Welcome to the third edition of the 2018 Virginia Scene! The weather outside is frightful, but TSA is so delightful. As competitions are beginning to start up again, it only seems necessary to take a break from all the stress and work with some holiday cheer. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this eventful edition of the Virginia Scene!
On November 16 through 18 Virginia TSA held the 2018 Leadership Academy! The theme was Off The Grid and was held at Camp Piankatank. All the events were themed around survival skills or ways to become a better leader. The weekend was filled with entertaining sessions, rope courses, and bonding activities!

Leadership Academy began as buses and cars came pouring in on November 16 in the late evening. Once chapters arrived they were greeted by the executive council and state advisor to register and acquire their Leadership Academy shirts. Next the students and advisors quickly headed towards their cabins eager to see their home for the next two days. There were four cabins total that were used by members; two for the boys and two for the girls. Each cabin contained a living room area, drawers and bunk beds for the students, two rooms for advisors to share, two large bathrooms, and one personal bathroom for advisors in their separate suite.
Once all chapters finished unpacking, they headed back towards the main hall for Opening Ceremony. The executive council ran the opening ceremony, which included a run through of parliamentary procedure. After the ceremony was recessed everyone went to the campfire to roast marshmallows, make s’mores, and get to know other members from the state. Afterwards all the members and advisors headed to the cabins for lights out.

The next morning began with a delicious breakfast cooked by the wonderful Piankatank kitchen staff. The breakfast consisted of sausage, eggs, pancakes, cereal, fruit, and coffee or orange juice for a beverage. During breakfast, the state officers put up a sign up list for the morning leadership sessions. Each students selected three of the five morning sessions to attend: A Day in the Life: each student is assigned to an executive council position and they work together as a team to create their own Leadership Academy, Survival Skills: (this workshop had two sessions) students learned many skills they would need to use in a real life survival situation, Moral of the Story: participants are faced with an ethically comprising scenario which tests their moral compass and integrity, and Reward Challenge, participants are split into groups in which they have to survive and do shelter building.
After the students chose which workshop they wanted, they went to the buildings where each of their selected workshop was held. Next some of the chapters were able to go on the high and low ropes courses to learn about leadership, teamwork, and of course just to have fun. Soon after, everyone filed into the dining hall to have a lunch consisting of hamburgers, french fries, and a salad bar. During lunch students again got to select their workshops that they would attend. These five workshops consisted of, Scary Stories: participants must create an ad-lib scary story, Escape Piankatank: (this workshop has two sessions) participants must apply the skills they learned in Survival Skills to a real life scenario, Tribal Council: participants must convince the Tribal Council on their side in a debate to survive another day, and Learning to LEAP: participants engage with the LEAP requirements in order to better understand LEAP. After lunch was finished everyone went by the edge of the Piankatank River to take the group picture. Afterwards, the rest of the chapters got a turn on both of the ropes courses while the officers finished setting up for the afternoon workshops.
The afternoon sessions then took place and afterwards students were able to take a break to relax or hangout with others. In culminating Saturday’s activities, everyone got to eat a delightful dinner, which was chicken alfredo, vegetables, and a loaf of garlic bread. Immediately following dinner, students headed to the main hall for icebreakers and skits that were led by the state officers and a quick rundown of the accomplishments of the day. Then just like the first night, everyone was given the go ahead to go to the campfire one last time.

On the final day of Leadership Academy, students made their way down to the dining hall and enjoyed delectable french toast. After everyone finished eating, they headed back to the main hall for the last time. The executive council held the closing ceremony and recognized the winners of the Reward Challenge session and thanked the Maryland State President and Vice-President for coming. After the meeting adjourned, the advisors and members went back to the cabins finished packing their belongings and headed back home, which signified the ending of a fantastic weekend: Leadership Academy 2018.
Holiday Traditions

When the word “holiday” comes to mind, my first thought is always the amazing and fun traditions that I celebrate during this time. Since the holiday season is right around the corner, it only seems fitting to hear some of the state officers’ favorite holiday traditions!

I recall a time during my middle school years in which my fantastic advisor decided to educate us on the making of ornaments. It was quite interesting. Ms. Parker showed us how CNC router worked as it carved “TSA 2016” into wooden board. If anyone has ever seen a CNC router at work, they ought to know its mesmerizing glory as it smoothly plows its way through wooden fibers, spitting up a luxurious cloud of sawdust. I promise I am no more insane than those who watch “oddly satisfying” video compilations.

