sixty of us on board the plane and a little over half of the passengers having instrument cases and carry-on items, there was limited space. Many of us were buzzing with excitement and chatter, which was likely too much energy for the other unsuspecting passengers.

After a quick flight, we landed in Newark, New Jersey, awaiting a bus to take us to New York. Unfortunately, we stood outside in the cold for an hour while watching the bus struggle to find us. Once we arrived in New York, the sights (and smells) had us awestruck. However, we didn't have time to lollygag. We rushed to the Element Hotel in Times Square to drop off our belongings before venturing to explore the Met. After getting a pricey bite to eat (thirty-three dollars for sushi and a small can of coffee is insane), we began our trek through the museum's grand halls, filled with art of all eras, cultures, and styles. Some of our favorites included Korean pottery, Japanese paintings, Greek and Roman sculptures, and instruments, which had a wide variety of Stradivari violins that were of great interest to each of our classmates. After we went to the hotel to get some rest, we went to Dallas BBQ



Times Square, where Luciano left his plate sparkling and crumbless, before heading to the Gershwin Theater to watch *Wicked*. Despite being thirty minutes late to the show, we still enjoyed it thoroughly, especially Lydia Plante who jumped up and down in her plane seat at the mention of *Wicked* earlier that day. On the way back to the hotel, we reflected on how just that morning, we were eating delectable donuts at the Charleston International Airport.

After a rude awakening from Riley's five different alarms, the second day was in full swing. With a long itinerary ahead of us, we dashed down fourteen flights of stairs (thanks to the faulty elevators) to get some grub before returning upstairs to watch *Paw Patrol*. Once we finished our daily dose of cartoons, we set off to the 9/11 museum. The hour-long (three-mile) bus ride felt worthy of a reward, so we made a quick stop at the nearest cafe to get pastries and coffee before entering the One World Trade Center for a group photo and a long expedition to the bathroom. We then went into the museum and immediately split into our groups to explore. The museum featured countless images, videos, and recordings of phone calls people had made to their loved ones during the tragedy. We also got the chance to read biographies about the victims of 9/11 through an interactive screen and watch a short documentary with interviews with George W. Bush, the president at the time of the event, and other government officials. Sadly for us, the feeling of the documentary felt slightly cheapened by the fact that there were incredibly rambunctious French people talking non-stop the entire time. The museum left us feeling reflective, contemplative, and spiteful towards French people. Nonetheless, lunch was on the horizon and we shortly found ourselves leaving the museum to make our way to Urban Hawker, an Asian food hall near Rockefeller Center.



**Strings majors take a group photo at The Met Museum**

Provided

With empty and growling stomachs, we were ready to eat. Urban Hawker had several food stalls that contained cuisine from Indian, Chinese, Singaporean, Filipino, Malaysian, and Peranakan cultures, which meant we had a huge range of choices. Many of us had to take laps around the hall to decide what to order. Every dish was delicious. Soon, we were ready and fueled up for our trip to Rockefeller Center for ice skating and Top of the Rock. Most people went ice skating and were buzzing with excitement up until the very second they got on the rink. The ice was clean and slick, making it incredibly difficult for a lot of us to get comfortable as amateur skaters. The minute we thought we were getting the hang of it, tragedy struck, and by that, we mean Luciano struck the ground five minutes into our skating window and had to sit out for the rest of the time spent at Rockefeller Center. We had around an hour and a half to skate, which was plenty of time for us to practice skating hand-in-hand, backwards, and spinning with quick stops here and there to check on Luci. It's safe to say we all have incredibly successful skating careers ahead of us (all of us fell multiple times). We ended our trip to Rockefeller Center by shopping at the nearby stores, which meant we obviously had to find the nearest Lego store. After some slight GPS issues, we quickly made our way in and took pictures in the lifesize Lego taxi before leaving with small yellow bags in-hand.



**SOA Strings majors ice skating at the Rockefeller Center**

Provided

We soon regrouped with the rest of the orchestra and began to make our way back to the hotel to freshen up before dinner and our last Broadway show, the *Lion King*. All of the walking and skating left us starving, so dinner did not disappoint. We'd gone to Ollie's Sichuan, which was a nice sit-down restaurant

with massive portions of food. It felt as if new plates of food just kept coming. With full stomachs, we waddled our way through Times Square to the Minskoff Theater. Lucky for us, the doors hadn't opened yet, which meant that we wouldn't miss the first thirty minutes of the show again. The *Lion King*, which featured wooden puppets, was beautiful and left some of our group in tears.



