

Shen - Val - Lore

The Student Voice of Shenandoah Valley Academy

Shenandoah Valley Academy

May 13, 2026

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Mission Trip

Mya Wong

On March 12, 2026, at 12:30pm, SVA students, staff, and parents left campus for the New Mexico mission trip. Although the group was smaller than most mission trips, they were still just as excited and on fire for the Lord. They arrived at Dulles airport, checked their bags, went through TSA, and waited at the gate for their flight. After about an hour of waiting for their flight, they discovered that there had been a delay that caused another hour wait. This would be the beginning of a long 24 hours for the mission trip group. After the plane landed, the group had to wait in the airport for several hours before they finally made it to the motel. The following day also had a few delays, but at last they began their long drive to La Vida Mission. As they journeyed deeper into New Mexico, the students and staff took in the beautiful landscape and rock formations. After several hours, the group finally arrived at La Vida Mission. To their surprise, there were no children there, only staff members. The students would arrive on Sunday, as it was a boarding school and they went home every weekend. The SVA group ate some delicious Navajo tacos, and planned for the upcoming week. After sunset, everyone met in the boys' dorm for vespers, and opened the Sabbath together.

Sabbath morning after breakfast everyone met in the church for worship. Valentina Rivera and Rachel Tello led out in Sabbath school and talked about friendship. One of the main points from Rachel was, "You don't always have to be friends with everybody, but it's okay to be friendly." We played a "speed dating" game where we got into two lines and answered questions about each other. This was a great oppor-

tunity for the students and staff to get to know the church members. Although they were few in number, they were also very friendly and godly people. Pastor Diego then preached about humility. After the church service ended, Pastor Diego took a few students to a nearby church called Crownpoint. They sang songs, preached, and got to know the people in the community. During their commute they also saw several wild horses in the desert, something they discovered to be very common in New Mexico. After they returned from Crownpoint, a community member by the name of Bob took the mission group on a short hike overlooking La Vida Mission. There, they closed the Sabbath while the sun set over the desert. They sang some songs, and Mr. Tony Williams shared a thought for worship. After that, they went to the gym to play some games and divide up the work for the following day.

On Sunday the real work began. The students split into various groups to work on different projects. Some people worked on drywall, plumbing, the greenhouse, and other maintenance activities. Pastor Diego took a small group of students to work on the week of prayer and plan the devotional talks for the week. This was also the day that the La Vida

students arrived. It was a shock to discover that there were only eight students attending the school. However, their liveliness and sweet manner were more than enough to fill the hearts of the SVA students. After dinner, the SVA students and La Vida students went to the gymnasium to play some games. They played futsal, volleyball, tag, and most importantly, they connected with each other.

On Monday morning, a week of prayer began. The theme for the week would be "Be like Jesus." Every meeting the WOP group would introduce new Bible characters and show how they exemplified Christ. Like Sunday, Monday would be filled with hard work, and planning for worship activities. A small group of SVA girls met with the La Vida students and helped out at the school. Throughout the week, students also took turns working in the cafeteria and cleaning the bathrooms. At night, everyone met in the gymnasium again and played games with each other.

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Upcoming Events

May

Apr 30-May 4 Junior
New England Tour

8 ROK Hayride

9 Spring Concerts

10 SA Picnic

11 Girls' Soccer Senior Night/
Spring Strings Recital

14 Junior Class Elections

14-15 Senior Exams

16 Flower Eventide/
Video Yearbook

17-20 Senior Class Trip

18 Cookie Monday

18-20 Final Exams

20 Freshmen & Sophomores Move Out

22-24 Graduation



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On Tuesday the SVA students got a break from working, and got to do some sightseeing. They drove several hours to go see Mesa Verde National Park in southwestern Colorado. Once they got there, they ate lunch at the top and then drove down the Mesa Top Loop Road. On the way down, they saw many archaeological sites such as the cliff dwellings and pit houses of native American people. They also got to go to Sun Point Overlook and see some amazing views of the canyons. After they finished up at Mesa Verde, they stopped at the Mud Creek Hogan Trading Post. This was a cute little stop where they could purchase Navajo made items and trinkets.

Wednesday was much like the other work days. The SVA students divided into various groups and worked on maintenance projects. They dug out potholes, made measurements for a new fence, did plumbing, worked on spiritual activities, visited with the kids, and much more.

