



The BLUE UMBRELLA

Alpha Omega Academy Student Newsletter

January-February 2016

A New Year, A New Logo!

By Rose K.

As this fourth issue of Blue Umbrella is released, AOA's student newsletter has a new official logo drawn by a professional artist. The logo is clean, eye-catching, crisp, and communicates official effort with a youthful touch.

Abigail explained the meaning of the logo. The colors, royal blue and pure white, are Alpha Omega Academy's school colors and serve to show school spirit and support for our fellow students and teachers.

But, "Why an umbrella?" Symbolic of school unity, the umbrella represents a safe space where people gather for shelter from the bombardments of soaking rain. People stand under umbrellas to help them safely reach their destination. As a corporate school, we are moving toward our futures and, ultimately, toward the advance-

ment of God's kingdom in this torrential downpour of a world. It is an "umbrella" that provides a cover, a platform of courage



for youth otherwise written off as foolish.

As Editor Abigail put it, "It is a place where the upcoming generation of students can gather to speak and share their ideas, a collective that aims to be a place where they can truly express their beliefs." In a world that silences truth, Alpha Omega students still desire to pour it all over the streets of their everyday lives.

Because the Blue Umbrella represents both international and nation-wide students, it aims to go beyond the reaches of a team and become family, ac-

cording to Abigail. "we are free of prejudice and full of acceptance and support of all things good, pure, and God-breathed. The Blue Umbrella is a place of creativity, art, and writing converged together in the Name of Jesus."

The logo design was crafted by professional artist Anthony Kuhlmann with the cooperation and input from the entire Blue Umbrella staff.

In This Issue...

The Real Valentine

Graduations Announced

AOA Art Show

Black History Month

Poem: Remembrance In Your Fragrance

Culinary Hacks: Red Velvet Cupcakes

Sports: Broncos Upset Panthers

The Real Valentine

By Abigail Q.

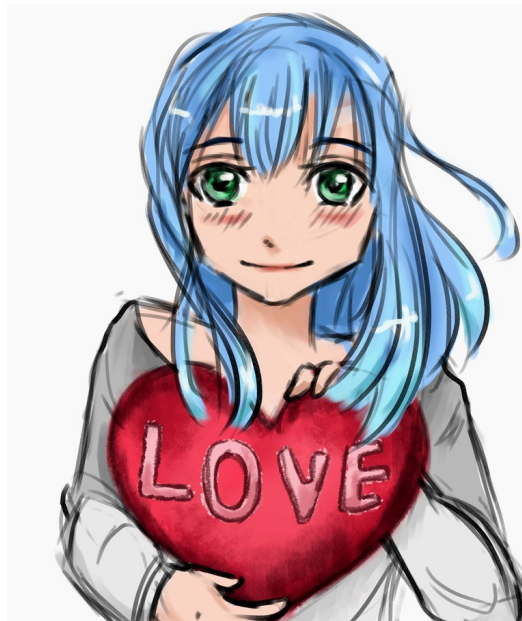
The true identity of "Valentine" or "Saint Valentine" as some people call him, may not be known. His identity was questioned by Pope Gelasius I as early as 496 AD. The official roster of saints in the Catholic church shows more than a dozen saints named "Valentine."

Early Rome was engaged in a multitude of wars that were unpopular among the people. Emperor Claudius II needed to maintain strong and united military leagues. He believed that single men were better soldiers, because they were not attached to their wives and families.

Also at this time, society was very permissive. Being a Christian was not popular. Claudius then made a decree to ban all engagements and marriages.

A Roman priest named Valentinus defied the emperor. He believed in marriage between a man and a woman. He continued performing marriages in secret and was soon discovered and jailed. While in jail, he tutored his jailer's blind daughter. His jailer was converted to Christianity because of his kind acts and his devotion to his faith. Valentinus was beaten with clubs and condemned to death on February 14 on or about the year 270 AD. It is said that he wrote a letter to his jailer's daughter on which he signed "Your Valentine."

