

# Shen-Val-Lore

The Student Voice of Shenandoah Valley Academy

Shenandoah Valley Academy

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## First Weekend

### Caleb Alferez

Every year, all students, returning and new alike, take part in a series of special events at the start of the school year— a way to reunite the school campus. The very first weekend of the school year promptly started off with Dedication Vespers, ROK Handshake, Nature Sabbath, and Almost Anything Goes, a Student Association (SA) event.

Friday concluded the week with a special vespers, led by the Senior praise team which sang songs including Glory Glory, Reckless Love, In Jesus' Name, and Firm Foundation. Afterwards, Pastor Diego gave a short talk before splitting students into fifteen groups led by SA officers and RAs. These groups went to many different places around the campus, including classrooms, the dorms, and even the farm. Afterwards, everyone returned to the flagpole where candles were lit, songs were sung, and emotions were high. Even with the evening coming to a close and most people having already left, a group of about thirty-five students remained, singing nostalgic Christian songs in Spanish, hugging in a large circle surrounding the flagpole. This traditional event reminds students to start the year with a dedication to Christ, and to center our school on Him alone.

Sabbath was also full of activities, starting with another thirteen-year tradition, ROK (Reach Our Kids) Handshake. After students went down the line of church members and were greeted with open arms, they enjoyed a worship service which included performances by SVA's Classical Players and the Senior praise team, and an anthem led by Mrs. Knight, Mrs. Wiedmann-Jaen, and Mr. Mendoza. Following Pastor Reed's sermon, all students were invited to stand and await

a gift from ROK which included a pair of specially made socks, a pair of shoelaces, and a bag of about 6 or 7 Oreos. This act of unification between the church and school body alike reminded students we are One Campus, One Mission.

Nature Sabbath is another great event that occurs every year. This started off with students hiking from center campus to a picnic shelter located near the Shenandoah River. The walk took about an hour, and when we arrived, we separated back into the same groups as vespers and did two activities. The first activity was called human knot and consisted of people holding hands with two random people in a circle, forming a knot. Many teams completed this task easily while others struggled more. The second activity was a relay race where teams lined up and had to run to and from the river using small five-ounce cups to fill a large bucket with water. This intense game took longer than many supervisors expected, resulting in the contest to turn from one of speed to a contest of holding as many cups with water as possible. The fastest team finished in roughly seven

minutes. Afterwards, students were given free time to do activities such as playing soccer or volleyball, wading in the river, exploring nearby areas, or just sitting around chatting. During this time, a classic meal of burgers and chips was served before a bus ride back to SVA.

Following the return from Nature Sabbath, eventide was held at the gym terrace, marking the end of the Sabbath and start of a new week. Once eventide was over, we headed to the gym to start another traditional event: SA's Almost Anything Goes.

At this adrenaline-creating event, students played many key and favorite games, including Mattress Surfing, Roulette, and Chariot Racing. Mattress surfing consisted of 20 class members lying on the floor, shoulder to shoulder, and a classmate "surfing" on top of them with a mattress. Later, Roulette was played. When your area was chosen by the dice, you had to sit in the middle of the gym and watch the rest of the game play out, cheering on your friends along the way. Finally, Chariot Racing was another favorite and memorable event; it involved two people dragging their classmate in a blanket. Both riders and runners were forced to rotate after every lap, to allow for fresh volunteers. This game, however, as exciting as it was, resulted in a couple injuries.

To conclude the night, Freshmen were "pranked" in yet another SVA tradition known as rally the troops. This was not really a prank, and it ended in their being surrounded in the middle of the gym and then prayed over. This moment of silence amongst students and staff alike served as a subtle reminder of all of the importance of these moments and concluded this long weekend in the best way possible, prayer.

From what I could see, all students found some positive way to bond and meet new people and could say they enjoyed this weekend in one way or another. Three-to-four-year upperclassmen and brand-new Freshmen alike each found something new in this traditional series of events that encouraged unity among our student body.

## Upcoming Events

### October

- 12 SA Barn Party
- 14 PSAT (Juniors)
- 15 ACT (Seniors)
- 18 Church Campout
- 19-20 Academy Days
- 21 Cookie Tuesday
- 22-26 Homeleave
- 27 Senior Portraits
- 29-Nov 1 Ringfest

### November

- 3 Underclassmen/ Staff Photos
- 9 SATs
- 12-16 Seniors Preview Southern
- 21 Faculty Family Vespers
- 23 SA Holiday Banquet
- 24 Cookie Monday
- 25-Dec 1 Homeleave



## Freshman Class Party

Emily Holtry

On Saturday, August 30, the Freshman class enjoyed a party with sweets, games, and a bonfire by the river. These activities drew us closer together as a class, and in turn with God.