Early Thursday morning, the group departed La Vida Mission to go horseback riding and sightseeing through Monument Valley, Utah. As they drove to their destination they saw several impressive geological formations, like the Mexican Hat, and many more beautiful sights. They also drove through a famous Forest Gump filming scene. Once they got to their destination, they saddled up onto a horse and began their journey. As they traveled on the horses the tour guides gave them lots of background information about the rock formations, and they got to take lots of photos. As the students and staff members asked questions to the tour guides, they discovered that all of the horses were caught from the wild, and then domesticated for professional use. One of the students, Belmaris Mercado, said, “I’ve never gotten on a horse before so I was kind of nervous. But when we got on the trail and I got used to my horse I wasn’t scared anymore because my horse was kind.” After the tour,

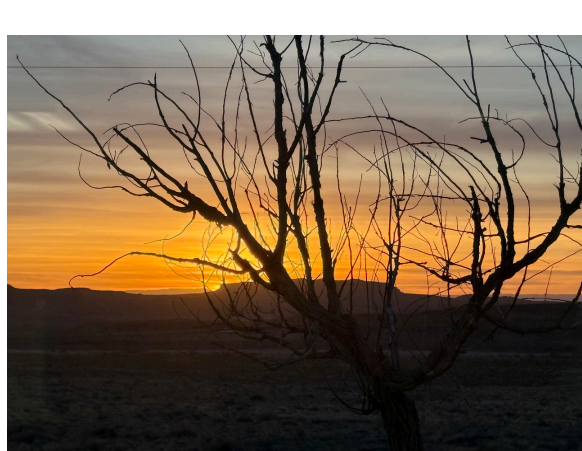
they stopped again at the Forest Gump destination to take pictures and buy little Navajo trinkets.

Friday was the last work day. Everyone scrambled to get all the projects done on time, and complete their work to the best of their abilities. The cement was poured in the bathrooms, and drywall was put up; all the hard work was coming to an end. After the students finished up their work they prepared for the Sabbath and went to the cafeteria for vespers. After a few songs, Valentina Rivera gave the devotional thought, talking about the overall theme of the week of prayer, being like Jesus.

Sabbath would be the last day in New Mexico. In the morning everyone met in the church for Sabbath school, where Mya Wong and Madison Wilson talked about the characteristics of living a Christian life. Afterwards, Mr. Tony Williams preached about hearing the voice of God. After the church service students relaxed a little

bit, and then went on a hike. One of the La Vida staff members, Karl, had talked about a place called Shark Tooth Rock. At the top of this hill you could find shark teeth as proof of the flood. The students had to climb cliffs, walk through a dried up river bed, and trek through the desert. By the time they got to shark tooth rock they were tired, but the view made it all worth it. This was a good last day.

Overall, the mission trip was a success. The community of La Vida Mission were touched by the spirituality and enthusiasm of the SVA students and chaperones. However, it was not only La Vida that was touched, but SVA students as well. One of the students, Andres Bedoya, said “I grew a lot on mission trip, and I learned how important it is to serve people.” The mission group that went to serve, was also highly blessed by the beautiful people of La Vida Mission



Senior Trip to Andrews

Ajani Shaw

Our senior trip to Andrews University kicked off early on Wednesday morning, April 1, marking the start of a 10-hour journey to Michigan. Thanks to our driver, Brooks, being “locked in” and a strategic lack of bathroom breaks, the drive felt much shorter than expected. Upon arrival, we settled in and had dinner at the cafeteria before getting our first taste of campus life. Most of the group headed to the wellness center to unwind in the pool and sauna, get a workout in, or catch the intramural basketball games.

Thursday was all about the academic experience. After breakfast, we took campus tours and visited the departments that piqued our interest. For our musicians, the day was especially high-stakes as they sat for auditions. The university treated

us to a Mexican lunch followed by ice cream, giving us a delicious break, before an evening of free time and worship. The trip also offered a deep dive into the university’s history.

On Friday, we traveled to Battle Creek—the original site of Andrews—for a tour of the grounds and a group lunch at Olive Garden. Once back on campus, our soccer players took to the field for a tryout session with the university team. The day concluded with a powerful vespers service featuring Proximity at Pioneer Memorial Church (PMC).

