



SLA's Great Controversies

The Questions People Are Afraid to Ask

Martin Luther Started the Protestant Reformation By Asking Hard Questions

The *Pioneer* Continues in the Spirit of Protestantism By Asking Hard Questions



Can We Do *Something* at Banquet?

By Maya Thomas

Readers, let me ask you to imagine a scenario with me. You're a sophomore at SLA. It's your first year here, and you're nervous, yet excited.

Why?

You are about to attend a school banquet. You went to these things at your old school. They were so much fun! You talked and danced with your friends, got all dressed up, and participated in fun activities. So, naturally, you're very excited. You put on your nice outfit, and you arrive at the banquet. You find your friends, and you walk to your table and sit down. Then you talk for a couple of minutes. Then they bring out the food. Then you all keep sitting. And talking. And eating. Just like you do at lunchtime.

Every. Single. Day.
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Different Possible School Schedules

By Anya Neidigh

Wake up, go to school, go home, do homework, go to bed.

This is a typical day in the life of a teenager.

But when the weekend rolls around, it's like all the stress washes away. Although, yes, I still have homework to do and chores to complete, now I have time.

However, our weekends should be breaks, we shouldn't have to rely on them to be able to get things done. Yes, we have weekdays to complete work but there are always sports, clubs, and the overall lack of motivation you get after a full day of school. Then on the weekends Sabbath is supposed to be a day of rest and Sunday, in my opinion, is a great day to have social time, or work at a job.

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The Crusader Controversy

By Andrea Baldwin

As most of you are aware the sports teams at South Lancaster Academy are known as the "Crusaders." But what no one knows is the origin story of the crusaders. We investigated and found no one is aware of the who, what, where, or when. It was a great mystery at SLA. Until, thankfully, I found three sources that shed some light for us.

In the 1960's the South Lancaster Academy sports teams were actually the Hawks and not the Crusaders.

I know ... shocking.

Who knew we had a name other than the Crusaders? At the time, they were only allowed to play against other Adventist schools and intramurals.

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Glimmers of Diversity: Illuminating the Benefits of Jewelry in School

By Patric Zabala

The debate over whether jewelry should be allowed in schools has sparked conversations and differing opinions among educators, students, and parents.

While some argue for personal expression and the right to wear accessories as a form of self-expression, others advocate for strict rules and restrictions, citing concerns related to safety, distraction, and potential inequalities.

The issue raises questions about the balance between individual freedom and the need for a controlled learning environment within school premises.

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Dance, Dance, Revolution!

Maya Thomas Asks: Should Students Be Free to Dance Their Hearts Out at Banquet?

(Continued from page 1).

You leave the banquet feeling disappointed. Why? Because this banquet didn't have anything entertaining for you to do. More importantly, you couldn't do the one thing you wanted to do most all night: bonding with your friends on the dance floor.

Look, I'm not here to trash the banquet. It's always a fun night out. We get all dressed up in our itchy suits or scratchy dresses and shove our toes into our church shoes. Then we sit for hours and eat food that (hopefully) tastes good. But I'd like to do something besides that. Specifically, dancing.

Some people fear that God won't approve of his children being on the dance floor. While I agree that people should behave themselves, no place in the Bible says dancing is prohibited. Dancing is encouraged in several places within the Bible. Even *David* danced before the Lord.

I understand why the school may want to avoid some of our students dancing. It's for the same reason we had "dress check."

One person may come out with everything covered, but another person might wear a dress that's skimpy enough to make Cardi B look like an angel from heaven.

However, that is part of why we have chaperones and dress checks. It's an unspoken rule that you'll be expelled from the banquet if you pull up looking like you belong in a nightclub. We can do the same thing with wild dancers.

If the chaperones observe someone getting a little too into their dance moves, they can be expelled from the dance floor, or the banquet itself. We shouldn't let the potential for a few people behaving poorly ruin the experience for everyone.

Let's say that no one was allowed to wear dresses because someone might show up with an inappropriate dress. That wouldn't be fair, right?