**Strings majors Cyle Tang and Isa Pineda showing the world why SOA is known as "the fat group"**

Provided

We began our last day in New York bright and early to check out of the hotel and make our way to Alice Tully Hall for the National Orchestra Cup. We were to be the first group to perform, which made many of us nervous. Upon arrival, we unpacked and warmed up individually in the small backstage area. We then began to warm up together, practicing eye contact, cueing, and movement. Our goal was to perform in a very connected, cohesive, and expressive style and our excursions during our trip to New York certainly helped that. It felt as if we were all a lot more bonded towards the end of the trip. Our performance and clinic was over before we knew it. Exhausted and hungry, we made our way to the food truck outside of the performance hall, which resulted in one of the groups labeling us as the "fat group." However, we ignored them and continued to maintain good attitudes towards everyone, wishing the other groups good luck, which we got rewarded for later. We spent the majority of the day watching the other groups before ending with the Awards Ceremony. We won second runner up, which was impressive considering how monstrous the other groups were. We'd spent the entire year preparing for the competition and the work paid off. We'd won third place, were more connected as a group, and made lasting memories together.

Following the competition and awards ceremony, the performing orchestra groups were to come together and mingle on a dinner cruise on the Hudson River. The experience was interesting to say the least. We got a chance to see iconic sights (with some difficulty due to the fact that it was pouring outside), talk to other musicians from around the country, as well as dance away any lingering performance anxiety on the dance floor. Despite having an injured knee, Luciano still found it in himself to get down and show off his moves (and that he knew the lyrics to every single song).

At the end of the night, we were exhausted and ready to make our way back to Newark Airport. We were at the airport early, which gave us plenty of time to decompress and get food. Luciano and Isa went to a coffee shop, where their names got butchered and changed to "Esisa" and "Jn" by the cashier (how one can misspell "John" is beyond us). After a long wait (and lots of card games), we boarded the plane, ready to go home. We arrived back at the Charleston Airport around midnight, tired and content. It was safe to say the trip was a raging success and a great memory for all of us. And yes, that donut was just three days ago.



**SOA Sophomores Cesar Ramirez and Vadym Stefanyshyn representing Academic Magnet on the soccer field.**

## Senior SOA Dance Majors Prepare for Senior Thesis

*As senior dance majors gear up for their senior thesis, the Applause staff seized the chance to sit down and interview them, delving into their thoughts and plans for the upcoming senior thesis performance.*

### Leilah Baird

by Lucy Cromwell

**Lucy Cromwell: What has been the biggest obstacle or challenge leading up to the senior thesis?**

**Leilah Baird:** Definitely finding time to rehearse with everyone, as our task for this thesis is to collaborate with other majors. The majors I chose were vocal and band. Vivian Gordon as my vocalist and Parker Weeks as my guitarist. Finding time to rehearse with everyone is really important because of tempo differences.

**LC: Outside of SOA, how does dance impact your life?**

**LB:** I dance at my home studio and take classes to keep up with the evolution of dance, but also to keep in contact with my dance family. Dance has brought me lifelong friendships.

**LC: What have you been doing to prepare for your thesis, and how has your creative process played into it?**

**LB:** I have been staying on track with time management, especially with so many other things going on in my life. Time management is something I have really had to focus on. Vivian, Parker, and I all chose a song that we enjoyed and that would be fun to play and choreograph too. My creative process has definitely stemmed the most from the song, as well as my dance partner Sierra Coleman.

**LC: What is your favorite part of being a dance major?**

**LB:** My favorite part about being a dance major is being able to compose our own pieces in junior and senior year, although it can be stressful at times, it's something I always end up being proud of after our performances.

**LC: After thesis, what are your plans?**

**LB:** I plan to continue to take classes at my home studio, but after my thesis there aren't any set plans for dance in my life.

### Sierra Coleman

by Ashley Peterson

**Ashley Peterson: How long have you been dancing?**

**Sierra Coleman:** I've been dancing since I was three years old.

**AP: What do you enjoy most about dancing?**

**SC:** I enjoy expressing myself through movement and being around my friends, which creates a great environment.

**AP: How have you been preparing for your senior**



**thesis?**

**SC:** The way I've been preparing for my thesis is coming up with some of my most creative movements.

**AP: What does this portion of the senior thesis include?**

**SC:** My thesis includes a collaboration with my friend Asia who's a visual artist. She made some really cool artwork that I incorporated into my piece.

**AP: What inspired your dance number(s)?**

**SC:** I think her artwork is what inspired me the most because I get to base my piece off the artwork like the music, the movement, etc.