Despite some rain, Sabbath was a highlight of the trip. Since it was Easter weekend, we participated in an immersive outdoor play similar to Journey to Bethlehem. The weather didn’t

dampen the spirit of the experience. Later that afternoon, we braved the cold at Warren Dunes for some outdoor fun. The night ended with a joint worship led by Pastor Shane, where we met an academy visiting all the way from the Bahamas. The friendly rivalry ended on a high note as we defeated their school in a volleyball match, while some of us chose to attend a stunning Easter program performed by the choir and orchestra.

Our journey home on Sunday was going smoothly—until a sudden accident during a lunch stop. While many of us were sleeping, two of the bus’s glass windows were shattered. Thankfully, it was an honest accident and no one was hurt. Though it delayed our arrival by about three hours, we made

it back safely that evening. The Andrews preview trip was more than just a getaway; it was an amazing opportunity to experience the freedoms and responsibilities of college life. From the historic tours to the late-night volleyball wins, it was a trip the senior class won’t soon forget.

Shen-Val-Lore

Junior/Senior Banquet

Staell Chrispin

Class President Thalia Transporte has dedicated herself to planning this year’s Junior/Senior Banquet, A Night in Dubai, working from the end of sophomore year all the way to April 12, 2026. Her vision, leadership, and countless hours of preparation were evident in every moment of the evening. What she created was an experience that brought our classes together in a meaningful and memorable way.

The night began with the traditional escorting, with the boys arriving at the girls’ dorm. One by one, we made our way to the bus that would take us to Hotel Madison. Upon arriving at the venue, there were decorations inspired by the elegance and vibrancy of Dubai, which made the entire space feel magical — warm lights, rich colors, and thoughtful details that made the theme come alive. The juniors took their seats as some of the seniors prepared for their grand entrances. Each of those seniors walked into

the venue with a personalized intro song playing that captured their personality perfectly. The room was filled with cheers, applause, and smiles, a moment that highlighted just how close our classes have grown over the years.

As we settled in, dinner was served. Afterward, we were treated to a performance by Ed-die Jackson, whose music added a nice touch to the evening. After his amazing performance we played a fun show game. Friends paired up to test how well they truly knew each other.

The rest of the night unfolded beautifully. Groups wandered around the venue, taking photos. Later in the evening, karaoke began, and the atmosphere shifted into something even more joyful. Students sang with enthusiasm, some confidently. It was one of those rare moments where everyone felt connected, where laughter, music, and genuine happiness filled the room.

What made this banquet truly special was not just the activities or the venue, but the heart behind it. It was clear that so much love, effort, and intention went into making this night unforgettable. From the planning to the execution, every detail reflected a want to give students a night where they could celebrate, relax, and simply enjoy being together.

This year’s banquet was more than a success. Thank you to everyone who contributed, and especially to Thalia, for giving us an experience we will carry with us for years to come.



Boys’ & Girls’ Club Event

Kaylee Buckland

On Sunday, March 29th, Boys’ and Girls’ Club came together to host an event: Bowling Day. The entire school got together, loaded the buses, and began making their way to the bowling alley. Even on the bus ride, the energy and school spirit were through the roof as everyone anticipated the fun they were about to have.

The buses pulled into the parking lot one by one, letting lines of excited students trickle out and into the building to claim their bowling shoes. They were told to give the employee behind the desk their size, then quickly make their way out of line in order to make room for the next person. All of the students were assigned a lane,

but got to pick who they played with. So everyone, surrounded by their friends, slipped into their specialized bowling shoes and claimed their lane. In the alley itself, there were more than just bowling lanes. Right down a short hallway, there was an arcade and a snack bar. The arcade had more games than one could count; a few students found themselves gravitating towards it. The snack bar had countless classics such as nachos, wings, tater tots, slushies, and more.

The bowling games themselves were a perfect example of friendly competition. Everyone put their absolute best into the matches they played in. One thing stuck out to me.

As I walked around, laughing on my way back from getting a free refill from the snack bar, I saw something that caught my eye. Vanessa, an eighth grader at Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary School (SVAE), was playing with her sister and a handful of other SVA students, and was beating them all by a landslide, getting multiple strikes in one game. It was a sight to behold! The music, as well, could be chosen by the students if they were willing to pay a little bit extra. Many people were willing to do just that. The handpicked music consisted of many different genres. From musicals to popular artists, the music truly made the atmosphere more personal. It was enjoyed immensely by ev-

everyone. You could look around, seeing people singing and dancing and laughing as they played their match. The sense of community and genuine happiness radiated from that bowling alley in a wonderful way.