Besides, as I previously mentioned, there are ways of controlling what the students do while showing their best (or worst) moves.

SA could have an organized dancing activity for everyone to participate in.

For example, instead of letting students have free reign, they could play a song that everyone can line dance to. There is the cupid shuffle, the macarena, the wobble, the whip nae nae, (you should probably leave that one out), juju on that beat, dame tu cosita, and many more.

Or, we could have dancing games. Games like Just Dance and Dance Dance Revolution are fun for the whole family.

I get that the school isn't going to rent a Nintendo Switch for a banquet, but videos of the game are available on YouTube. We could use a projector to put the videos on a screen. People could get into teams and whoever dances the best could win a prize.

I'm just guessing, but I think that's ten times more fun than picking at my mashed potatoes while I scroll aimlessly through BuzzFeed.

Besides, I'm not the only one who is sick of the boredom that can occur at the banquets. I spoke to several students and teachers to ask what they thought of the idea of dancing at the banquet.

I'll be honest with you here. Some students whom I spoke to were not at all interested in dancing at the banquet.



David Danced Before the Lord With All His Might, by David Tissot
Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

However, several students I interviewed seemed very much on board with the idea of dancing at the banquet.

Andrea, Loy, Natalie Shuris, and Audreyanna were among those who were willing to dance at the banquet. Baile and Bruna, two other students whom I spoke to, brought forth excellent points when I asked them why they thought dancing should be permissible.

Baile pointed out that the banquet is meant to be fun for the students, and having fun is the whole purpose of dancing. Bruna mentioned that those who don't wish to dance don't have to.

This comment added a central thought to my argument.

If dancing were permitted, not everyone would have to participate.

One student who disliked the idea of dancing at the banquet mentioned that the idea of dancing in front of other students made them uncomfortable, which I completely understand. However, I believe that those who may not want to dance are forgetting another part of what makes the banquet so magical: bonding with your date.

Many people use banquet as an opportunity to get close to their boyfriend, girlfriend, or crush. Imagine how romantic it would be if you were able to slow dance with your crush on the night of the banquet. Assuming that the person who you're with actually likes you, and didn't go with you out of pity, a beautiful romance could be ignited by a slow dance at the banquet. Unfortunately, you'll never know... because dancing is banned.

To close, I will give SA some credit: although banquet can be yawn-worthy, it's always nice to get out of school for a while, and I do appreciate the work they put in to make everything come together. Besides, it's hardly their fault that we aren't permitted to dance.

So, I encourage the powers at be to reconsider the issue of dancing at the banquet. There are hardly any fun activities at banquet besides scrolling through our phones... can we do something else, for once?!

Is It Time to Rethink the Schedule?

Anya Neidigh Asks: Should We Change the School's Schedule to Something More Modern?



(Continued from page 1)

Sometimes it feels like there is never enough time to do everything we need and want to do. So when a 3-day weekend appears it is a glorious moment. But what if that weekend was all of the time? This is when the idea of a 4-day School week pops up.

Nearly 900 schools in the US have started doing a 4-day schedule, where they work Monday through Thursday and have Friday off.

Most schools report a positive reaction with students, parents, and staff to the 4-day schedule, especially among teachers, which there has been a national shortage of.

Additionally, there are reports of higher student attendance rates, behavior and emotional well being, as well as a better school climate.

But I will say that since the 4 day school week is a fairly new idea, most of the research I have found has been pretty loose and there's no concrete evidence to prove whether this schedule is helpful or not.

For example some say that this would save money because you wouldn't have to pay for water usage or electricity an extra day but you would also lose a whole day of fundraising opportunities.

I talked to JoAnn Shaul, SLA's treasurer about this and she said that there is a possibility that we could save money but because of how our heating system runs we couldn't fully turn it off anyways and that the amount we would save isn't that much.

Another obvious con to the 4-day schedule is that there would be longer school days or shorter summers. But I wanted to be a bit more specific and find out exactly how much.

Massachusetts legally requires 900 hours of school for elementary students and 990 for secondary students.

