

SLA Scoop

Student Leadership Academy
Venice, FL

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All the SLA News: By the Students, For the Students

SLA Opens Bigger and Better Than Ever

By Julia Lesko and Liz Mogford

In August of 2004, SLA opened its doors with just over 100 students. On August 24, 2009, SLA opened with 288 students; four weeks later we're up to 291. We currently have 100 sixth graders, 95 seventh graders, and 96 eighth graders. We expanded the Honors Academy to include sixth and seventh grades. While other schools in the area are struggling with dropping enrollment, SLA continues to grow. "I think people are drawn to our school for many reasons", stated **Trina Aker**, who has been involved since the beginning. "Parents like the smaller, more intimate learning environment that we offer at SLA. Our enrollment has steadily increased since the first year." **Ms. Vickie Marble**, who has been the principal here since January of 2005, agrees. "I have been involved with charter schools for many years. Parents like having a choice."

Students have come to SLA from all over the area and from far away. We have even attracted students from out of state and from out of the country!! A little closer to home, students came from numerous elementary schools including Cranberry, Garden, Glenallen, Laurel Nokomis, Taylor Ranch, and Venice. Students also transferred from several middle schools including Booker, Heron Creek, Pine View, and Heron Creek.

While the students were enjoying summer vacation, Ms. Marble and some of the staff were busy working to make the school better. "We installed three new air conditioners, new carpeting, twelve active boards, hurricane resistant windows, and a new serving line in the cafeteria."

Ms. Marble is also very excited about the high quality staff. "Each staff member is committed to the mission and vision of the school," Ms. Marble says. "I have worked in many schools and this is as good a group of teachers as I've ever seen."

Mrs. Hart has taught at SLA longer than anyone else. She, too, has seen many changes. "There are so many more students! My first year, we only used the front of the school and the cafeteria. We used the back hallway for storage!" Mrs. Hart is also impressed with how many service projects we're doing. The students seem to be more committed to helping other people and the community.

All in all, we're looking forward to a great year!



Ms. Marble welcomes new students and parents

Service Projects Planned Coastal Cleanup is First

By Kelley Mayo and Molly Stone

If you're wondering how or where to get your service hours, we have the answer. SLA will have a school sponsored service project each month. Parents and students can fulfill almost all of their service hour requirements by participating in these projects. The first project, Coastal Cleanup, will be sponsored by **Chelsie Jacob** and **Steve Waite**. It is scheduled for 8:00 a.m. until we finish (probably between 10 and 10:30 a.m.) on Saturday September 19, 2009. We will meet at South Jetty Park, 1968 Tarpon Center Dr, Venice, FL 34285.

Mr. Waite and **Mrs. Jacob** will be on hand to supervise so parents are not required to attend. However, parents must sign their child in with one of the faculty advisors before leaving! Parents and students of all ages are welcome and there are never too many volunteers. This is the only beach cleanup scheduled for the year, so everyone should come out for the sake of the beach and the animals that live there. Students hope to see lots of animals, such as jellyfish, manatees, and dolphins, along the way.

Students and parents who want to participate need to sign up at the front desk. Volunteers should bring gloves, drinking water, sunscreen, and hats and should wear old clothes. Boots are recommended. Remember to pick up your volunteer hours form at the Front Desk so they can be signed by **Mrs. Jacob** or **Mr. Waite**



Mackenzie and Tracey Schemenauer
at Coastal Cleanup '08

Basketball Season Begins

By Kelley Mayo and Molly Stone

On August 25, 2008, thirty-five students tried out for the Student Leadership Academy basketball team. The tryouts included offensive and defensive drills. Coach Nate Patton was impressed by the effort and talent of the players.

The 2009 basketball team consists of 14 members - nine 8th graders, three 7th graders, and two 6th graders. Congratulations to the following students for making the team: 8th grade: **Devin Berry, Ian Brewer, Lucy Janusz, Jakin McCorkle, Gracelyn Perry, Rory Shortt, Austin Shroyer, Nick Turkovics, and Christian Whitted**; 7th grade: **Jacob Branamen, Paul Lesko, and Genesis Vazquez**; and 6th grade: **Kaleb Kern and Sean Kerrigan**.

SLA will play private and charter schools. Our first two games will be away; the first is against St. Charles on September 22nd, the second is against St. Joe's on September 29th. Our first home game is against Venice Christian. It will be held at the Venice YMCA at 3:45 p.m. on October 1st.