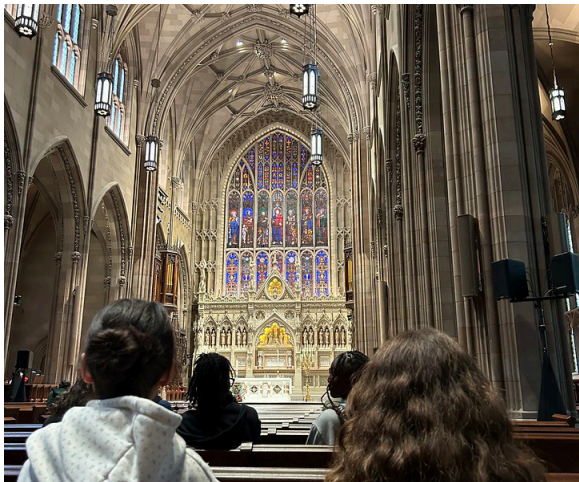
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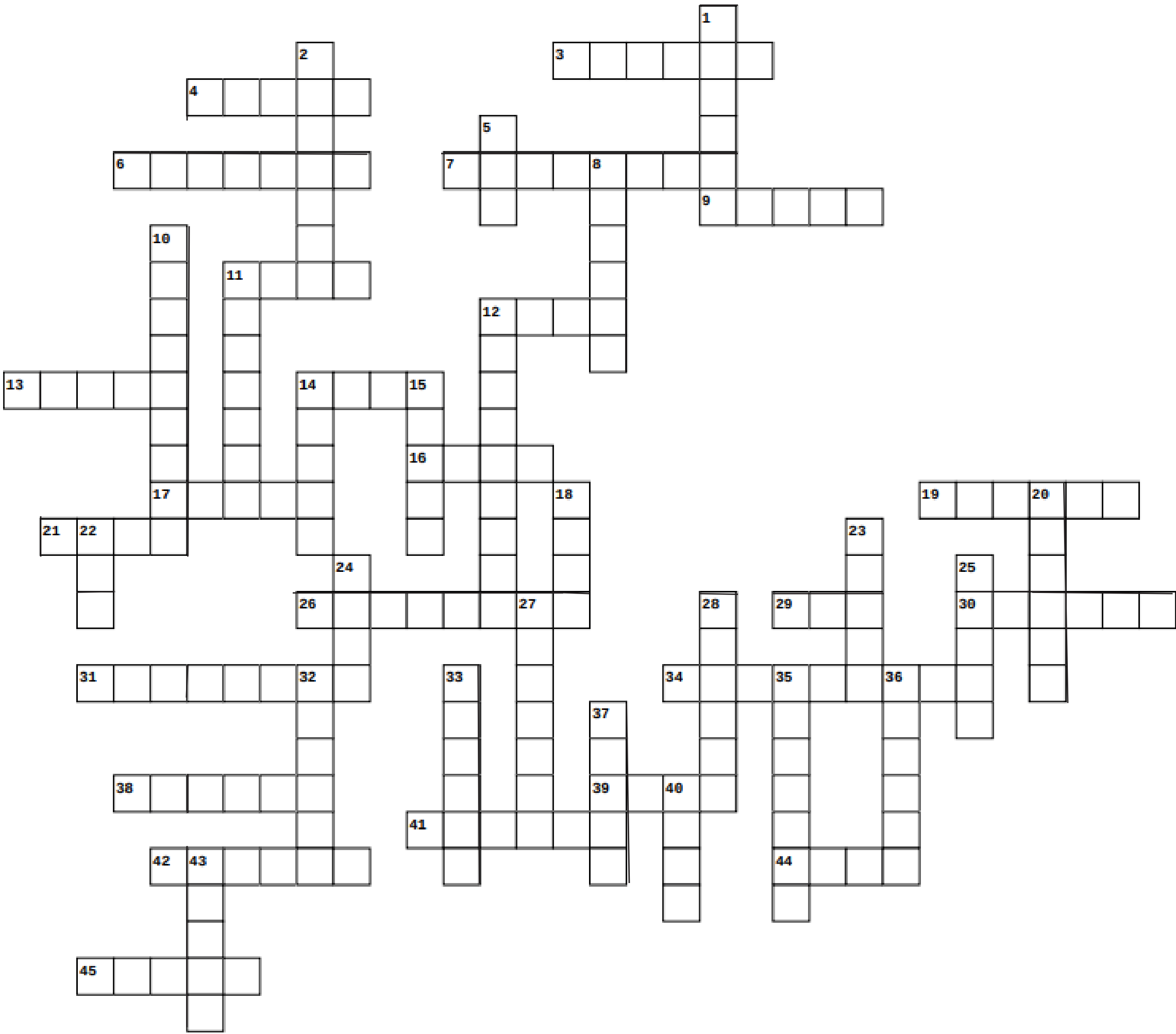
Eventually, it was time to leave. With grateful hearts, everyone returned the shoes, packed up, and made their way back into the buses. However, much to everyone's joy, this wasn't the end quite yet. The students and chaperones all made their way to a nearby park to enjoy dinner and more time together. The delicious dinner consisted of pizza, drinks, chips, and cookies. Everyone dispersed, eating, laughing and chatting among themselves. Some people played games or sports, while others took the opportunity to just rest and enjoy their time off campus. The one consistent factor was the overall enjoyment. Not just of the park, or of the bowling alley, but of the sense of community and happiness that gladly permeated that entire day. It was the kind of day that leaves a lasting impression, and closer bonds than you had before you'd left that day. As everyone made their way into the buses a final time, it was with an undisputed happiness. The Bowling Day had been an undeniable success, and a fun one at that.