**AP: What is your senior thesis about or what does it portray?**

**SC:** My thesis portrays someone who's struggling with addiction and mental health issues which leads to having heart problems.

**AP: Can you tell us anything else about your senior thesis?**

**SC:** The last thing I would like to say is: I would like to thank Asia for being willing to collaborate with me on my last thesis and her artwork is so cool, she's so talented!

### Sofia-Page Simmons

by Luciano Cusatis

**Luciano Cusaris: What is the theme of your thesis?**

**Sofia-Page Simmons:** The theme of my thesis is how love can go from something so beautiful to something so mentally chaotic.

**LC: How are you preparing for your performance?**

**SP:** I've worked on my thesis pretty much every day even when I go home but we get time in class.

**LC: What are you most excited about for your thesis?**

**SP:** I'm excited to be performing with one of my closest friends at SOA, Emani McNeal. I love that I can leave after performing with my best friend.

**LC: Has it been difficult to balance your thesis with your schoolwork?**

**SP:** Oh, it has been difficult to balance my work and thesis and it has been a stressful experience but I'm proud of what I have done.

### Alyceah Lawrence

by Lucy Cromwell

**Lucy Cromwell: What has been the biggest obstacle or challenge leading up to senior thesis?**

**Alyceah Lawrence:** I would say time has been the biggest challenge. Creating a piece that you feel comfortable letting people see is very difficult especially with limited time and just life in general.

**LC: Outside of SOA, how does dance impact your life?**

**AL:** Dance for me has always been an outlet of creativity and peace. Growing up doing dance has given me a sense of



community and confidence.

**LC: What have you been doing to prepare for thesis, and how has your creative process played into it?**

**AL:** Preparing for thesis is something I still haven't mastered even with it being my 4th show, it's really just something you have to entirely put yourself into and go for. Creatively I have so many ideas that just don't end up working out so it's all about just doing my best and refining my ideas.

**LC: What is your favorite part of being a dance major?**

**AL:** My absolute favorite part of being a dance major is the amazing group of girls (and Max Besta) that I get to work with everyday. This amazing group of talented artist have become some of my closest friends. Watching them grow up, and growing up with them has truly been a blessing.



**LC: After thesis, what are your plans involving dance?**

**AL:** After thesis I plan to join either the dance or cheerleading team at my college and most likely take some outside classes.

## Reagan Villegas

by Marz Watson

**Marz Watson: What is the theme of your senior thesis?**

**Reagan Villegas:** My dance is about how the world sees beauty and how we are so much more than that.

**MW: Even though you have some years of dancing, do you still get nervous sometimes?**

**RV:** Yes, i do still get a little nervous before every performance.

**MW: Do you see yourself pursuing dance as a career?**

**RV:** No not really at this moment, I have considered it but I most likely won't.

**MW: What dance advice would you give to rising dance majors?**

**RV:** Be confident and do your best.



## Sadie Vanderver

by Isabella Pineda

**Isabella Pineda: What is the theme of your senior thesis?**

**Sadie Vanderver:** The theme of my senior thesis is forest. I tried to captivate the shapes and lines in the artwork Ava Dawson created for me. I also picked a song and costume that coherently flows with the painting/theme.

**IP: When did you have a clear vision for how you wanted your senior thesis to be?**

**SV:** This senior thesis was very different and I had to be more creative with my ideas. Ava was so easy to collaborate with and

she helped me form a vision which became the artwork. I started by picking a song and then forming a theme off of that. I then collaborated with Ava by sending her my inspiration pictures and the vision I had for the dance.

**IP: What was your process for preparing for senior thesis?**

**SV:** I did a lot of research on songs and it was hard finding one that I could base a theme and dance off of. We have to use instrumental music, which is challenging to choreograph to. It's important to find one that fits your style. I chose Wash by Bon Iver and the song was perfect for my theme and easy to choreograph to. My partner in the dance is Fallyn Dunmeyer and she has helped me so much with creating fitting choreography and working through issues that arise.

**IP: How have you grown as a dancer through your years at SOA?**

**SV:** I've been at SOA since sixth grade and I've grown so much through the people and experiences. Starting off, I never thought I'd be able to choreograph for myself, let alone create duets and trio dances. The senior dance majors are so loving and supporting that junior comp and senior thesis have been a breeze. Choreographing a dance is still so challenging but our dance teachers have prepared us over the years for this and I couldn't ask for a better group to be sharing this show with. Even though it's still scary to perform what you've been working so hard on, the feeling of accomplishment and the support you receive from friends and family is so worth it.