Mr. Nate Patton is the coach of the team. You may remember Coach Patton from last year. He helped out as a substitute teacher for PE for a few months last spring. He has coached basketball for years. We're excited to have him on board!



Students Shine in Glee Club

By Mary Chrystal and Alexis Riley

One of the most popular clubs is Glee Club. Mrs. Willmore and Mrs. Smugorzewski teach the club. Mrs. Willmore says, "It's amazing how much talent we have in our little school!" The club currently has 27 members. They could take a lot more, but there just isn't room. Due to the popularity, only 7th and 8th graders were able to join; 6th graders will get their chance next year.

Mrs. Willmore says students will perform a holiday and spring concert. Members will also perform in the Talent Show. The group performs together, in small groups, and solos. In addition to singing and acting, the group choreographs dance routines for every song. There are several guitarists and a drummer. The day we visited, they were rehearsing *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*. It seems weird to be singing Christmas music in September, but practice makes perfect.

Several students shared their thoughts about Glee Club. Gracelyn Perry is new to SLA this year. Glee Club is one of her favorite parts of the day. She says, "I love to sing and dance and I love it that we have rules about no bullying and taking it seriously." Victoria Ahlers is also new to SLA and she agrees with Gracelyn. She said, "I like everything about Glee. It's a great, positive way to start my school day." Glee is not just for girls. There are several boys in the group. One of the guys in the club is Ben Holmes, Mrs. Willmore's son. He plays instruments and sings, although he prefers playing instruments. He says, "I love Glee; I get to have fun with my friends and it's my time to shine."

We're looking forward to seeing the results of all this practice!



Glee Club Members Rehearse a Song



Gracelyn Perry loves singing and dancing in Glee Club



Victoria Ahlers loves starting her day with Glee Club



Quite a Dramatic Group



Ben Holmes pretends to be shy, but we know better!! He enjoys singing and playing instruments.

SLA Scene

Candid Shots from the Halls of SLA



8th Grader Drew Paull is the first student of the year to solve the puzzle in Mrs. Hunt's room. Trust us; it's not as easy as it may appear!!



Chloe DeVries is excited about her first day of middle school



Mrs. Sandi and Ms. Barb greet people on the first day of school.



Palmer Francis is happy to see all her friends again



CAP Commander Madeline Kirsten and CAP Cadet Cristina Megna
Cristina says, "I enjoy CAP because it makes me stronger. I also love raising the flag in the morning and wearing my uniform."



Laura Benavides is looking forward to middle school



8th Graders Aja Brown, Julia Dieffenwierth, Emily Christie, and Tayla Bailey and 8th Grade teacher Mrs. Aker are all smiles on the first day of school



Pint sized 6th Grader Julia Lesko squeezes into a storage box!?!?



Anastasia Antipov is a little bit nervous about middle school



Jessie Goetz has his backpack full; he's prepared for 6th grade.



Mrs. Turkovics is glad to be back in SLA after spending a year in Canada!



Lily Carmichael is thrilled to be in middle school



Mrs. Hart is pleased with all the changes in SLA.

Homework Helper

By Mackenzie Allen

In the Homework Helper column, we will give helpful hints for completing homework assignments. In this first column, the topic is solving word problems. Word problems may seem overwhelming, but they're not that difficult if you break them down into three easy steps: 1) read and understand the problem, 2) plan how to solve the problem, then solve it, and 3) check to make sure your answer makes sense.

OK, so that sounds easy. Let's try one: Three friends went to a baseball game. Each bought a ticket, a hotdog, a bag of peanuts, and a soda. They spent \$78. How much did each person spend?

- 1) *Do you know the question? Do you understand it?* Three friends went to a game. They spent \$78 all together.
- 2) *Plan how to solve the problem?* If they spent \$78 all together and there are three friends, to how much each person spent, divide 78 by 3. $78/3 = 26$ so each person spent \$26.
- 3) *Does this answer make sense? What do you think?* If you want to check your work, you can work the other way; $\$26 \times 3 = \78 , so the answer makes sense.

