

Every summer, the new leadership takes the reins of the paper's design, sifting through fonts, colors, Pinterest pages and design languages to find the best ones for its new branding. We had to use the same design language given to us by last year's authors for the "rookie paper," published at the end of each school year, but summer is our chance to put the paper's new personality in place.

This summer, I led the charge of our redesign efforts. As I thought about what I wanted our new brand to be, I considered a couple questions:

- Do we want our look to be modern or traditional?
- Do we want to emphasize cleanliness or substance?
- At the end of the year, how should everything look when we lay it all out, side-by-side?
- How much work do we want to put into making our layouts fit into the design language?
- Do we want design-inspired content or content-inspired design?

I gathered through the process that a good designer doesn't need to choose between two options — both can work.

A couple hitches are always going to be there — we have to think about our cover designs long before we get out the cameras, for example — but the end result has met and exceeded our expectations.

Before a staff can begin its own design process, it has to look at the successful works of other papers. Below, you'll find some examples of the elements we looked at in other publications we admired before even opening InDesign on our own computers. The first thing I wanted to square away — for the sake of a unifying visual element — was a strong page 1 design language. We eventually incorporated elements from all four of the following sample cover designs to create a cohesive unifying element throughout the rest of the paper. Lastly, one of the things I was continually considering was how all the papers would look side-by-side at the end of the year. A cohesive design is paramount to a cohesive publication, and in my opinion, we did pretty well.

Since then, much of our design process has hinged on the use of snippets, which I created over the summer to create design cohesion and to streamline the layout process. Each month, I refine the snippets slightly to advance this cohesion while also allowing the designer as much creative expression as possible, and nowhere is that better shown than in our covers: each feature a prominent "flag" design, whether a photo or photo illustration or graphic, as well as a masthead that interacts with the flag visual.

Our story this cycle, centered around role of media, examined how student publications factored into the news cycle. For the cover design, I set up a photoshoot with one of our student photographers, gathering fitting trinkets and souvenirs from desks of people I knew. My main challenge was integrating the headline, but after realizing that we had prime real estate on the newspaper itself, I “erased” the already existing headline on the newspaper and replaced it with our own text, working in Photoshop to blend it with the texture of the paper.

For the centerspread design for our cover story on the role of media, we continued the unifying visual of paper by incorporating the paper-rip technique on the left-hand page. Like on the cover, I replaced an already existing newspaper text with my own headline and subhead; I did the same for editor-in-chief Robert Pou’s column at the bottom of the page. The main globe visual in the background initially presented challenges, but I discovered that if I reduce the opacity and place it underneath the text, the story would still be legible and we could keep the entire visual.

I had begun designing this page on a false premises: rather than a tabloid design, I'd accidentally chosen 8.5x11. Once I realized my error, I found myself with a glut of free space to use. Thus I decided that, rather than only section beginners, I could include a short description of each story and a couple photos scattered throughout. I also had room to include a personal column from our Senior Writer, an "overheards" section and a small collage of relevant photos at the bottom. This design has served us well, so we've kept it ever since.

For this cover, I set up a photoshoot with a friend of the editor-in-chief who, importantly, did not go to our school and would therefore not be recognized by the student body. I wanted a dramatic photo, preferably with a mirror, to represent the earnestness of the issue of mental health while localizing it to St. Mark’s, so we gave him the recognizable blue shirt that seniors here wear and drove to a classmate’s house with lots of mirrors. The one that worked best for our purposes was in a small, intricately decorated bathroom with dark yellow light to contrast with the artificial blue light we shone up at the subject’s face. Once I got this photo into our InDesign layout, I completed the routine masthead overlaying and placed the headline into the mirror to further integrate it into the photo.

For our final cover the year, we asked Morgan Chow, a talented sophomore artist on our staff, to draw a portrait of an Asian student at St. Mark’s to draw attention to the localization of our coverage on the recent surge in anti-Asian violence, the background featuring references to Asian symbols and designs. Rather than keeping our preview text localized in one area, we decided to use low-opacity type with high leading to cover the length of the photo, interrupting it with our headline ‘Now I feel unsafe,’ a quote I took directly from our story. Like all our other covers, the masthead interacts with the image.

Dallas, TX • Volume 67, Number 5 • April 16, 2021 • St. Mark's School of Texas

THE REVIEW

Anti-Asian hate crimes are spiking, more than doubling in the last year.

While this issue has seen a major rise

• **Now I feel unsafe** •

in coverage by the media recently, it

isn't new. Asian Americans have faced

discrimination for years, and faculty,

students and experts have opened up

about their own experiences. Some

feel it personally. Some don't see it for

themselves, but they fear for their

friends and family. And some are

spending their days and nights doing

something about it, figuring out why

it's going on — and how to fix it. **PAGE 14-15**

STORY Jamie Mahowald, Luke Piazza, Robert Pou, Siddhartha Sinha, Sai Thirunagari **ARTWORK** Morgan Chow

Inside

Talking consent

Katie Koestner speaks on healthy relationships and the school's sexual education program. **Page 3**

Senior Section

As end-of-year festivities approach, the Class of 2021 reflects on their time here. **Special section**

Focus

In light of The Capitol insurrection Jan. 6, we explore the different facets of democracy. **Inside magazine**

14, 15

Perspectives

...haggard face at the office. Pull up Netflix on your phone and catch up on the latest season of *Queer Eye* while Tony Moly's finest serums seep into your pores. The only thing better would be a nice, hot soak in a Jacuzzi. And why not? You have the space! You never get to use the one you have at home; it's just collecting dust and dirty towels. Hire a handyman to install it in the back of your Hummer H2, grab that beach read that's been on your nightstand for four months, and make a day of it. After all, you spend more time on the road than you do with your own family. Don't they deserve to see you relaxed and refreshed? Oh no. Traffic is starting to clear. Back to reality. Take your dripping self back into the driver's seat and inch forward. Watch your engine meter slowly...

