

Applause

Volume 28, Number 2 School of the Arts, North Charleston, SC October 2026



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From the Editor

Dear Readers,

This month has been a flurry of news as the midterm elections approach, and South Carolina prepares to elect a senator. For the first time in 23 years, Lindsay Graham will not be on the ballot. Instead, Dr. Annie Andrews (D) will be running against Darline Graham (R), the late Graham's sister.

South Carolina has not elected a Democratic senator since the last term of Fritz Hollins, who declined to run for reelection in 2005. We are notoriously a red state, and yes, it is likely that the 2026 election will not yield a different result.

But recently, online buzz has been circulating about those voting for Dr. Andrews "wasting votes" due to South Carolina's reputation as a red state. This mentality is how systems that keep senators like Lindsay Graham in office for 23 years stay in place.

To students who are eligible to vote in November, I only encourage you to do your own research. Refrain from voting based on who may or may not win, and instead research the policies of each candidate. Journalism is political, and everyone has a bias. Research past one perspective and allow yourself to come to your own conclusions.

With that in mind, we hope that you enjoy the October issue of *Applause*.



Your Editor,
Lila Hayes

Readers React To Our September Issue

"Wow. That's the first *Applause* I've seen- incredibly impressive!" -**Mr. Andrew Collins, SOA English Teacher**

"I thoroughly enjoyed Fia's column. It was, in my opinion, an honest look at how the original meaning/ interpretation of a word [*woke*] could be hi-jacked, contorted and purposefully misbranded for nefarious purposes. Job well done with that! -**Mr. Robert Grant, SOA Assistant Principal**

"We really enjoyed *Applause*! Kudos to you and your team!"- **The Markham Family**

"Love it!" – **Ms. Gail Moore, SOA Bookkeeper**

SOA Calendar

by Keller Fauerbach

Thursday-Friday, 10/22-23:
Oklahoma! Act 1, RMMT, 10 AM

Thursday-Sunday, 10/22-25:
Oklahoma!, RMMT, 6-9 PM/2-4

PM (Sun)

Thursday, 10/29: Visual Arts

Glow Show, Art Hallway, 6:30 PM

Wednesday, 11/10: Spend a

Day with the SOA Band, HS Band

Room, 12 PM

Wednesday-Friday, 11/11-13:

Theatre Senior Thesis, RMMT,

6-8 M

Wednesday-Thursday, 11/18-19: 7G Short Form Improv Show,

BBT, 4/6 PM

Thursday, 11/19: Dance Winter

Showcase, RMMT, 6:30 PM

Applause

since 1999, the official student publication of
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Founded in 1995 by Rose Maree Myers

Dr. Shannon Cook, Principal

Editor-In-Chief:
Lila Hayes

Staff Writers:

Ella Bonazzi	MJ Johnson
Kai Boone	Juliet Ladd
Caleb Brown	Sally Lewis
Fia Coleman	Ty McGinnis
Keller Fauerbach	Marley Mendes
Lena Fernandes	Fletcher Seminaroti
Micah Howell	Tallon Tirozzi
Haven Hughes	Leo Voelker

John Cusatis, PhD, Advisor

Charleston County School of the Arts
5109-B West Enterprise St.
North Charleston, SC 29405

soa-applause.com

Cover by Sally Lewis

In This Issue

Getting to Know Ms. Horn

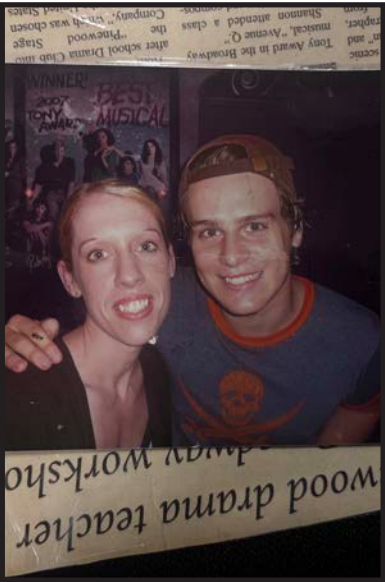
by Haven Hughes

Where Are They Now: Talking to Philip Lipton

by Juliet Ladd

Meet the Cast of *Oklahoma!*

by Applause staff



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Editorial: Artificial Intelligence In The Art World

The world is constantly changing, and with it, the art world. Art is intertwined with nearly everything we do. It reflects our experiences, records history, challenges ideas, and gives people a way to express what words cannot. One of the biggest changes facing the arts today is the rapid growth of artificial intelligence.

AI has brought new possibilities to countless fields, and there are definitely ways in which it can be useful. But as AI-generated art, music, writing, and entertainment become increasingly common, an important question has to be asked, What happens to art when we take the human out of it?

For thousands of years, the arts have been a means of free expression. Art captures happiness, grief, anger, love, and confusion. It gives people a way to show who they are, and how they see the world.

In July, an AI art piece won at the Ohio State Fair, sparking extreme controversy over whether or not AI has a place in art. The controversy was not simply over this one piece. It raised a much larger question about what we all value when calling something “art.” At School of the Arts, originality and creativity are at the heart of everything we do. AI can create an image, a story, a song, in seconds. But it does so through zeros and ones; AI processes patterns from human-created material; it cannot create something out of nothing. It can imitate style and combine ideas, but it doesn’t have a childhood, a memory, a personal experience behind the work that it produces. Human artists do.

When an SOA student creates art, there is a reason behind every decision. A certain color may represent a memory, a lyric might come from an experience that was a pivotal moment for them. They present a character reflecting their own emotions, a dancer communicates something through movement that they cannot put into words. Even the imperfections become part of what makes a piece meaningful. AI is unable to create that personal history. For this reason, AI may not create bad art, but it will lack the originality that comes with the creation of something from the human mind. The danger of relying on AI too heavily is not that every AI-generated piece will be bad. The greater concern is that society could begin accepting art that is convenient over art that is personal.

If we constantly ask technology to predict what looks appealing or sounds familiar, we risk creating a world where art becomes predictable. Art is supposed to make us reflect, feel emotions. It should surprise us. AI art will not accomplish that. It will be mediocre. AI takes an average; it takes an average plot and storyline, average colors, an average design.

Here at SOA, we embrace the most unique side of things. We don’t sit in the average. AI works in a box; at SOA, we refuse the box. There is no limit to what we as artists can do, and that is the importance of rejecting AI art. SOA values human creativity and the ideas of its students. Students from SOA build real connections from their art, and it reminds us of something important: creativity doesn’t have to be perfect to be valuable, it doesn’t have to follow a formula, it just has to be yours.

As AI continues to develop, we should not stop creating, we should create more. Because the future of art should not be about making everything look perfect and the same. It should be about making sure everyone has the freedom to create something different, and that is something SOA has been teaching its students all along.

Opinion: We Need To Take Our Activism Seriously

by MJ Johnson

As Gen Z, we are digital natives to the internet. Our social network is interconnected with social media; it is largely how we navigate the world and a window into how other people live, think, or feel. It’s clear that the rise of social media platforms, like Instagram and TikTok, have altered the landscape of how people engage with current events. In particular, the way we consume, interpret, and respond to political and social issues has become increasingly shaped by the digital spaces we inhabit.

Traditionally, activist movements have been orchestrated through physical protests or legislative action, through organizing and filling physical spaces to create a sense of civic belonging. Now, it seems our primary tool of activism lies within our phones.

When bad things happen in the world it’s a natural human response to want to spread the word or take a stance in polarizing situations and encourage others to care. For Gen Z, this response often begins online.

In light of the Cornell 7 case resurfacing, I observed the response of my peers online. While scrolling through an endless stream of Instagram Stories, I noticed that many people were reposting similar, simplified takes on the issue. To be clear, there is value in speaking out against injustice and using social media to amplify important conversations. However, I felt as if the reaction was driven more so by bandwagon effect and sensationalism rather than genuine conviction. These gestures, such as infographics or catchy slogans, can create the feeling of having participated in a larger conversation without necessarily requiring us to understand the issue at hand or implement actual change. This is often coined as “slacktivism.”

I noticed another social media trend taking place, an Instagram story template that said “repost if you’re against rape.” Suddenly, I was seeing this text displayed with random pictures in people’s camera rolls as the background. It astonished me to see that this very real issue was now being taken to promote algorithmic tactics of engagement by taking relevant social issues and turning them into a posting trend for virtue signalling. What happens when you view these stories? Do you give them a like and scroll past them towards the next algorithm curated video and forget about the issue? If nobody else was posting these stories, would you? What are you doing to help the cause? Will the revolution be televised or plastered on your FYP?

Awareness doesn’t always equal action, only so many quick 10 second reads posted to stories will help a cause. It seems like these things often fade away online when the next step should be going out and researching ways to help your community. The most impactful thing to do is take action. Devoting your money or time to a non-profit is far better than just an empty statement that’s been said before. If you see something happening in your personal environment, say something. Apply this outrage in your own life, all too often things go unspoken in our own student body for fear of selling out a friend or nobody listening. Our solidarity doesn’t have to stop at the repost button.

I guess what I’m trying to say is that in situations with a collective stance, the center is not always holding. Maybe even through online activism, the center is not what we thought it to be at all. As the philosopher Jacques Derrida said in his landmark lecture, “the center is not the center.” Derrida describes a core paradox in how human systems and ideas are organized.

Applied to online activism, this paradox reveals that a collective cause does not simply unite participants around a fixed set of morals and outrage. The “center” of a cause, rather, can become unstable, continually negotiated through



MJ Johnson

the interactions that both sustain and challenge it (hashtags, shared images, reposts, etc). Online activism thus reveals a paradox at the heart of collective action: the same mechanisms that enable us to gather around a common cause may also fragment that cause, exposing the instability of the very consensus we seek to establish and the injustice we strive to abolish.

In short, don't just rely on the crowd. Keep campaigning for change, go out and talk to people in your community and take action in the real world. It's great to speak out but it feels even better to practice what you preach; it makes your words legitimate. Don't be afraid to push it further, the results of volunteering and taking action is so incredibly rewarding for all sides. In the words of the feminist punk icon Kathleen Hanna, "get off the internet, I'll meet you in the street!"

