

REMARKER.

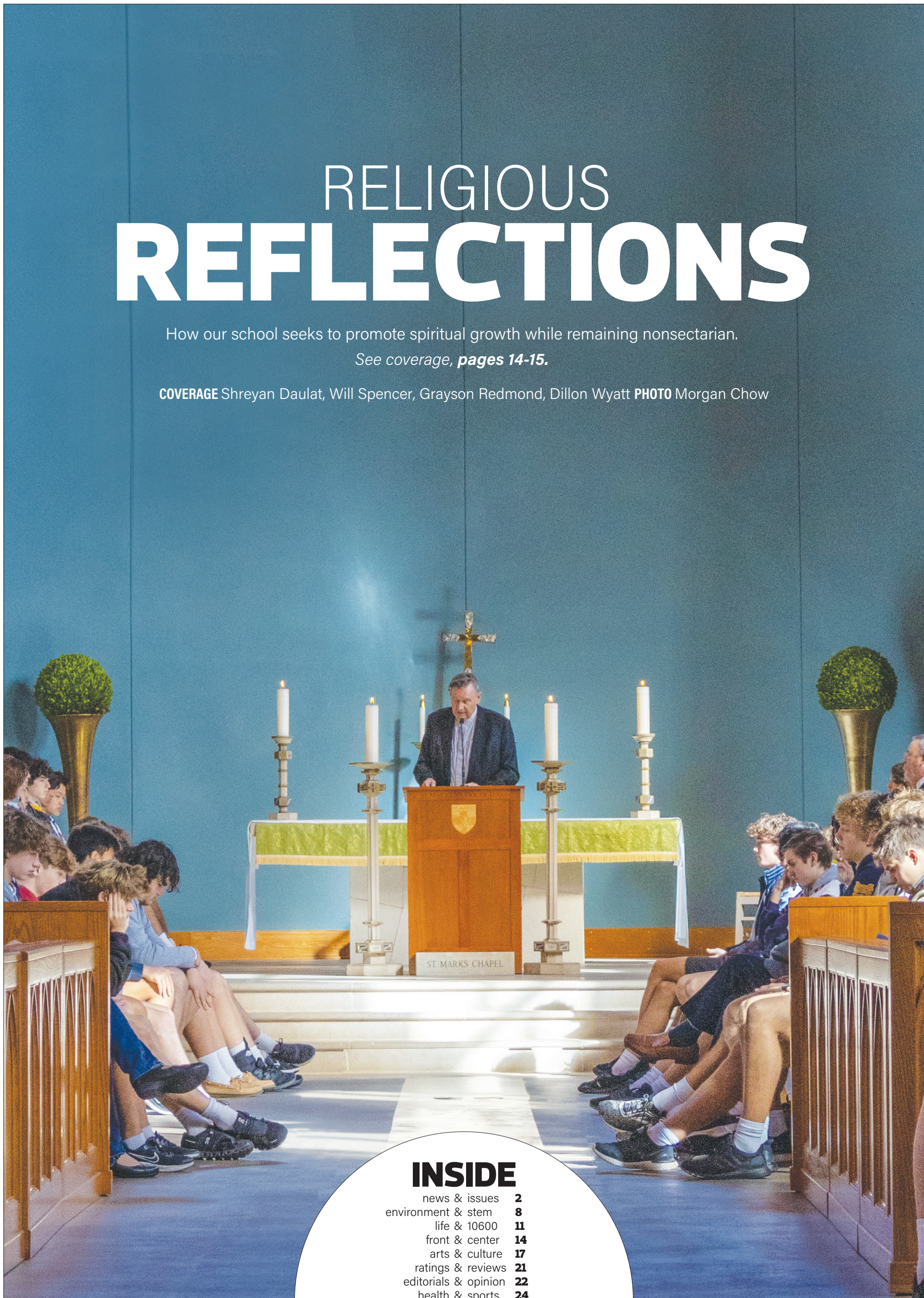
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2022 • VOLUME 69, ISSUE 3 • ST. MARK'S SCHOOL OF TEXAS, DALLAS, TEXAS

RELIGIOUS REFLECTIONS

How our school seeks to promote spiritual growth while remaining nonsectarian.

See coverage, **pages 14-15.**

COVERAGE Shreyan Daulat, Will Spencer, Grayson Redmond, Dillon Wyatt **PHOTO** Morgan Chow



INSIDE

news & issues	2
environment & stem	8
life & 10600	11
front & center	14
arts & culture	17
ratings & reviews	21
editorials & opinion	22
health & sports	24

PERSONAL COLUMN

The House, the Senate and their frozen burritos



MYLES LOWENBERG
Focus Magazine Editor

Psychiatrists have suggested something called the “burrito test.” It goes like this: if you have to ask a higher authority’s permission in order to microwave a burrito, you are not in a “flourishing center” or group home or College Preparatory All-Boys School — you are in an institution. By this standard, Congress is only exempted from being a mental institution on one technicality: most of its members are unable to microwave a burrito not because they were forbidden by someone else, but because they are simply unable.

Take Kevin McCarthy, fearless leader of the elephant crew. You see, K-dog is the leader of the House Republicans, and the President is a Democrat. For a solid 20 years, ‘Muricans’ have exercised their God-given right to whine and moan about minor incidents like the President wearing a tan suit or being annoying on Twitter or starting a couple wars that killed a million people. That means the President’s party has lost in every single midterm since 2002. But there’s more! The Senate and House seats up for election generally favored Republicans more than the average year, and Biden’s approval rating is as low as Trump’s when Trump’s party was crushed in the 2018 midterms.

So, these midterms really were as easy as microwaving a burrito for Kevin. What did the wise sage of Central California do? Well, he wouldn’t shut up for a year about how amazing the burrito he was about to cook would taste, stuck his hand in the microwave, shut the door on his hand and suffered the flaming heat of humiliation for a solid week of election returns.