End of story? No!



"Valentine" by Chriss N.

Valentinus and a dozen or more saints named similar to Valentinus have died in martyrdom. But you see, legends never die. What more, their ideals and values are passed on to generations hundreds of years later up to this day. Today we celebrate Valentine's Day on February 14 and call it "Heart's Day" which the Catholic church set

centuries ago to remember Valentinus who died on the same date.

Valentinus stood for something he believed in – love made sacred by marriage and commitment between a man and a woman, even to the point of death.

Today, who is the real Valentine? Is he the one that makes your heart beat faster? Is he the one who writes lovely poems? Is he the one you think about

the whole day? Is that the person that inspires you?

The real Valentine is the person who has the right motive of cheering you up when you are lonely. Romantic or not, he is the person who helps you get closer to God and leads you to the truth even when truth is not popular. Most importantly, the real Valentine is the unselfish person who takes risks to live a pure life consistent to the Love mentioned in I Corinthians 13, authored by the God of the Bible Himself.

Il mio Valentino, dove siete?

AOA Graduations Announced

2007 Graduate To Speak At Dallas Ceremony

By Elisabeth M.

Graduation at Alpha and Omega Academy is coming faster than we think. We have three ceremonies: Dallas, Orlando, and a virtual ceremony. The Dallas ceremony is on May 13th, the Orlando ceremony is on June 3rd and the virtual ceremony takes place on May 27th.



For the virtual ceremony each student receives his or her cap, gown and diploma through the mail. Many families will have an event at their house and invite friends and family over to watch the ceremony online. At the ceremonies in Dallas and Orlando, students will travel to the location. They will participate in a fun activity mid-day and have the formal ceremony in the evening.

Guest speakers at graduation get to choose the topic that they talk about. Many talk about practical advice concerning life changes and have inspirational words for the graduates. This year at the Dallas ceremony the guest speaker will be Julia Andrews, Mrs. Andrews is an alum from Alpha and Omega Academy. She graduated in 2011 and went to the Sam Houston State University earning a degree in animal science with a minor in equine science. Mrs. Andrews currently works for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. I spoke with Mrs. Andrews and had a very exciting conversation with her. To Mrs. Andrews, "graduation is almost like

starting a new book in a series. You know, when you're reading a really good book series and you finish one book and you're really happy that you have finished the book and can't wait to start the next book. Graduation is the closing of something that I had a lot of fun with and enabled me to go on to the next 'book'."

Some advice to the upcoming graduates from Mrs. Andrews is, "Never stop making goals for yourself. You have made goals all the way up to this moment, don't stop making goals in the various places in your life, both short term and long term. If you make these goals and stick with them, then you will be very successful in whatever you aspire to do. Something that my mother always told me that if there is any day that you have not learned anything is a day wasted." If you attend the Dallas commencement, you can look forward to a very exciting and inspiring speech.

Graduation is a very important event in one's life. "Graduation is a celebration of new beginnings, an acknowledgement of completing an important milestone," according to Principal Joe Bakker. Some advice that our principal has for our upcoming graduates is "to make good choices and take the steps necessary to meet your goal."

There are only a couple more months left in the school year; now is the time when the realization begins to set in that you're finishing high school. Just as you power through to the end of a book to see how the story ends, keep powering through to end of the school year so you can finish the book of high school and finish on a really good note.



AOA Hosts First Art Show!

The first Art Show of the Academy took place this January. The theme of the show, Nationality, was created in anticipation that the students would illustrate a glimpse of how they viewed their own country or state and what it represented to them. More than 50 entries were submitted for high school, junior high, and elementary grade categories. 12 different countries were represented in the submitted

works. Below are the names, grades, and categories of the selected prize recipients. If you would like to view the pieces that were submitted, [click the following image and be whisked away into the artistic worlds of your AOA student community!](#)



Black History Month

The Story Behind the Month

By Elisabeth M.