Sass Attack: 2026 VMAs

by Caleb Brown

For nearly four decades, the MTV Video Music Awards have been pop culture's biggest night. Iconic performances like Britney Spears' "I'm a Slave 4 U," public feuds reaching their peaks, as with Christina Aguilera and Eminem in 2002, and insane looks like Lady Gaga's meat dress. If you weren't watching the VMAs, you were missing out, but this year's was a complete dumpster fire.

The 2026 VMAs started off with foolishness. In person, the VMAs started at 7:30 as planned, but since a football game ran long, the VMA broadcast started twenty minutes late. Seriously, who puts the VMAs after a football game? As a result, the eight million people watching at home missed Madonna, Sabrina Carpenter, and Charli XCX's opening performance. Instead, we were greeted with Snoop Dogg's unfortunate introduction including inappropriate comments about Madonna and childish jokes. The audience audibly cringed. Yikes. What a great way to kick off this trainwreck.

When I saw the performers for the 2026 VMAs on Instagram, I was so surprised to see that besides Madonna and Lisa, there were no actual performers this year. I quickly realized that we were gonna have to sit through a bunch of nepo babies singing their niche indie-slop TikTok sounds while standing at the microphone all night. No iconic dance breaks or outfit changes. Mind you, most of these performers were virtually nobodies, while the actual artists making waves, such as Slayyyter, Troye Sivan, and even Ella Langley, were stuck in the little music stabs in between segments. Instead of performances, we got naptimes between the award presentations.

When it comes to the winners, Madonna swept with a controversial seven wins. Many people said that Madonna was some old, washed-out hag hogging all the wins from the new blossoming artists, but I say that she's literally Madonna, a living legend. If Michael Jackson were still here, we'd expect him to be winning awards left and right. We should honor Madonna's legacy while she's still here. On the other hand, she robbed PinkPantheress and Zara Larsson of like four awards; so that old hag should get out of the booth and back into the nursing home.

This year's VMAs were a snoozefest filled to the brim with flop nobodies giving other flop nobodies undeserved awards. We have watched the VMAs go from one of America's most anticipated award shows to a piping hot mess. Praying next year's is actually watchable.



Caleb Brown

Applause Staff

Oh, What a Beautiful Legacy: *Oklahoma!* Returns to SOA

by Marley Mendes

Cowboys, sweeping symphonic strings, and a healthy dose of Americana are taking over SOA. This month, the SOA Vocal program and High School Symphony Orchestra join forces for another colossal collaboration, bringing *Oklahoma!* back to SOA.

Past collaborations between Vocal and Symphony have brought unforgettable renditions of *Les Miserables*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *the Sound of Music*. *Oklahoma!* is notable for being the first musical performed by SOA students, hitting the Gaillard Auditorium stage in 1998, as a full-school production, the first of nine. SOA's 1998 performance of *Oklahoma!* starred Josh Strickland, who went on to play the lead in Disney's Broadway production of *Tarzan* in 2006-07. This year's production features **Ava Davis**, who has already toured nationally with *the Sound of Music!*

Oklahoma! is based on Lynn Riggs's 1931 play *Green Grow the Lilacs*, which follows the lives of farmers and ranchers living on Indian territory. In 1942, when Riggs was drafted into the U.S. Army, he gave the play's script to Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. *Oklahoma!* (originally titled, *Away We Go!*) debuted in March 1943, where audiences witnessed the birth of the modern American musical. As Rodgers and Hammerstein's first monumental collaboration, *Oklahoma!* broke the theatrical formulas of the 1940s. Prior to its premiere, Broadway was largely dominated by loose musical revues and comedic cabarets, the plot hidden beneath garish dance numbers. Instead, Rodgers and Hammerstein introduced the idea of an "integrated musical" with the combination of book, lyrics, music, and Agnus de Mille's choreography. This revolutionary shift in style began what historians now recognize as theater's "Golden Age," and jumpstarted the career of the largely successful duo. Rodgers and Hammerstein are celebrated as two of the pioneers of musical theater, following *Oklahoma!* with other masterpieces such as *Carousel*, *The King and I*, and *The Sound of Music*.

Oklahoma! succeeded for a unique reason: the show offered solace to an American population that was facing the harsh realities of World War II. Not only did the show's homefront values offer optimism, but also had a profound level of emotional depth that appealed to a nation otherwise filled with uncertainty. The



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production had massive Broadway success, running for nearly five years with 2,212 performances. National touring companies brought this classic overseas for ten years, across 250 cities, even performing the musical on the battlefronts for troops abroad.

Rodgers and Hammerstein struck gold with *Oklahoma!*, setting records with its economic success. There was an initial struggle to find investors for the show due to its unconventional structure, but the production company took to unknown talent to economize. The show featured a cast that included Alfred Drake as Curly, Howard Da Silva as Jud Fry, Joan Roberts as Laurey, Celeste Holm as Ado Annie, Betty Garde as Aunt Eller, Joseph Buloff as Ali Hakim, Lee Dixon as Will Parker, and Ralph Riggs as Andrew Carnes. After its Broadway run, the show made a \$5 million profit on an \$83,000 investment. All around, this impressive show with long running success changed musical culture indefinitely.

Oklahoma! is an ambitious production for high-school students; however, SOA Vocal and HSO are known for conquering their extravagant productions with unforgettable scores, and when selecting shows every other school year, the teachers place careful consideration into what should inhabit the RMMT stage. Dr. Selby noted that selecting shows that offer exceptional musical material for both the orchestra and vocalists is a priority, *Oklahoma!* is widely recognized for its impressive and high-energy symphonic score, which the SOA students have tackled with grace, among their many other projects.

Senior Strings major **Ali Wager**, to offer one example, gave us a peak at what this autumn season looks like for the HSO. On top of leading the viola section through the more than two dozen pieces that make up *Oklahoma!*, she is preparing a concerto for senior thesis, practicing for the National High School Orchestra Cup, learning the music for three private gigs, and more. Dr. Selby told Applause that the dedication from his students inspires him to bring his very best attitude to work each day.

On the other end of this collaboration, the SOA Singers are working equally hard under the direction of Mr. Rogers and Ms. Hammond. Mr. Rogers, who worked on SOA's 1998 show, can attest to how far the program has come. In 1998, *Oklahoma!* rehearsals took place in a small black box theater (a converted garage on the original campus), with a young cast. Because SOA only served grades six through nine then, performers were significantly younger than today's cast. Students rehearsed choreography in

the parking lot until community connections helped to secure the Gaillard. Nearly 100 students eventually took the stage from across all majors, turning limited resources into a real success. "We took nothing, I mean, literally nothing, and turned it into something unbelievable," Mr. Rogers recalled.

SOA has grown substantially from those humble beginnings and expanded on nearly every front, with state-of-the-art performance spaces and an orchestra that has grown from forty musicians to nearly ninety. *Oklahoma!* offers students the opportunity to experience a foundational piece of American musical theater, while also becoming a part of the school's history. The revival reflects how far SOA has come and the unwavering community spirit and passion for the arts, inspired thirty-one years ago by stage actress turned educator, Rose Maree Myers.

Part Two: Meet the Newest Faculty at SOA!

Photos by Applause Staff

Each year, SOA excitedly welcomes new teachers and staff to the campus. For the second part of our interviews with new faculty, Applause staff writer Caleb Brown sat down to find out more about Ms. Black's life and education.

Ms. Audrey Black, Theatre by Caleb Brown

Caleb Brown: What classes will you be teaching this year?

Audrey Black: I teach 4th period Theatre this year, with 10th Grade in the fall and Contemporary Theatre in the spring.

CB: Where did you grow up, and what attracted you to Charleston? Why SOA?

AB: I grew up in Alpharetta, GA, but fell in love with Charleston coming here during summers. My parents moved here after I graduated high school and I ended up staying after COVID sent us home from school.





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I did my student teaching at SOA last year and couldn't imagine teaching anywhere else. I am thrilled to get the opportunity to teach at such a prestigious school for the beginning of my career.

CB: Where did you attend college, and what degrees did you earn?

AB: I attended the College of Charleston and hold a Bachelor's of Art in Theatre Performance and a Master's of Art in Teaching for Performing Arts Education.

CB: Do you do any work outside of teaching?

AB: I am also a working actor and stage manager at several theatre companies around town in addition to my duties here.

CB: What did you like or dislike about your own early education?

AB: I had some wonderful teachers growing up who were really dedicated not only to students' learning, but to their personal growth as well. I learned so much of my moral compass and compassion from the educators who showed me that a balance of patience and challenging work creates well-rounded students.

CB: Is there any moment or story you'd be willing to share that stands out to you as one of those "this is why I do what I do" moments?

AB: One of my students who I coached on their college audition package ended up getting into every single school on their list, which was a very proud moment for me as a coach. It's such a full circle moment to be teaching in a theatre classroom less than a decade from when I was a student in a similar class!

CB: What do you most want students to take away from your classroom?

AB: I think the most important part of a safe theatre classroom is understanding that failure is important to the process. I fail all the time as an actor! It's how we



Ms. Black

learn to grow, by making bold choices that may not always work out. I'd rather have an artist who fails a hundred times than one who refuses to try.

Where Were They Then: Ms. Horn

By Haven Hughes

Ms. Shannon Horn has taught in the Theater department of SOA since 2021. This month, Applause staff writer and Theater major Haven Hughes spoke with her to find out more about her childhood, education, and inspirations.

Haven Hughes: What was your childhood like and what are some of your favorite memories?

Shannon Horn: I was born in Janesville, Wisconsin as my parents worked at the University of Madison. However, we moved when I was 18 months old so I have no memories of it.

Overall, I had a wonderfully adventurous childhood. Because my dad was a civilian who worked for the military, moving became a pretty regular part of our lives. By the time I graduated from high school, I had lived in six states and one country—which meant a lot of packing boxes, making new friends, learning new places, and starting over.

If you had asked me how I felt every time we moved, I probably would have told you, very dramatically, that I hated it. At the time, leaving behind friends, familiar places, and everything I knew was hard. But looking back now, I realize what an incredible gift those moves were. Each place gave me new experiences, new friendships, and a different little piece of the world to carry with me.