We began the party off with soda floats and popcorn. While we sipped our drinks, we played table games and enjoyed each other's company.

Then, a new game was introduced. Chairs were placed in a circle. One person stood in the middle and said one quality about him or herself. Those who shared that same quality switched seats with another person, and the person in the middle also attempted to sit in a chair. The last person to get to a chair became the person in the middle.

We then began our walk to the river in the dark, which lasted around fifteen minutes. We had brought flashlights but decided to keep them off to preserve the atmosphere. It was difficult to see where we were going, but God's direction guided us. Our conversations drifted from subject to subject, strengthening our bonds as a class. A faint flower scent wafted throughout the air.

As the air became cold and damp, we zipped up our jackets to keep warm. All of a sudden, the night was lit up by a flamboyant bonfire! We arrived at the bonfire and split into groups of sorts, some resting in trees and others talking. A few students waded into the cool water and skipped stones. A chorus of insects sounded around us. A maze

of trees stretched over the fire, whose flickers of ash drifted upwards. Stars were visible across the sky, constellations like the Big Dipper being easily seen. Even though we were new, we found our friends quickly and formed strong bonds. Those who waded into the water noticed fish swimming around their feet. They felt the smooth crevices of the rocks. Those who chose to stay dry and talk learned new things about each other, like middle names, sports we play, and hobbies we enjoy.

We watched as the fire, once angry and bright, sank into small embers whose flares waned and died, a coda to a fun evening.

Our lively energy had not yet died, however, and we walked

back to the school.

Students would later note that the walk was "very peaceful," and that it was a significant opportunity to bond with classmates and make new friends. The walk lasted around an hour, and was a great chance to unwind and enjoy each other's company



## Sophomore Class Party

Jael Blackett

On Saturday night, August 30, the Sophomores gathered in Hewitt Hall, not just to party, but also to elect their new class officers. "When I walked into the room, I felt as if there was a good vibe already there," said Sophomore Aliyah Serve-li. Many other Sophomores had the same opinion. They also mentioned how our class seemed to be more connected and social. It was as if all the troubles of freshman year were gone. Everybody was loud, friendly, and seemed to be happy to see each other after a lengthy summer break. Sooner or later, the social time had to come to an end. We moved onto the more reflective part of the night, worship. Our class engaged in singing, followed by a deep message from Pastor Diego. When we were singing, something bittersweet began to consume me. I realized that our class would not be together like this forever. However, I brushed it off, knowing that I had to live in the moment and had to enjoy it while it lasted. After the memorable worship, we soon shifted from reflection to decision making. It was finally time to elect our class officers for the 2025-2026 school year.

This year, the stakes were high. All of the candidates running had a passion for what they wanted to do, whether it was being village representative

or being president. The candidates who ran this year included: Teara Bayanilla and Dejayay Burnell for Treasurer, Jael Blackett and Jason Kim for President, Maya Castillo, Alexis Mace, and Isai Sanchez for Vice President, Elijah Masikonde and Daniel Torres for Pastor, Sam Onoffrey and Lucas Reis for Parliamentarian, Nathen Shaw and Jason Kim for Boys' Representative, and Nayomi Siever and Aidan Van Der Vyver for Secretary.

The people who ended up being elected were Jael Blackett, Maya Castillo, Alexis Mace, Elijah Masikonde, Sam Onoffrey, Nayomi Siever, Teara Bayanilla, and Jason Kim. When I ran for President, it felt like my heart was in my throat. At one point, it felt like I could not even say a single sentence properly. Going through the speech, I began to feel more confident and comfortable. I realized I was speaking to the class I would be growing with over the next three years. Some of the other candidates I spoke to also expressed similar feelings. "My hands were shaking as I read from my paper. It got easier over time, knowing that I was comfortable with my class," said Maya Castillo. Continuing off of that, another candidate, Teara Baynilla, shared, "When I shared my speech, I felt very scared and nervous

because I am not a big public speaker. But as I kept getting deeper into my speech, I realized I was running to promote the glory of God, not to flex a title." A recurring theme with most candidates was their realizing that they could feel somewhat comfortable with their class. Last year, even talking to your own classmate felt uncomfortable. It felt like every word was being judged. It is clear that our class had taken a giant step forward. "I really liked it. I

made so many memories. Also, the people we elected really fit their position in class office," expressed Brianna Dixon, one of the voters. Another voter, Kateryn Osorio, explained, "I think that we voted for good representatives that will represent our class. We voted people based on their skill, not how popular they were. I liked how all of the representatives seemed to have a connection with God, even throughout their speeches. They showed their true character and personality through their speeches also."