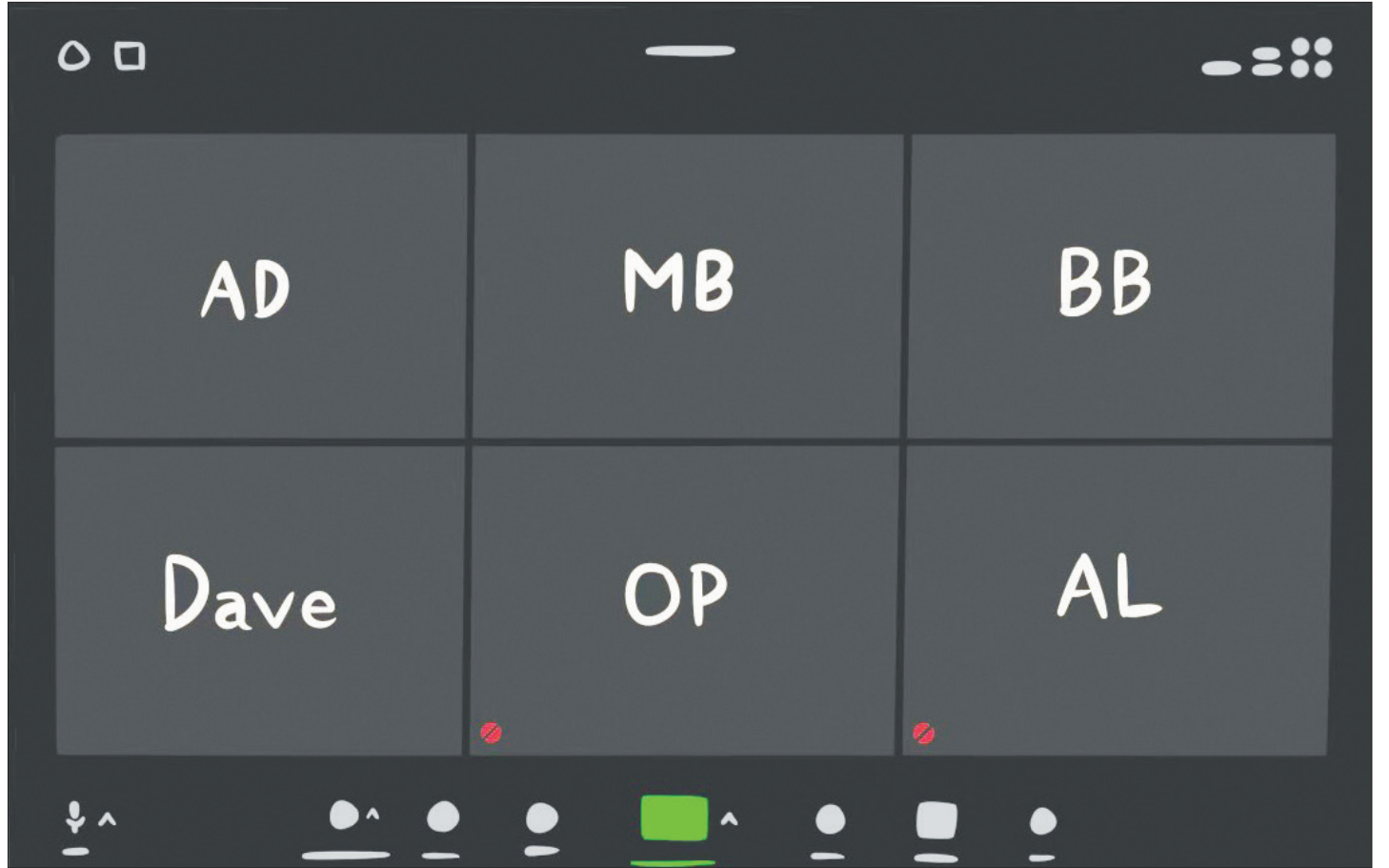
The Republicans not only failed to hold the Senate and lost big on governorships, but in a twist of hellish torture for poor Kevin, he now has to wrangle a tiny majority in the House. There are many humiliations in store for him as he now relies on the votes of the extremist fringe of his party that actually should have to ask for permission to microwave a burrito.

The divided Congress of the next two years will be filled with no useful legislation due to gridlock, but there’s an emerging civil gawk at instead of doing anything useful. Reeling from the defeat, Republicans are divided between trotting out Ron DeSantis, governor of Florida, or unearthing the Cheeto Geezer himself from his hiding place in the swamps of Mar-a-lago and whatever Truth Social is. Only time will tell how funny the next news cycle will be.

CHANGES IN LEARNING

LOGGED OFF

How has student performance changed since the pandemic? See coverage, page 6



GRAPHIC / JOSHUA GOFORTH

BEHIND THE CURVE Recent test scores suggest that student performance across many demographics is declining at a national level, something many think is a direct result of the pandemic and online learning. With this diminish in scores being so widely seen, have St. Mark’s students stayed on track?

NEWS IN BRIEF

PARENT’S ASSOCIATION The Past President’s Luncheon of the Parent’s Association took place Nov. 9. The event was organized by the President-Elect of the Parent’s Association Cindy Hanson, and it drew 32 attendees, 22 of whom were previous presidents. The luncheon’s theme was athletics and featured food catered by Sage. There were three guest speakers — Headmaster David Dini welcomed and introduced many attendees, Assistant Headmaster for External Affairs Scott Jolly discussed the new athletic center and Director of Athletics Sean Lissemore spoke about the coaching staff and student involvement in athletics at the school.

CHAPEL SERVICES The Lower Schoolers participated in Banner Chapel Dec. 9. They chose messages to display on their banners and spent hours gluing, cutting and designing them. In

addition, the Lower School chapel council made greeting cards for visitors, decorated the chapel for special occasions and participated in Thanksgiving chapel by reading a litany. Next week, as Christmas Break approaches, the annual tradition of Lessons and Carols will take place Dec. 13.

ELEVATED COOKING CLUB The Elevated Cooking Club recently partnered with the Middle School Community Service Board to sell food on campus. Club presidents, seniors George Genender and Stice Neuhoff, also hosted Middle Schoolers at their homes to prepare food for the bake sale that took place Nov. 7 and 8, during which the club accepted both money and Thanksgiving foods in exchange for baked goods. The club also served food at the car wash during McDonald’s Week and will be serving food Dec. 10 at Coffeehouse.

LESSONS AND CAROLS The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols will take place in the chapel Tuesday, Dec. 13, at 6:30 p.m. All 97 choristers from the fourth grade, Middle and Upper School Choirs will be performing. This is the 71st consecutive year the service will be held. The choir will be performing a wide variety of carols ranging from traditional works to pieces from modern composers.

TELOS UPDATE The Middle School Telos program has continued meeting with students throughout the year. The organization, run by Upper School boys, has alternated between giving character and leadership talks during Middle School class meetings and hanging out with Middle Schoolers in their advisories. Similarly, Telos 4 has continued monthly meeting, covering topics such as manners and community engagement.

INSIDE

04 Head of Upper School plans

A look at the school’s aspirations for the position’s future.

05 Affirmative Action

How the recent decision could affect college applicants here.

06 Changes in education

With test scores dropping across the nation, has our standard remained as high as always?

HEADLINES

Breaking down this month’s hot topics.



What happened: United States announced plan to restore electricity to Ukraine.

When: Nov. 29

Importance and relevance: The plan would reestablish consistent power to the nation left in the dark and cold due to Russian attacks on the power grid.

What happened: President Biden signs bill to avoid rail strike.

When: Dec. 2

Importance and relevance: With Christmas just days away, the looming strike was estimated to have an economic impact of almost \$2 billion per day.



What happened: United States Senate passes landmark legislation that recognizes same-sex marriages.

When: Nov. 29

Importance and relevance: The 61-to-36 vote set the bill on path to become a law in the final weeks before Republicans gain the majority in the House of Representatives in January.



What happened: Greg Abbott won the race for Governor of Texas.

When: Nov. 8

Importance and relevance: Abbott will continue serving in the position he has held since 2015 after defeating challenger Beto O'Rourke for the second straight time. Despite winning only 36 percent of the vote in Dallas County, Abbott collected a majority of 54.8 percent of total votes across the state, while O'Rourke took home 43.8 percent of votes.

DRUG MISUSE



DRUG SCARE
The fallout of fentanyl's growing popularity has caused citizens around the country to worry about their children ingesting it.

GRAPHIC / MORGAN CHOW

Poison sweeping across the nation

In the past two years, fentanyl has become the leading killer in drug related deaths. Yet, most are unaware of how lethal it actually is.

STORY Dillon Wyatt, Shreyan Daulat

The United States is battling yet another drug crisis.

Kids across the nation are getting exposed to fentanyl without knowing its deadly effects.

In a major public setting, children are not always able to say no to drugs like fentanyl. Many times, they won't even know they've ingested it.

As new versions of the drug have been found across the country, the danger of fentanyl is now at an all-time high.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released safety tips to avoid the drug, but the question still remains:

How do I avoid fentanyl if I don't even know I am taking it?

According to the CDC, pharmaceutical fentanyl is a synthetic opioid approved for treating severe pain, typically advanced cancer pain. It is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine, and it is prescribed in the form of transdermal patches or lozenges.

Though the drug has an intended use, fentanyl has now been discovered in many different ways. School Nurse Julie Doerge warns students of these many unintended uses.

"Fentanyl is intended to relieve severe pain, so it was never meant to be made illegally," Doerge said. "It's been supplied in chalk form, in pill form and in

powdered form. The problem is, most people have no idea what they're taking."

Not only are there multiple forms of fentanyl, the sensations felt from taking it are dangerous and many times deadlier.

"It makes you feel happy and experience no pain," Doerge said. "And it's extremely addicting to the point where governments are beginning to control what opioids physicians can prescribe because even small doses in the hospital, which can be extremely useful for relieving pain, specifically cancer pain, can get a person hooked."