I learned how to walk into a room where I didn't know anyone and find my way. I learned to appreciate that people and communities can be wonderfully different, and that home isn't always one particular place. In the end, I fell in love with the places we lived and, even more so, with the people we met along the way. What felt like constant change as a child ultimately became one of the things that shaped who I am today.

HH: How old were you when you decided you wanted a career path in the theater world, and what do you think initially caused this desire?

SH: I've always loved performing. My parents put me in dance classes when I was four, and apparently, I decided pretty quickly that being onstage was going to be a lifelong thing! Before long, I was recruiting the neighborhood kids and organizing full-blown productions in our basement. We had no fancy lights, no elaborate sets, and definitely no budget—but we had costumes, big personalities, and an audience of very patient parents!

Both of my parents worked in education, so becoming a theatre teacher eventually felt like a pretty natural combination of two things I loved: the arts and working with kids. I get to share my love of theatre with students every day, help them discover what they're capable of, and occasionally convince them that memorizing lines really is fun. And the fact that I actually get paid to do something I love? That still feels like a pretty incredible gift.

HH: What activities did you like to do in your free time as a teenager?

SH: During MS and HS I was in band, dance team, theatre, choir, show choir, volleyball and a club called Odyssey of the Mind.

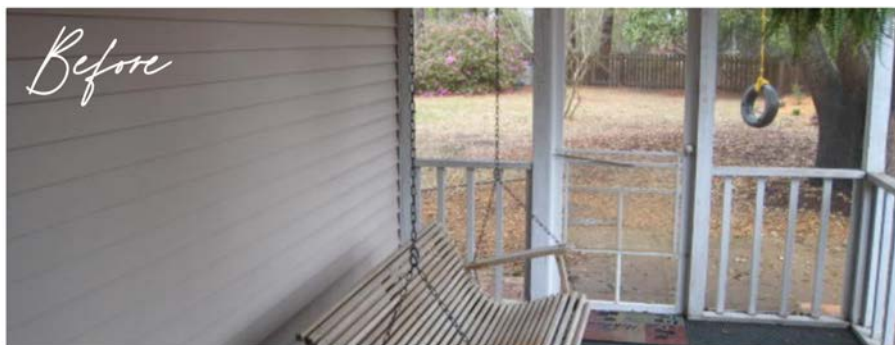
HH: What do you think your childhood self would think of you today?

SH: I think my younger self would smile to see that I am doing something I love every day.

HH: As far back as you can remember, what do you recall being your favorite



Ms. Horn during high school



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Musical, and why was it your favorite?

SH: While I don't really have one favorite musical, there is one that holds a special sentimental place in my heart: West Side Story. When I was growing up, my mom would put on the original cast recordings—actual vinyl albums!—while we worked around the house. Somehow, dusting furniture and cleaning my room became a lot more entertaining when I was belting out, “When you're a Jet, you're a Jet all the way!”

Those afternoons turned ordinary chores into little performances, and they gave me some wonderful memories with my mom. To this day, whenever I hear those songs, I'm transported right back to our house, singing at the top of my lungs with a dust rag in my hand.

HH: What is the most valuable lesson you learned in your youth, and how did you learn it? (Also my biggest inspiration)

SH: My paternal grandfather was one of the most important people in my life, especially when I was young. Although he was a high school dropout, he built a life that was defined not by his formal education, but by his compassion for others, his incredible work ethic, and the respect he earned within his community. He taught me that a person's worth is never measured by a diploma, a title, or the circumstances into which they were born.

One of the greatest lessons he gave me was the importance of truly seeing people—to look beyond first impressions, circumstances, or differences and to meet each person where they are. He believed that every person has value, and he lived that belief rather than simply speaking about it. That lesson has stayed with me throughout my life and has deeply shaped the way I see and interact with others.

Where Are They Now: Philip Lipton

By Lena Fernandes

Philip Lipton graduated from SOA as a Band major in 2005. Applause staff writer Lena Fernandes caught up with him to find out more about his education and his life in Charleston after graduation.

Lena Fernandes: What have you been doing since you left SOA?

Philip Lipton: Business stuff: sourdough bakery business owner that operates at our farmers' markets (Moonrise Loaf LLC), Principal Clarinet, and board member of the North Charleston POPS! Life stuff: Dad of two amazing niños, husband to my amazing wife Sarah, who is a designer on James Island.

LF: Where did you go to college, and how did it help you in your career?

PL: I went to the University of North Florida-BM and Jacob's School of Music, Indiana University- MM. UNF fed my inspiration, and IU helped build my resilience.

LF: How do you feel your time at SOA has impacted who you are now?:

PL: SOA was the ground to be unique, kind of a watering hole for the roots of this artsy tree we are all growing.

LF: What made you decide to continue with the clarinet after high school?

PL: I lucked into a music scholarship (in-state tuition waiver for UNF), and schools in FL are way cheaper. I actually didn't decide I wanted to pursue music professionally until my teacher, Guy Yehuda, at UNF inspired me, honestly.

LF: In what ways has your time at SOA affected your post-graduate life?

PL: Your brain doesn't fully develop until after age 22 or something like this, so these were formative years. I'd say the culture was that it was cool to be different so ultimately SOA kind of helped build my sense of counterculture that stays with me today.



Philip Lipton with his daughter

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LF: What's one thing about your life now that you would've never imagined in high school?

PL: I'm using the pedagogy skills I learned from teaching clarinet and applying them to this culinary art.

LF: What was your favorite part of your time at SOA?

PL: Spending time with friends, playing at the Yorktown on the 4th of July with Mr. Kerr, getting chased by your dad (Josh Fernandes) wielding a bass clarinet peg, learning to surf, Dr. Cusatis' English class, shaking Mr. Brem's hand (he had only four fingers and would intentionally shake our hands as we came in), most all the teachers were inspiring, not getting expelled for being a class clown... I got close.

LF: What advice would you give to the current students of SOA?

PL: Competition is limiting. We can get hung up on others' achievements so much that we may miss our own. Focus on gratitude for the gifts you already have yourself. Focus on your own process and stay true to yourself.

SOA Offers Club Grants

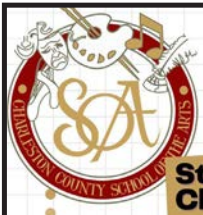
by Juliet Ladd

For the first time this school year, SOA student clubs have a new way to turn their ideas into reality. The SOA PTSA is offering grants of up to \$500 per year to official student clubs and organizations to help pay for projects, supplies or other items that directly benefit their members.

The application process is simple. Clubs need approval from a sponsoring teacher or staff member and must complete an online form explaining what they are requesting and how it will benefit their club. Grants are given on a first-come, first-served basis, so clubs are encouraged to apply early before the funds run out.

The idea came from a similar initiative the PTSA has offered teachers for several years. After seeing the impact these grants had on teachers, the PTSA wanted to create something that would support student organizations as well. Since student clubs often face fundraising challenges, the grants can provide "seed money" for new ideas or wish-list items.

The program officially launched this school year after the PTSA board discussed ways for students to benefit more directly from money raised through annual membership dues. With support from Dr. Cook, the program was organized and began being promoted to faculty in early August. The PTSA hopes the grants will help clubs turn their ideas into action.



The PTSA wants to support your Student Club!

Student Club Grants

Are you a student who helps lead a club or organization at SOA? With your sponsor's support your club can apply for a \$500 PTSA grant!

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"We love hearing your vision for how you will spend the funds to support your club's interest and activities, so don't hold back on telling us what your goals are," says Nicole Houston, who is the first member of the board to review requests. With limited funding available, clubs with an idea in mind should start planning (and applying) now.



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Marley and Juliet Have Thoughts!

For the first installment of Marley and Juliet's advice column, they tackle topics of feeling excluded and managing stress!

How do you deal with stress from homework and tests? (10)

First, it's important to recognize that the academics at SOA can be more demanding than people might expect. On top of challenging classes, we also have to balance the demands of our majors. That being said, everyone handles academic stress differently, so finding what works best for you is key. Personally, I find it helpful to teach the material to someone else or make a large poster with all the information in one place. It may take some trial and error to figure out what works best for you, but keeping everything organized in an agenda or calendar can make a huge difference in staying on top of assignments and deadlines. Most importantly, remember that one of the easiest ways to fail a class is to stop turning in assignments. Even if you can't complete an assignment perfectly, turning in something is almost always better than turning in nothing!

**Sincerely,
Juliet**



It's my first year at SOA and I joined as a highschooler, I feel like I joined so late and I'm having trouble finding a friend group. (9)

Talk to people! I know it can feel like everyone already has their friend groups figured out, especially when you're coming later than a lot of people. But don't let that stop you from putting yourself out there. Start with your seatmates, people in your clubs, stand partners, or even someone you've barely talked to. You don't have to become best friends with someone right away. Just start talking and see where it goes. Also, don't stress too much about finding your group immediately. It can take a while to find people you really click with, and that's completely normal. Just keep meeting people, being yourself, and give it some time. You might be surprised by who you end up connecting with!

**Sincerely,
Juliet**

I'm having trouble feeling motivated to do my schoolwork because everything has gotten so stressful, what do I do? (10)

It is completely understandable to lose motivation when you're stressed out. I was experiencing the same thing during junior year, so I looked into it and found out that our brains actually can sometimes perceive stressful workloads as an actual threat, and resort to avoidance or procrastination. I would suggest, instead of starting homework as normal, that you switch some things up. This may mean switching to a different location, whether that be your dining room table, or the library. This could mean setting small goals, or rewards for yourself. For me, I like to light a candle, play music, and allocate a set amount of time to schoolwork. Little by

little, hopefully tackling your pile won't feel so impossible.

**Sincerely,
Marley**

Everyone keeps talking about a big weekend party I wasn't invited to. How do I stop feeling left out and awkward at school? (11)

First, I just want to say that you're completely allowed to feel hurt by this. It never feels good being left out. However, it's even more important that you recognize that your value is not defined by the names on a guest list. There are always going to be circles you naturally fit into and some you just don't, and when you're at a small school like ours, the rejection feels magnified. Honestly, I used to doubt my own value based on the amount of parties I attended, but once I started actually going to these parties, I'd never have as much fun as I did with small groups of friends. Try to find people that make socializing feel effortless, and a hang-out with 1-2 good friends will always beat out a huge weekend party with people you don't mesh with. Your worth is much greater than one high school party!