New England Trip Gallery



Shen-Val-Lore

Senior '26



Across		Down	
3. Sad Boys	30. “Hey how’s it going”	1. Our Favorite Feminist	25. Turkish Lad
4. IT Princess	31. Hello Kitty LOVER	2. “Mum! Dad! Bingo! Blu-ey!”	27. Firefighting Cowboy
6. Cuban Veterinarian	34. Uganda’s Prom Queen	5. Mrs. White’s Best Friends	28. Spongebob
7. Pom-Pom	38. Nonchalant Dread-head	8. Professional Ragebaiter]	32. Professional Photographer
9 Lil Jit	39. “I’m not black”	10. Professional Crashour	33. Fresas Con Crema
11. Mr. Engineer	41. By: The Marias	11. 50% Mermaid, 25% Shark, 25% Human	35. Argentinian Big-Foot
12. JBL Speaker	42. Onions	12. Uruguay	36. Madame President
13. Never Growing Past 4’11”	44. Horse Girl 4LIFE	14. Major League Baseball Player	37. Buffest K-pop Stan
14. A part of THE Army	45. Jelly-Bean	15. Instagram Notes Warrior	40. “Hey Meta, Scuba Baby Boo 67”
16. Wannabe Pastor		18. Our Little Class Baby	43. Southern White Girl
17. Arabian Prince		20. Class Artist	
19. Origami King		22. Ms. Vice President	
21. Mafia		23. Mufasa	
26. Type 1 Dominican Princess		24. Where His Shoes At?	
29. Blasian Spider-Man			

Shen-Val-Lore

Capital MUN
Anaya Maynard

After a tedious two-hour crawl through traffic, the last thing anyone wanted to do was debate the complexities of national sovereignty. Yet, there we were, on March 29: 12 SVA students stepping off a bus and jumping immediately into the shoes of global delegates for China, Ecuador, Canada, and Kenya. The atmosphere inside the venue was electric—vibrant and alive with hundreds of students from dozens of different backgrounds. These were the people I would spend the next 48 hours with, navigating the high-stakes world of international relations and debating the very fate of global human rights.

Representing a powerhouse country like China requires more than just showing up to the committee; you have to stand out. To be successful, you must completely submerge your own personal opinions to advocate fiercely for your assigned country’s interests. While debating resolutions on human rights and climate change,

each delegate had to remain “in character,” often defending policies that stood in direct opposition to their own moral views. This mental shift is one of the most challenging aspects of Model United Nations, transforming a simple debate into a class in both empathy and strategic thinking. While there was an air of seriousness in each committee room, there was also a bright spark of liveliness. While forming alliances and drafting resolutions, you met new people and discovered that the most effective breakthroughs often started with a shared laugh or a quick handshake between sessions. Outside of the formal debates, these connections grew naturally. Whether we were grabbing a quick lunch in the Washington Adventist University cafeteria or making a run to the Wawa next door to our hotel, the “unfiltered” moments were where the real bonds were forged.