8th Grade News

By Niki Bedell and Brianna Deemer

The 2009-2010 eighth grade class consists of ninety-six students. Most of the seventh graders returned from last year; in addition, we have six new students and four semi-new students. New to our school this year are **Anna Carter**, who came to us from Venice Middle; **Destanie Enloe**, who came to us from Tennessee; **Tristan Ivkov**, who came to us from Colorado; **Gracelyn Perry** and **Raleigh West**, who came to us from homeschool, and **Sarah Tarlowski**, who came to us from Prew Academy. We extend a friendly SLA welcome to all our new students. In addition to our brand new students, we're also glad to welcome back **Niki Bedell**, **Caleb and Jacob Hogg**, and **Nick Turkovics**. **Niki** was here in 6th grade, but spent last year in Michigan with his family. **Caleb and Jacob** also previously attended SLA and recently returned to us from Glynn Middle School in St. Simon's Island, GA. And **Nick Turkovics** was here in 6th grade and spent last year in Canada because his dad was transferred there. We're glad to have all four of you back at SLA!

The eighth graders are excited to be the "big kids on campus" this year. They are looking forward to a great year! As part of a lesson on point of view, Mrs. Aker had all the 8th graders complete a project called *In My Shoes*. We had to answer some interesting questions. Overwhelming, the superpower 8th graders would like to have is the power to fly. The most popular favorite colors are lime green and black. If you haven't seen the bulletin board in the 8th grade hallway, come take a look. Mrs. Aker has displayed some of the shoes.

If you have any news for the 8th grade column, let us know. The eighth grade news team consists of: **Niki Bedell and Brianna Deemer**.

7th Grade News

By Hope Cross, Ryley Kvamme, Kelley Mayo, Mackenzie Schemenauer, and Molly Stone

This year the seventh grade has added fifteen new students: **Victoria Ahlers**, **Sarah Arrington**, **Adriana Butler**, **Kyra Doyle**, **Nico Gregoire**, **Sierra Hendricks**, **Jerrod Hubbard**, **TC Liming**, **Stephanie Martinez**, **Josh McLendon**, **Diana Milo**, **Giovanni Norvariva**, **Zenic Straebel**, **Callie Thompson**, and **Winston Wheat**. We spent some time with nine of our new additions; we wanted to see how they were adjusting to life at SLA.

Sarah Arrington attended Sugg Middle School in Bradenton. She switched to SLA to be closer to her family. She likes SLA because of all the activities she can do here. She likes to play Wii and listen to music. **Diana Milo** attended Martine Del Moncada last year; she switched schools because she moved to the United States. She likes to watch TV and study. **Stephanie Martinez** attended Venice Middle last year and her favorite subject is gym. She loves the smaller size of SLA. She likes to play soccer and tennis. **Sierra Hendricks** attended Heron Creek Middle school last year. She transferred to SLA because she was not learning what she needed to learn. She likes SLA because all of the kids are nice to her. She likes to do gymnastics and she takes tae kwon do. **Giovanni Norvariva** attended L. A. Ainger in Englewood last year. He likes this school because he is able to chew gum in class. He likes to skateboard. His favorite class is Filmography. **Winston Wheat** attended Pineview last year. He is in the Honors Academy. His favorite subject is science. He likes SLA because of the learning environment. He likes to play football. **Kyra Doyle** attended St. Charles Borromeo Catholic School in Bradenton. She likes to go to the farm and ride horses. Her favorite subjects are math and science. **Nico Gregoire** went to Heron Creek Middle last year. He transferred to improve his academics. His favorite subject is science, and in his spare time he likes to play soccer. **T.C. Liming** went to Epiphany last year. His favorite subject is science. **Jerrod Hubbard** went to Wildwood Middle school last year. He transferred because he wanted to live with his mom.

We welcome all the new students.

6th Grade News

By Julia Lesko and Liz Mogford

Finally, after five years of waiting, we were the big kids on campus last year. Now, once again, we're at the bottom of the food chain. Even so, we have the biggest class ever at SLA - 105 students!! We came from a ton of elementary schools including Cranberry, Venice, Englewood, Garden, Pine View, Taylor Ranch, and more!

Some of us were nervous and scared, but we all made it through the first few weeks of school. We were excited to find out that we had all our classes in one hallway, far away from the big 8th graders!