If we stayed at our current day length we would have to make up around 31 full days of school. So we would end school on July 12, leaving students with 5 weeks and 4 days of summer and teachers with only 2 weeks of summer break.

However, if we go back to our old schedule of ending at 3:45, we would only have to make up 20 days of school, adding an extra month of school. That would give us all of July and most of August for summer break.

A student's opinion on this is, "I don't agree with the four day schedule because I would rather have a longer summer. Also if we do take away Fridays then we only get an extra half day so is it really worth having an extra few hours in a day or is it worth having a longer summer?"

My original intent when I started writing this article was to convince people to have a longer Friday and a shorter day every other day before I found out about different models for our school schedule.

The reason for my initial argument is because I have always thought half-day Fridays were a waste of time. The classes are too short to do anything meaningful and everyone is tired from the week and doesn't want to do work anyways.

Additionally, Monday-Thursday we leave much later than kids in public school. In the winter some of us get home and it is already dark. If you do sports or any extracurricular activities, it's even worse, plus all the classwork you miss if you need to leave for a game early.

But I didn't just want to report my opinion, but the student body's as well.

An anonymous student said, "I like the idea of having Fridays longer but then everyday shorter. This is much better because you can plan and it's more consistent."

Another honorable mention for a change is to make the school day start later. This is especially helpful for high school students,

After puberty our internal clock shifts to 2 hours later. So if you went to sleep at 8:00 pm as an 11 year old then it will be hard to fall asleep any earlier than 10:00 pm as a 15 year old. This also means it will be harder to wake up at the same time when you pass puberty.

20%-30% of high school students fall asleep in school daily. A later start to the school day helps mental health, academic scores, tardiness and less teen car accidents or injuries.

A student said that, "I believe that a later start to the school day may be an issue for some parents who work earlier in the morning and still need to bring their children to school. If I think about this from my eyes, I would love to be able to wake up later though since I would feel more awake and productive at school."

A school schedule that is popular in other countries is a year round schedule. In this schedule you have your schooling last all year and have breaks every few weeks. This helps avoid losing knowledge over summer break.

The original purpose of summer break was to help farm, something we don't need anymore.

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The Crusaders men's basketball team took first place at last year's SWAU Hoops Classic Tournament, keeping a 41-year legacy alive.

Andrea Baldwin Asks: How Did SLA's Athletic Teams Get the Name *Crusader's*?

(Continued from page 1)

Many of you know the much appreciated donor Orey Gadway. Well, he played for SLA when it was known as the Hawks. But then, in the 1982-1983 school year, Dean Harris started up the athletic program for the SLA Crusaders, the one we know and love today.

The first ever Crusader team for SLA was a flag football team which played AUC for the next five years. They acquired a record of 3-2. The basketball team also started up that year by playing in the AUC intramural league. Clearly, since then we have stayed with the Crusaders.

He got inspiration from the Holy Cross "Crusaders" that are located in Worcester. We have the same colors as them as well.

Our team colors are purple and white. There used to be yellow in the mix but it got cut out many years ago.

Dean Harris's reasoning behind the word "Crusaders" is that we are on a crusade for the Lord and to show that we can play sports even as Christians. Also that it was such a "crusade" to get to play sports since it was practically forbidden back then.

One of these "crusades" was that the Atlantic Union Conference threatened to terminate Principal Alfred Asatrup (the principal at the time) from his job if an official team was formed. But through that, he chose to continue the program anyway. Without him we wouldn't have the program we have today.

This year will mark 41 years of our beloved Crusaders program.

December of 1991-1992 is when the boys varsity team finally played their first MIAA (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association) game.

That first game was against Douglas, and our first ever championship win was against Douglas as well.

The original seven players on the team were Karl Hernandez, Mike Comley, Tom Wehtje, Mike Harris, Warren Clark, Robert Suckert, and Alan Delillo. And the very first point ever made for the SLA Crusaders Basketball program was made by Tom Wehtje.

These players took this season very seriously. They felt very pressured to make sure they represented the new sports program well and showed everyone that sports are not a bad thing. The coaches and players made sure to show the best example of our school and our beliefs while playing. They even won sportsmanship that first year. One of the former players told me that their coaches made it clear that it was God first, family second, school third, and basketball last.