The danger of the drug is not only how it makes you feel or how it is distributed, but also the environments in which youth, specifically, try it.

"When a kid is offered fentanyl in college, and they take it because of peer pressure or other factors, it can be an extremely dangerous situation and has gotten more prevalent over time," Doerge said. "The medical world clearly recognizes this concern. The CDC has put in clinical practice guidelines for prescribing opioids for pain in November 2022."

The guidelines were set due to an issue that arose during the Halloween season. With the upcoming holidays, Doerge says it's important that Americans are aware of these safety precautions.

"On the news in October, there were a lot of pictures of 'Rainbow Fentanyl,' warning the public that they would be targeted at youth and would end up in schools," Doerge said. "It's the illicit manufacturing of fentanyl that is a big problem right now. And it's often

being mixed with other drugs, which can be so much more dangerous for anyone."

The CDC warns that fentanyl, which has a heroin-like effect, can be mixed with other drugs before being sold through illegal drug markets.

"It is often mixed with heroin itself and/or cocaine as a combination product — with or without the user's knowledge — to increase its euphoric effects," the CDC website says.

One former Marksman, who has chosen to remain anonymous, has come across the drug firsthand and warns others to take caution if ever put in such a dangerous situation.

"A group of guys and I were at a party, and someone came up to us asking if we wanted to take fentanyl," the former student said. "My friends and I knew about the drug because we had heard about how deadly it was. If we had not known, there is a good chance that one, if not many of us would have agreed."

Though he was able to avoid the drug, he knows that many people around the country believe they can survive it and are willing to risk their lives to try it.

"I think the main reason why fentanyl is dangerous is because of the environment it is being supplied in," the former student said. "Though, it is not only college kids doing it. At parties, it is easy to find yourself being pressured into doing something you do not always want to do. Especially with a drug like fentanyl, its power comes from people taking it as a dare, or people believing they are 'stronger' than it."

Sophomore makes film about the underprivileged

BY Arjun Poi

Sophomore Tiger Yang is working on a documentary where he dives deep into the lives of homeless people in Dallas.

"I'm interviewing people working at homeless shelters, and also homeless people, trying to use that material to tell the story of what homelessness is," Yang said.

Yang was in downtown Dallas for a photography assignment when he saw the effects of homelessness first hand. Soon after that, he decided to make a documentary.

"It just occurred to me one day that I don't really know Dallas very much," Yang said.

Yang believes that getting to know a city is not only seeing the landmarks or buildings, but also learning

about the people.

"I wanted to learn more about their situation, and that's why I started this project," Yang said. "I realized that there are so many people who are struggling, and I don't know anything about them. When you go somewhere new, you should get to know that place as much as possible. And for me, that includes even homeless people."

In the past, Yang didn't take much note of those living on the streets.

"There are homeless people everywhere, but back in Shanghai, I didn't pay attention to that," Yang said. "I want to expand my understanding of the world and share that awareness with other people."



TIGER YANG

Yang has encountered many people with unique backgrounds while filming, showing him that everyone has a story to tell.

"I found one woman who told me that she went to college," Yang said. "But the reason why she's homeless is that her boyfriend got her addicted to drugs when she was pretty young. She has an Associate's Degree, so she can become a nurse, but because of her drug addiction she has lost many opportunities. She is disconnected from her family because of her problems, and one of the things she gets really emotional about is that she wants to have a place for her grandchildren to be able to visit her, but she doesn't have a house."

As he is still in the shooting phase right now, Yang plans to release the documentary in May 2023. His documentary's message is simple.

HEAD OF UPPER SCHOOL

Filling the VOID

In light of persistent volatility in the Head of Upper School position, the school is pressing pause on its search for a new candidate. There is no official timeline as of now, allowing the school to take its time and address ways to improve the position's longevity.



PHOTO / ARJUN KHATTI

WHO'S NEXT? While Interim Head of Upper School John Ashton will serve in office as needed, a permanent successor will not be decided for the time being.

STORY Arjun Khatti, Matthew Hofmann

Eleven — the number of Head of Upper School terms that have been held since Headmaster David Dini joined the Development Office in 1994.

In contrast, only two Heads of Lower School and two Heads of Middle School have been here in that time frame.

All three are high-achieving administrative positions, but the turnover rate for Head of Upper School is clearly higher.

So, why is it an outlier? Dini points to a few overarching factors — recruiting tendencies, the pandemic and family obligations.

Still, the problem remains unsolved. In just the past seven years, there have been four total switches in the position, two of which involving Interim Head of Upper School John Ashton temporarily stepping in to fill the position until a replacement can be found.

But this time, Dini is taking a different approach. Despite former Head of Upper School Colin Igoe's departure last year, the school has not yet begun the official recruitment process for his permanent successor. By stepping back and reexamining the way the entire position is run, from its core purpose to the way candidates are selected, Dini hopes to put an end to its volatile nature.

With the proper approach, he believes consistency and longevity — the St. Mark's standard — will ultimately prevail.

The issue surrounding shorter terms for heads of upper school is actually also common in many other independent schools.

"It's inherently a position that attracts a lot of recruiting attention," Dini said. "In other words, people are often recruited to other senior administrative jobs, including heads of schools, like what happened with [former Head of Upper School]

Mr. [Colin] Igoe."

In the typical educator progression, moving to a head of division is one of the crucial steps in advancing to higher administrative roles.

"For administrators in independent schools who are developing their career over time, a traditional academic route would be teaching in the classroom," Ashton said. "Then, you might go into a department chairmanship or an assistant head of a division. If you aspire to be a head of school, then perhaps you would go into a head of upper school position where you'd be responsible for a whole division."

But with this common progression comes a potential misconception — that recent Heads of Upper School have been anticipating quick terms from the moment they stepped on campus. Dini says, however, that this isn't always the case.

"We talked very openly with Mr. Igoe about him wanting to achieve that goal of greater continuity," Dini said. "We were moving in that direction, and I think his plan was certainly to be here for a longer period of time. But other things in his life interrupted that. [Former Head of Upper School] Mr. [Patrick] Andr n, who was here before Mr. Igoe, is now the assistant head at Brunswick School in Greenwich, Connecticut. That's actually his alma mater."

Regardless of the reasoning behind each recent Head of Upper School's departure, Dini feels that reframing the position and its hiring process is necessary.

"Perhaps there are things that we could do to mitigate that potential disruption in the future," Dini said. "That's really the overarching goal. I'd imagine by the end of the calendar year, we'll have a greater sense of at least the near-term plan."

By finding ways to make the Head of Upper School position more longstanding, Ashton believes the community will grow closer.

"The school has great stability over time and great longevity and institutional memory that comes with that," Ashton said. "The relationships that form are both broad and deep among every person on this campus."

The goal is for everyone to feel a sense of consistency rather than disruption. Ultimately, that will remain the priority.

JOHN ASHTON
Interim Head of Upper School



DAVID DINI
Headmaster



JOHN ASHTON
Interim Head of Upper School

Past 11 Head of Upper School terms

- 1992–2000:** Eric Benke
- 2000–2001:** Scott Gonzalez*
- 2001–2005:** Tom Elieff / current head of school at Anne & Nate Levine Academy of Dallas
- 2005–2009:** Chris Gunnin '90 / current head of school at St. Stephen's Episcopal School in Austin
- 2009–2010:** Scott Gonzalez*
- 2010–2015:** Wortie Ferrell
- 2015–2016:** Scott Gonzalez*
- 2016–2018:** Patrick Andr n / current Assistant Head of School at Brunswick School in Greenwich, Connecticut
- 2018–2019:** John Ashton*
- 2019–2022:** Colin Igoe / current Head of School at Long Trail School in Dorset, Vermont
- 2022–present:** John Ashton*

* = Interim

Past Heads of Middle School

- 1994–2017:** Warren Foxworth '66
- 2017–present:** Dean Clayman

Past Heads of Lower School

- 1994–2016:** Barbara York
- 2016–present:** Sherri Darver

This longevity and the valuable relationships that follow are cornerstones of the Marksman experience.