**IP: Looking back on your time spent at SOA, what are some of your fondest memories?**

**SV:** Some of my fondest memories at SOA are the Departmental performances, Disney trips, Powderpuff, Junior Ring Ceremony, and really any time spent with the senior dance majors. We've grown to be such a family and I love them all so much. Departmental is our big performance where we perform two dances that we've been working on. This departmental is the most special one because it's our last one where we perform our graduation dance. It's going to be such a heartwarming, sad day but I will forever cherish every departmental spent with my lovely dance friends. I will also always cherish the two Disney trips the dance majors went on. We did some really fun dance classes and just the memories and laughs will always stick with me. I loved my time at SOA and I'm so excited to be graduating with such a lovely class.



# SOA Powderpuff

Photos by Luciano Cusatis





# SOA Fashion Show

Photos by Cate Traywick





line ng

Jasmine Zheng  
Film Near  
One-way

Charl Diet

## Contemporary Book Review: *The Passenger* (2022)

by Braeden LaRoche

An excellent crowning achievement to Cormac McCarthy's career, *The Passenger* (alongside its companion novel, *Stella Maris*) is complex and vivid, floating effortlessly from philosophy to paranoia to compelling narratives to natural splendor along the swells of McCarthy's tactful prose while exploring ideas that plunge—often quite literally—to the very fabric of reality through the story of Bobby Western as the United States government pursues him for what he sees during a salvage dive, his genius sister Alicia as strange, vaudevillian hallucinations haunt her, and the innovative tragedy of their relationship in the nuclear shadow of post-WWII America.

*The Passenger* begins with Alicia's death by suicide. However, her life is elucidated through the rest of the novel via her interactions with a hallucinated figure, the Thalidomide Kid, in chapters occurring one week before her death and ten years before the narrative involving Bobby. The fact of his sister's death, as well as having to contend with the more-than-familial love he felt for her, plagues Bobby as he evades the immense yet vague governmental force pursuing him after he salvages a crashed airplane with a mysteriously missing passenger.

McCarthy preserves in his prose much of the sense of sweeping grandeur he developed in the almost poetic, elegiac passages exemplified by earlier works such as *Outer Dark*, *Blood Meridian*, and *The Road*; he uses it, though, with a sparring exactitude indicative of his culmination into a truly exceptional writer. The novel also features fascinating and lifelike characters reminiscent of McCarthy's accomplishments in *Child of God*, the *Border Trilogy*, and *No Country for Old Men*.

Despite his previous works' holdovers, McCarthy intended to venture into new territory with *The Passenger*. Influenced by his time spent among renowned scientists at the Santa Fe Institute, McCarthy blends modern physics and philosophy through Bobby's conversations with his friends.

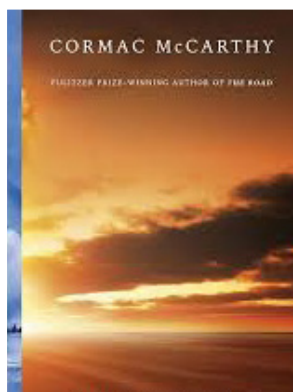
McCarthy is perhaps more interested, though, in a particular development of twentieth-century physics: that of the atomic bomb and its implications for Cold War-era America. The entire novel feels profuse with the doom of mutually assured destruction, manifesting in each element of the story and shaping the Western siblings' lives into a tragedy that feels almost constant from the first page yet never loses its edge.

McCarthy, as usual, finds a strange breed of hope in this dark nonetheless—a hope not untainted nor in existence despite the bleakness and doom, but one, rather, that is borne along with that which seems so contrary to it, *The Passenger* acting as McCarthy's vessel for this ultimate conclusion on the human condition.

## Classic Book Review: *The Bell Jar* (1963)

by Elle Baker

Sylvia Plath is one of the most influential and celebrated writers of the 20th century, sacred especially to young women. Born in 1932 in Boston, Plath was raised by a single mother after her father died when she was eight years old, inspiring much of her work which follows her feelings of betrayal and abandonment after his death. Exploring mental health, women's issues, and confessional revelations, taboo topics for her time, Plath spoke for an unrepresented population of both women and those who struggle with mental illness. Before ending her life in 1963 at thirty years old, Plath explored femininity and gender roles in marriage, households, and society. Much of her



struggles with mental illness, womanhood, motherhood, and her marriage to fellow poet Ted Huges are reflected in her poetry. Plath's only novel, *The Bell Jar*, was published less than a month before her death. Originally published in only Europe in 1963 under the false name Victoria Lucas, the novel is semi-autobiographical and wasn't published with Plath's real name or in the States until 1971. The novel criticizes the social standards of Plath's time, as the main character, Ester Greenwood, falls into mania as she realizes the limited positions she's allowed as she emerges as a woman in society. Plath writes her struggles with Esther, and their similarities are obvious: Plath spent a month in New York editing the *Mademoiselle* magazine after her junior year of college, exactly where she places Esther as the novel opens, they both felt isolated by their desire to express their artistry, they both suffered a mental breakdown, hospitalization, and eventual recovery. The novel opens with Esther in New York City on a summer internship for the fictional *Ladies' Day Magazine*.