The first girls varsity team wasn't formed until 1984-1985. That team was formed by the music teacher at the time, Laurie Redmer, now Laurie Redmer Cadwallader.

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School Schedules

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Thomas Bloom, the history teacher at South Lancaster Academy, had this to say: "I agree with the idea and concept of year round schooling. Our society and culture has progressed beyond the place where students are needed to gather the harvest during the summer. This statement comes from the idea that early culture in America was agrarian in nature and children were needed for other family duties and school was considered of secondary importance."

A few ideas that are possible is that on Friday teachers can come into school for a bit of time so students can come to school and receive some one-on-one mentorship. However, part of the appeal of this schedule is the appeal to teachers as well. But the time when teachers come in could be any time, maybe 9-11 or a few hours.

Another idea I have thought about is a virtual Friday.

After COVID we all now have experience with zoom meetings and virtual work.

Snow days have transformed into virtual days. I wondered if we still had a half day Friday but made Friday virtual. This way we can sleep in more, save travel time, and no time is wasted because if you have nothing to do you can do whatever you do at home.

While some other people may say that if it's not broken don't fix it, I ask how would you know to fix something if you didn't bother checking if it was broken.

Surviving isn't living.

The world is changing, will you change with it?

Anya Neidigh is a sophomore journalism student at South Lancaster Academy and a staff writer for the Pioneer.



Is the Jewelry Issue Crystal Clear?

Patric Zabala Asks: Is the Way Church and School Handle Jewelry Really Biblical?

(Continued from page 1)

Going back to the 19th century, we go to the woman that influenced many things we see in the church today. Ellen G. White had many visions, one of them being about the topic of jewelry. She said that when the Lord comes, everything will melt off our bodies. As stated, everything will melt off, not just jewelry.

Another reason is that these rules are extremely old.

Most of these rules that we see today were placed around the 19th-20th century.

Why are people focusing on what students wear instead of focusing on our education?

In the Bible, in Ezekiel 16, it says that God picked up a newborn baby who was abandoned on the street, he cleaned her up, fed, and provided for her. It also says that God adorned her with a jewel on her forehead, earrings, and a crown on her head.

If you want to find the exact place where it says that, read, Ezekiel 16:8-12. In the Church Manual we read: "To dress plainly, abstaining from display of jewelry and ornaments of every kind, is in keeping with our faith," citing to the *Testimonies*, volume 3, page 366.

It is clearly implied that the Scriptures teach that the wearing of jewelry is contrary to the will of God. Yet the Bible can also be read to say that it isn't a problem.

If the jewelry isn't extravagant and something more simple, is it really a problem?

Students state that they think jewelry should be allowed if it's something like a small necklace, bracelet, even little stud earrings. If jewelry is modest it should not be a problem.

Jewelry also often holds cultural or traditional significance for individuals. Allowing students to wear jewelry can be a way to honor and celebrate cultural diversity within the school. Many cultures will get their daughters' and sometimes sons' ears pierced when they are young.

With the rules in place, they aren't allowed to wear earrings or even a clear plastic earring to keep the hole open. On average it cost \$25-80 for piercings on both ears. When there is nothing in the hole to keep it open, it will close up. When this happens people usually go and get it pierced again, or not get it pierced again, either way it's a waste of money.

Another reason why people would say that jewelry should not be allowed is because it could be very expensive.

Some jewelry prices are in the tens of thousands of dollars. Schools and the church have a problem with this because we believe that we should be using our money for the church and not selfish needs.

If that's the case, why is it that we are allowed to wear expensive shoes, or uniforms that we can barely afford? If the reason is that it's too expensive, then that is not a valid reason.

I understand the concerns about potential distractions or deviations from a modest dress code.

However, it is essential to remember that responsible and respectful guidelines can be established to ensure that the wearing of jewelry aligns with our Christian values.

Someone can be kind and modest while wearing jewelry. And someone can refuse to wear jewelry while being unkind and arrogant. What are your priorities?