"[The Head of Upper School situation] is an exception to the way that we generally operate at St. Mark's," Dini said. "Many of our faculty members have very long tenure, for me, almost 30 years. And there are many teachers that have been here longer than I have."

That's why finding the perfect person to fill the Head of Upper School role — the person who can stay for years and foster the deep relationships the school is known for — is going to take time. But Ashton claims the school is capable of handling that process.

"We don't necessarily have to jump right into a search for next year, but that doesn't mean we aren't talking a lot about the issue," Ashton said.

"Because we have teachers who can adapt to roles outside of their usual description, we have the unique ability to be flexible in this situation."

The goal for the position is to cultivate a sense of continuity for Marksmen, something facilitated by the typical longevity found at the school.

"The goal is for everyone to feel a sense of consistency rather than disruption," Ashton said. "We want things to look and feel the same. Ultimately, that will remain the priority."

Debate Club advances in International Public Policy Forum competition

BY Akash Manickam

Two out of three teams from the International Public Policy Forum (IPPF) Debate Club passed the qualifying round in this year's annual IPPF Debate competition based on essays submitted in October.

"We're involved in a once-a-year, written debate competition concerning a new international public policy topic each year," club member Roome Becker said. "This year's topic concerns NATO. Last year's concerned International Dollar Hegemony."

Founded in 2001 by the Brewer Foundation, the IPPF, formerly known as the National Public Policy Forum (NPPF), expanded to include international competition in 2009. The competition is truly global, as two of the last four contests have been won by teams from Slovakia. Due to COVID, the 2020 contest was shut down.

"I've been a member of the club for two years," Becker said. "There's definitely a lot more energy because the

prospect of an in-person trip to New York is much more exciting than a virtual end to the tournament like there was during COVID."

Now that the club has passed the qualifying round, they will compete against 64 teams from countries around the world by writing essays. IPPF judges will then approve 32 of those teams to advance to the next round. The process continues until the pool of contestants has been narrowed to eight teams. The 64-team round will conclude Jan. 6, 2023, and the final eight teams will be announced March 30. The grand prize for winning the competition is \$10,000. The IPPF Finals Weekend will commence May 5, 2023.

"The top eight teams will move on to the in-person rounds in New York City in

May," Becker said.

In addition to the two St. Mark's teams advancing to the round of 64, one team from Hockaday has also qualified for the competition. Becker attributes the club's success to the efforts of the members.

"The club has been successful largely due to hard work," he said. "Each essay requires intense research, writing and editing. Every team, and every team member's sacrifices are part of this. In addition, it's helpful to have intense arguments and discussions at meetings so we can consider all the different parts of an argument."

Becker encourages more students to join the club, and he says interested students should sign up before November next year if they want to be on the 2023 team.

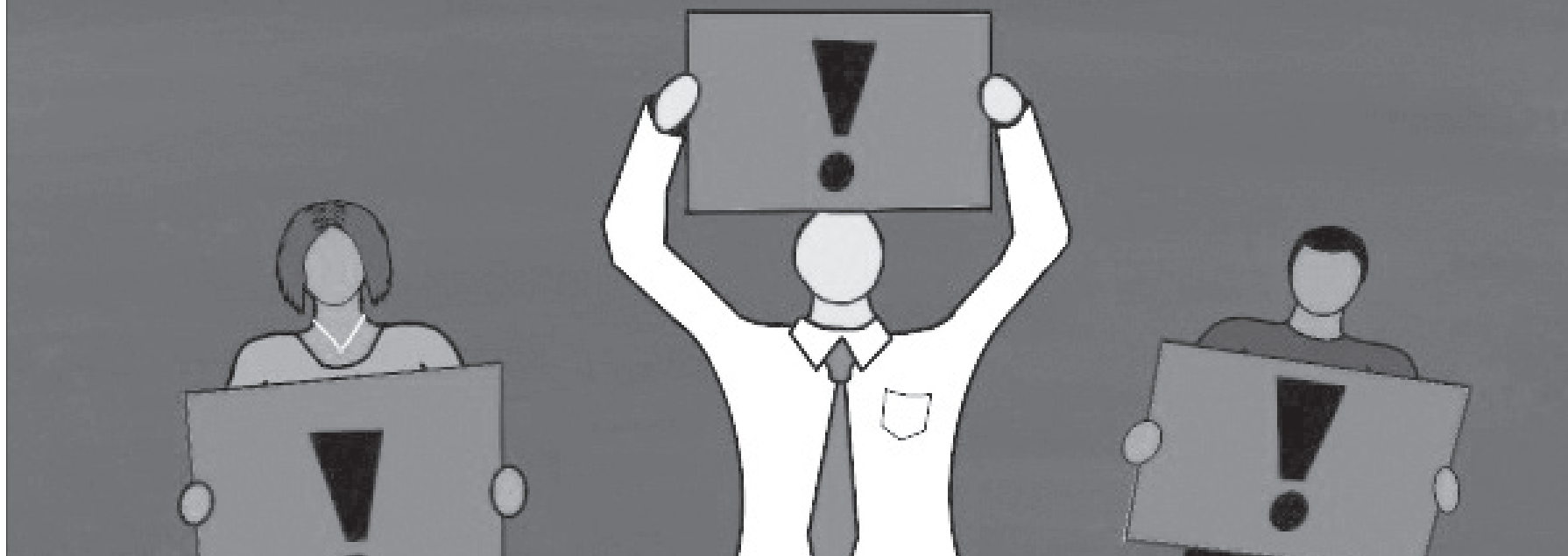
"Students interested in debate should definitely consider signing up," he said. "Regardless of being on the teams, we can always use more proof-readers and ideas at the all-club meetings each week."



ROOME BECKER

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Admitting it



GETTING IN
Affirmative Action seeks to increase the number of students belonging to particularly marginalized groups.

GRAPHIC / MATTHEW HOFMANN

Amid lawsuits against high-level institutions such as the University of North Carolina and Harvard, Affirmative Action has recently taken center stage at the national level as schools and courts both try to decide how much of an impact race should have on a student's application.

STORY Keshav Krishna, Grayson Redmond

About a week from now, there will be a moment years in the making.
December 18.

A Marksman cautiously opens his laptop to a navy log-in screen. He begins to type in his credentials.
23—

He types in the wrong letter. His hands are shaky. Nerves. Of course. What else is he going to be feeling?

He's in.
He takes one last look at pictures of the campus. Boy, it looks nice. He'd give just about anything to be there in a year's time.

Status Update.
He clicks on it, muttering a prayer. A wall of text pops up. Immediately, he's scanning for those fateful words. And he's found them.

I am delighted to inform you of your admission...
This acceptance could well change the course of his life. But aside from the test scores, grades, extracurriculars and essays he's put in the work for, there's a factor he can't control that could've shaped his destiny — his race.

Recently, the Supreme Court has seemed right on the cusp of making yet another monumental decision that would reverse years of past decisions — this time to effectively eliminate Affirmative Action in institutions across the nation.

Affirmative Action, a process by which institutions admit a higher number of students belonging to groups previously disadvantaged in the application process, such as Black or Latino applicants, has come under fire recently from many who believe that race should not be taken into account when viewing applications.

This is primarily shown in the case recently taken to the Supreme Court, with the organization Students for Fair Admissions advocating for the reconsideration of the previous precedent on race-conscious admissions, with Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill serving as defendants who assert Affirmative Action aids in creating a diverse campus while accounting for historical and social ills.

We sat down with students who have applied or will be

applying to college very soon to gain a greater understanding of their viewpoints on this topic.