**Sincerely,
Marley**

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Meet the Cast of *Oklahoma!*

Photos by Applause Staff

Students across majors have been working tirelessly to produce this year’s musical, Oklahoma! Applause staff writers sat down with members of the cast to find out more on the process, from their first audition to preparing for opening night.

Curly McLain: Beckett Carrington

by Caleb Brown

Caleb Brown: You play the controversial character, Curly McLain. How do you feel about Curly as a person?
Beckett Carrington: Curly has good and bad qualities. He is a man of mystery, yet an acclaimed figure of love and light, but also of darkness and deep brooding. Curly is strong, yet soft. Rugged, but gentle.
CB: You’ve been in several musicals at SOA; what have you learned as a performer in that time?
BC: Time management is the biggest thing I have learned from them. Throughout the past few years, I have always waited to really lock in on learning the parts, and I have learned that getting things done fast is the better option.
CB: How did you develop your character?
BC: I have been reading the script with my brother, Tripp, and have tried to analyze the meaning behind what Curly says and does.
CB: Without spoiling, what’s your favorite part of the show?
BC: My favorite scene (without spoiling would be) when Curly ***** and then ***** because that scene emphasizes the *****. (Hope I didn’t spoil it!)



Beckett Carrington

Curly McLain: Matthew Gould

by Haven Hughes

Haven Hughes: Last year, you played Dimitri in SOA Vocal’s production of Anastasia. If Dimitri and Curly were to cross timelines and run into each other, how do you think they’d interact?
Matthew Gould: I think that if they were interested in the same person, there would be a little bit of competition there. They’re the types of people to one-up each other. But I also think there would be a level of respect. They both deeply care for the people that are close to them.
HH: What is your favorite scene or moment in the show?
MG: I think my favorite scene is the Vox social scene, when Lori calls out for Curly after she fires Jud and is scared about what he’ll do. And then they end up having a really nice conversation together, and he asks her to marry him. I think it’s just really sweet, and it’s just very vulnerable.
HH: If you weren’t cast as Curly, who would you want to play?
MG: I think the other role that would be most interesting for me probably would be the role of Jud. He’s very, very complex, and I haven’t really played a villain or someone who’s not the hero yet. I think it’d be a great way to develop some more skills and get my acting pie chart well-rounded.
HH: What is your favorite song from the musical, and how does the melody reflect the lyrics in that song?
MG: I like the dream ballet sequence a lot. The music is like a compilation of every one of each character’s melodies, and I honestly think it’s an excellent



Matthew Gould

piece of work. I mean you hear different characters’ themes and different things that are revolutionary for its time. This is a piece that was never written before for theater, so when listening to it I always find something new that I haven’t heard before, or something that interests me for a specific reason. I think the songs without words are the most powerful for me.

Ali Hakim: Harry Baxley

by Lena Fernandes

Lena Fernandes: Can you tell us about your character? Do you relate to them at all?
Harry Baxley: My character is Ali Hakim, a Persian trader and conman who tends to wear his heart on his sleeve. I relate to my character in certain aspects, as I like to collect interesting trinkets from foreign countries, and I’d consider myself well-traveled.
LF: Is this the character you originally auditioned for? And can you tell me more about the audition process and preparation?
HB: I did originally audition for this character. I practiced my accent diligently, and worked hard on the monologue and exploring new dynamics. The audition process was lengthy for sure, but it was well worth it. I’ve always had a fundamental belief that auditioning for everything is the best you can do, so I always make sure to work hard and audition for everything I can.
LF: What has been the most challenging part of preparing for this role, and how did you work through it?
HB: A challenging part is that I have to use a thick and complicated accent for my character, which can be extremely tedious work. I have been watching many dialect coaches to prepare, as this will be the first time I have played a character with a distinct accent.
LF: Is there a particular scene in the musical that feels the most meaningful to you? Why?
HB: There are many fun and meaningful scenes in the show, specifically the dream ballet sequence. When my character sells smelling salts to Laurey, she has a dream about her two lovers duking it out in a Swan Lake-style fight. I love this scene and dance sequence because I have a deep appreciation for ballet, and it plays a vital part in the story.



Harry Baxley

Will Parker: Artur Ribeiro

by Lena Fernandes

Lena Fernandes: Introduce your character to us. What sticks out to you the most about him?
Artur Ribeiro: My character is Will Parker, who is basically the comic relief of the show. I love his charisma and the way that he lights up the stage. You never know what he’s going to do.
LF: What does it feel like to be in a major role, and what are you most excited about?
AR: It feels awesome. Because I’m a freshman, there’s more pressure to do well. If you’re a freshman and you’ve earned a major role, everybody expects you to do great. I’m most excited about the joy Will Parker brings to the audience whenever he sings and dances.
LF: Do you see yourself in this role?
AR: I definitely see myself in Will because, like him, I’m very social and energetic. Will also really cares about the people he loves, such as Curly, Laurey, and Ado Annie. I also love the people who are very close to me, like my mom, dad, sister, and all my friends.
LF: How have you been working to prepare for this role and really embody the



Artur Ribeiro

character?

AR: I've watched the movie several times, the 1955 version and the 1999 Broadway version. I also studied his mannerisms: the way he talks and walks. He is a unique character, and I want to get every aspect of his personality right. Everyone in the cast is doing such a great job. I love playing Will, and I'm really excited for the show.

Laurey Williams: Ava Davis

by Juliet Ladd

Juliet Ladd: Is this your first lead role in an SOA production? How does Laurey compare to your past roles?

Ava Davis: My sophomore year I played Louisa von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*, which was my first lead! Rodgers and Hammerstein are arguably the greatest classical musical theatre composers of all time, and *Oklahoma!* was their first collaborative show, while *The Sound of Music* was their last. So I feel grateful to have started my high school career with their music and now to finish it out with Laurey!

JD: What was it like to audition for another SOA role after touring with *The Sound of Music*?

AD: It feels like such a different process to audition at SOA and to audition professionally. Honestly, it felt way more nerve-racking coming back from *The Sound of Music* to having to perform in front of my peers again, but I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity to get to come home and do so. Spending time with everyone in rehearsals has meant the world to me because of how much I missed everyone!

JL: How do you handle the pressure of being the focus of the stage?

AD: It is definitely a big challenge, but stepping into the role of Laurey has already taught me so much. I think getting to the point of being able to get out of myself and make choices as she would gets me out of my own head.

JL: Which two sides of Laurey's personality have been the hardest for you to emulate?

AD: There is definitely a toss up between her tough and girly sides and there are a lot of moments within the show where Laurey is not afraid to stand up and talk back. At other times she just wants to be comforted. Being able to identify those and play them truthfully definitely becomes a bit of a challenge.

JL: Laurey is double cast, what is one scene where your version of Laurey feels different from your double's version?

AD: Libby and I completely agree that we have different takes on Laurey, but that's what makes it a lot of fun for us to share. All of the scenes between Laurey and Curly feel different because we have two Curlys as well!

JL: What is it like switching from being the lead to being in the background on your alternate nights?

AD: I love being able to switch between the two. It's super helpful because I feel like I get time to clear my mind in between each Laurey show, but I also get to learn a lot about the plot and setting of *Oklahoma!* that way.

Laurey Williams: Libby Hansel

by Haven Hughes

Haven Hughes: How would you say the character of Laurey relates to you as a person?

Libby Hansel: Laurey is very independent—or at least, she likes to think of herself as independent. I really relate to her in that sense because I used to believe that being completely independent was what made me stronger. Throughout the play, however, Laurey begins to realize who she truly needs in her life and who she can rely on. Recently, I have started to realize the same thing. I have so many people in my life who support and care about me, and I've learned that relying on others does not make me weak. In that way, I really connect with



Ava Davis

Laurey, as she realizes how much she needs Curly in her life.

HH: Who else in the cast do you admire for their work during this production and why?

LH: I really admire Ava Davis, who is my double-cast buddy. She inspires me to constantly improve and better myself. She is incredibly talented, and I am so unbelievably proud of everything she has already accomplished. She always comes to rehearsals prepared and knows her material extremely well. She also has such a strong understanding of Laurey's character, so whenever I am confused about something, I know I can go to her for advice and she will usually know the answer. I feel so lucky to have the opportunity to share such a fun role with someone who is such an amazing and supportive person.

HH: *Oklahoma!* is set in the year 1906. If you were alive in 1906, would you want to be a cowboy or a farm girl?

LH: I would hypothetically want to be a cowboy because I would love to ride horses all day. However, if I'm being realistic, I probably would have ended up as a farm girl because I'm honestly a little too lazy to be a cowboy!

HH: If you had to give a four sentence summary of the show, capturing its most important moments, what would it be?

LH: The curtain opens with Curly singing to Laurey as he tries to win her over, because they both have feelings for each other but struggle to admit them. After Laurey rejects Curly, she takes Jud to the box social out of spite, even though there is a tradition that whoever you take to the dance is supposed to become your future spouse. The story also follows another love triangle between Ado Annie, Will Parker, and Ali Hakim, with both relationships creating plenty of conflict throughout the show. After lots of singing, dancing, drama, and even a death, everything eventually works out, and the characters get their happily ever after.

Aunt Eller: Ellery Ketron

by Juliet Ladd

Juliet Ladd: What are you most looking forward to going into this show?

Ellery Ketron: This is my first time having a lead role in an SOA production! I've had a couple smaller solos in concerts in the past, but this is definitely different from anything I've done with Vocal before. I'm really excited about seeing everything come together, and it's such a blast having one of my closest friends, Ellie Polk, play the same role as me. We live less than a minute from each other, so we can hang out and run lines any time.

JL: Aunt Eller uses humor and a strict tone to keep everyone in line. What is your favorite line to deliver?

EK: "The HUSSY!!"

JL: How does your interpretation of Aunt Eller's tough love differ from how your double plays her?

EK: I think finding the sweet spot between Aunt Eller being tough and still being kind was a big part of the audition/callback process. Ellie and I definitely play slightly different versions of her character. In my opinion, Ellie really embodies stability, strength, and quiet understanding, but also has plenty of attitude. I'm not really sure how to describe any differences other than my Aunt Eller is maybe a bit more emotional. At times she's more annoyed, but on the opposite end of the spectrum, sweeter.