The reader is greeted by a confident—some might say arrogant—young lady who finds herself bored and annoyed with the parties, clothes, food, and frilly activities set up for the girls and is barely able to tolerate her fellow interns. She treats the program and the people present as something she simply needs to pass through to pursue her artistic goals at a higher level. Esther is written to be unapologetic and calculated, creating a coldness about her attitude and tone that makes it hard for some readers to find sympathy for her later on. The tone is alarming and confrontational throughout the entire book, although it shifts along with the sentence structure to follow Esther's descent, forcing the reader to fully recognize Esther's stark circumstances that reflect that of so many women. When Esther returns home to the suburbs, her life begins to crumble, seemingly brought on by her imminent senior year of college and the question of what life holds for her as a woman afterward. Plath struggled with balancing motherhood and her desire for a career and identity as a writer, which she writes into Esther, who suffers under the constant pressure of what she feels to be her impending marriage and motherhood.

Even more so, she struggles with the double standards of the time around women's sexuality. Plath parallels the iniquity of the double standards through a character named Buddy Willard, a friend of Esther's family through church whom she is practically betrothed. Buddy is able to exercise his social and sexual freedom behind Esther's back while Esther's is limited as she is urged to stay "clean" and "pure" for her future husband, serving as a powerful reminder of the double standards of our society. This realization, as well as her return home from New York and her rejection from a summer writing class she had hoped to take, tip Esther into a spiral where she refuses to read, eat, sleep, drink, or bathe. After several attempts to end her life, Esther is hospitalized. After switching hospitals, Esther builds a slow friendship and trust with her psychiatrist, Dr. Nolan, and another patient, Joan, begins her slow redemption arc. Almost the entire second half of the novel follows Esther's slow return to sanity, providing clarity on her situation and teaching her that she doesn't have to surrender to the gender roles she was so afraid of. *The Bell Jar* is a raw, honest, intense viewing of what our society is capable of. Plath's own experiences and Esther's internal fears and struggles in the book confessed what so many women and people with mental illness have struggled with, serving as an outlet and a representation of these long-ignored groups. Because of its intense topics and revelations, *The Bell Jar* can be a brutal, cathartic, or analytical read. Plath's refusal to shy away from or romanticize mental illness and the rigidity of women's experiences, though, makes it an unavoidably revelatory experience for any reader.





## Contemporary Album Review: *Melt My Eyez See Your Future* by Denzel Curry

by Jovanny Silva Velasquez

In the eclectic and unorthodox world of punk rap, artist Denzel Curry has remained on top of the game ever since his debut back in 2013. His ability to combine at-your-face rhymes with hardcore production was a key aspect of his sound, so when he released *Melt My Eyez See Your Future* in March of 2022, many of his fans were shocked by the drastic evolution of his music. In comparison to his previously released LP *Zuu*, this project took a much more jazzy approach and dealt considerably more with the internal struggles of Denzel. His introspective lyrics take center stage, placing a high emphasis on self-realization, understanding your own flaws/shortcomings, and moving past them. The album features outstanding guest stars such as T-Pain, JPEGMAFIA, and Thundercat.

The opening of the album immediately lets you know that the old Denzel Curry is no more. A very smooth keys part by Robert Glasper is played over a very reflective Denzel. Lines such as “I wholeheartedly understand why I need to grow even though I’m grown” reveal a sense of maturity that Denzel has placed onto himself. The next song juxtaposes his own self-reflection with troubles externally, primarily the disparity between the ruling class, their pawns (i.e. law enforcement), and those beneath them.

The production features a great and unusual drum pattern by swinging the eighths against rushed snares (classic Dilla line) as well as a beat switch midway through the song that gives the song a completely new feel from Boom-Bap to Trap. The next song comes in even harder with Curry’s reflective lyrics while, of course, still maintaining a very smooth production style. It also highlights the absolutely randomness of sample choices on the producer-end. This song features a sample from a random Indian record, and many of the other tracks in the album feature similar samples that seemingly come from nowhere.