By the time the second day of MUN arrived, the exhaustion of the first day was replaced by

a focused adrenaline. This was the day you had to put on your game face. For the next four hours, we readily debated resolutions and delivered persuasive speeches that, in many cases, you would only be granted a short break to write. Having allies was the most critical part of this stage. The room became a hub of ideas where signatures were key. Securing enough signatures meant your resolution would pass and become an official “UN” policy. The floor was alive with activity, with topics ranging from the safety of journalists in conflict zones to the combating of social media propaganda and different standpoints on nuclear expansion. The debates grew heated as the delegates channeled the mindset of the nations they represented. By the end of the final session, our committees reached conclusions that would have fundamentally shifted the global landscape in a real-world scenario. Looking back on some of the more extreme measures we passed, we realized that while we were passionate,

we were also bold—perhaps too bold. “I really liked some of our impractical ideas. Yes, the debates were serious, but moving the world underwater to

combat climate change isn’t really what you expect,” said Delegate Luci Mesa. Thankfully, the actual UN typically finds more pragmatic, cautious solutions that aren’t quite as fatal as ours turned out to be.

Ultimately, the heart of Capital MUN is the community it builds. It provides a rare space where intellectual competition and social connection coexist. Delegate Katherine Herold, representing Kenya, summed up the experience perfectly, stating, “I loved being able to go to MUN and meet new people and see others that I haven’t seen since elementary and middle school.” It was not just about the policies; it was about the people. Capital MUN is truly an experience and you just have to be there for yourself to find out.

Nordic Music Tour
Sophia Trigo

After months of rehearsals, 46 of our SVA orchestra members and Shenandoans were ready to pack up our belongings and board the plane. After a final check of equipment in Zirkle Gymnasium, Mr. Mendoza was excited to say we were all set and ready to board the bus. We arrived at Dulles Airport around 4:00 pm and scattered to get our boarding passes and our cargo on plane. Thankfully, with the help of our chaperones, all of our luggage and instruments were approved and loaded. The SVA students looked like a school of fish, as we nibbled on our lunch as we were sprawled across the airport floor. We then marched down the stairs and through security. We had a small problem once we passed security; Emily Wetmore could not find her passport. After a lot of time searching, praying, and talking to the TSA agents, the passport was found and we hurried on. We boarded the plane and headed to Keflavik Airport, Iceland. The plane ride was restful and, thankfully, uneventful. Once we arrived in Iceland, we spent an hour or so going through customs before boarding

the plane to Helsinki, Finland. As we landed in Finland, we checked if our instruments survived the very long plane rides. Besides a few scratches on our cases, everything was safe and sound!

As we left the airport, we met our faithful bus driver, Kari! He drove us previously in the 2023 Italy Music Tour and was a familiar face to Mrs. Wiedemann-Jaen; he had been her driver when she was a student going on music tours. We loaded up our equipment and suitcases, and took a deep sigh of relief as we sat on the comfortable seats of the bus. A couple of hours later, we arrived at Suomen Kristillinen Yhteiskoulu (SKYK), the Adventist high school in Finland.

On the first night, students from SKYK hosted us in their evening worship. SVA students got to mingle with the Finnish students and had conversations ranging from common get-to-know-you questions to student life in different countries. We had a lovely time with the students at SKYK. We were able to play games ev-

ery evening with them and enjoy Finnish culture with them. A favorite of many SVA students’ experience was the saunas! We enjoyed the hot steam in the saunas and then many students took a cold plunge in the Baltic Sea. Ask Mrs. Wiedemann-Jaen about her first cold plunge; she had a very enjoyable time.

We performed at two churches on our first Sabbath in Finland. One of the SVA orchestra’s most memorable songs to perform was “Finlandia.” In Finland, “Finlandia” is treated with higher admiration than their own national anthem. Many adults were moved to tears and

students were so pumped when Mrs. Wied announced it during the programs. We played it at almost every school and church we performed at.

We took multiple sightseeing days while we were in Finland. On the first sightseeing day, we visited the Turku Castle, one of the oldest buildings still in use in Finland. We also visited the city centers where students got to

taste some Finnish food and do some souvenir shopping.

During the next two days, SVA had two more performances in Finland. We had a lovely turnout of people coming to see us! Both children and adults alike came up to us after the performances and had great interactions with SVA staff and students. We had a few more sightseeing opportunities in Tampere and we also got to spend a lot of time doing activities with the students from SKYK. One of these activities included a very long and cold scavenger hunt with the grand reward of Finnish chocolate.