Patric Zabala is a sophomore journalism student at SLA and a staff writer for the Pioneer.

What's In a Name?

(Continued from page 4)

Now that you know the history behind the Crusaders we can now get into the controversy over this name.

There are people who will tell you that they love the name and others that dislike it and think we should change it due to the historical context behind "crusaders".

From the point of view of people who like the name, first we have had the name for so long, and we are already known as the Crusaders.

We are also not the only Christian school with the name of the Crusaders. And why change the name when so many people fought for SLA to have a sports program and chose that name for a specific reason?

We are on a crusade for the Lord and we should embrace that.

Andrea Baldwin is a junior journalism student at SLA. As a staff writer, she covers sports for the Pioneer.

Crusader Sports Update

Andrea Baldwin, *Pioneer* athletics reporter, tells us the state of SLA sports.



The Lady Crusaders varsity volleyball team made an appearance in the state playoffs for the second straight year. Photo Credit: Crusader Athletics Facebook Page

Unfortunately volleyball, soccer, and cross country have come to an end as well as fall. We say bye to them and hello to basketball season and, later on, boys volleyball season, along with winter.

The girls volleyball season has come to an end with the record of 5-14. The girls team also made it into the playoffs and won the preliminary round game, but lost in the next round to Bellingham High Blackhawks on November 4, 2023. They ended the season knowing that 4 seniors will not return next year: Valeria Mayer, Jasmin DaSilva, Brianna Small, and Rachel Gardner.

The soccer season comes to an end with the record of 3-12 and tying one of the games with Innovation Academy. The soccer team will be losing many seniors also, such as, And to conclude with cross-country, they will be losing only two seniors this year, Shaily Perez and Amalia Hough. We are proud of these teams and look forward to seeing how they do next season and we say thank you to all the seniors. We will miss you!

Moving on, we look forward to girls and boys basketball and boys volleyball.

So far, the Hoops Classic Texas teams have been made and are starting to prepare for the Hoops Classic in January at Southwestern Adventist University. Their official practices will begin after Thanksgiving break.

These teams have a lot to live up to compared to last year's season, with the 1st place win for both teams last year at the Hoops Classic, the girls over-all best score in our conference, and the conference playoff trophy, with an additional appearance in state

Don't forget to donate and support our South Lancaster Academy Crusaders.

Go Crusaders!

Also don't forget you can watch all of the home games on the NFHS network. And again thank you to everyone who made this season possible!



Will Senior Connor Allain be ready to return to the volleyball court? He'll have to get through basketball season first. (Photo Credit: Crusaders Athletics Facebook Page)



Junior Natalie Shuris is cool, calm, and collected on the volleyball court. Will she help lead the Lady Crusaders basketball team to victory this year? (Photo Credit: Crusaders Athletics Facebook Page)

SLA Celebrates Veteran's Day 2023

Freedom Isn't Free: SLA Makes Public Display of Flags, Welcomes Vets into Chapel



Students from South Lancaster Academy spent part of the morning of November 10 creating a public Veteran's Day display on the front lawn.

The phrase, "Freedom Isn't Free," is something we hear often but rarely stop to think about on its own terms.

There is a cost to freedom, and part of that cost is the dedication and sacrifices made by the men and women who serve our nation in the military.

On Friday, November 10, South Lancaster Academy celebrated Veteran's Day by saying *thank you* to these men and women.

Part of the morning was spent in different community service activities related to military veterans. Students stuffed stockings to be delivered for Christmas to actively-serving members of the armed forces.

Others took the time to plant dozens of flags and the words, "Happy Veteran's Day," on the school's front lawn. This display not only shows patriotism, but let's those who pass by know that SLA values being part of a larger community.

These weren't the only Veteran's Day activities, however.

Students were also treated to talks by two members of the SLA community who served in uniform.

Mr. Zachary Connolly and Mr. David Tejada took time out of their own schedules to talk to students about what it is like to serve in the U.S. military and why Veteran's Day is significant.