Caleb Wong, who came to SLA from Venice Elementary said, "I was nervous about all the different teachers, but it wasn't so bad." The main thing Caleb misses about Venice El is recess!! **Laura Benavides** came to SLA from Cranberry Elementary. Laura said, "My favorite subject is geography because Mr. Shearer is an awesome teacher and really nice." Finally we interviewed **Lily Carmichael**, who also came from Venice Elementary. So far, what she loves about this school is seeing old friends and meeting new friends. She also said "I love all the clubs, especially cheerleading!" One of her goals is to make good grades. If Lily could change anything about SLA, she would change it so that we would have no homework!

There are seven 6th graders on the Scoop Staff: **Mackenzie Allen, Mary Chrystal, Julia Lesko, Liz Mogford, Alexis Riley, Savannah Walker, and Kelsey Worth.** If you have any news for the 6th Grade News column, let us know!



Teacher Profile: Mr. Cooley

By Niki Bedell, Hope Cross, and Brianna Deemer

One of the newest additions to the SLA staff is Mr. Jon Cooley. Mr. Cooley joined the staff of SLA as the 8th Grade Science teacher. He worked last year as a substitute teacher at Venice High School. When he heard about a full-time opening at SLA, he was very interested because he had heard SLA was a great school with a great staff and administration.

Mr. Cooley was inspired to be a teacher because he wanted to help young students learn and help them gain the skills they need to become successful in life. His most embarrassing moment as a teacher was when he called a student by the wrong name for a week! He also enjoys coaching football at Venice High School. He enjoys instilling discipline, honor, perseverance, and other morals into the players. He also enjoys teaching them to work together as one unit.



He was born and raised in Sarasota County and he has been coming and going for 35 years. He says, "I am blessed with an incredible family. They are very thoughtful and courteous."

Something you might not know about Mr. Cooley is that he likes to hunt. Other hobbies include coaching, golfing, and traveling. His dream vacation would be staying at a cottage on the cliffs of southern Spain.

Other interesting facts about Mr. Cooley are that his favorite food is steak, he likes the color black, his all time favorite movie is *Braveheart*, his favorite store is Bass Pro Shop, his favorite animals are horses, and his favorite holiday is Christmas.

Box Top Contest

The Student Council is sponsoring a Box Top Contest. Each homeroom is collecting Box Tops for Education. The homeroom that collects the most box tops per student will receive three casual days; the second place winner will receive two casual days, and the third place winner will receive one casual day.

Proceeds from this program allow the administration to purchase extras for the students. The school receives 10 cents for every box top.

Currently, Miss Schmitt's class is in first place, Mrs. Clark's class is in second place and Mrs. Aker's class is in third place.

The contest continues until October 16th so look through your cupboards, clip those box tops and send them in with your child.



Announcements/Reminders

- We have bake sales every Friday. This is a great way to earn service hours!
- MANY yellow health cards/papers have not been turned in. If you have not submitted current health information on your child, please do so immediately. If your child has misplaced the forms, he/she can get a new one from Mrs. Tallman in the clinic.
- Only plain red, white, navy, or black sweatshirts or SLA sweatshirts are allowed. SLA sweatshirts are available for \$35. Please see Mrs. Aker before school or during 1st period.
- We strongly recommend that students wear a clean PE shirt each day. PE shirts are \$7; please see Mrs. Aker before school or during 1st period if you need PE shirts.

Upcoming Events

- **September 19 - 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.**
Coastal Cleanup at South Jetty in Venice
- **September 21 - 6:00-7:30 p.m.**
Back to School Open House
Parents will follow their child's schedule; 10 minutes per class
- **September 22 - 4:00 p.m.**
Basketball Game at St. Charles
- **September 29 - 4:30 p.m.**
Basketball Game at St. Joe's
- **October 1 - 3:45 p.m.**
Basketball Game vs. Venice Christian @ YMCA
- **October 8 - 4:30 p.m.**
Basketball game at Tabernacle
- **October 8 - 6:30 p.m.**
Parent Council Meeting
- **October 16**
Box Top Competition Ends
- **October 23**
Washington, D. C. payment due
- **October 24**
Make a Difference Day
- **October 26**
End of 1st quarter
- **October 26-29 - Spirit Week**
Themes to follow
- **October 29 - 6:00-9:00**
School Dance
- **October 30 - Professional Day**
No school for Students

SLA Sleuths (Newspaper Staff)

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- Niki Bedell Liz Mogford
- Mary Chrystal Alexis Riley
- Hope Cross Mackenzie Schemenauer
- Brianna Deemer Savannah Walker
- Ryley Kvamme Kelsey Worth
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