## Shen-Val-Lore

After lengthy elections and unspoken tension between games, we moved on to dinner. For dinner, Pastor Diego generously bought pupusas for everyone. It added a more comforting touch to the evening. Still, we had to give five dollars for two pupusas, a fair deal considering he had bought them. During the dinner, we sat in a square, just laughing and having actual conversations. If I could give one word for the mood in the room, I would definitely say jolly. “I was talking a lot

honestly. It was pretty unusual for me,” admitted Kayla Prins. What stood out even more was watching people emerge from their shells. It was subtle, but beautiful. Humans are social creatures. And as for our class? We are definitely living proof.

Moving onto the final and most notable portion of our class party, the games. There were several Sophomores expressing their love towards the games we participated in. “The party overall was really fun, especial-

ly the games,” Deborah Berent expressed. Abigail Wetmore added, “The games were entertaining. From a new person’s perspective, it was really cool to see everyone’s personalities through the games.” The games we played were steal the bacon and infection tag. What made it better was that we were playing it in the dark. One of my favorite memories was during infection tag. Seeing people in trees, or even on top of the cafeteria building made me laugh and realize something. Moments like

these will not always happen. I have to cherish these memories, even if I do not find them to be good.

Our class might not always be the most mature or respectful, and there is no doubt we are still growing, but with God’s grace, I am excited to take that big step forward together.

## Junior Class Party

### Hannah Hunt

The Junior Class Party was held at the Student Center on Saturday night, August 30. Everyone showed up in stylish clothes, ready to have a great night. We kicked off the party by having worship. Dean Kristi, our newest sponsor, gave us an amazing talk about what it takes to be a leader. She talked about how the qualities of a leader determine how they lead, and you might not always want some qualities over others. After that, she ended with prayer and we started class elections. As soon as the speeches started, it was quite hard to tell who would get each position. Every speech was wonderfully crafted. Just about every single candidate had put a lot of thought into this, and every single one of them deserved some sort of recognition. Two people who stood out were Eddie Campio-Mendoza and Keilyn Tarango. Eddie, who was running for class pastor, included prayer in his speech while also giving an inspirational message. He had dressed up and,

as Dean Kristi said, looked “spiffy.” Keilyn was incredibly organized. She had notes written down on index cards and looked stunning. When she started speaking, she was calm and confident. At the end of elections we were all ready to play Jeopardy, but the projector in the student center was not working, so we had to grab our snacks and head to Mr. Samuel’s classroom. The food served at the party was pretzels, Doritos, ice cream, cookies, Sprite, and Takis. The delicious cookies, which were Oreo cheesecake flavored, were baked by Staell Chrispin.

When we got to Mr. Samuel’s classroom, we all sat down and Thalia Transporte pulled up a Jeopardy she had created for us. She explained that they were all based upon different quotes from people in our class, or just little-known facts about them. As soon as it started, everyone was very rowdy and competitive. Camille Hamilton was Thalia’s

assistant and helped by calling on the person who raised their hand the fastest. There were five categories of questions: students, goofy quotes, quotes and ppl, more ppl in our class lol, and then more ppl. One of the quote clues was “I worked in a banana factory,” which was a quote from John Mathai. A factoid clue was “Everyone in our class who played all three sports last year,” which was Micah Molina, Kryza Carrasco, and Hannah Hunt.

The game, though thoroughly chaotic, was kept relatively under control, but there were a few outbursts from people saying that things were unfair, much to Thalia’s chagrin. People were very competitive, and the rules had not been clearly stated at the beginning of the game. However, we still all managed to have a lot of fun.