Those who attended this special event in the high school chapel were also allowed to ask questions.

Thank you Mrs. Connolly and Tejada, not just for being a part of SLA's Veteran's Day celebration, but more importantly, for your own sacrifices on behalf of all of us.

Although Veteran's Day is now past us and won't come around again until next year. It's probably useful to reflect on the meaning of Veteran's Day and why it is an important holiday to take notice of.

According to information available from the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs,

Veteran's Day originated in a more international celebration of Armistice Day, which commemorated the end of World War I.

November 11 was chosen as the day to celebrate because the fighting in the "war to end all wars" stopped at 11 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month.

Next year, November 11 is on a Monday. So if SNEC decides we will be in school that day, perhaps we should make it a point to hold a ceremony at 11 a.m., to recreate the spirit of Veteran's Day.

That spirit is one of respect and solemnity.

Again, from information provided by the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs, Armistice Day--which became Veteran's Day--began when the Unknown Soldier was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

And even though Veteran's Day is now over, we can still adopt that spirit every day by praying for the men and women of the armed forces.

Here's one that was first published on Veteran's Day 2021:

Lord God, Almighty Father, creator of mankind and author of peace, as we are ever mindful of the cost paid for the liberty we possess, we ask you to bless the members of our armed forces. Give them courage, hope and strength. May they ever experience your firm support, gentle love and compassionate healing. Be their power and protector, leading them from darkness to light. To you be all glory, honor and praise, now and forever. Amen.

NHS Inducts New Members

The SLA chapter of the National Honor Society inducted new members at a ceremony held in the chapel on November 7.

Pastor Tom was the keynote speaker, inspiring those present with words about the Christian foundation for the core NHS values of scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

Congratulations to this year's inductees:

Seniors: Will Fernandes, Sehoon Lee, Damon Loss, Valeria Mayer, Nikolas Mukulukusso, and Elon Prather.

Juniors: Andrea Baldwin, Elora Hubbard, Arthur Martins, Kaylee Mustard, Natalie Shuris, and Maya Thomas.

Sophomores: Beatriz Martins, Camilla Moraes, Anya Neidigh, Brianna Roldan, and Leeanis Urbina.