A Historic Question

What are the goals and responsibilities of the modern media, and how do news companies strive to achieve them?

Both left and right declare victory after large protest

large contingent of right-wingers to leave when they asked to — authorities were able to mostly keep sides apart. Joe Bir...

As the Greater Dallas Press delivery van pulls up just outside Nearburg, several members of *The ReMarker* staff gather round. It's 10:30 a.m. on a Friday, and 1,400 copies of the October edition of *The ReMarker* have just arrived. Bundle after bundle of hot-off-the-press newspapers are unloaded and hauled off to the Hersh Journalism Suite. From there, the papers are distributed all over campus — to Winn, Hoffman, Decherd, the Lower School, and even the student store. When students emerge from their classes and head to lunch, they pick up a copy of the newspaper on their way, thumbing through it while waiting in line for food, perusing it between classes, stashing it in their backpacks to take home and read later. Then the conversations start — the casual comments, heated discussions, intense debates.



Robert Decherd '69
A.H. Belo Corporation chairman, president and CEO

And that's what *The ReMarker*, what any newspaper, should do — that is, fuel dialogue about important topics and issues. Over the years, newspapers and other forms of media — television, radio and now social media — have changed, especially with the dawn of the digital age. Even today, publications and news outlets across the country go about accomplishing this goal of sparking discussions in totally different ways.

According to Robert W. Decherd '69, chairman, president and CEO of the A.H. Belo Corporation, the parent company of the *Dallas Morning News*, newspapers in the late 19th century "took very specific and often strident positions on political and other issues." Then, during the mid-20th century, they took a more balanced approach, where opinion remained secondary to the delivery of standard, straightforward news.

"But more recently, the cycle has gone back toward opinion being incorporated in the news report, and that makes the challenge of maintaining balance even greater," Decherd said.

But why is maintaining balance so important? What's wrong with opinion occasionally slipping into news reports? Well, Robert Zorn '75, independent journalist and

author of *Cemetery John*, believes objective truth is paramount in factual reporting.

"I have to be really careful that I'm not seeing things just because I want to see them in a certain way or in a certain line," Zorn said. "This actually gets back to what I learned from a lot of teachers at St. Mark's: to be intellectually honest. You can't all of a sudden ignore stuff just because it doesn't fit your theory or way of thinking."

Similarly, Patrick Barta '90, Asia Enterprise Editor for *The Wall Street Journal*, believes that while many may decry the modern news industry as "fake news," his publication continues to approach its coverage "without opinions, without spin, without any shortcuts that deprive readers of factual information."

"We pursue facts; we don't publish rumors," Barta said.

"We don't publish things that are untrue, and if we miss someone's name, if we get the date wrong, if something is blue and we say it's red, we correct that. The people who say that we are 'fake news,' they just don't understand what we do. A lot of times that's just people who don't want to believe that we're trying to do our jobs scrupulously and fairly, and that's not something to worry about. We just have to keep doing our jobs."

On the other hand, Decherd believes that *The New York Times* serves as an example of journalism that properly incorporates the writer's personal experiences and knowledge within its stories.

"It's the greatest newspaper on Earth," Decherd said. "It has the most resources of any newspaper on Earth but has long since embraced the idea that its reporters are well-informed, insightful men and women who can essentially report the news in narrative form, which by definition means they reveal some of their own philosophy and views."

That separation of opinion from news reporting is important because it allows readers to know what exactly they are getting



Grant Moise
President and Publisher of Dallas Morning News

at any given time. *D Magazine* President Gillea Allison believes opinion pieces should be clearly labeled and distinctively designed in order to draw readers' attention.

And regardless of whether the story is fact- or opinion-based, *D Magazine* also employs a group of interns, paid staffers and editors to engage in the rigorous process of fact-checking every line of every story.

"While a blog post can be deleted from the internet, print is there forever," Allison said. "So that's why we invest a lot of time and resources into ensuring accuracy."

So what's the benefit of opinion if it's so easily misinterpreted? *Dallas Morning News* President and Publisher Grant Moise thinks opinion ultimately has the potential to better society.

"We praise the people who deserve it and constructively praise the people, the companies or the organizations that deserve praise," Moise said. "We

will constructively criticize the people, the companies or the organizations who deserve the criticism. If we do those in a healthy balance, then you're ultimately going to create a better Dallas and in turn a better North Texas."