Black History Month is celebrated during the entire month of February throughout the United States of America and Canada. The grand story of Black History Month began in 1915, which is actually half a century after the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified, abolishing slavery in the United States of America.

In September 1915, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, was founded by minister Jesse E. Moorland and Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson. The ASALH was an organization that was strictly dedicated to researching and promoting achievements made by African Americans. The ASALH sponsored a national holiday known as Negro History week in 1926. They chose the second week of February, because it coincided with the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the USA, and Frederick Douglass, a civil rights activist. Both men were influential to the freedom of African Americans.

In the late 1960s, because of the legendary civil rights movement, there was a growing awareness of the identity of African Americans. Negro history month evolved into what we now know as Black History Month. Black History Month was officially recognized in 1976 when U.S. President Ford called upon the public saying that Black History Month was a time to “seize the opportunity to



Art by Elisabeth M.

honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

Black History Month was mostly created to celebrate and honor the work of African Americans. But it also represents unity and acknowledgment breaking racial and geographical barriers.

Without African Americans we might not have some of many useful things that we have today. Things such as the pacemaker, which was invented by Otis Boykin; 3-D graphics technology used in film, invented by Marc Hannah; traffic lights, invented by Garrett Morgan; and the super soaker water gun, invented by Lonnie Johnson. If Mr. Johnson hadn't invented the super soaker we would have some very boring pool parties.

Remembrance In Your Fragrance

By Abigail B.

He passed by me on the street
Smelling of your sweet cologne
Never again would we meet
But kind memories my heart was shown
Of a time long ago; ah the time of our love
My heart could stand no chance
Of this gift from above
He walked past me that day without so much as a glance
Yet my mind was taken back
It wasn't merely happenstance
Your incense of masculinity; so strong and fine
Made me stop at a moment
And remember the time that you were mine
Sorrow filled within me,
How painful it truly is
To be reminded of the beauty
Of a time when I was his

Yes this fragrance in the air
Made me stop and pause
Your location, I know not where
Why you left, I have no cause
Thoughts of your features
So soft and fair
As any majestic creature
With a spirit so rare
I miss you, my darling
Where have you gone?
Can you hear me calling?
Why have you withdrawn?
Perhaps you were not meant to stay
Maybe it was for the best
All I do now, is hope and pray
That your life would always be blessed
Although you are no longer with me
My heart still hums your name
This poem is my cry; This poem is my plea
My love, please return to me once again!

Red Velvet Cupcakes With Cream Cheese Frosting



By Esther N.

Originating in the 1800s, Red Velvet cakes and cupcakes have soared in popularity in recent years, and combine a tantalizing reddish hue, a delicious hint of chocolate, a rich buttery texture, and a tangy cream cheese frosting to tease the taste buds and pamper the soul. These cupcakes are perfect for sharing with loved ones, not so loved ones, or simply indulging your sweet tooth. Enjoy these Red Velvet cupcakes with a steaming cup of green tea or coffee in your favorite cozy spot. Yield: 12 .

Ingredients: ¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, softened at room temperature. ¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar. 1 large egg. 2 ½ tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder. 3 tablespoons liquid red food coloring (*I know this seems like A LOT, but remember, you're making red velvet cupcakes not pinkish velvet cupcakes. The amount of coloring will help you achieve the maroon look*). ½ teaspoon vanilla extract (*Use pure vanilla extract for best results*). ½ cup (120 mL) buttermilk OR mix together ½ cup (120 mL) whole milk + 1 Tbsp. distilled white vinegar, set aside. 1 cup + 2 Tbsp. (170 grams) all-purpose flour. ½ teaspoon salt. ½ teaspoon baking soda. 1 ½ teaspoons vinegar.