JL: What is the hardest part about sustaining the accent while still making sure the audience can hear your lines clearly?



Libby Hansel



Ellery Ketron

Oklahoma! Rehearsals:

Photos by Micah Howell

While opening night approached, students were hard at work!

The Taming of the Shrew:

Photos by Haven Hughes

Junior Theatre majors perform *The Taming of the Shrew* in the Rose Maree Myers Theater!

Middle School Dance:

Photos by Marley Mendes

Students enjoyed a relaxing evening filled with music and dancing!



SOA in Motion!

SOA students are constantly moving, whether they're dancing, rehearsing, or performing!



EK: I LOVE Aunt Eller because she's kind of rude and angry all the time, and shouting at people with the accent is so fun. Maintaining it is only really difficult when I have to sing, because those specific twangy vowel sounds are tricky. My accent has grown a little more consistent, but I'm far more used to singing in a bright musical theater-y voice, so the *Oklahoma!* accent is a whole new beast.

Aunt Eller: Ellie Polk

by Ella Bonazzi

Ella Bonazzi: What made you want to audition for the role you have now?

Ellie Polk: I originally auditioned for Ado Annie with Aunt Eller as my second choice, but I liked Aunt Eller because she has a lot of attitude and she's not a super soprano-y role like Laurey or Ado.

EB: Were you nervous to audition for the part?

EP: Duh. I was pretty anxious to get a role in this show since it's my senior year and kinda the last chance I get to have a big part. In addition to that, we have our auditions in front of the whole class, which is pretty nerve-wracking.

EB: Do you like the acting or the vocal aspect of your character better?

EP: Definitely acting, since I don't have very much singing in this show. It's really fun to do the accent and be super sassy and funny. Aunt Eller has a lot of really funny lines. It was a little hard to read the lines at first though because the accents are written into the script, so there were some lines where I had no idea what I was saying.

EB: Have you learned anything new about vocal or acting in the process of this musical so far?

EP: I've learned that I have to be ready for the show to change at any moment. I can't tell you how many times we've changed the blocking of a scene or a dance or cut something. We just have to stay flexible and write our stage notes in pencil.

EB: What is your favorite line of *Oklahoma!*?

EP: When Jud reveals that he's taking Laurey to the Box Social and Curly says "You're drivin' Laurey?" and Jud says "Ast her." My favorite of my lines is: "You know whut he tol' me? Tol' me that egg-beater ud beat up eggs, and wring out dishrags, and turn the ice-cream freezer, and I don't know whut all!"

Ado Annie: Reese Patterson

by Ella Bonazzi

Ella Bonazzi: What were you most nervous about for your audition?

Reese Patterson: I was most nervous about nailing the accent! It's a mix of Southern and Midwestern, so I was scared I'd lean a little too Southern.

EB: Is there any part of your role that has been more complicated than you thought?

RP: My character is very ditzy, so it's a bit more complicated than I thought to sound completely clueless in every single line!

EB: What is your favorite line to perform?

RP: When I say, "He called me his Persian kitten, cuz theys was the ones with the soft round tails!" It's my favorite because everyone busts out laughing!

EB: Do you think that your acting and vocal skills have progressed throughout this process?

RP: I completely do! I haven't performed a role quite like this before, and I'm excited to explore my acting range. As for the vocals, it has helped me improve my belting and strengthen my high notes!

EB: What is your favorite song in *Oklahoma!*?



Ellie Polk



Reese Patterson

RP: I absolutely love "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top"!

EB: What advice would you give to anyone hoping to audition for a big role?

RP: I would say put your all into preparing every day by researching the character and how they say specific things, their mannerisms, and try your best to let the judges see your passion during the audition!

Jud Fry: Nathan Wright

by MJ Johnson

MJ Johnson: What character are you playing, and what do they contribute to the show?

Nathan Wright: I am playing Jud Fry, the hired farmhand on Aunt Eller/Laurey's farm. He is a social outcast and lives alone in a shed outside of the main farmhouse, causing him to build up resentment toward the world, as well as a longing for someone to love him as he loves them – and specifically for that someone to be Laurey. So he serves as a somewhat fragile and misunderstood villain, opposing the charismatic Curly in his attempt to win Laurey's love. However, his desperation for love leads him to become obsessed and crazed and perhaps take things too far... I guess you'll just have to come see it to find out the details!

MJ: What is your process for getting into character?

NW: Jud's character is very different from me in many ways, so it's a little bit challenging to get into his mind. However, although his actions are inexcusable, I can empathize with his emotional longing for love and relate to his wanting to belong. By channeling that side of his character, rather than the creepy, perverted side, I can better understand his motive and goals for his actions and better express that onstage.

MJ: Looking back at past shows you have done, how does this one compare?

NW: This show will be very different from past shows that I have done because this is the first show where I have had a true lead role with complex development, plenty of lines, and solo songs on a big stage. I have mainly been in the ensemble with occasional features in previous SOA shows such as Anastasia and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, and I have also been in a few Charleston Stage productions such as A Christmas Carol and Dare to Dream; but overall, this role, I would say, is my official first lead, and so I am extremely excited to see what I can take away from this exciting new experience.



Nathan Wright

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Teaching in Thailand!

by Leo Voelker

This year, SOA welcomed Personal Finance teacher Ms. Stancliffe. Applause staff writer Leo Voelker sat down with her to find out more about her life in Thailand, where she taught for several years prior to teaching at SOA.

Leo Voelker: How did you become a teacher in Thailand?

Kylie Stancliffe: I knew I wanted to work overseas and then, through a friend of mine, I found out about the school I ended up working at. I reached out and it turned out that they needed a Social Studies teacher really badly. Grace International School, where I worked, exists to provide quality Christian education to students from around the world. I was really excited to work with such a diverse group of students and to be in such a beautiful country!

LV: What subjects did you teach?

KS: I taught Ancient World History, AP European History and a class called Sports Leadership 2.

LV: How does education in Thailand compare to here?

KS: It's so different. I was teaching at a Christian international school so schedules and overall environments were more similar to a public school in America. I worked occasionally with local Thai schools so I definitely noticed the differences there much more. Thai schools are located on a Buddhist temple. In Thailand, Buddhism and education are intertwined. "To be Thai is to be Buddhist" is a common phrase.

LV: Do you have any funny stories from your time there?

KS: When I first moved, I was trying to learn Thai so that I could communicate with locals. Thai is a tonal language, and all words have different tones. While practicing my communication at a market, I tried to compliment a lady's shirt that she was selling by saying in Thai that they were really beautiful. What actually ended up coming out was that the shirts were "bad luck," which is very disrespectful in Thai culture. Everyone surrounding me in the market burst out laughing.

LV: What was the biggest adjustment in your day to day life?

KS: Everything is slow paced in Thailand. Everyone walks slow, drives slow, orders food slow. Thailand is not efficiency driven, but I learned to love the slow paced peacefulness of the country.

LV: Was the Thai food similar to what we have here? Do you have a favorite Thai dish to recommend?

KS: My favorite Thai dish is Khao Soi— it is from Northern Thailand and it is a curry noodle/soup dish. It is so yummy. Thai food has a lot of flavors at once— and it is usually quite spicy.

LV: Do you have any favorite memories?

KS: I coached girls soccer and went to international tournaments where I flew to other countries to compete. In three years I got two



Ms. Stancliffe (bottom left) with her girls soccer team!

second place titles and one first place title. It was my school's first win in twenty years. Countries I flew to included South Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines.

LV: What are some of your fondest memories of your time coaching?

KS: My favorite memories coaching are probably just all the in between times getting to know the girls and laughing about funny things that happened.

SOA Slang

by Fletcher Seminaroti, Ty McGinnis, Kai Boone, and Leo Voelker

Each issue, Applause's brightest staff writers put their heads together to find the newest slang terms circulating around SOA. These were the top picks of this month.

Nathan (n): Synonym for 'nothing' used in the context of "nathan"; unable to do something/anything; cannot complete an action.

Ex: I can't do nathan.

G (n): The original street slang meaning, referring to a friend or other person. It also forms terms like OG (Original Gangster). More commonly used as a friendly term of address, such as saying "What's up, my G?" to mean "my friend" or "my guy."

Ex: That was an absolute G play.

The Cheese Factory: A place that is unsettling, uncomfortable, or of annoyance. Derived from a demeaning connotation of being described as "cheesy." Personified; (Cheeseball, cheeser)

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Ex: School is the cheese factory, bro.

Slide (v): To come over, visit, or show up somewhere casually; to arrive or head to a location, party, or someone's house.

Ex: Slide folly or folly slide?

Newgen (n): Short for "new generation," used to describe someone who is new, inexperienced, or recently joined a specific community or subculture.

Ex: He's not very good, he's a newgen

Crine (v): Synonym for 'crying' when directed towards humor; A term used to describe hysterical laughing, usually pointed at someone or something

Ex: Son, I'm crine.

Peep (v): 1. To notice or understand; to observe or realize something. 2. To look or check out; to take a quick glance or look at something.

Ex: Yo, did you peep that aim assist?

EBK: (adj): used to abbreviate "elite ball knowledge," a term coined to describing a niche reference or joke.

Ex. I don't understand that, it must be EBK.

SOA Band Highlight: New Dirty Shoes

by Ty McGinnis

For this October band feature, Dante Criscitiello shares some info and upcoming gigs for our band New Dirty Shoes. Our local band plays at venues all over Charleston including the Pour House, Tin Roof, and the Garden. Members include SOA alumni students Audra Elm and Grey Harlos, as well as senior students Sam Harris and Ty McGinnis.

Ty McGinnis: What was your favorite gig that we've played?

Dante Criscitiello: I have two answers. As far as pure musicianship goes, our best gig technically was at The Refinery this past weekend, but my favorite is our gig last year at HedHi Studios, the chemistry was unreal that night!

TM: What is your favorite song that we've covered?

DC: It changes frequently, but my personal favorite and very comfortable chart for me is "This Ol' Cowboy" by the Marshall Tucker Band.

TM: When and where is the next gig?

DC: November 14th at Minor Threat 2!

TM: Who is your biggest inspiration?