Barta, who's spent the past 18 years living and working abroad, has primarily focused his efforts in investigative reporting on Asian countries, many of which do not have similar journalistic freedom. In the end, it's important to remember that the U.S. is one of the few major countries to have an unrestricted press and to even be debating what responsibility a free press has in balancing fact and opinion.

"American media certainly isn't perfect, and it does make mistakes, but it's part of a healthy democracy filled with debate based on facts," Barta said. "As much as people complain about the media — that's their right, and they should if they see that their problems — they should also be thankful."

We have always been unique in the fact that we are not in the business of explaining why you should think or care about something or showing an interesting story you may not have heard of. **Gillea Allison**, *D Magazine* President and CEO

A look beyond the pages: *The ReMarker's* role on campus

I had absolutely no idea what elective or fine art to choose when I first came to St. Mark's my freshman year. Part of me leaned towards film studies (who doesn't like movies, right?), and part of me leaned towards ceramics. But in the end, I went with journalism, and, to be honest, I can't really remember why I chose it. Did I want to improve my writing? Did I see a *ReMarker* laying around and think it was cool?

Either way, it's been one of my biggest commitments these past four years. All the interviewing, writing, editing and designing, sometimes late into the night, sometimes on Saturdays when I'd rather be watching college football. I've

invested a lot of myself into the Hersh Journalism Suite, and I've certainly reaped the benefits.

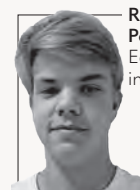
I've been fortunate enough to interview NBA stars, the police who watch over our campus every day and even former *ReMarker* editors. I've covered topics like pharmaceutical drug pricing, social injustice and the new schedule. I've experienced the incredible sense of accomplishment that comes with holding my very own 32-page newspaper.

But what's the point of it all? Sure, I've made memories and gained skills I'll take with me once I leave St. Mark's, but is there any greater

significance to what I'm doing? As I work on my fourth-to-last *ReMarker* ever, I've started to reflect on what exactly the role of *The ReMarker* is on our campus.

Our mission statement states that we aim to produce a "top-quality student newspaper applying the highest standards of writing, editing, coverage and production." But at the end of the day, I think our job is simpler than that — it's to provoke meaningful discussion on campus. If just one person picks up a newspaper out of the 4,000 we print each cycle and strikes up a conversation, debate or any other exchange because of it, then our community is better for it.

We, as a *ReMarker* staff, did our job. And my decision to pick up journalism freshman year was worth it.



Robert Pou
Editor in Chief

The Digital Era

With the rise of the internet and social media, how have news companies adapted to shifting standards and expectations of modern readers?

With age comes change, and journalism is no exception to the rule. From ink-and-quill pamphlets in town squares to unlimited information in the palm of your hand, the news industry has morphed and adapted to various developments of the modern world. And no innovation has shaped the state of journalism more than the ubiquity and convenience of the internet — for better or worse. According to Barta, the pace of news has rapidly accelerated over the course of his 23 years with the paper.

"When I started at *The Wall Street Journal*, we used to print newspapers only, and we had a roughly 6 p.m. deadline," Barta said, "so if something happened at 11 in the morning, that gave us until 6 p.m. to figure out what happened. Now if something happened at 11 in the morning, you can get the story up online within minutes sometimes. There's a great deal more pressure."

While the unparalleled efficiency of online news has increased accessibility to information at a faster rate and over a broader range of topics, many news companies feel strained to keep up with this higher demand, shifting towards more sensationalized coverage to make up for falling profits.

"I showed some students the first three minutes of CNN the first day it started," Barta said. "It's very strange: no opinion, just facts. To a current audience, I think they would be kind of boring. But it was objective, and there was no debate about whether they are inciting your passions and sensationalizing the news. Then I switched to a clip of a recent news program that I won't name, and it was people screaming at each other and fighting and like, 'You're terrible! You're so stupid!' It wasn't really insightful journalism. It was sensationalism, frankly, and I think that's what people look at. They say that news media is not healthy, and they don't like that, even though that is often what gets traffic online."

Many publications, however, continue to strive for high-quality journalism, finding new ways to optimize their coverage to provide as much information as possible without stretching themselves too thin. To *D Magazine* President Gillea Allison, the ultimate winners are smaller and more local publications.

"If I was going to start a magazine today, I would not start a national magazine or a publication," Allison said. "Because with us, we're quite relevant. We really have very specific content relevancy and trust as our number one attributes. I'm not going to sit here and say that print is going to come roaring back, and we know that. We've built a very diversified business around our digital presence, events, programs and branding. But local magazines, or city and regional magazines, are outperforming other peers."

The even more drastic half of the digital shift is social media. According to Decherd, social media is

likely "the most disruptive force in the history of journalism and continues to be." With their ability to rapidly spread unverifiable or abbreviated information to millions of people worldwide, popular platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and others can monumentally shift both public opinion and the very methodologies of traditional journalism.

"The biggest question, which will not be answered soon," Decherd said, "is the extent [to] which the core principles of journalism in the United States and other countries where free speech exists translate to the digital world — if they do at all. We're in the early stages of that. We're basically seeing the long tail of pre-internet journalism being almost continuously reshaped in a digital environment. But there is no way to separate the changes in journalism and the effect of social media from the polarization that exists in the United States today. And that is something we collectively need to address in a very intelligent and thorough manner."