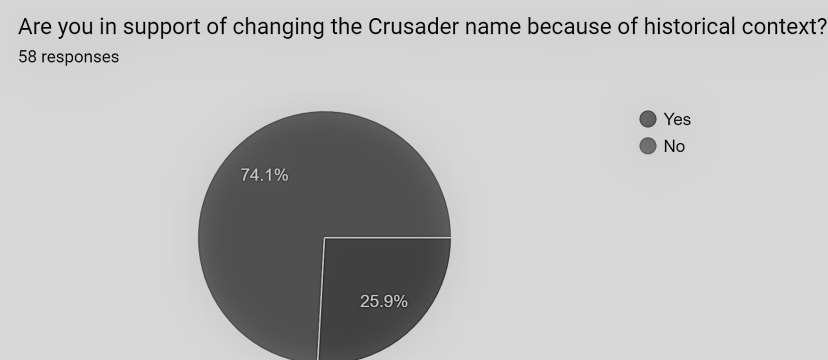
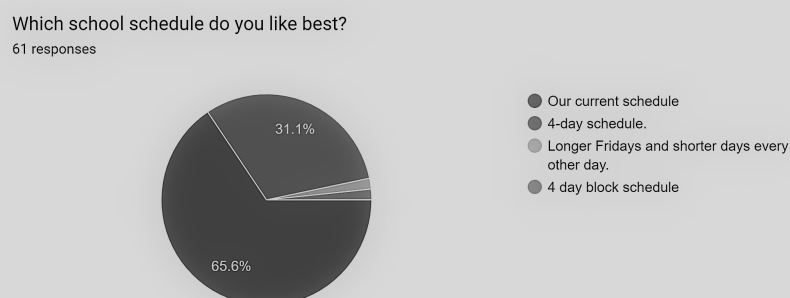
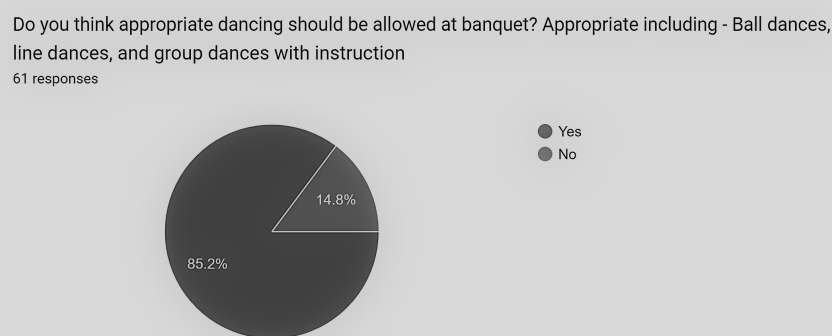
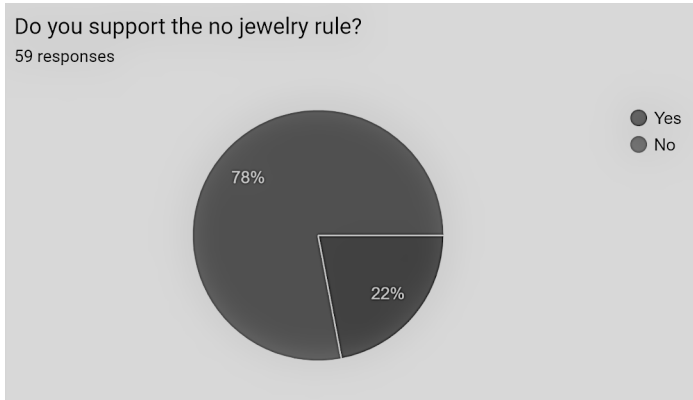
Sophomore Anya Neidigh receives a congratulatory hug from Senior Amalia Hough after being inducted into the National Honor Society. (Photo Credit: David Branum)



Above: Senior NHS member, Miguel Martins, pins his sister, Sophomore Bea Martins, as she is inducted into the National Honor Society. Below: Sophomore Leeanis Urbina signs the NHS register (Photo Credit: David Branum)



SLA's Great Controversies Survey Results



In conjunction with this issue's stories on "SLA's Great Controversies," the journalism class conducted an online survey of students and faculty. The results are reported in the charts above.

In all cases, the opinions of the SLA community are clear.

78% of those surveyed do not agree with the current "no jewelry" rule.

85% of those surveyed think some form of dancing should be allowed at banquet.

65% of those surveyed like our current schedule, although 1/3 said they could go for a four-day schedule.

74% of those surveyed think we should keep the *Crusader* name.

Sponsor's Note

By Roger Prather, *Pioneer* Sponsor

The word *apoplexy* has both informal and formal meanings.

Formally, it is a medical term for becoming unconscious or incapacitated by a stroke or another type of bleeding in the brain. Informally, it describes becoming speechless or otherwise incapacitated by extreme anger.

The informal usage derives from the colloquial phrase, "to give someone a stroke."

I realize that some who pick up this paper run the risk of becoming apoplectic over the fact that students are openly questioning traditions of the church and policies of the school. The idea that teenagers—who are still just *children* after all—are given a forum in which to ask questions is seen as threatening.

If this describes any readers out there, let me defend my students (and my editorial choices) while setting your mind at ease.

The students who wrote these articles are all committed Christians and members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They all come from families whose bona fides, in terms of commitment to the church, are evident and unquestionable. That they are asking questions about the way we do things should not be discouraged but, rather, encouraged.

That these students want to ask these questions shows that they care about how the church and its related institutions—like SLA—are moving into the future.

That means they consider the futures of the church and SLA a part of their own future.

And besides, isn't school the right place to ask questions?

Operation Christmas Child: Made Possible by NHS Seniors Julia Moraes & Shaily Perez



A total of 96 packed Christmas boxes were delivered to Grace Baptist Church by SLA. These packages will be delivered around the world to poor children on Christmas. Thank you to everyone who participated and donated!