Dean Kristi interrupted the game to finally announce the class officers. We all sat back and nervously bit our nails as

we waited for the anticipated reveal. As she announced the class officers, everyone clapped their hands in admiration as they walked to the front. The officers ended up being the following; Micah Molina for village senator, Joshua Kim for boys’ senator, Giselle Castillo for girls’ senator, John Mathai for parliamentarian, Eddie Campio-Mendoza for pastor, Jake Pacylowski for treasurer, Kaiden Goodwyn for secretary, Keilyn Tarango for vice president, and Thalia Transporte for president. I think that our Junior class officers are going to provide great support for us this year. They have promised many things, and we as the Junior class believe they will carry through with them. We are already thinking up fun ideas to make this Junior-Senior banquet a banquet to remember.



## Shen-Val-Lore Senior Dedication

### Andrew Martin

Shenandoah Valley Academy's Senior Dedication event is a special ceremony in which the graduating class of that year is recognized as the next leaders, and the next generation of this school many call home. The Senior Dedication event which took place on September 12, 2025, was nothing short of legendary. The Seniors invited Hon. Jeffrey Martin to address the graduating class of 2026. Martin's speech, titled Your Journey, emphasized the importance of understanding what we are truly capable of, and leading forth a life of love, which can beat any obstacle facing us. A notable part of Martin's speech that surely turned heads was when he said, "Will you fail? I hope so." This left the Seniors dumbfounded, as the speaker is supposed to uplift the class and give hope for the future. Martin then followed up with the popular quote "success is 99% failure."

Martin emphasized that making mistakes is okay, and even linked it back to a book read in the Seniors' prior year, *The Old Man and Sea*, in which Ernest Hemingway noted that mistakes are proof that you are trying. Martin then made the appeal to our dreams, which can include happiness, success, fame, fortune and feeling closer to God. While these dreams are extraordinary and definitely reachable, he noted that many children of the world have dreams much more modest. Many kids just dream of having food, shelter, schooling, getting healthy, and simply staying alive. However, there is one dream in which we all share in common; this is to learn how to love and to forgive. Martin focused on love with a quote from the famous scientist Albert Einstein: "Each individual carries within them a small but powerful generator of love whose energy is waiting to be released. If we want our species to survive, if we are to find meaning in life, if we want to save the world, love is the one and only answer."

Martin then made the spiritual appeal, emphasizing that God is Love and Love is God. Engaging the Senior class, the speaker threw miscellaneous scenarios at the class in which he ended most with "we should respond with. . ." and the Senior class, and audience, would respond with "love." This is a message that will carry not only the Seniors, but anybody who heard it. We do not always need to respond to certain situations by just reciprocating the energy that we are given, but responding with love to any given situation will make everybody happier. Most importantly it will take us "closer to God than we could possibly imagine" which is always the end goal.

Our Senior Dedication this year included special music, the keynote speaker, and special prayer time, but most importantly, the Sacred Charge, in which the Senior class is asked a series of questions about expectations the school expects them to meet, and to which the class responds with "By God's grace we will." After the ceremony, there was a reception open only to the Senior class and their immediate families which takes place in the student

center. There are pictures taken and memories made as the class reflects on the promise they have just made with the school, to take this place which we call home to a place of acceptance and true family bonding—a school where we will all want to be.



## Shen-Val-Lore Senior Survival

### Sophia Trigo

When Shenandoah Valley Academy Seniors head to Camp Overlook, it is not just another retreat—it becomes a crucible of growth, faith, and lasting friendships. For many Seniors, this week marks a turning point: leaving behind the safety of teenage life and stepping toward adulthood, leadership, and spiritual depth. Senior Survival is an immersive experience sponsored by Campus Ministries. It is designed exclusively for grade twelve students to push their limits physically, emotionally, spiritually, and in their interpersonal relationships. The retreat combines wilderness adventure, team-building challenges, reflection, and worship. Seniors are removed from the usual rhythms of school and dorm life to live in a more stripped-down setting—facing unfamiliar situations, navigating group dynamics, and growing toward maturity together. Outdoor adventure, team challenges, spiritual reflection, and decision making are key points in Senior Survival.

Senior Survival is not easy. Whether it is hiking, carrying gear, sleeping in rustic conditions, or bad weather, the body gets tested. Overcoming this often involves pacing, teamwork, encouraging each other, and leaning on the spiritual motivation of doing something bigger than comfort. Heights, darkness, being away from home, confronting personal insecurities are a few personal battles Seniors faced on this trip. Creating a safe space via small groups, mentorship, and sharing helped, while the role of leaders/chaperones is crucial in modeling honesty and courage. Removing distractions can expose doubts or spiritual low points. But being in nature, with peers and mentors committed to faith, often gives life back to faith, sometimes with clarity for future paths—whether further education, service, ministry, etc.