Senior Arjun Badi on the negative side of Affirmative Action in college admissions:

I don't think race should play as big a role as it does, or any role at all, in college admissions. I think what matters more are class and socioeconomic indicators such as family income, because a rich Black kid has almost the same opportunities as a rich White kid. Conversely, a low-income white kid in Appalachia has pretty much the same opportunities as a low-income Black kid in the inner city. The relative lack of opportunity is directly related to how much a student is able to do during their high school career and that opportunity should be considered instead of race. While socioeconomic



ARJUN BADI
Senior

status and race often overlap, there are instances where a very wealthy Black kid has had a distinct advantage over poor White kids. And not to mention Asian Americans, who are the most discriminated against in race-conscious admissions.

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned a world in which people were judged on the content of their character rather than the color of their skin. Now we have become so divorced from that perspective that we are judging people almost entirely on the color of their skin. If you take a Black and an Asian American student that have equal family incomes, equal test scores and equal everything, the Black kid has a much higher chance of getting in, and that isn't right.

You have to enter everything for FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid], so colleges already know how much money your family is making and pretty much all of your financial situation. Just use that to determine an applicant's adverse circumstances — the amount of money spent on a kid strongly correlates with privilege. How does race give kids more or less opportunities compared to income?

Junior Noah Cathey on why he thinks Affirmative Action serves a positive purpose:

I don't have one explicit view on Affirmative Action. It has a rightful place in the admissions process. I think colleges should feel obliged to extend opportunities to the historically disadvantaged. Race-based admissions, like legacy admissions, are the preferred considerations during application. Systems like these have a place but could stand to be revisited.

Colleges are supposed to be environments that foster learning and help create solutions to change the world for the better. The most productive and successful of these environments are dependent on diversity. It is imperative that college campuses are comprised of a myriad of backgrounds in order to best achieve their role in society.

Although I understand the idea that race alone should not matter when making decisions about an application, that idea is one deprived of historical and societal context. One's race should not matter in situations where choices are being made with relative merit, but that has not always been the case in our country. It is no secret that minorities in America have been denied opportunities because of their race alone. Throwing out race entirely does not give us the opportunity to bridge that gap.

I believe fair or unfair is such a results-oriented way of looking at Affirmative Action. It cheapens the history of Affirmative Action to categorize it as unfair when it was created to counteract the system that was unfair for centuries. Colleges should not and cannot be blamed for extending opportunities to those they once denied them from. Minorities in the U.S. are generations behind, largely, if not entirely, because of race-related discrimination. Non-minority students are right to feel that Affirmative Action admissions are unfair, but the racial and economic preferences that existed long before Affirmative Action have not been fully undone.



NOAH CATHEY
Junior

Rideshare services

As companies such as Uber, Lyft and Alto are becoming more and more popular, many people use them without being aware of the risks. We asked students what makes them feel safe while using these services.



I always feel very safe while using Uber because the majority of the drivers have clean cars and are nice and polite.

TEDDY FLEISS
Sophomore



Being with someone I know and telling someone where I am while I'm in the Uber makes me feel safer.

BEAU BABILLA
Freshman



I have never worried about my safety because my parents can always see where I am during the ride.

PATRICK FLANAGAN
Junior

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

PAR FOR THE COURSE...

Teachers all across the country have reported major behavioral issues throughout classrooms and lecture halls alike. Standardized test scores have seen sharp declines in the past three years. We asked teachers and professors for their opinions.

FACTS & STATS

From 2019–2022:

- 33** states where significant decrease in test scores was reported
- 18** states where no significant change was reported
- 1** state where test scores increased
- 0.4** point decrease in ACT scores (out of 36)

Source: The Nation's Report Card (NAEP)

STORY Dawson Yao, Linyang Lee

The half-asleep 19-year-old rolls out of bed, opens his computer and joins his 9 a.m. chemistry class. It's a videoconference, where only the professor has his camera on. He's the only speaker. Like always, half the class is missing.

The student takes his notebook out of his bag, yawning.

The professor starts the lecture off with the definition of chirality.

He hurriedly copies down the definition of a stereoisomer, fighting to stay awake.

But as the professor drones on and on about enantiomers, the college student, like half of his classmates, puts his faith in the video recording, sets his head down, and starts to snore.

The 19-year-old never gets around to seeing the video, never understands stereochemistry, and never shows up to class.

The next week, he doesn't bother joining. Haphazardly clicking through the lecture recording, he leaves the studying to a later date.

By winter break, he doesn't bother watching the lecture. It's been ages since he's even taken his notebook out.

Despite all his procrastination, he scrapes by on the final exam. But some of his classmates aren't so lucky.

It's the worst average final grade the professor has ever seen.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) evaluates academic strength, administering a standardized test every three years to fourth and eighth graders across the country.

The average scores this year have significantly dropped in every category, hitting a 17-year low. Director of College Counseling Veronica Pulido thinks that the pandemic is the main cause of this decline.

"Nationwide, the pandemic has thrown a wrench into the educational system in general," Pulido said. "Evaluations ultimately had to be done differently, and students had to potentially learn and study things on their own. The decline is par for the course, because there wasn't close interaction, and students had to be self driven. I'm not surprised to see scores go down."

Despite the nationwide decline, however, Pulido still believes that the school has upheld a high level of academic achievement.

"For St. Mark's specifically, because our students are such independent learners already, we haven't seen

[a decline] in terms of testing [results]," Pulido said. "Whether that's just who we are or just that our students are so used to standardized testing or a test in general, I haven't seen that trend with St. Mark's students."

This is in part due to the differences between schools — specifically in funding.

"I think the gap is widening, unfortunately, within the educational system, especially between private and public institutions," Pulido said. "Over the pandemic, there has only been a small, but not enough to be concerning, change at St. Mark's."

Pulido believes much of the difference between private and public schools lie in the values instilled. Here, the school highlights the need to exceed expectations.

"The culture of the school emphasizes the need to do well," Pulido said. "In the grand scheme of things, doing well has good end results, whether that be mastering the violin or competing at a high level athletically. However, it's totally up to the student to decide if he wants to do well or not."

Though the report card only evaluated a small portion of the population, it is still evidence suggesting a worse student body. Throughout the nation there have been multiple instances where students have drastically underperformed.

One such case was in Dr. Jonathan Malesic's first year writing class at SMU. Having taught for 21 years, Malesic was surprised to find a number of huge problems with his students in the last few years.

"Across the board, both attention and attendance was poor," Malesic said. "It was obvious when students had their laptops open and were watching a soccer game or a movie. They were even openly sleeping. It was almost every student, just to differing degrees. There was always about a third of the class missing at any given day, but it was never the same third."

Much of this change took place after the pandemic.

"Prior to the pandemic, I was having this great class in the spring of 2020," Malesic said. "These last few years, things have definitely changed a lot. Even though there's no real, objective measures of student performance, I can say for sure that I was getting requests for extensions that I had never gotten before."

After the pandemic, science instructor Dan Northcut '81 has noticed something similar here as well.



DR. JONATHAN MALESIC
Writing teacher at SMU

TIRED Students across the world have grown accustomed to online learning, making it difficult to stay awake with a transition to in-person learning.



PHOTO / DAWSON YAO

OR SUDDEN DECLINE?

“I think there’s been a little bit of relaxation in terms of getting the work done [after the pandemic],” Northcut said. “There’s definitely been a shift during [the pandemic] because of the online learning process. It was not a good shift, but I think that we are slowly getting back on the right course. Online instruction, online classes, all that stuff was not conducive to good academics.”

Malesic has also noticed a steep decline in learning ability on top of the lack of general attentiveness.

“I think it’s more that the student’s ability to learn eroded,” Malesic said. “It’s not that they haven’t learned these algebra concepts that they should, but rather just the habits of mind that you need in order to learn anything have broken down. Just those last two semesters, they struggled with some concepts in ways that previous students never did.”