But I digress from our topic! Where is the teambuilding, the holiday spirit, you ask? Well, my dear friends, such social fraternization became clearly present when my dear advisor handed us the marvelous substance of wood stain! We were a raucous, lively bunch, and oddly competitive as well. We bashed each other on our lack of stain application prowess, touted our own superior color selection, and engaged in other happy team-building activities. We were middle schoolers, we were having fun, and we were TSA. Happy Holidays, everyone!
I love the holiday season, and all of the traditions and crazy family moments that come with it. One of my favorite holiday traditions is putting up the Christmas Tree on Thanksgiving weekend. There’s just something about lugging out the battered, dusty old tree box that brings back some really great memories. This tree is about 25 years old and 10 ft tall, it just barely scrapes the top of our ceiling. We have to painstakingly fluff out every single branch and string in the lights as we go. Needless to say it takes up the whole day and a BUNCH of Christmas songs belting from our TV. At the end of the day we bring out a seemingly endless string of ornaments that all have special meanings. Ya know it would probably would be a lot faster if more than just my mom and I put it up, my sister just watches us construct the big ole thing stating that she’s the moral support captain. I’m looking at you Sydney -_- But by far, my favorite holiday tradition is when the whole family piles in to my grandparents house on Christmas. We all sit down by my Oma’s (grandmother in German) raging fire that is fueled by her incessant need to collect December’s daily editions of the Daily Press and a few logs. Usually my Opa (grandfather in German) will go down to the basement a pull a a faded brown case that is spiderwebbed with age. It is his Diatonische Akkordeon, an instrument that was once popular in the German States but has been lost with the times. It is similar to the accordion (the accordion took over as the popular instrument), but doesn't have a keyboard. He will play the night away while we all sing along to some traditional German Carols. Of course we can’t forget that this is rush time for TSA. It’s time to get crackalackin on those competitions! Regionals is closer than it seems! Happy Holidays

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sierra Funk  
Tidewater Regional President
It’s the most wonderful time of the year! Christmas is an amazing time to visit with family and friends, continue traditions, and celebrate the season. Each aspect of this holiday season is magical, but perhaps one of my favorite traditions is participating in Secret Santa with my friends. This is a great way to make sure each person receives an outstanding gift he or she deserves! Personally, I have much more fun making gifts for my friends than buying them; I enjoy expressing creativity and personalization through my project! I know several chapters that also do a gift exchange for their members, and in the upcoming years, I would love to implement that into my chapter as well! I hope you all have a wonderful and safe holiday season, and I can’t wait for 2019!

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Collins

Our chapter always distributes our events for Regionals right before winter break. This means we have a winter break filled with TSA productivity! I’m not sure if you sense sarcasm over text but we’re definitely not productive. We do, however, blast Christmas music and really bond as a chapter while making very little progress on our events.

Respectfully submitted,
Rishin Pandit
Hey y’all! It’s Ashley Sooklal, your Southwestern Regional President. My all-time, hands down, fa-vor-ite, holiday tradition is every other year, my family and I go up to Nashville where we visit my cousins and spend Christmas time with them. They have the biggest Christmas tree at their house and it’s always so nicely decorated. Another thing I enjoy about it is my cousins have not one, but two toddler girls that are bustling and always have something to say. I make sure I get my babysitting practice in while I’m with them. On Christmas Day I like to wake up early, get fancy with a little elf dress, and run downstairs with the two girls to celebrate the joy of a Christmas morning.

That’s all of our holiday traditions. However, if you or someone you know have some amazing holiday traditions that you’d like to share with the state officers and possibly all of Virginia TSA, feel free to contact reporter.virginiatsa@gmail.com We would love to how all of you spend this wonderful time of year!
For the month of December, your state officer team chose Lanney Le to be the Member of the Month for her outstanding accomplishments in TSA and all she has done to give back to this organization. Lanney has been a dedicated member of TSA for the past 4 years. Throughout this time she’s competed in many events and placing rather well in them. She’s dedicated and passionate about what she does, and she is always willing to help with anything. She has also held several leadership positions at the chapter and regional level. The past two years, our high school has been without an official advisor that works there, so the students have had to really step up to make sure we were affiliated, had paperwork and money turned in on time, etc. Lanney has served as Treasurer the past two years and has made sure everyone has everything the need and turned in on time. She has more than stepped up in our chapter and has become a major role model for each of us. If you know any members that you believe would also be a great Member of the Month candidate, please contact secretary.virginitasa@gmail.com with that person’s name and why they should represent Virginia TSA for that given month.
In this next article Jake Strother, a Regional Representative for the state of Oklahoma, is going to give us an insight on his position and journey throughout his years in TSA!

Hey Virginia TSA, my name is Jake Strother and I serve on the Oklahoma TSA State Officer Team as a Region Representative. The fun thing about my position on the team is I have the responsibility of keeping in contact with the regional officers and the members to bring their ideas to the rest of the State Officer Team. I joined TSA in 2015 and became my school’s Treasurer. After that, I went on to serve as my school’s President then the Western Region of Oklahoma’s president. In Oklahoma, we have 2 Regions. (The East & West) Each region has 6 officers. Then we have our 8 officers on the State team. I was elected to serve as the Region Representative on the State team this year, and it is a fantastic honor. I serve with some of the best State Officers you’d ever meet. Teams work better when they are more like a family and I can say I have definitely found that with my team. Oklahoma TSA and Virginia TSA are great friends. We stood together in Atlanta to pass the Compromise Amendment that your president and Oklahoma’s former president served on the committee to make. Just recently I got to become friends with your Treasurer, Rebecca. I believe State officers from every state should always have good communication and bounce ideas off of one another. We can only make each other better. Virginia TSA, I hope y’all have a great Holiday Season!
If you’ve made it to this point, I hope that this edition of the Virginia Scene was everything you were hoping it would be and more! If you have any questions relating directly to the Scene or any suggestions, feel free to email reporter.virginiatsa@gmail.com. I will happily answer any and all questions and take into account all suggestions because the Virginia Scene belongs to the members too! I count on you all to tune in to the February edition of the Virginia Scene. Until then, Have a wonderful holiday season and keep lighting the way for a brighter future for TSA!

Respectfully Submitted,
Lexi Vencill
State Reporter