Unfortunately, while the start of the album is phenomenal in both production and rapping, it begins to dip in quality with tracks such as “John Wayne”, which has a few great lines but overall not great (absolutely stellar production by JPEGMAFIA however). The album seems to lose its original sight of introspection along the way, which isn’t to say that the quality itself is diminished, but that the purpose of the project feels muddled when thrown in with all these different ideas. There are some gems here and then, however, such as “Troubles” which features some of Denzel alongside T-Pain singing a great hook, although the rest of the song isn’t too much to write home about. Overall, the LP struggles from a lack of consistency in quality. While I might be exaggerating ever so slightly, the range in quality isn’t as bad as they seem. The worst songs on the album are still easily six out of ten, with the best (such as “The Ills” and “Walkin’”) close to ten out of ten on a Curry level. I would heavily recommend the album to anybody who was already previously interested in Denzel Curry, as well as to anybody who’s a fan of jazzy production. I would also recommend the extended edition to anybody interested in bands such as The Roots, Cypress Hills, and any other hip hop group that features live instrumentation alongside a rapper. In the expanded edition, various songs from the album are reimagined by Denzel Curry’s newly-formed band, The Cold Blooded Soul Band, into lush, more soulful grooves while Curry still retains the raunchiness of his voice throughout. It’s a great example of live instrumentation in hip hop, and features some creative recreations/interpolations of moments from the original tracks.



## Contemporary Movie Review: *Five Nights at Freddy's*

by Marz Watson

On August 8, 2014, the first *Five Nights at Freddy's Game* was released. On October 27, 2023, the *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie was released. The catalog of games and books surrounding the Five Nights at Freddy's universe is seemingly never-ending—a vast expanse of Easter eggs and lore—yet all of these things were thrown down the drain for this movie.

I do understand that the director (Emma Tammi) wanted to make it for everyone to enjoy, but she could have kept the lore, and people who don't know anything about the games or books would still be able to understand. *Five Nights at Freddy's* is an indie horror game series that gained instant popularity. Five kids go missing, last seen at Freddy Fazbear's pizzeria, and their bodies are trapped in an animatronic suit. You're the nightguard trying to survive.

Watching this movie was exciting, but I lost interest after Vanessa (Elizabeth Lail) showed up. In the movie, Vanessa is a police officer who checks on Mike Schmidt (Josh Hutcherson) during his night shift, but why is she in this movie if it's based on the first game? Vanessa is the security guard in the latest series, *FNAF: Security Breach*. She is the antagonist in the game, as she looks for Gregory and sends the rest of the animatronics to find him. We barely know much about her, and yet they put her in the movie; it makes no sense at all.

The main animatronics are Freddy, Chica, Bonnie, and Foxy. They weren't scary in the movie, and not much in the first game either. The most vicious animatronic was Chica's cupcake; he had a field day with the thieves. A group of thieves decided to break into the pizzeria and smash and steal everything in there, and the cupcake woke up with violence and ate his face off. That cupcake showed no mercy at all. What gets me is that Chica was just watching him. It reminds me how some dog owners tell people that their dog is nice, but it looks like they're going to jump out and eat a toddler any minute; also a coincidence because William Afton killed Susie (the soul/child in Chica's body) and her dog, which resembles the cupcake. Maxine, one of the vandals, looked inside Freddy's suit and then a hand grabbed and pulled her inside of the suit and bit her body in half. They only showed the shadow of what happened for censoring reasons.

The “biggest shock” of the movie that was very wrong is that Vanessa is the daughter of William Afton, aka “Spring Trap.” When Mike and Vanessa are trying to defeat the animatronics, she reveals that she is the daughter of William Afton. William had one daughter, Elizabeth Afton, She died because she got close to the animatronic “circus baby” in the game series sister location. You can see her death when you collect balloons and the circus baby hands out ice cream and snatches her inside. William Afton never meant for that to happen, but I don't know what he expected to happen. You make animatronics to kill kids but are surprised when they kill your kids... It doesn't add up. Even though I don't like most parts of the movie. My favorite scene is when the taxi driver shows up. The taxi driver, played by everyone's favorite and unproblematic YouTuber CoryxKenshin, was the reason why he was gone for a while. When the credits started, they used the only correct song, “Five Nights at Freddy's” by The Living Tombstone, I'm glad it was the original and not remixed like *Barbie*. ( I never watched *Barbie*).