After returning to campus, Seniors typically report changes in several areas: knowing they survived more than they thought they could, realizing that they can lead, and facing adversity all increased the Seniors' confidence. Closer friendships formed under pressure become stories they will draw on. The spiritual lives of the Senior class were also impacted; people took steps to ask questions and understand the message of God. Once the Seniors returned, they started mentoring younger students, taking spiritual leadership roles, being more intentional in service and community.

For Shenandoah Valley Academy Seniors, Senior Survival is more than an event—it is a rite of passage. It is a few days where the physical climbs and spiritual stretches culminate in a view that is not just from a cliff or riverbank, but from the heart: the view of who they are becoming.

“I loved waking up to a pretty sunrise and enjoying a warm fire before the start of the day.”

-Sophia Trigo

“Something I enjoyed about Senior Survival was the vulnerability, especially during worship. It's always comforting to know that there are others on their walks of faith, and learn from their experiences.”

-Jordan Rivera

“I enjoyed all the team building activities we did. It was fun to do and brought our group closer together. I lost my glasses during one of them, but it's okay!”

-Matthew Hernandez



## Shen-Val-Lore

## New Staff

### Jordan Rivera

Shenandoah Valley Academy has been blessed with a variety of staff over the years, and this year is no different. We are excited to welcome a total of seven new staff members to our campus. To get to know them better, I asked a few of them some questions, which included: “What are some of your first impressions of SVA?” “Do you have any hobbies or interests outside of school?” “What do you enjoy most about working with students?” and “How did you first hear about SVA?”

Our school nurse, Sandy Mendoza, said that her first impression was very welcoming. “I found everyone to be very warm and friendly. I was also impressed by the spiritual atmosphere that the campus has.” Zo Sanga, the task force dean for the boys’ dorm this year, mentioned how he can see how we are rooted in our school’s history, especially with the alumni influence and presence. He also appreciates seeing the past staff members and alumni still continuing to attend church with our current students.

When not working hard at school, our staff has time on their hands for their own interests and hobbies. Chaplain Callie Buruchara says, “I enjoy long, early morning walks and bike rides. I also enjoy making food from scratch. Some recent favorites: sourdough bread, strawberry jalapeño jam, soy milk, soy yogurt, pasta.” Dean Sanga enjoys playing different sports and cooking. He also greatly values being able to tell students about his experiences from his time as a student in a dorm, and what they can learn from his stories.

As a boarding academy, SVA is very rooted in having a strong staff presence on campus. Many staff members mentioned that their favorite part of working is students, and that they favored having conversations with us, since it can also teach our staff meaningful lessons, too. Chaplain Buruchara loves these conversations in particular: “Whether it’s in class, by the campfire at Senior Survival, or during a free period—I just love talking about things that are important to students. I always learn so much.”

With all the trips SVA takes students on, we are always ministering and recruiting wherever we go. The places that helped our new staff find us are unique for everyone: Dean Zo heard about the opportunity at SVA through a church member from Charlotte, North Carolina, Mrs. Mendoza has had friends who attended SVA and has known about us for years, and Chaplain Buruchara is a full-circle moment, as she is a third-generation graduate from SVA—talk about school pride!

But these are not our only new staff members. Boone Menhardt, our new IT specialist, has made a strong impression by helping out staff and students alike. The start of the year is always chaotic with setting up school accounts and making sure computers work, so we all appreciate his effort in holding the school’s technology together.

Our head music director, Andrés Mendoza, is bringing passion to all of our musicians. Based on the conversations I have had with fellow music students, I see that we are all motivated by Mr. Mendoza’s excitement and are ready to do our best for performances. We also warmly welcome Manuela Cabrales to SVA. Valentina, a student in the freshmen class, shares, “She is very encouraging and nice. I also enjoy playing clarinet with her.” Another student, Ajani, expresses that Reginald Long is attentive, and always fun to see around campus.

As the year goes by, we are grateful to have such a multi-talented and dedicated staff join the SVA family. We look forward to the many ways that they will continue to impact the student body and our campus community throughout the coming years.