DC: My biggest inspirations musically are two people: pianist Oscar Peterson, who mastered jazz and bebop in the 1950's-1970's; he opened up the door for a lot of blues pianists as well. Also, Stevie Wonder. Based on songwriting, he is my favorite musician of all time.

TM: If you had to give advice to a new band, what would it be?

DC: It would be that when you have time to practice independently, practice to a metronome; it'll show when you get together with a group.

TM: What do you think is the most important lesson when it comes to music?

DC: Even if you don't have an amazing ear, this is something I've followed my whole life: learn to do what's right for the musical setting you are in, which basically means three things. Don't overplay, listen for cues, and be as original as you can be.

TM: What do you think defines a good crowd?

DC: People who are good listeners always make the best crowd. and dancing isn't encouraged as much as it should be at live performances, nothing is better than a crowd that's moving!

Upcoming Gigs to Check Out:

October 17th: "Biscuit Beatdown" in Greenville at 3pm & Hanahan Music Festival

October 25th: Molly Macquire at Tua Lingua

October 29th-November 8th: Coastal Carolina Fair

November 14th: Minor Threat 2 at HedHi Studios featuring New Dirty Shoes and PosterGrrrl

Congratulations to our *Oklahoma!* cast and ensemble!



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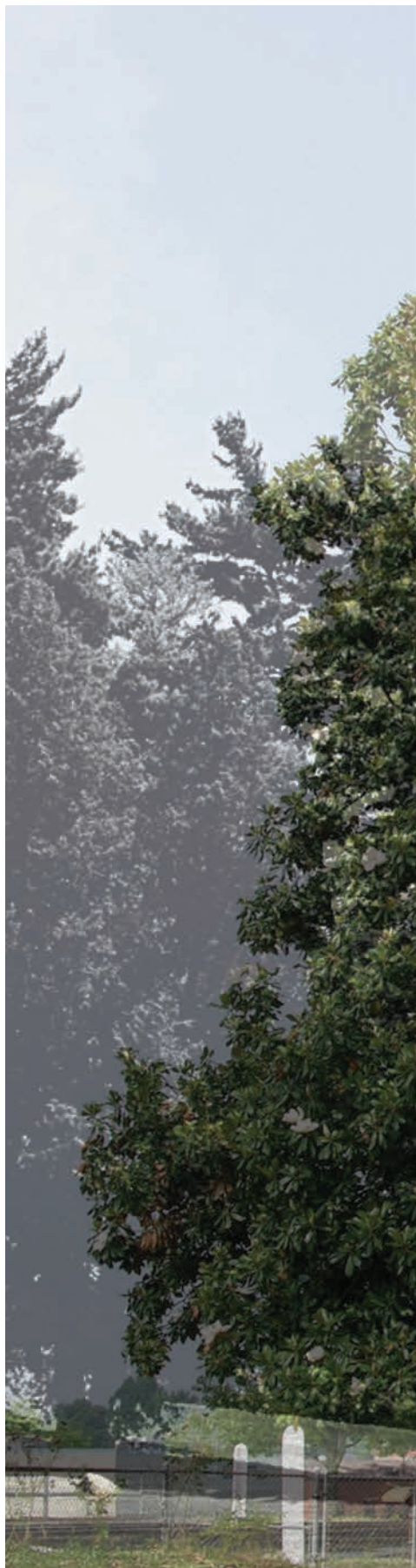
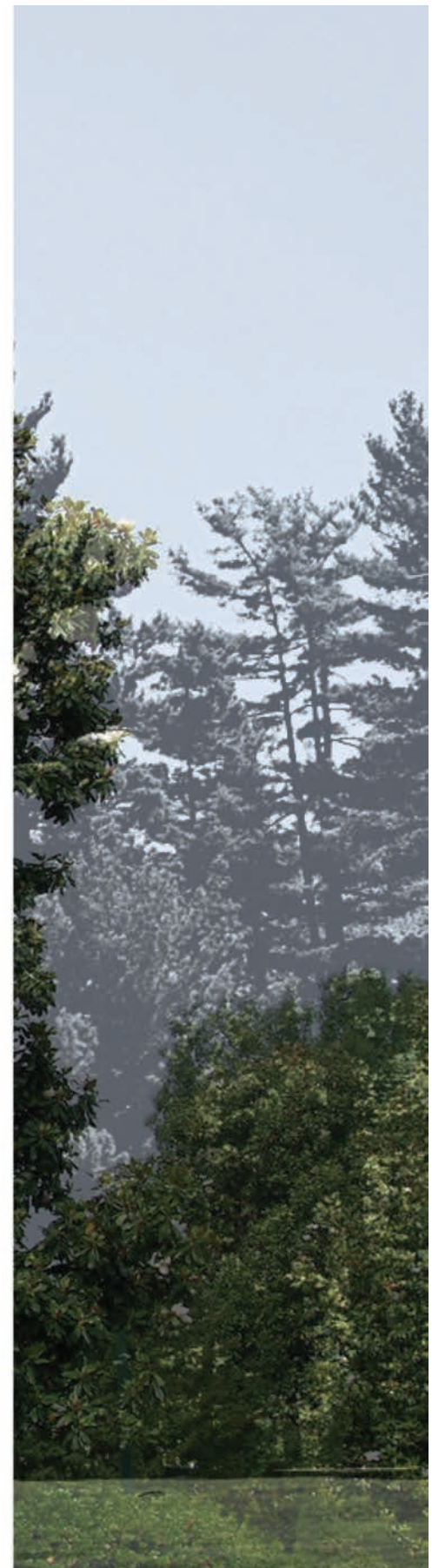
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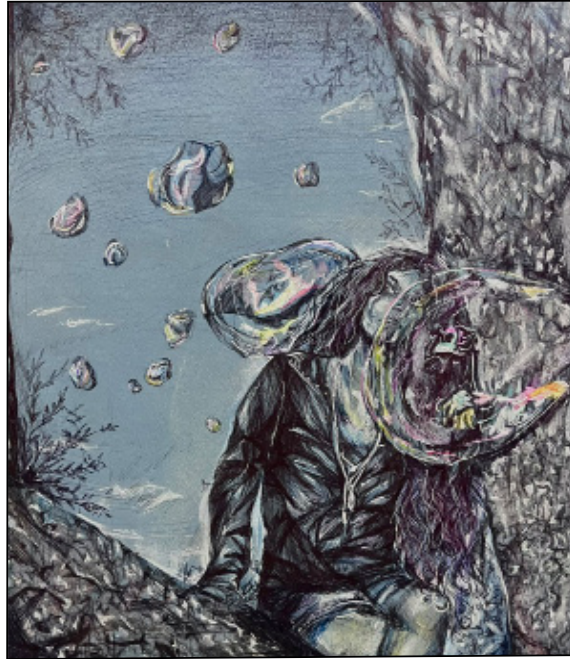
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Katie Childers, 11th



Saylour LoVallo, 10th



Evyn Angelos, 12th



Sora Littleflower, 7th



Sean Curran, 12th

SOA Athletes Continue Fall Success

by Fletcher Seminaroti, Kai Boone, and Micah Howell

Going into the second quarter, SOA student athletes have continued to work towards their goals for the season.

Academic Magnet football has settled into the mid-season with a 4-3 record. With an increasingly challenging schedule, Magnet has fallen to Timberland, 41-28, and Battery Creek, 31-10, both top contenders in the SCHSL 2A division. These overview statistics overshadow the team's impressive achievements. The Raptors traveled to the Timberland game optimistic, in hopes of beating the Wolves for the first time in program history. These thoughts were fueled by Timberland's graduated key defensive lineman and University of Florida commit, Desmond Green. At the end of the first half versus Timberland, the game was tied 21-21, but after a few unfortunate fumbles, the Raptors gave away 20 points, leading to an unfortunate defeat.

With three games remaining on the regular season schedule before playoffs, the Raptors are looking for one more win to continue to the playoffs.

Sideline cheer has continued with football's schedule, present at every home game to support our Raptors. Not only are SOA students involved in Academic Magnet sports, but we also sprawl across Charleston. Since our school does not have teams of our own, students have the ability, through the SCHSL regulations, to be eligible for Magnet or personal home schools that students are individually zoned for based on residence. Senior Creative Writing major, **Amelia Burt**, is a key leader on the James Island High School team, leading practice and performances throughout the season. In the off-season, Amelia cheers for local powerhouse Pack Cheerleading, winning national titles throughout her career.

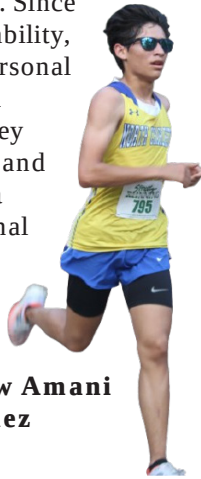
The Cross Country season is nearing its end and at Iron Horse, Junior **Isaiah Liu** (18:46.96) helped his team to beat Wando and West Ashley as the third-fastest runner on his team. At The Warrior Invitational, Sophomores **Andrew Amani** (16:56.09), **Aldrin Moriarty** (17:07.78), and **Xander Sanchez** (17:50.82) all helped the varsity boys to a second-place finish.

Also at Iron Horse, on the women's side, Sophomore **Saylor LoVallo** (30:16.61) and Juniors **Sally Lewis** (30:23.56) and **Zoe Gebhart** (29:06.51) all helped Academic Magnet finish ahead of Bishop England and Fort Dorchester. At Warrior Invitational on Pawley's Island, Junior **Lucille Harper** (20:37.91) finished third in the team, helping them to a 3rd overall in a competitive field.

Academic Magnet boys' swim team captured the 2026 SCHSL AAA state championship at the USC Natatorium on October 10, earning its second consecutive state title. SOA eighth-grader **Keith Aikman** helped the Raptors reach the podium in two relay events. Aikman, **Noah Pomerantz**, **Iaroslav Abramov**, and **Logan Patterson** placed third in the 400-yard freestyle relay, setting a new school record of 3:17.47. He also joined Patterson, **Finley Connors**, and Abramov for a second-place finish in the 200-yard medley relay.

Other highlights included Patterson's state title in the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 50.71 and second-place finish in the 200-yard freestyle relay at 1:43.32. Connors placed third in both the 100-yard butterfly and 100-yard breaststroke, while the Raptors also took third in the 200-yard freestyle relay.