## Earth Day Trivia

by Lucy Cromwell

1. When is Earth Day this year?
2. How many rings does the Earth have?
3. What is the most abundant element in the Earth's atmosphere?
4. What is the largest island on Earth?
5. Where is most of the Earth's freshwater found?
6. How old is the Earth?
7. What layer of the atmosphere do most clouds form in?
8. Where was the hottest temperature recorded on Earth?
9. What type of rock makes up the majority of oceanic crust?
10. Which state does the senator and accredited founder of Earth Day hail from?

### Answers

1. April 22nd
2. Zero
3. Nitrogen
4. Greenland
5. Glaciers
6. 5 billion years
7. The troposphere
8. Death Valley, California
9. Basalt
10. Wisconsin

Della Terrell, 7th grade Visual Arts



Lucy Cromwell

**2/10**

1. April 22nd
2. Zero
3. Oxygen
4. Pangea
5. The ocean
6. 13 million
7. The stratosphere
8. Arizona
9. Mermaid rock
10. Colorado

Jack Hinske, 12th grade Vocal



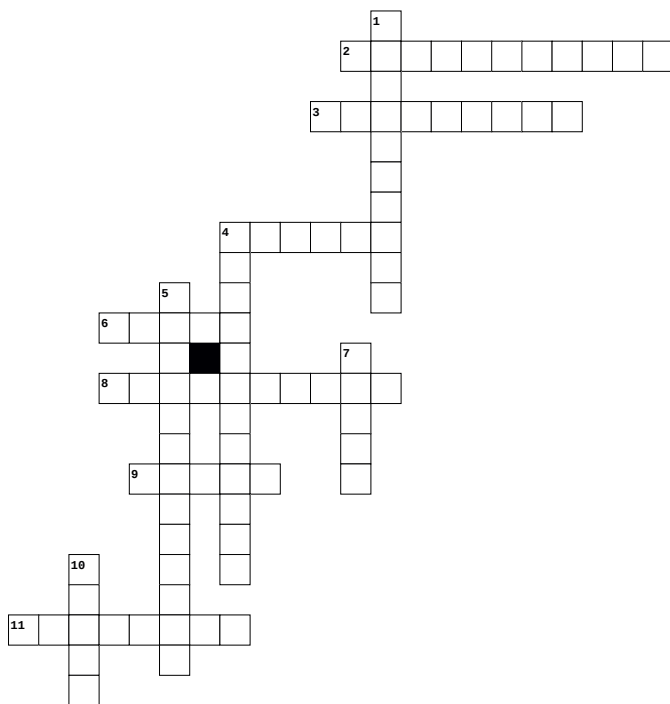
Lucy Cromwell

**5/10**

1. April 22nd
2. Zero
3. Nitrogen
4. Australia
5. Lakes
6. 8 billion years old
7. The troposphere
8. The equator
9. Sedimentary
10. Wisconsin