Mr. Mendoza



Mrs. Mendoza



Mrs. Buruchara

Not pictured: Dean Zo; Boone Menhardt

## Shen-Val-Lore

## ROK Vespers

### Kaydin Kinney

On the peaceful evening of September 26, the New Market Seventh-day Adventist Church sanctuary slowly filled with warm conversations and joyful greetings. Reach Our Kids, a ministry now at its twenty-second year of service, happily welcomes each and every SVA student. Hugs and gifts are given as students get a chance to catch up with their ROK friends while some get to meet a new face.

The hustle and bustle is slowly settled as Pastor Buz and his praise team take the stage to enter the service with music. Accompanied by three vocalists, guitar, violin, and ukulele, Pastor Buz leads the congregation in song. Voices join together in “This Is the Day That the Lord Has Made” and a medley of “I’m Gonna Sing,” “O When the Saints Go Marching In,” and “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.” In predictable Pastor Buz fashion, several students are called up front to sing with their ROK friends. The congregation is then split into sections, each section singing a different melody from the medley. The differing melodies combined into a joint harmony of praise and worship. Pastor Buz and his praise team then close the praise and worship time with “All That I Need,” commemorating the SVA joint chapel with SVAE during the first week of the school year.

Mr. Ryan Brossfield then takes the stage. He recounts all of what ROK has done for the SVA students this year and even jokingly proposes a new ROK event, “Tofu Tuesdays.” He then explores what it really means to be a ROK friend through a scenario. He asks the congregation to imagine that they are on a plane with an empty seat in their row. Through the aisle, however, comes a tired parent with boisterous children. The parent desperately searches for a place with enough seats for themselves and their children to sit together. The ROK friend is the person who gives up their seat for them. ROK friends are the people who go out of their way to make others feel welcomed and cared for. Mr. Brossfield then introduces the evening’s speaker: Mr. Steven VandeVere.

Mr. VandeVere begins his message by recounting his life. He begins with his experience as a SVA student all the way from freshman year to his graduation in 2013. He then from 2015-2016 became a taskforce dean at SVA. After this, he attended Southern Adventist University where, during his Junior year, met his future wife Lachelle. After the call to California and becoming a Kindergarten teacher, he and his wife got married on December 23, 2018. He and his wife then would have two sons, Eli and Everett. Now, Mr. VandeVere is the 5th-6th grade teacher at SVAE.

Mr. VandeVere then explains how he became the person he is today and how he was affected by those around him. He focuses on three important people in his life and how they invested in him. Tony, who invested his time; Karen, who invested no matter what; and Evan, who invested in selflessness. Mr. VandeVere explores how these people, through even the simplest of acts, invested in him even when he believed he did not deserve it, and unknowingly changed his life for eternity. He then explains how ROK invests in the same way. ROK invests for eternity, it invests in its students and sees them as worth every portion of the investment. He then calls the students to reciprocate the investment. He calls them not to just receive the investment, but return such gifts back to their ROK parents.

Mr. VandeVere closes his message with a Q&A for each and every ROK friend and student. Each and every student got a chance to talk one-on-one with their ROK friend about five questions: “What is your favorite pizza topping?”, “What is the best condiment for french fries?”, “What has gone well this year?”, “What has been a struggle?”, and “What can I pray for you today?”. Students then got a chance to pray with their ROK friends and find solace in their hospitality.

After a closing prayer, the vespers service had come to an end. However, the evening was not yet over. In the church fellowship hall students and ROK friends alike got to enjoy delicious pies and caramel apples, while fire pits outside gave warmth to the already cozy fellowship. The evening slowly came to an end as students began to return to the dormitories. Farewells were given but for some the lasting impression of ROK ministry’s hospitality will forever be remembered.



## Shen-Val-Lore

# Soccer Tournament

### Ajani Shaw

During home leave, I had the incredible opportunity to represent Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA) in the Andrews University Soccer and Volleyball Tournament. It was more than just a series of games—it was a journey filled with competition, growth, friendship, and unforgettable memories.

We kicked things off on the seventeenth of September with a long, 13-hour bus ride to Andrews University. Most of us slept through the majority of the trip, saving our energy for the days ahead. When we arrived, the university greeted us with warm hospitality and pizza, which was a welcome treat after the long journey. That evening, my brother and I were fortunate enough—thanks to Joseph Pelote—to attend a private training session with the college goalkeeper. It was an eye-opening experience that gave me valuable insights into positioning, communication, and technique. That session alone helped me understand what I needed to work on to elevate my game.