On top of allowing less reliable information to spread, social media promotes an environment where the first story is the best story, something *Dallas Morning News* President and Publisher Grant Moise worries crowds out the trustworthy journalism people are searching for. "[For *Dallas Morning News* journalists,] the rules and the standards of all of the gates of approval and fact-checking that they have to pass through are no different on social media," Moise said, "but it's hard because then these young journalists especially are watching all of these other local news sources or national news sources beat them to break that story. But that's where we always just have to tell them, 'We're not in the business of being first necessarily — we're in the business of being right.'"

But no matter what changes and challenges the news faces, technological or social, internal or external, global or right at home, the media will continue to put out reliable and accurate news.

"At the end of the day, for all the sensational stuff you see on TV and all the shouting, you still see incredible reporting," Barta said. "We've had budget cuts, yes, and it's hard to compete and newsgathering is really expensive, but we are still a viable company. Even

though people complain about the media and don't like it, and there have been changes that are clearly noticeable in the way information is presented, at the end of the day, I think you will find that good journalists at the Associated Press, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Dallas Morning News* are still doing their jobs just as well, if not better, than they've ever done."

STORY Robert Pou, Luke Piazza

GRAPHICS Luke Piazza

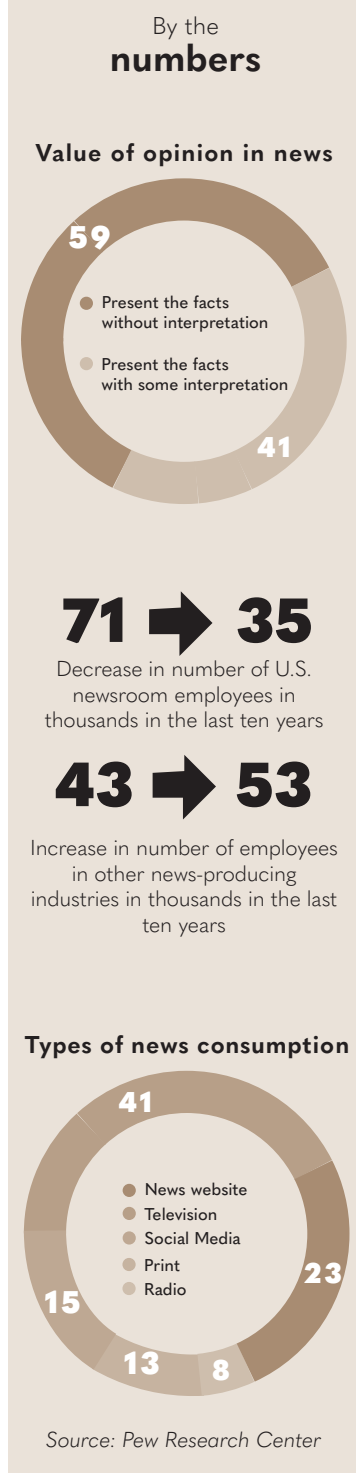
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION Ekansh Tambe, Luke Piazza



Gillea Allison
D Magazine president



Patrick Barta
The Wall Street Journal Asia enterprise editor



A one-man publication

With major news companies sporting large staffs and even larger wallets, how can someone like Robert Zorn '75 deliver quality investigative reporting all on his own?



Robert Zorn '75
Author of *Cemetery John*

As concerns over misinformation and biased reporting rise, the role of the reader grows critical in maintaining truthful and intellectually rigorous discussion. So how does one tell right from wrong? For Robert Zorn '75, the answer was doing it himself.

Zorn's book *Cemetery John* analyzes the Lindbergh Kidnapping of 1932 and proposes that there were two additional conspirators, John and Walter Knoll, who had worked with Bruno Hauptmann to kidnap Charles Lindbergh's son and ransom him for \$50,000 — roughly \$950,000 today. What makes Zorn's scenario so unique is that his father, Eugene Zorn, was the only one who witnessed the two brothers planning the kidnapping.

"On my father's deathbed," Zorn said, "my father was haunted that that two guys that he knew that were neighbors of his had gotten away with the crime and the murder of a child while their

accomplice had gone closed-mouth to the electric chair, taking the penalty for all three of them. My father felt that telling the story could bring a measure of justice to the case, so I made him a promise that I would take up his investigation and tell his story to the world. To my amazement, I found out that he was exactly right."

Yet despite seeing a clear solution to this hotly-debated case, Zorn opted to start long before the crime, carefully analyzing the Lindbergh family from the perspective of the criminals involved.

"When people have written about this case, what they do is they go to *The New York Times* the day after the crime, March 2, 1932, and start there," Zorn said. "I went farther back in time to learn more about Lindbergh and his wife, who was the daughter of the US ambassador to Mexico, and then also when the baby was born. A lot of clues were overlooked. They were dismissed as irrelevant or un-

decipherable, but if you get all the noise out of the room [and] adopt this 'close-to-the-ground' approach, you'll see that these clues will actually talk to you."

Many may feel like they simply lack the qualifications or prerequisite knowledge to tackle the tricky issues that fill the media, just like how Zorn knew absolutely nothing about forensic science or criminal profiling when he began. But he put in the work to truly understand his subject and was ultimately able to help bring justice to the world.