Frosting Ingredients: ½ cup (115 grams) unsalted butter, softened at room temperature. ½ (115 grams) cup cream cheese, softened at room temperature. 2 cups (250 grams) powdered sugar. 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract.

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit or 176 degrees Celsius. Line a standard muffin/cupcake pan with liners
2. In a stand mixer, cream the butter on medium-high speed. Turn the speed down to low and incorporate the sugar into the butter. Then, turn the mixer to high and continue beating until light and fluffy, about 2 - 3 minutes. Add the egg and continue to beat until well incorporated, scraping down the bowl as you go.
3. In a separate small bowl, mix together the cocoa powder, vanilla extract, and red food coloring to make a thick paste (the consistency will match a stiff frosting). With the mixer still beating, add the chocolate mixture into the cupcake batter, scraping the mixing bowl to make sure the color is evenly distributed. Continue beating for a couple of minutes.
4. Reduce the mixer speed to low and slowly add half of the buttermilk. Add half of the flour and mix until combined. Scrape the bowl and repeat the process with the remaining milk and flour. Beat on high until smooth, but do not overmix.
5. Reduce the mixer speed to low and add the salt, baking soda, and vinegar. Turn the mixer to high and beat for another 2 minutes until completely combined and smooth.
6. Divide the batter evenly between the cupcake liners, filling the liners until $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Bake cupcakes for 15 - 20 minutes, or until a skewer or toothpick inserted into the center of the largest cupcake comes out clean.
7. Cool cupcakes for 10 minutes, then remove cupcakes from the pan and place them on cooling rack to cool completely before frosting. It is imperative that the cupcakes cool completely before frosting.

Frosting: Using the stand mixer and the whisk attachment, whip the butter and cream cheese on high speed for about 5 minutes, scraping the bowl down as necessary. Reduce speed to low and slowly add the powdered sugar one cup at a time, adjusting the sweetness as you go, until all is incorporated. Add the vanilla and mix to combine. Increase the speed to medium high and whip for another few minutes until the frosting is light and fluffy, scraping the bowl as necessary.

Proudly present your homemade red velvet cupcakes to family and friends before gobbling three of these darlings up immediately. After all that hard work, you deserve it! **Enjoy!**

Staff for this issue:

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Upcoming Editor Rose K.

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Broncos Upset Panthers 24-10

By Jack C.

Super Bowl 50 is possibly Peyton Manning's last game in the National Football League, and if it is, he went out with a bang. He has two Super Bowl wins. One ring with the 2007 Indianapolis Colts and the second with the 2016 Denver Broncos. He has been in four Super Bowls total, including two with each team. Although the victory was a huge deal for Peyton, Cam Newton and the Carolina Panthers, with their almost perfect record of seventeen wins and one loss in the regular and post-season, were the center of attention.

Although a blowout was expected, the game was an entirely different story. Peyton and the Broncos took the lead early with 10-0 over the Panthers. In the second quarter, the Broncos added three points to their lead, but Carolina put seven on the board to make it 13-7 at the half. In the third quarter the Panthers were silent, but the Broncos added another three



points to make it 16-7. The panthers closed the gap to six in the fourth, only to see Von Miller and the dominant Bronco defense put the game out of reach. The Broncos had sealed the deal and were Super Bowl champions.

The Bronco's defense, led by the Super Bowl MVP Von Miller and Demarcus Ware, carried Peyton Manning to victory. Manning's performance in this game is a further indication that he is but a shell of his former great self; I hope Peyton retires. He has set many records, such

as most passing touchdowns, and most passing yards. As much as it must be tempting to make those records even more impossible to reach, not many players ever get the opportunity to end their career as Super Bowl victors.

Overall, this may have been the best Super Bowl I have watched.



BECOME A PART OF THE BLUE UMBRELLA!

Email Mrs. Smith at kasmith@aoacademy.com or send a message to Minty (Rose K.) on the AOA Student Center today, and ask how you can contribute. We would love if you joined us!