We went to bed early that night, knowing that the next morning would be intense. Our first match was scheduled for 8:30 a.m. against Highland View Academy (HVA), a team we've faced many times before. The rivalry added extra motivation, and we came out strong, securing an 11–0 win. That victory set the tone for the rest of the tournament. Later that afternoon, we faced Hinsdale Academy from Chicago. Despite the fatigue from our earlier match, we pushed through and won 19–0. With two solid wins under our belt, we spent the rest of the day cheering on our girls' team, who were playing multiple matches and showing incredible resilience.

The next morning brought a doubleheader—two back-to-back games at 9:00 and 10:30 a.m. To conserve energy, our starters played fewer minutes in the first match against the Andrews Jr. Cardinals JV team. It was a tougher game, but we managed a 7–0 win. Our final regular match was against Wisconsin Academy, which we expected to be our biggest challenge. But once again, our team delivered, winning 9–0 and finishing the regular round with a perfect 4–0 record.

Heading into Sabbath undefeated was a huge morale boost. It gave us time to reflect, recharge, and prepare mentally for the championship game. Sabbath itself was a meaningful experience. We attended vespers in the gym Friday night, and on Sabbath morning, we got to sleep in before heading to the 11:30 church service. Afterward, we returned to the hotel to rest and recover. That evening, Andrews hosted a special evening service with fun activities that helped us unwind and bond as a team.

Once the sun had set, it was time to lock in. The championship game was against the most feared team in the tournament, and we knew we had to bring our best. From the start, we played some of the strongest soccer we have ever played, even scoring first to go up 1–0. Unfortunately, a few missed opportunities and some lucky breaks for the other team led to a 3–1 loss. It was a tough pill to swallow, but we were proud of how we performed and how far we had come.

Beyond the competition, the tournament was a chance to connect with others. We met athletes from different schools, made new friends, and even ran into several SVA alumni. One of the highlights was making music with Samantha Trigo, a recent SVA graduate, which added a creative twist to the weekend. Whether it was on the field or off, the experience was filled with moments of laughter, learning, and lasting friendships.

Representing SVA at Andrews was not just about the scores—it was about the spirit, the teamwork, and the memories we created together. It is a trip I will never forget, and I am already looking forward to the next opportunity to wear our school's colors with pride.



***Happy Birthday!***

Editor:  
Josie DeClerck  
Sponsor  
Mrs. Boyer White

3	<b>June</b>	30	Quinaze Matthew
	Kahlen Ma		
6			<b>August</b>
	Jason Kim	1	Sophia Trigo
	Sofia Segura		
14		3	Dejagaye Burnell
	Ella Short		
	Mark Wilbur	8	Natalee Jovel
16			
	Hudson	9	Maria Sanjuan Lemus
	Zimmerman		
17	Mayleigh Henson	10	Matias Mesa
18			
	Joshua Franco	12	Mya Wong
20			
	Belmaris Mercado	15	Peterson Rene Jair Hernandez
	Michael Kelly-Zalaf		
22		16	Kaiden Goodwyn
	Evan Lopez-Montano		
24		22	Philipa Ashabahebwa
	Rhonnier Gutierrez		
25	Ethan Kareti	23	Joshua Kim
28			
	Asa Johnson	26	Samuel Onoffrey
	Mattias Sajuan Lemus		
30		27	Denise Nix-Pinto
	Brianna Dixon		
	<b>July</b>		<b>September</b>
1	Kaydin Kinney	11	Yeili Osorio Hernandez
2			Madison Wilson
	Rosmaily Peguero	14	Daniel Biyete
3	Milagros Mojica	16	Lucas Reis
6	Jesse Odiewuor	18	Matthew Hernandez-Morales
7	Teara Bayanilla		
9		22	Cassius Hartman Emily Holtry Belinda Rosette
	Camille Hamilton		
11	Isla Akinyemi	23	Eddie Jackson Kayla Prins
22	Jael Blackett		
29	John Mathai	27	Stephen DeLong Kris Hoffman
30	Caleb Alferez		Kaylee Buckland

## Letters to the Editor:

The Shen-Val-Lore welcomes your letters. All letters must contain the writer's name & phone number. All unsigned letters will be omitted. The Shen-Val-Lore reserves the right to edit your letters for space and clarity, and to reject any letters. Place all letters under the door of the newspaper room or mail them to: Shen-Val-Lore, 234 West Lee Highway, New Market, VA 22844.

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