"I think about how green I was when I started out with just a promise to my dad to try to get to the heart of this thing," Zorn said, "to figure out if this story was right, to tell a story to the world, but now I've spent countless hours with the greatest criminal profilers in American history who taught me so much, and I've learned a tremendous amount. But I had to acquire that knowledge."

One year later ...

One year ago, *The ReMarker* told the story of three students' struggles with mental health. With several changes happening within the Counseling Department over the past year, we caught up with one old face and one new one on how they've kept moving forward.

Back on track

Finding techniques to combat his anxiety and depression over the last year, Jake* has found his own ways to make his turnaround a reality.

Growing up, Jake* never thought he had mental health problems. He never thought he would eventually be diagnosed with anxiety, moderate depression and OCD.

Even freshman year after two instances of self-harming and periods of feeling completely and totally overwhelmed, Jake moved on, never thinking much of his troubles.

It happened again the summer after sophomore year. But still no acknowledgement of a deeper issue.

And then junior year happened. Usually a perfectionist, Jake wasn't able to handle the extreme workload and the constant demands of school, athletics and extracurriculars. Unable to meet his own high expectations for himself, he began to regress. Social anxiety and self-loathing began to mount. It was getting harder and harder to hide the scars, the stress, the emotion ... until it all came to a head.

Jake's friend reported him to the Counseling Office.

At first, he was scared — scared of what his parents would think, what the counselors would think, but after he shared his struggles, he felt a massive weight lift off his chest. He started talking with the counselors more and more about balance and time management, attending weekly therapy sessions and eventually sharing his story with close friends and teachers.

As his support system grew, so did his resolve to grow as a human being, to consistently work on his mental well-being and help others going through the same thing.

In March of his junior year, one year ago, Jake shared his story with *The ReMarker*. Since then, he's made a lot of progress. He's not perfect, he'll tell you, but he's more mature, more conscious of his feelings and emotions.

One year later, Jake is still fighting.

One of the most significant contributors to Jake's turnaround has been his increased focus on building deep, meaningful relationships.

"I started trying to be more social, meet new people and make a lot of friends," Jake said. "I have met a lot of people at St. Mark's and Hockaday, and I think that's a great way for me to have balance. It's an outlet for leisure and a relief on weekends when I get to spend time with friends."

Jake has picked up the ability to compartmentalize different aspects of his life over the past year, separating his feelings from his responsibilities and obligations.

"It was very difficult, but I eventually learned that I have to separate my emotions from the things that I have to do," Jake said. "Regardless of how I feel on a given day, there are certain things that I have to do. And, yes, if things get out of control, I can take a break. But I have to know the boundary between taking a break just for leisure, for procrastination, versus taking a break for balance."

Jake has also made a commitment to

exercise six days a week since the start of this year. He sees his physical health as being an integral part of his self-confidence and just as important as mental health.

"While I'm exercising, it's difficult, and sometimes I just hate it," Jake said. "But once I'm done, I feel so much better. I feel like I pushed myself, and I feel more confident about my abilities and pushing myself mentally."

These workout sessions have been greatly helped by the new schedule. Because of the 8:35 a.m. start time, Jake has been able to exercise each morning before school. And that's not the only way the new schedule has helped Jake out.

"Even though sometimes it can be confusing, I feel like I adjusted to the rotating schedule within two weeks of school," Jake said. "It's a nice change of pace instead of having the same thing every single day. And the long free periods are so beneficial."

While the new schedule has been a welcome change, the outbreak of a global pandemic most certainly has not been. Jake is thankful for the .Jose friends he is still able to talk to, but wishes it wasn't so hard to socialize with the rest of his classmates.

"I feel like I haven't been able to connect with the rest of my grade the way I anticipated I would," Jake said. "Unfortunately, COVID has physically and socially distanced everyone from each other."

Jake believes that COVID-19 has certainly contributed to mental health problems among the student body but recognizes that mental health was an issue long before the pandemic, one that may have flown under the radar.

"At an environment like St. Mark's, there are so many kids — I know so many kids — who have mental health issues, and anxiety's one of the most common ones," Jake said. "That's just evident in the way that the school is built. We push ourselves, and finding balance is difficult."

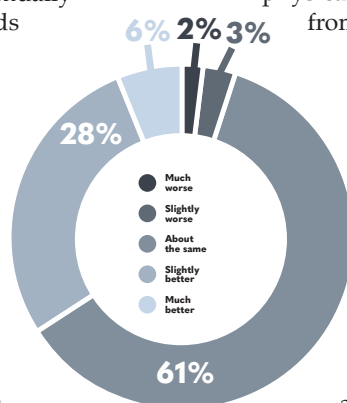
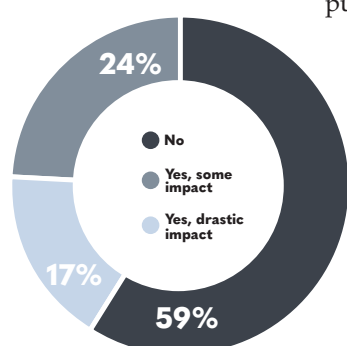
For anyone dealing with their own mental health struggles, Jake suggests getting help, regardless of how big or small one thinks their mental health problems are.