Malesic also attributes part of the struggle to the loss of competition among students during virtual learning. He believes that the stress that drives competition, or, in his words, a positive anxiety, is essential for student motivation and success.

“Positive anxiety shows that you care, you want to do well, you want to learn, so that causes you to study more, to prepare, to read over your paper one more time, before turning it in or something like that,” Malesic said. “Even though anxiety can go too far, that sense of competing for a goal is a great motivator, but it was lost after the pandemic.”

But a loss of motivation at this school’s ultra-competitive environment means falling behind the pack. In an environment with heavy competition and a demanding curriculum, students have small room for error.

“With the way our curriculum and academics work, taking it easy is not really possible,” Northcut said. “[Students] have got to keep doing the work if they want to make a grade. You just can’t slack off.”

Northcut has been at the school for almost 40 years, having been here for six years as a student. In addition

to teaching in that time, the Earth Science curriculum hasn’t changed much. “The people who were teaching in the 70s taught me in almost the same way I teach Earth Science now,” Northcut said. “A lot of the earth science stuff hasn’t changed much. Granite is still granite. Polaris is still Polaris. So there’s a lot of things that have stayed the same. A lot of the methods and the lessons are very similar to the way I learned it, because the way I learned it is part of what made me interested in it. So, if that made me interested in it, I’m using the same sorts of ways to make kids nowadays interested in it.”

Although the syllabi for many classes have largely remained the same, Northcut believes that the general quality of teaching has improved.

“It was good [in the 70s],” Northcut said. “Don’t get me wrong. It was good for sure. And certain classes were incredible. But, I think the [general] level of instruction is better now.”

However, the general experience for students here has changed in some specific ways.

“Pecos was harder,” Northcut said. “We got our equipment from Army-Navy surplus stores. There was no REL. There weren’t any synthetic materials. You had to get 100 percent wool stuff that was usually old military stuff for camping. We used vegetable cans from the cafeteria for the billycans. We used coat hangers to wire the handles into these cans from the cafeteria, so

we were a lot more rangy. We looked a lot more scruffy out there than they do nowadays. Not that how it is now as bad by any means, but it was definitely different back then.”

Northcut has also found that the way the school approaches leadership has changed drastically compared to when he was a student.

“In the 70s, the only character building we did was in classes, and in the sports,” Northcut said. “Now, they’re treating it like a subject, so it’s interesting. These are hugely important concepts, and it was just a part of everybody’s teaching back then.”

One class that has had character and leadership education incorporated into the curriculum is English 10.



DAVID BROWN
Victor F. White Master Teacher

“The biggest change [to the English curriculum] was our decision some years ago to make English 10 the home for our character and leadership program,” said Victor F. White Master Teacher David Brown. “Then, there was no class at St. Mark’s that intentionally and

systematically incorporated character and leadership into the curriculum.”

Brown has found that, even with evolving curriculums, the rigor of each class remains the same.

“I think that the level of difficulty has stayed about the same,” Brown said. “[And] I think [English 10] is a stronger course now. But as far as the work level, I think it’s about the same.”

Brown also thinks that the attitude towards learning remains the same on many different levels, including his experiences here.

“I’ve taught at private schools, inner city public schools, prisons and universities,” Brown said. “I’ve always had excellent students who write excellent papers, and I’ve always had weak students who wrote weak papers who have improved over time. Overall, the quality is the same.”

Brown believes that the students are not at fault, but rather the education system itself.

“Our public education is in such horrible shape,” Brown said. “Classrooms are overcrowded, teachers are underpaid. English teachers in public schools have 35 or so students in a classroom teach five of those classes a day and have hundreds of papers that they would have to grade. They can’t do that and live a sane life. A student who goes to public school will be lucky in many cases, if he writes one solid essay like that in his senior year, and gets thorough feedback from the teacher and revises that to make it better.”

In terms of athletics, there has not been much of a decline in performance. Former Athletic Director Mark Sullivan believes do not translate to academic decline

“I’m not sure that [academics and athletic growth rates] correlate so much,” Sullivan said. “That’s also not just personally here. I haven’t seen kids getting softer athletically.”

In accordance with Northcut and Brown, Sullivan does not think there has been any change of effort at the school.

“Even as an advisor and as an observer of the kids at this school, I think that grit, determination and effort haven’t ever really wavered,” Sullivan said.

Like Pulido, Sullivan believes this is due to the environment fostered by the school.

“We live in a very competitive environment here at St. Mark’s,” Sullivan said. “And I think that drives us all, whether a students or a teacher, to be better every day.”



Students got into the habit of approaching their lessons [when they were at home] a bit differently. Taking some time to readjust and get back in the groove of a classroom setting was something students didn’t have to worry about before. There’s always an adjustment and a learning curve to get back on track.

DAVID BROWN
Victor F. White Master Teacher



PHOTOS / COURTESY CREATIVE COMMONS

PRECEDENT During the Spring of this year, accomplished organic chemistry teacher Dr. Maitland Jones Jr. was fired, on the grounds of his class being too difficult. According to the New York Times, New York University (top) dismissed Jones after 82 of his 350 students signed a petition against him.

PERSONAL COLUMN

The international food shortage

AARON AUGUSTINE
Environment & STEM Editor

With the Russia-Ukraine war, our global food shortage is being examined with a magnifying glass.

There's no evil as old as hunger; famines have ravaged countless societies, and we could be no different.

As is the case with industrialized nations, we are likely to feel the pangs the last, but the signs of possibly the worst food crisis ever are already evident.

In countries such as India, the food crisis has already reached a breaking point. Over the summer, India issued a ban on wheat crop exports. With the second largest producer of wheat leaving the market, this will only worsen the problem.

The United Nations predicts that the number of people facing food shortages is expected to grow to 47 million by the end of the year.

And the war is not the only cause of this food crunch.

Globally we have been choking the fields. Fields have not been rotated, and we have been pouring copious amounts of fertilizers onto crops.

These fertilizers not only run into waterways and pollute drinking water, but they also strip crops of necessary long-term nutrients.

Year after year, we will see a diminishing crop yield as the fields choke on ash and turn to dust.

In addition, these fertilizers are largely produced off the byproducts of the oil and gas industry.

While these cost-effective petroleum based fertilizers may not be more harmful than other fertilizers to plants, as oil and gas becomes scarcer, the cost of production will continue to rise.

The rising costs of fertilizers will in turn drive the global cost of food higher and higher, forcing more countries to adapt isolationist policies like India and further driving the price to unfathomable levels.

By over-fertilizing and tying our food production to one of the most volatile and environmentally harmful industries, we have set ourselves a time bomb.

While profitable in the short-run, we have created a system of increasingly glaring contradictions, a system which could spiral into global collapse. And this collapse would be an arduous one; the amount of time needed for the soil to completely recover its nutrients will hinder recovery.

The global population that contrary to popular belief, is not responsible for this crisis. Currently, we easily produce enough food for 10 billion people, but due to profit-motivation and market tendencies, this surplus is largely wasted.

However, all is not lost. If given time, the Earth can heal itself. And, if we take drastic action by allowing the fields time to recover and separate food production from oil and gas, we can still stem the worst that is yet to come.

GARDENING

Restoring the PLANTS

Marksmen combat the erasure of the native Texan prairie.

See coverage, page 10



FOCUSED Marksmen work to help protect the Texan prairie from invasive species such as Bermuda grass. The native prairie is more resistant to drought, but is constantly under threat from more aggressive invaders.

PHOTO / AKASH MUNSHI

STEM IN BRIEF

ROBOTICS TEAM STATE

The robotics team won first in the state for the robot game in their University Interscholastic League (UIL) group Dec. 3. They participated in BEST of Texas Robotics, a national robotics competition in the United States held each fall for a stretch of six weeks. Every team is given the same parts and competes in a robotics game with the goal of earning points. The challenge this year was called Made2Order.