## Dance Crossword

by Luciano Cusatis

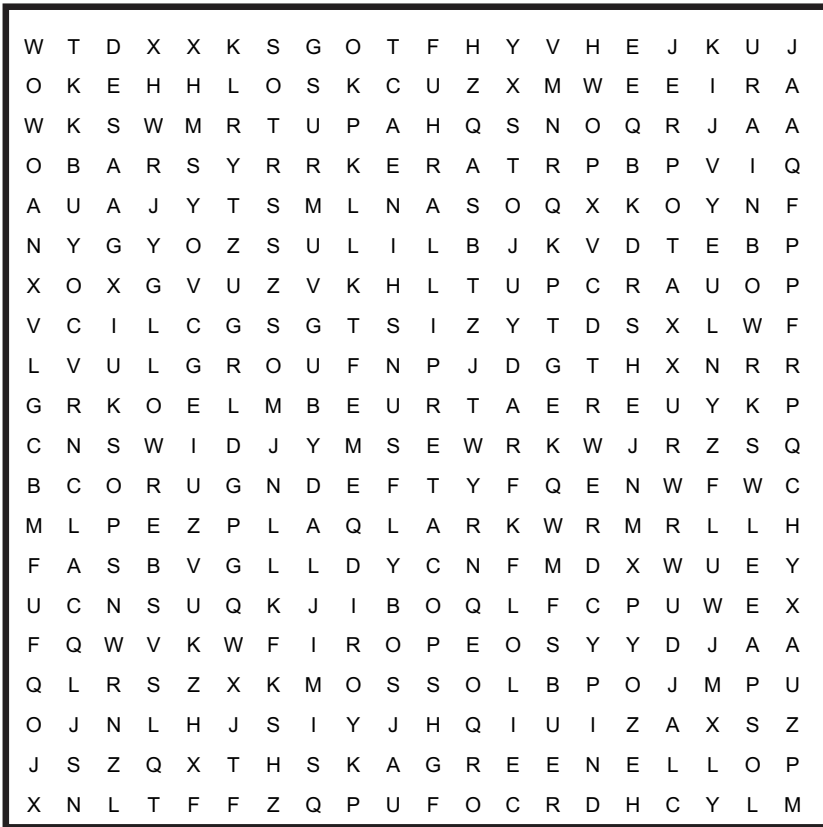


### Across

2. One of the most popular line dances
3. Spinning on one foot
4. Type of dance originating in the Italian Renaissance
6. Exercise featuring Latin-inspired dancing
8. French term describing arm movements
9. Genre popularized in the 1970s US
11. Dancing commonly occurring with a partner

### Down

1. Dance sharing a name with local city
4. Comprised of Rocks, Powermoves, and Freezes
5. Dance moves made up on the spot
7. Shares a name with vegetable dip
10. Dance written in triple time



# April Word Search

by Luciano Cusatis

- APRIL
- GREEN
- BLOSSOM
- LADYBUG
- BUTTERFLY
- POLLEN
- CATERPILLAR
- RAINBOW
- DANDELION
- SUNSHINE
- EASTER
- FLOWERS

# SOA Sudoku

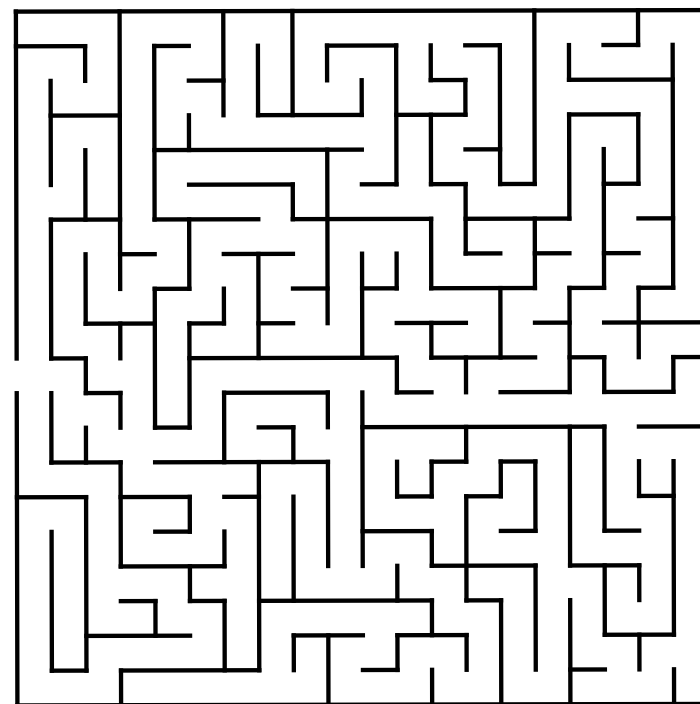
by Luciano Cusatis

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



# Help Ms. Oakley find her saxophone!

by Luciano Cusatis





“I guess Ariel, no, Ed Sheeran. He’s one of my favorite music artists.”

Dylan Till, 6th grade Theater



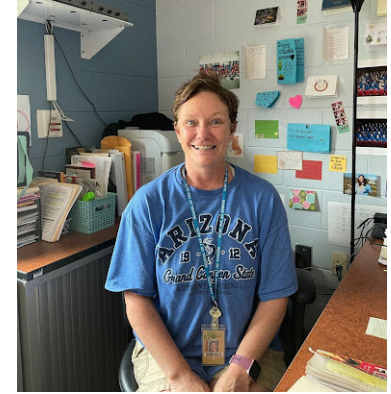
“Ed Sheeran. He has so many bangers.”

Hallie Mcglynn, 7th grade Visual Arts



“Me.”

Aurelia O'brien, 8th grade Creative Writing



“Ms. Hills”

Ms. Paeschke, Middle School English Teacher



“Prince Harry. He’s handsome.”

Ms. Campbell, High School Science Teacher

# Who is your Favorite Ginger?

by Isabella Pineda, Riley Borkowski, and Luciano Cusatis



“Ms. Paeschke.”

Ms. Hills, Special Education Teacher



“The girl who gives me food on the bus.”

Reeves Earl, 9th grade Theater



“Hailey Bailey. She’s my favorite TikToker”

Bella Adore-Williams, 10th grade Theater



“Cahal. He’s the only ginger I know.”

Kai Sulyma, 11th grade Visual Arts



“Maggie Largent. She’s the GOAT.”

Linda Garzier, 12th grade Creative Writing