"For any student who's seeking some sort of help, they just need to forgive themselves and try not to downplay whatever they're going through," Jake said. "Don't say, 'I don't need to see Dr. Bonsu,' or 'I can just get through this on my own.' Go seek help if you have the slightest inclination to get it."

Overall though, Jake believes the most important thing is having a support network, and he's thankful for the people in his own life he has been able to lean on when he was going through tough times.

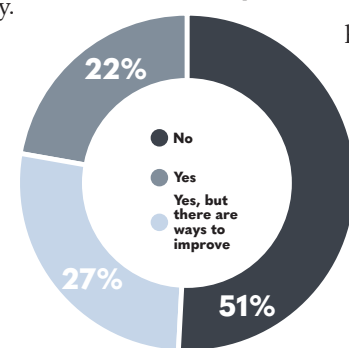
"The surprising thing that I noticed was just how caring and supportive all of the people around me ended up being," Jake said. "I realized how grateful I am for the people that I have because I know that not everyone has such a strong and supportive social network. But I was lucky to have a bunch of people who cared about me, especially my family, but my friends and teachers as well."

Has the new schedule positively affected your mental health in anyway?



In your opinion, has St. Mark's improved its available mental health resources for students in the past year?

Do you think we talk enough about mental health on campus?



Arthur sees value in articulating his ideas in a communicative, often literary way. Drawing on past experiences — rather than experiencing and expressing heavy emotions at the same time — allows him to get his ideas on paper without sustaining the thoughts that brought him grief in the first place.

"You can think about that dark place without necessarily existing there," Arthur said.

"You can't be objective about it, but I think it can help you be a bit more rational about it. You could argue that there's truthfulness from writing it from the dark state, an authenticity that you can't capture unless you're in it. But can say that while you may be feeling that way authentically, a lot of the things that you're portraying are unhelpful."

But above all, having graduated from many of his worst fears, Arthur recalls the seismic shift in mindset he's felt over the last few years. If his ninth-grade self viewed mental health issues as depersonalized medical problems, he now sees them as a manageable part of him — a difficult part of him, but part of him nonetheless.

"My first therapist was right: lots of people deal with this and can still have fantastic lives," Arthur said. "It will help you empathize with people. It will help you relate to people going through similar issues."

"Once you realize that people sometimes do things for reasons that may be beyond their control," Arthur said, "you can explain to yourself the things they have going on. That helps you be a better friend, and it helps you be a better classmate, a more caring person. If I were my ninth-grade self, I would want to pick up a newspaper that told me that I was not alone. It's normal."

Resetting the norm

At first, Arthur* saw his mental health issues as abnormal. But as he's adjusted, he's found out how normal — and manageable — they actually are.

He still wasn't sold on the idea of therapy. His first session seemed stuffy, a bit formal — he felt like he was being examined for the flu or screened for cavities.

"Lots of people go on to do great things," the psychologist said. "Edgar Allan Poe, Vincent Van Gogh, Ernest Hemingway..."

Arthur's stomach sunk. Everything in the room felt curated. A wide window overlooked a highway. He sat on a couch several feet away from the therapist, and the room felt infinite and depersonalized.

He struggled to speak. Talking with other kids was already an unclimbable mountain — how could he expect to open up to a stranger? It didn't feel normal.

Arthur's mental health issues began early on, as a child and soon-to-be teenager who found himself terrified by the idea of large social events. Celebrate Seven, eighth grade mixers, freshmen dances — each contributed to an idea of terror that he'd somehow mess something up, a familiar kind of social anxiety felt by millions of teenagers.

"I'm out there, and I'm very worried about what impressions I'm making, what I'm saying, what I'm doing," Arthur said. "I'm acutely aware of that. And the ironic part is that people can tell you feel that way, which makes the problem even worse."

After trying a series of therapists, though, he found one he could speak with candidly and comfortably.

"The second person I talked to felt a lot more casual, more like a friend," Arthur said. "That does mirror the shift in mindset from seeing it as a medical thing that should not be happening to a normal thing that I can deal with."

But as he progressed in his therapy sessions and understanding the way he made decisions, he began to realize that everyone — even if they don't have mental health struggles of their own — acts in psychologically definable patterns.

"There are people who are not easily explainable," Arthur said, "but a lot of the time, their actions are. So once you come to that realization, it can be really hard to dislike someone that you realize you could really empathize with."

• See also: "One year later" and "The daily battle of an average Marksman," page 16.

• Editor's note: Jake and Arthur are pseudonyms for unnamed Marksmen who prefer to remain anonymous. Jake retains his pseudonym from the previous coverage in March 2020.

In their own words

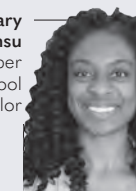
Dr. Gabby Reed, director of Counseling, and Dr. Mary Bonsu, Upper School counselor, on their daily goals in helping students.

Dr. Gabby Reed
Director of Counseling



Good counseling in a school is critical, because most of the time, if someone's not doing well mentally, they're also not doing well academically, and struggling academically is linked directly to struggling mentally and emotionally. For teenagers, there's no way to separate school from mental health."