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It was then time to say good-bye to Finland. We said a very mournful goodbye to our friends and landscape at SKYK and boarded the bus to Helsinki. We spent a few hours sightseeing and doing some shopping. Later into the evening, we boarded the bus again to take our ferry to Sweden. Now there were a few complications with our first arrangement of our ferry, but have no fear, Kari was a superhero and took matters into his own hands.

He arranged for us to take a ferry that he regularly boarded. Let's

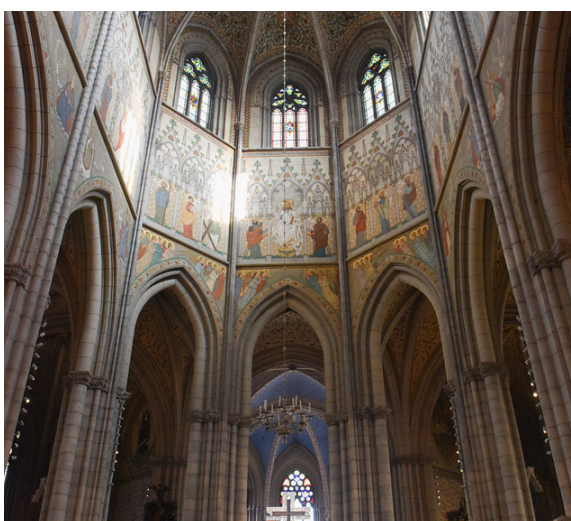
just say it was amazing! We felt like celebrities when we entered the dining hall and we filled our stomachs with delicious food. We entered our bunks for the night and got some well-deserved sleep.

Once we arrived in Sweden, we rode the bus to Ekebyholmsskolan, a high school in Sweden that unfortunately was no longer used as a school due to a lack of students. Hopefully, the school will be back in session in the coming years. We hope to have made an amazing impact on the Adventist community in Sweden. We had

three concerts in Sweden; they all had a lovely turnout. Tears were shed by our audiences and we had so many lovely words spoken to us after. SVA was very grateful to connect with the Swedish community and we had so many lovely conversations.

On our tour days, we traveled to Stockholm and visited cathedrals and museums. One of them was a beautiful city center surrounded by so many pretty colors. One of my favorite memories was singing in the cathedrals. We sang "Esto Les Digo" and the sound resonated so beautifully.

Emily Wetmore's solo was so angel-like, it drew many of the singers and chaperones to tears. On March 22, our trip came to an end. We drove to the airport in Stockholm, and had a hectic but otherwise smooth time in the airport and security. We took similar flights back to Iceland and then back to Washington DC. Parents flooded the airport as they waited eagerly to see their children again. We loaded the SVA bus up for the last time and drove away from the airport feeling tired, but very satisfied.



Happy Birthday!

April

3	Yandel Verdugo
	Hakan Birgin
6	Jacob Libscomb
	Corey Whalen
	Alex Whalen
7	Alan Perez
9	Sophia Juncal
14	Nayomi Siever
19	Elijah Masikonde
22	Isai Sanchez
	Catherine Robson
24	Luis Javier
25	Abraham Velasquez
28	Kyle Goodwyn

May

2	Miranda Jenkins
4	Mason Webster
6	Dylan Jimenez
8	Derek Alcantara
10	Sara Adomako
	Xavi Fuenes
13	Kyra Walker
17	Neijer Ortiz
	Aidan van der Vyver
18	Dominic Mendoza
23	Abigail Alferez
26	Abigail Dugre
27	Erick Avendando
29	Staell Chrispin

June

3	Kahlen Ma
6	Jason Kim
8	Sofia Segura
14	Ella Short
	Mark Wilbur
16	Hudson Zimmerman
17	Mayleigh Henson
18	Joshua Franco
20	Belmaris Mercado
	Michael Kelly-Zalaf
22	Evan Lopez
24	Rhonnier Gutierrez
25	Ethan Kareti
28	Asa Johnson
30	Mattias Sanjuan
	Brianna Dixon

July

1	Kaydin Kinney
2	Rosmaily Peguero
3	Millie Mojica
6	Jesse Odiewuor
7	Teara Bayanilla
11	Isla Akinyemi
14	Christian Stanford
22	Jael Blackett
29	John Mathai

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Sponsor
Mrs. Boyer White

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