LIBRARY INTERNET ACCESS

Over the past year, the library has been making substantial changes to their website. Due to increased demand for online books, the new database has expanded access to online newspapers, magazines and other online tools. The library has also introduced single sign-on to protect

the security of the school's online accounts.

ONLINE SAT Starting in the spring of 2024, the SAT will only be offered digitally. College Board believes that making the SAT digital will allow the test to be easier to administer and to take. The digital version of the standardized test will only last two hours compared to the current three. The SAT will also become adaptive: how one does on the first few problems will impact the difficulty of the following problems. Marksmen foresee changes to college admissions because of this.

HOMECOMING ILLNESS

Due to the changing of seasons along with the after-effect of Homecoming, the school has seen an increase in total sickness cases. The abandonment

of masks has also led to a sharp rise in the number of cold and flu cases. Due to last year's mask mandate, flu and cold cases were extremely low, but they have since returned to normal levels.

MATH TEAM COMPETITIONS

Upper School Honors-level math students took the AMC 10 and AMC 12 Nov. 10 for a chance to take the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME). The tests are all hosted by the Mathematical Association of America, which select the best performers to advance to the USA Mathematical Olympiad. In addition to the AMC, the math team has been competing in Arete Lab's Math Madness, a bracket based math competition held between schools across the country. The team made it to the quarter finals.

INSIDE

08 Food shortage

How can we stop the global food shortage?

09 Virtual chemistry

Marksmen design a virtual reality chemistry lab.

10 Prairie restoration

Marksmen work to restore the native Texan prairie.

WEATHER REPORT

The ReMarker meteorologist Akash Munshi breaks down the upcoming forecasts in Dallas.



THIS WEEK

Friday High is in the low 60s. Low is in the upper 40s. Cloudy with light rain off and on. 40% chance of rain.

Saturday High is in the upper 50s. Low is in the upper 40s. Cloudy with a 20% chance of rain.

Sunday High is in the upper 50's. Low is in the mid to lower 40's. Cloudy with a 30% chance of rain mainly during evening and into the night.

WHITE CHRISTMAS

Ten years ago was the last time Texas has received a Christmas full of snow and ice. Every year children look to the skies and hope for a snowy new year, but what are the chances?

Christmas Day historically has a less than 10 percent chance of snow according to the National Weather Service, but with several cold fronts coming in, I anticipate the probability of a white Christmas to be significantly higher.

Houston water panic

Number of People Affected	2.4 million
Total Duration	Two days
Cause of Crisis	Power outages
Water plants out	Three water plants
PSI Required for Safe Water	20 PSI
Total People Injured	Zero people

Source: Fox News

GREEN
CORNER

MARKSMEN IN STEM

Virtual chemistry lab

Ethan Zhang '25 and Everett Jin '26 competed in the Congressional App Challenge by developing a virtual Hololens chemistry lab. Zhang sat down with Environment & STEM Editor Aaron Augustine to share his journey and experiences.

INTERVIEW Aaron Augustine

Aaron Augustine: How did you get involved in the virtual chemistry lab project?

Ethan Zhang: Well, it first began in the summer. We were working with a professor at UTD on developing a motion recognizing AI. We had a camera, which was linked to a laptop, and we taught the AI how to recognize basic hand movements. By the time we were done, the program was able to differentiate between a person putting their thumbs up or waving. Afterwards, one of the other students invited Everett and I to work on the Congressional App Challenge.

AA: What was the program designed to do?

EZ: It's a virtual chemistry lab. So once you put on the Hololens, you are able to fill beakers up with various solutions and combine them. For example, when you combine sulphuric acid and a lot of water, it would bubble up and explode.

AA: How did you develop the app?

EZ: It's a little difficult to code the Hololens when you can only see what happens when you put it on, so we first had to connect the lens to a laptop that our entire group could look at to see our progress.

AA: What was the most difficult part of designing the app?

EZ: A lot of people don't understand all the work that goes into coding a simulation. I remember on one of the first tests we ran, I tried to place a beaker on a table, but we forgot to insert gravity, so the beaker fell into an infinite void. All the minutia made developing difficult in the strangest ways. We originally planned on having a Bunsen burner be able to heat things, but we had to give up because the amount of effort required to design the graphics and insert temperature was not worth it. We would of had to have made a heat cap that would limit the max heat of an object, otherwise the Bunsen burner would infinitely heat something until the entire program crashed. So, really it was all the little details that took the most time.

AA: What was the funniest thing that occurred while you were making the app?

EZ: Actually, the funniest thing that happened was during the summer work with the UTD professor.

Towards the end of the project, we thought we had completely finished, but as we ran the test instead of telling whether I was holding up a finger or wave, it highlighted my face and called it a clenched fist, which led to a lot of teasing.

AA: For a STEM guy, working with graphics must've been hard. How did you do it?

EZ: Well, I got lucky in that the other people working on the project were able to create all of the 3D models, so I only had to work on being able to piece them together and how they would interact with each other. Working on combining the 3D models with gravity was really hard. When you pour one beaker into another, making it so that the liquid would interact with the models of the different beakers led to a few painful headaches.

AA: What is the format of the competition?

EZ: The goal is to just make a new idea or design on an app. In fact, we didn't even have to use the Hololens, because most of the applicants are just making phone apps, but we thought it would be really cool to try it, so we did.

AA: What inspired you to make the app chemistry-based?

EZ: It wasn't actually up to me. By the time I joined, our group had already decided on it. But, I was quite happy considering I am taking chemistry this year, so I thought it would be able to prepare me a little bit.



INSPECTION
Zhang inspects a glass beaker, simulating what the app is able to accomplish.

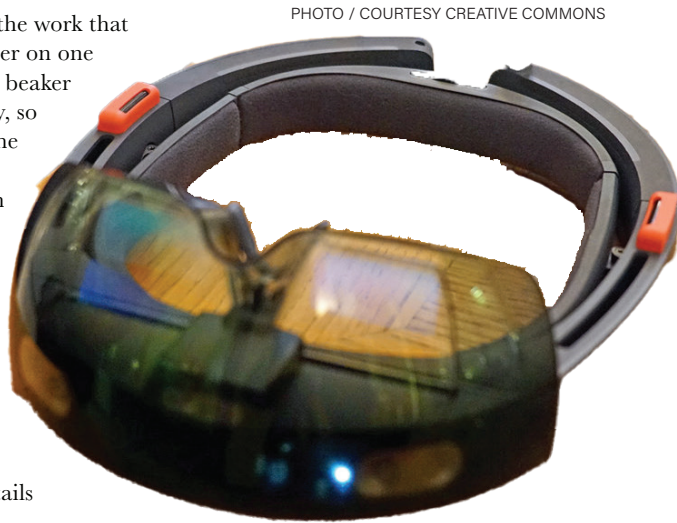


PHOTO / COURTESY CREATIVE COMMONS

HOLELENS
The app was programmed to work on a Hololens: a wearable screen that allows you to interact with both the app and the outside world.

PHOTO / AARON AUGUSTINE

- 2,177** Apps submitted every year to be judged based on various factors such as real-life impact, technological complexity and practical application.
- 304** Members of Congress support the competition including a near perfect bipartisan split, showing the competition's merit.
- 7** Years that the competition has been held to promote national coding education with rapid growth in the last two years alone.
- 3** Places in Washington D.C. where the winning app is displayed including the Capitol building.

CONGRESS APP INFO

Science magazine editor Michael Gao leads publication into 11th year

BY Vikram Singh

From covering student-led experiments and interests in science to commenting on scientific breakthroughs in Texas, the editor of *The Scientific Marksman*, senior Michael Gao, is leading the publication into its 11th year.

As editor, Michael oversees the entire process done by a group of over thirty kids working to produce an annual copy of the magazine.

"I give the members of the magazine a few months to work on their stories, and after their stories are done, we begin proofing and working on the design," Gao said.