Dr. Mary Bonsu
Upper School Counselor



If they come through my door, it's my job to try to help them feel comfortable, make them feel heard, make some kind of a connection — the practitioner term is "building rapport." You have to make sure in that 10 to 15 minutes he'll find value in sitting in that chair."

Mental health challenges heightened by pandemic

Loss of time, experiences and life. They have become themes of the past year — a year marred by COVID-19. And it's taken a toll on the mental health of teens and adults alike.

Marksmen of all ages have spent the year isolated in some way; it's difficult to come to terms with the fact that seniors never had their last homecoming, their last SPC tournament, their last in-person chapel.

The pandemic complicated an already complex developmental period for adolescents. Now, they can view mental health from a new angle that psychiatrist Dr. Fred Gioia encounters with all his patients.

"In general, the pandemic has been more of a catalyst for poking at things that have already been a struggle for people," Gioia said.

The emergence of underlying issues comes from the lack of social opportunity, among other pandemic-related lifestyle changes.

"From what I've found in seeing people who were on different spectrums, a lot of people's struggles have had to do with either feeling isolated and really struggling with the loss of social output, loss of activities or loss of ways of dealing with existing struggles that they've already had," Gioia said.

Everyone has felt the impact of the pandemic on their mental health, some more than others. To Gioia, even a small change in one's mental well-being should be given attention during these delicate times, especially for adolescents.

"The threshold for speaking to someone, a parent or a professional, should be pretty low," Gioia said. "There's so much more availability for telepsychiatry and teletherapy now. You can use your phone and have a video chat with someone. It's not as if you have to go to someone's office, especially now with the risks of COVID. Hopefully people are finding that it's a little bit easier to reach out."

Of course, not everyone will be willing to speak about their mental health to someone outside of their close circle. But, if that close circle becomes distanced, through a lack of face-to-face time or isolation, seeking a professional's advice may be the best option.

"Social contacts, especially when teenagers are so habituated to being around certain people all the time, and that suddenly drops off — that's a major disruption," Gioia said. "Developmentally, it's so important for teenagers and adolescents to be with their peers, not just stuck at home with their families."

Social contact has sharply decreased to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, but, in doing so, teenagers have lost a large portion of their high school experience.

"There's nothing that's going to replace the high school prom," Gioia said, "and there has to be a kind of mourning of not having these things. Then, we must work through that mourning. That process is a little bit different for everybody."

It's difficult to deal with an unfulfilling and frustrating year, but Gioia wants to turn lemons into lemonade.

"These losses that we experience can be really profound avenues for growth, internally and interpersonally," Gioia said. "The losses we experience can make us look into our lives in a more holistic manner."

When people cut out the accessory aspects of their lives, they can begin to focus on what's truly important to them. But it's certainly not easy.

"Just like the folks who came out of the Great Depression in this country, they learned some very powerful lessons," Gioia said. "Sometimes that caused certain behaviors that were maladaptive in the future, but sometimes it can provide a sense of great perseverance."

76%

of surveyed students said that COVID-19 impacted their mental health.

33%

of adults nationally showing symptoms of anxiety as of February 2021.

42%

of adults nationally showing symptoms of depression as of February 2021.

Source: CDC - National Center for Health, ReMarker poll

14, 15

Perspectives

The ReMarker • March 11, 2021

FALLING APART
Students facing mental health struggles suffer in all parts of their life.

STORY Jamie Mahowald, Henry McElhanev, Robert Pou PHOTO Jack Davis

Essentials

What's INSIDE

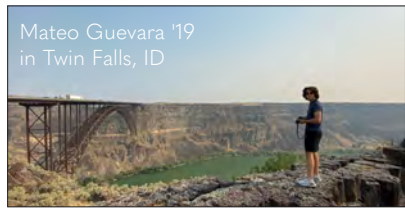
3 Issues

The ABCs: Adulthood, banking and crediting lessons from faculty and alumni. **3**

A look into the driven agenda of Board of Trustees President Kathy Crow. **4**

Why wear a uniform while you're sitting in front of a screen in your bedroom? **5**

Four Marksmen's decisions to take a year off before heading to college. **6**



Mateo Guevara '19 in Twin Falls, ID

7 Discoveries

Labs, a staple of the St. Mark's experience, in an era of social distancing. **7**

8 10600

New year, new faces: talks with this year's 19 new faculty and staff. **8**

The time and work it took to make our campus safe enough to return. **9**

A record breaker: More than 900 Marksmen enroll in the 2020-21 year. **10**

The future of school events like Homecoming during changing times. **11**

Three new Marksmen families from around the world. **12**

Photostory: Back-to-school scenes from first to twelfth grade. **13**

14 Centerspread

The quiet presence we lose when parents aren't around campus. **14-15**

16 Culture

Senior Josh Mysoré's experiences in language learning. **16**

Glenn Stroh's first year as choir master and what that position entails this year. **17**

A look into sophomore Sall Hussein's work as a videographer. **18**

Examining the impacts of COVID-19 on two alumni artists' careers. **19**

Buzz: Three summer albums, plus one of the few pandemic movie releases. **20**

21 Opinions

Editorials: Marksmen voting; Delays in textbook distribution. **21**

Editorials: New schedule. Mahowald: On talking forever and ever. **22**

Editorials: Appreciated efforts from faculty & staff. Pou: The Centipede Dance. **23**