Academic Magnet's girls' swim team finished third out of 30 teams at the SCHSL AAA state championships at the USC Natatorium. SOA swimmers



Junior Isaiah Liu ran an impressive 18:46.96 at Iron Horse!

Charlotte Connors (10), **Judith Suttle** (12), and **Priya Cardella** (11) helped the Raptors earn relay medals, with Connors making four trips to the podium for the second consecutive year.

Connors, Suttle, **Anika Martin**, and **Whitney Gwisc** placed second in the 200-yard freestyle relay, setting a new school record of 1:42.85. In the 400-yard freestyle relay, Connors, Cardella, Suttle, and Gwisc earned third place. Connors also claimed bronze in both the 50-yard and 100-yard freestyle, swimming the 50 in 25.29 seconds.

Beyond the medals, SOA swimmers celebrated personal progress and a supportive team atmosphere. Sophomore **Moxie-Jo Galvin** was proud of earning her state qualifying cuts and reaching her goal of an automatic qualifying time. She described the team's energy as "hyped to the max," with teammates cheering at the end of each other's lanes. Cardella also celebrated an automatic qualifying time in the 100 freestyle and improvement in the 200 individual medley. "It's nice to have people going through the same hard practice as you just to turn to your friends and laugh it off," she shared.

The Men's Volleyball team has won the Region V-AA Championship and is ranked highly, with a record of 11-4 in its fifth season. Junior **Sam Bundy** has been an influential member of the team, working with **Finn Gottage** to be a wall in front of the net.

The Women's Volleyball team is currently 12-3 and 7th in the division. 7th-grade **Charlotte Chubb** and Sophomores **Emma Hollowell** and **Ava Unterreiner** are all members of the winning team, impressively beating highly-ranked Hanahan 3-2.

Academic Magnet's women's tennis team has earned its third consecutive Region V-AA championship, going undefeated in region play with a 4-0 record. Through October 8, the Raptors hold a 15-2 overall record after opening the season with 15 straight wins. SOA players **Bella Billew** (9), **Fia Coleman** (10), **Charlotte Grass** (9), and **Simone Kaya** (9) represent us in the tennis program.

September highlights included 5-1 victories over Oceanside Collegiate Academy and Bishop England, along with several 6-0 sweeps. The Raptors continued their winning streak into October, defeating Ashley Hall 7-2 and Philip Simmons 6-0 before falling to Wando and Lucy Beckham. On varsity, freshman **Bella Billew** and doubles partner **Victoria Carabus** have posted a combined 3-1 record across their appearances at three doubles positions.

As the fall sports season continues, we wish our student athletes the best of luck!



Junior Sam Bundy has helped the team to an 11-4 record!



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Classic Movie Review: *The Sixth Sense* (1999)

by Marley Mendes

M. Night Shyamalan's 1999 masterpiece *The Sixth Sense* works so brilliantly because it completely subverts what we expect from a supernatural thriller. Movies in this genre often rely on creating a fear factor through loud synths and complex stunts to manufacture an audience reaction. However, Shyamalan chooses to focus on human performance instead, which is exactly what drives its timeless success.

The story follows Dr. Malcolm Crowe (Bruce Willis), a child psychologist trying to help a troubled young boy named Cole Sear (Haley Joel Osment), who claims to see dead people. The child psychology aspect of this film was executed



The Sixth Sense

wonderfully; rather than subjecting Cole to clinical interrogations simply to move the plot along, Shyamalan structures their sessions like a puzzle. Their interactions steer away from basic questions like “tell me about why you see ghosts.” Instead, they feel intensely realistic, making the audience feel like we are actively unfolding the narrative alongside them.

What really emphasizes the tension is the camera work. Legendary cinematographer Tak Fujimoto brings his signature personal framing and longer shot lengths to this film. Having shot multiple masterpieces throughout his career, his visual style forces his films to rely entirely on raw actor performances. In interviews, Shyamalan has emphasized that the movie is truly about human communication. In fact, Toni Collette (who plays Cole's mother, Lynn) noted that she didn't even realize she was shooting a horror movie during production, she thought it was just a beautiful drama about family grief. That experience is clear, seeping through in her performance and in the family dynamic, delivering an incredibly endearing backbone.

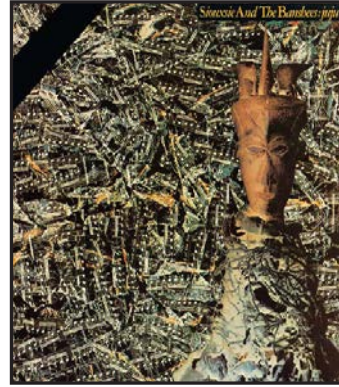
The film's progression builds toward an ending still credited as one of the largest plot twists in cinema history. Though, it doesn't cheapen the film whatsoever, and I feel its delivery was quiet, poetic, and genre-defining. Decades later, *The Sixth Sense* remains an absolute must-watch for

individuals of all ages, and will continue to be watched, dissected, and appreciated across many demographics.

Classic Album Review: *Juju* (1981)

by MJ Johnson

Siouxsie and the Banshees is no doubt one of the most influential post-punk bands of all time, and their album, *Juju* is a perfect gothic album for this October. The album cover and the album's unmistakable spooky sound is drawn from an African art piece in the Horniman Museum. The collection features



Juju

statuettes and busts with intricate faces, evoking a dark and mysterious atmosphere that inspired the mood of the album. Siouxsie and the Banshees was founded by the mother of goth and lead singer, Siouxsie Sioux, and bassist/primary co-lyricist Steven Severin. They were inspired by the effervescence of the punk rock movement, as they were devoted followers and superfans of the Sex Pistols in the mid-70s, chasing after the raw energy of the early punk scene. The album was also inspired by the sinister storytelling of classic horror movies and Alfred Hitchcock films. Instead of just relying on cheap thrills that feel underwhelming and expected, the band focused on psychological tension that jumps out at the listener.

The first song, “Spellbound,” is fast-paced, with lots of echoey guitar and heavy drums, the perfect opening for the album. Fitting with the title, it has a bewitching sound, and it reminds one of a song that would be played in *The Craft*. The song explores the helplessness and vulnerability that comes with childhood, and the parallels that it has with being in love, opening with the line: “From the cradle bars / comes a beckoning voice/ it sends you spinning / you have no choice.” I like that the song opens itself to interpretation. It adds to the theme of mysteriousness displayed throughout the album.

Juju's overall sound is quite haunting, with each song building an extreme tension throughout, especially with “Voodoo Dolly” (my personal favorite), leaving the listener excited for more. “Voodoo Dolly” opens with a creepy guitar interlude and heavy bass, building up tension like something is about to pop out at you. Siouxsie's voice is filled with vibration, and she gets louder as the song builds tension and grows faster. During this tension

build, the guitar also becomes more experimental, heading towards a crazier sound. Towards the end, Siouxsie's voice changes again and becomes very echoey (I imagined her falling down a hole). This song really sticks out to me because it feels very visual. For me, there's no way to be distracted by something else while listening to *Juju* because I'm completely enthralled with each song.

Contemporary Album Review: *Detour* (2026)

by Caleb Brown

Detour, Kim Petras' third studio album, is an electropop joyride full of sonic detours, while simultaneously a retrospective venture into her struggles with fame and self-perception.

Detour as an album is a literal detour from the sounds of Kim Petras' past works. Trading the campy euro-pop of her past albums *Problematic* and *Feed the Beast*

for the danceable party girl aesthetics of the mid-2000s.

Detour opens with its energetic and bittersweet title track that gave me chills on release night. With the lyrics “I'ma take you with me if you're bad enough/

Throw your life away

tonight, let's take a detour,” the song encompasses the central theme of the album: change. The record has some incredible bangers like the industrial trap-infused “DTLA,” the experimental, hyperpop-coded “101,” and, my personal favorite, the bubblegum pop-sounding “Need for Speed.”

Though Kim is the face, *Detour* is the result of a whole team of star-studded artists' hard work. The lead producer, Grammy-nominated Margo XS, responsible for much of Zara Larsson's *Midnight Sun*, has credits on every track on *Detour*. It is also largely produced by the New York-based brother-sister EDM duo Frost Children, giving the album that mid-2000s dance party vibe. “Basketball” is even produced by the late “Mother of Hyperpop” SOPHIE, who Kim has worked with in her earlier music. All of these producers are so talented, and I recommend listening to *Sister* by Frost Children and *Oil of Every Pearl's Un-Insides* by SOPHIE.

Individually, nearly every track on *Detour* stands out with a distinct sound and emotion attached to it, but as a consequence, the album lacks cohesion. When listening to the album from



Detour

front to back, it swerves and veers from one vibe to the next, giving the listener sonic whiplash. We go from light, airy songs like “Check It” to harsh, abrasive songs like “Polo.” We go from incredible highs like “Basketball” to nothingburgers like “B***h Ball Out.” This might be intentional, considering the album is literally called *Detour*, but I think it actually hurts the listening experience in the end.

Detour is a new beginning for Kim’s career, sporting a new sound, a new style, and an evident reignited passion for her art. Since *Detour*’s release, Kim has been super active with her fans on social media (she follows me on Twitter!) and seems so wild and free during her performances. The running joke in the Kim Petras Stan-dom is to call every new album her debut, but when it comes to *Detour*, it isn’t a joke. *Detour* is Kim Petras’ true debut.

October Spotify Playlist

By Ty McGinnis

Looking for even more recommendations for fall?
Check out our October playlist!



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October Horoscopes

by Fia Coleman and MJ Johnson

Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)

Spooky season has begun, so it's time to plan out that perfectly calculated and genius Halloween prank. Gather your supplies, recruit a group of assistants, and get to work. You're a genius at your pranking craft, so make sure there are no similarities compared to your previous ones, because we all know you're a perfectionist, and no one likes a predictable surprise.

Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)

You're full of nostalgia, and fall is the perfect time to channel that. Dive into a fun halloween craft, carve pumpkins with your friends, and commit to a fully homemade halloween costume this year. And of course, we can't forget the It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown movie night to relive your childhood. Maybe even a little trick-or-treating to really go back to your roots. Just don't get too sentimental!

Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

You don't need to rewatch Hocus Pocus one million times to get into the fall spirit or post lipsyncs to the same recycled tiktok audios. Hmm...some pumpkin themed baking might suffice though..creation will be especially prominent for you this October. Get creative and that's all you'll need to carry you through this fall season.

Aries (March 29 - April 19)

You know what they say, fall is the perfect time for a hyperfixation. Cozy up by the fireplace with your favorite fan fiction and go ham. Annoy your friends by only talking about this once thing for as long as you can and you know what, if they're true friends, they will surely stick by you through this intense phase.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

You can't fix what you refuse to acknowledge, you need some serious deep self-reflection. Don't be afraid of introspection but also don't use it as a vehicle to doubt yourself. I want you to be bold this year, wear that costume you've been thinking about, don't settle for familiarity! Go to that Jump Jive and Wail function, forget about what could go wrong- YOLO! Assert what you absolutely need instead of trying to force harmony, you need to put yourself out there!

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)

Reflect and recalibrate, it's time for a cleanse, so gather your crystals and reset during the full moon and maybe have Fleetwood Mac playing in the background. You should really adopt an alter-ego for this Halloween, shake it up a bit. Don't get ahead of yourself though; as leaves wither over from green to brown, the cosmos asks you to slow down and look back. Everything will work out.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)

As Jupiter transitions into Leo, you will be channeling 1996 Cher, "Mama, I am a rich man!" That's right, hard work pays off and now you're made of money. Hey, don't get stingy, for you are now obligated to use this month as a means for charity. Spread your generosity, pay for a friend, donate to an organization— maybe your pockets will feel lighter but so will your heart.

Leo (July 23 - August 22)

As the Sun moves into Libra, it might be the best time to find a job. Taking professional initiative this month will result in success and maybe you can use those paychecks to splurge on a super cute costume! Your charisma will be at a peak so it's a good time to step into a leadership role. Only you can change what matters to you! We are all rooting for your success.

Virgo (August 23 - September 22)

This Halloween, you need to let loose a little bit. We all know last year was a disaster, but this year is going to be different. You're going to be the life of the party. You're going to let go and become care free, just for the night. Save all the overthinking for your costume. Focus on every little detail, every little accessory, but when Halloween night finally rolls around, you become the free spirited soul we all know you are deep down. It just might need a little bit of force to really come out.

Libra (September 23 - October 22)

Let's face it: you need to sort the drama out surrounding the group costume. We know you're a people pleaser, but you just need to choose a side and get on with it, because at this rate you're going to be costume-less on Halloween. One group will just have to be down one member of the Spice Girls. Honestly, making this choice will be good for your character. You'll become less conflict avoidant and more assertive. Be confident, and choose the costume YOU really want to do. You got this!

Scorpio (October 23 - November 21)

Fall is approaching... It's time to get cozy with your loved ones and bring people together. We know you fell out of touch with your old friend... but maybe this year, it's time for everyone to evolve. Be honest, we know you miss that lost friendship. Maybe catching up at the pumpkin patch could mend the broken bridges, who knows?

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)

You need to reign in the recklessness this Halloween. We know it's dark out, but just please watch where you're going and try not to bash a car window in or get run over by a gaggle of trick-or-treaters. You can still have a good time, but maybe drink some calming tea before or meditate. I don't know, but no one can seem to match your energy, so this year, try and match theirs.



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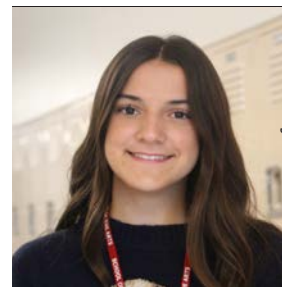
Halloween Trivia

by Tallon Tirozzi and Ella Bonazzi

- 1. What date is Halloween celebrated?
- 2. What are the traditional Halloween colors?
- 3. What is Halloween short for?
- 4. What holiday comes the day after Halloween?
- 5. What fruit do people carve into jack o’ lanterns?
- 6. Which animal is associated with witches and bad luck?
- 7. What phrase do people say to get candy on Halloween?
- 8. Which candy has orange, yellow, and white stripes?
- 9. Which country did Halloween originate in?
- 10. What creature from Mary Shelley’s 1818 novel is associated with Halloween?

1. October 31st, 2. Purple, orange, and black, 3. All Hallow’s Eve, 4. All Saint’s Day, 5. Pumpkins, 6. Black cats, 7. Trick or treat, 8. Candy corn, 9. Ireland, 10. Frankenstein or Frankenstein’s monster

Bridget Lee, 11th grade
Vocal



Sally Lewis

8/10

- 1. October 31st
- 2. Purple, orange, and black
- 3. All Hallow’s Eve
- 4. Wake up, it’s the first of the month!
- 5. Pumpkins
- 6. Black cat
- 7. Trick or treat
- 8. Candy corn
- 9. Scotland
- 10. Frankenstein

Sam Smyth, 11th grade
Vocal



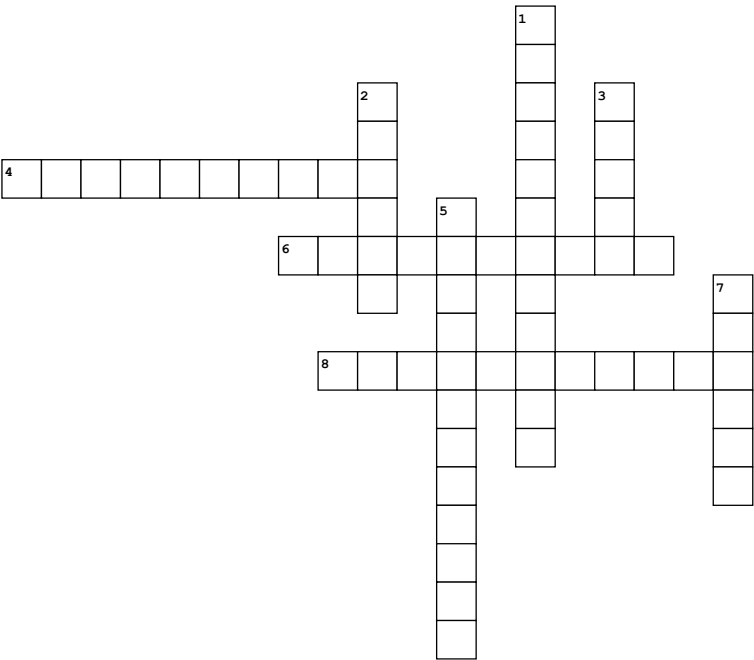
Micah Howell

10/10

- 1. October 31st
- 2. Purple, orange, and black
- 3. All Hallow’s Eve
- 4. All Saint’s Day
- 5. Pumpkins
- 6. Black cat
- 7. Trick or treat
- 8. Candy corn
- 9. Ireland
- 10. Frankenstein’s monster

Halloween Movie Crossword

by Sally Lewis



Across:

- 4. Three sisters who happen to be witches
- 6. “Here’s Johnny!”
- 8. Say his name three times

Down:

- 1. Classic novel by Mary Shelley
- 2. A friendly ghost
- 3. Mask-wearing character in *Friday the 13th*
- 5. “Who you gonna call?”
- 7. “Man of your dreams” in *Nightmare on Elm Street*

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

October
Word Search

by Tallon Tirozzi

October
Halloween
Football
Hay Ride
Pumpkin
Chilly
Scarecrow

Tailgate
Foliage
Cobweb
Bleachers
Bonfire
Acorn
Ghost

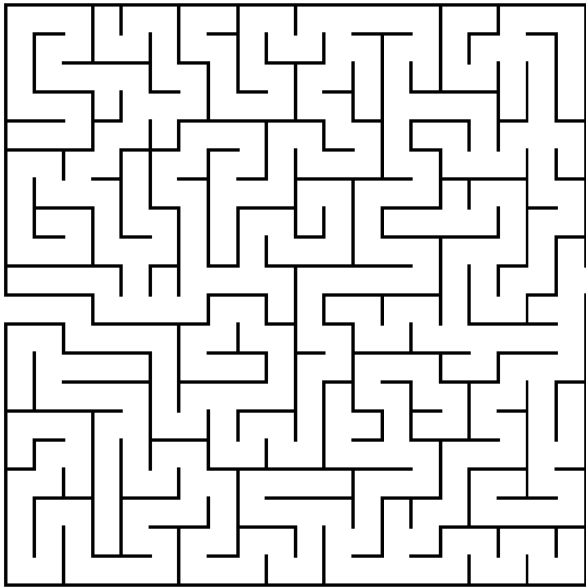
SOA Sudoku

by Sally Lewis

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



Help Ms. Horn Get To
The Theater!





“Candy corn, it’s disgusting.”

Jaycee Gilliams, 6th grade Strings



“Skittles, too fruity; why are they all the same flavor with different colors?”

Drake Ward, 7th grade Band



“York’s Peppermint Patties.”

Elizabeth Spaulding, 8th grade Vocal



“I don’t really eat candy like that though.”

Billy Grauer, Administrator



“Good and Plenty, I hate licorice.”

Ms. Bednarzyck, French Teacher

What candy do you not want to see on Halloween night?

by **Lena Fernandes and Micah Howell**



“Candy corn. Ugh, nasty.”

Mr. Boyle, Piano Teacher



“Licorice, it’s very hard.”

Zoe Cuzmar, 9th grade Strings



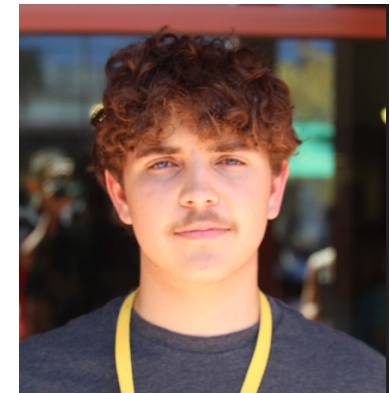
“Gushers; the liquid inside is awful and I hate it.”

Andrew Amani, 10th grade Theater



“Black twizzlers, because I don’t like licorice.”

Grace Pitcavage, 11th grade Theater



“Mars bar, it sounds disgusting.”

Reeves Earl, 12th grade Theater