24 Sports

The school's plans to continue with a season after the canceling of SPC. **24-25**

Your 2021 Superfanmen: Daniel Sanchez, Will Chance and Colin Bajec. **26**



Daniel Sanchez, left Will Chance, center Colin Bajec, right

The long-awaited Stanford commitment from senior Harrison Ingram. **27**

28 Backpage

The show must go on: conducting a full band from the screen. **28**

PERSONAL COLUMN

John Muir is my homeboy

Nowhere will you see the majestic operations of nature more clearly revealed beside the frailest, most gentle and peaceful things. Nearly all the park is a profound solitude. Yet it is full of charming company, full of God's thoughts, a place of peace and safety amid the most exalted grandeur and eager enthusiastic action.

— John Muir, on Yosemite National Park

When my family was deciding where to travel over the summer, we decided to head to Yosemite.

By car.

Round-trip, the number of hours by car clocked in at around 50 (Yes, we split each drive into two days).

When you're in a car with your family for 50 hours, it's easy to focus on the negatives.

My legs hurt. Everyone needs to use the bathroom at different times. Getting snacks is an ordeal, since they're usually buried under piles of luggage in the trunk. Carsickness, homesickness, all while trying to avoid COVIDsickness.

By the time we arrived at our cabin, we were fatigued, upset and tense. And the park is big — Yosemite Valley was an hour away.

The next morning, we drove an hour through tree-shaded winding roads. Passing few buildings, civilization faded away as we made our way deeper into the park.

And then the valley revealed itself.

One turn, and there was El Cap, Half Dome, Cathedral Rocks. We soon arrived at "Tunnel View," the place where most photos you've seen of Yosemite Valley were probably taken from.

As I was met with this sheer, raw, natural display of grandeur, I was humbled.

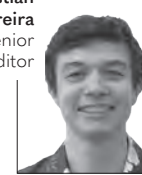
I've never experienced a natural sight so mesmerizing, so picture perfect as Yosemite Valley. Four straight days in the park didn't quench my thirst to see the valley again, and again, and again.

I hiked up Yosemite Falls, Sentinel Rock, Mariposa Grove, each day more beautiful

than the last. It was too magnificent to get tired of.

John Muir was right. It truly is "a place of peace and safety amid the most exalted grandeur and eager enthusiastic action."

Cristian Pereira Senior Editor



Overall, I'd say my summer was tumultuous. I'd assume most of my senior classmates can say the same.

Not only did we have to finalize our identity for colleges — internships, online study programs, essay-writing, college counseling (Thank God for Ms. Pulido, Ms. Nute, Mr. Shandera and Ms. Kingsak by the way) — but we also had to face the diverse and ever-changing challenges of COVID-19.

Unpredictability and I are not a good combo. This summer I didn't have a choice — for multiple reasons, I was forced to face many personal realities about myself. I became more anxious, stressed, angry — all of it. It was really, really easy to focus on the negatives.

But every so often a Yosemite Valley comes around.

Yosemite Valleys aren't necessarily giant rock formations that yell "You're small!" at you from a distance. They could be small things like a good book, a project you're passionate about, they could even be those days that you reflect on and say, "Hey, today was a darn good day!" Anything that you identify as life-enriching, fulfilling—you've found one of your Yosemite Valleys.

To preach to everyone about how noticing my Yosemite Valleys in life has made me happy all the time would be a lie.

But sometimes, all you need to get through a tough time is just a little bit of help.

Whenever I'm down, whenever it feels like life's just hitting me in the face and knocking me down, I picture Yosemite Valley, and I remind myself that I still have the rest of my life to experience more. Whatever's going on right now, it'll pass.

We're in an unprecedented era of human history. We still have to struggle through school while worrying about our family members, limiting our interactions and human contact and reading one negative headline after another.

But we can still find our Yosemite Valleys. And honestly, as long as I still have those, I'd say life is pretty good.

Say what?

Comments overheard around campus.



Rahul Banerjee Senior

●● I have big cheeks. About smiling behind a mask



Shane May Mathematics Department Chair

●● Pour all your broken tortilla chip crumbs and salsa into a bowl and eat it with a spoon like cereal.



Tim Weigman Senior

●● I didn't expect it to explode.

While talking about kicking a water bottle

Correction

The story on page 28 of the September issue of Focus magazine reported the school's original charter restricted admission to white students. That is untrue. The original charter establishes the school's religious identity, but does not mention racial discrimination. The ReMarker regrets the error.

Parents are making an incredible investment, because it's not the easiest thing to be a parent at St. Mark's. You can't outsource your kids to St. Mark's and show up at graduation.

Paul Geneder '87, Alumni Board President and parent — Story on page 14.



SIGNAGE All across campus, signs like the "Do Not Enter" (above left) and "One Way" (far above right) direct the traffic flow to minimize student traffic during passing periods. The "Notice" sign (above right) reminds students and faculty alike to socially distance while on campus. Kristin and Paul Mlakar spent days over the summer installing traffic guidelines to facilitate social distancing.