To try and leave his own mark on the longstanding

magazine, Michael is pushing for a change in design to try and personalize the magazine to the school as well as the students who work on it.

"I am trying to have the magazine move away from relying on graphics for the visuals in our magazine," Gao said. "Instead, I would like to have more photos of students conducting experiments or photos taken by students to give the magazine a more personal touch."

Although he has come to be the editor of the magazine, his initial

involvement in the club would not be indicative of this future.

"I first joined the club in my freshman year but wasn't too interested in pursuing a higher role like editor until much later," said Gao.

Last year's main theme was centered on covering the natural world and our place in it. This year's theme is still being worked on by the staff, which includes several editors and writers.

The Scientific Marksman's purpose is to cover interesting scientific topics and analyze how they relate to the school. The magazine releases at the end of every academic school year along with the newspaper, and is co-led by senior Aaron Liu.



MICHAEL GAO
Scientific Marksman Editor

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Preserving the green path

The latest event in a series of conservation-minded projects took Gardening Club members to locations from the Northaven trail to the various Blackland Prairie reserves around the city. Though only one percent of original Blackland Prairie vegetation has survived from the pre-urban era, the club members are fighting against the ever-present tides of change.

STORY Aaron Augustine, Vikram Singh

From the gentle rustling of branches, to the falling brown leaves and barking dogs, the Northaven Trail is a popular destination for people of all ages. Teenagers race down the trail while couples walk with their children or pets down the path, but due to a combination of climate change, invasive species and increases in littering, the natural beauty of the trail is slowly diminishing. A group of students are volunteering to ensure the preservation and restoration of trails and prairies in the greater Dallas area, saving them slowly withering away.



AKASH MUNSHI
Gardening Club President

Led by senior Akash Munshi, members of the Gardening Club partnered with the Friends of the Northaven Trail, a non-profit board of directors that manage and keep the trail in shape.

“Volunteers are very important to our organization because we have no paid staff members, meaning we do heavily depend on volunteers,” said board member Cary Fitzgerald. “Recently we’ve had a large crowd helping us clean up the trails and teach different activities. There’s always something that we can find people to do.”

Along with St. Mark’s, the members of the Northaven Trail Board have partnered with Hockaday and the Dallas Girl Scout Troop.

“We also partner with organizations like the Texas Conservation Alliance, who will help provide flaps and volunteers to assist us on planting day,” Fitzgerald said.

Students from the Gardening Club assist in multiple ways. For example, volunteers may have to assist in events they might hold with the YMCA or the nearby church. But mainly, students help maintain nature projects ran by board, these include their pollinator gardens and wildflower programs.

“They make sure all the plants are watered, and more importantly, they help to fend off and make sure invasive plants do not make their way into the trails ecosystem,” board member Dorothy Beuchal said. “These are the main ways they contribute.”

Although the partnership with the Northaven Trail has been much of the focus of the Gardening Club’s work to help the environment, they also help out at local prairies around the DFW area.

“In terms of the prairie side of things, one area we frequent is the prairie area down by Harry Moss Park,” senior and Gardening Club member Thomas Goglia said. “That is one of the places a lot of Gardening Club members spent time at this summer.”

Not only are members of the club working to help preserve the prairies and trails, but they are also encouraging students at others to do the same. Working with the Flow Project, a non-profit organization that promotes environmental education at public schools around DFW, members of the club hope to spread awareness to high schools across the city.

“If you check on the Flow Project’s website, you can



FROM THE GROUND UP Planting native species along the Northaven Trail. Gardening Club members restore Blackland Prairie ecology (above). Below, club members grow a pollinator garden full of various pollinator species. These species provide hot spots for pollination, allowing the population of bees, butterflies and other pollinators to flourish. This event was part of a larger project to target the especially vulnerable Northaven Trail ecosystem.

PHOTOS / AKASH MUNSHI



see that their partnership with us is actually a chapter of the organization,” Goglia said. “Through this connection we have been able to work with students from schools in Plano as well as DISD.”

The main issue the Northaven Trail and different prairies are facing are the invasive species that are not suitable to grow in Texas’s climate, but they also take resources away from the plants that should be growing in these locations.

“We’ve mainly seen different species of grass find their way into places like White Rock Lake, where they tend to spread more and more aggressively, winning the battle over the native species,” Beuchal said. “This has been an ongoing problem for us.”

Members of the Gardening Club and Northaven Trail Board also feel spreading awareness of these issues is crucial due to the extreme weather Texas has seen from throughout the year.

“We’ve noticed that these more aggressive invasive plants tend to be much less drought-resistant, meaning they might be able to take over the native plants but will simple wither away come drought season, something we’ve been experiencing more and more frequently,” Beuchal said.

According to Beuchal, the demand for awareness, education, and volunteers, is at an all-time high, not only because of the extreme weather but also because of the plans the board members have for the future.

“We’re always taking on more and more projects to make the trail a more inviting place,” Beuchal said. “One thing we are trying to do at the moment is plant more milkweed along the trail, a plant that attracts Monarch

butterflies, hopefully giving the trail a brighter and more natural feel.”

With more projects to come in the future, more awareness to spread, and more work to do, the Gardening Club have been effective not only in applying their knowledge, but also sharing it, in the hopes that more and more people will help to combat the very same issues they’re dealing with.

“We can always find someone to do something, we need all the volunteers we can get,” Fitzgerald said. “So it meant a lot when the club took the initiative to reach out to us.”



THOMAS GOGLIA
Gardening Club member



DOROTHY BUECHAL
Friends of the Northaven Trail board member



PHOTO / AKASH MUNSHI

FRUITS OF LABOR Flowers have been growing in the pollinator garden for months.

Senior and dedicated environmentalist awarded for efforts in the field

BY Matthew Hofmann

Senior Akash Munshi was named the sole recipient and first school winner of Green Source DFW’s Next Generation Award, a prestigious honor that recognizes high school or college students who display considerable action in helping the environment.

According to Munshi, winning this award was due to perfect opportunities and amazing mentors like science instructor Dan Northcut inspiring him to further his passion for environmental work.

“I got set on the right path with mentors like Northcut and some people in the Northaven Trail, and I was put in a great environment,” Munshi said.

With incredible mentors in place, Munshi was then able to participate in projects a limited number of people ever do.

“I was then able to do all this crazy stuff like grow thousands of plants,” Munshi said. “Doing projects like the pollinator garden and the Blackland Prairie was amazing because it took effort. We grew about 1000 plants, but seeing everybody come together on the June 4 planting and having around 70 people all working together was quite special.”

Because of all of his efforts, Munshi was recognized for the award, which is presented by the Memnosyne Institute and Green Source DFW, two local organizations dedicated to honoring North Texans who have committed significant efforts to improve the climate change crisis.

In college and beyond, Munshi is prepared and excited to continue his work toward improving our environment.

“I want to get my Ph.D. in plant sciences and botany, but then I want to go into agriculture technology,” Munshi said. “I think it’s a booming

field, and I want to do something concerning rehabilitation or restoration in the field.”

But despite the potential for economic success, Munshi is interested in the field for a more important reason – helping solve the climate crisis of the planet.

“I’m not motivated by the money,” Munshi said. “I think in the future, our planet is the only thing that will matter. We’re all going to eventually be off the planet and dying, and our race is gonna go extinct.”

For this reason, projects like those Munshi has worked on are important steps for educating about and improving the climate crisis facing the world.

“Doing restoration for the prairie, which captures the second most carbon of any ecotype is incredibly important,” Munshi said. “The prairies are enormous carbon sinks and the prairie has been the most devastated. That’s why the work that environmentalists and volunteers are doing is so important.”

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

The next few YEARS

As the college admission deadlines approach, many students begin to worry about how the next stage of their life will pan out. Sometimes it seems that an acceptance or rejection letter is life or death, but is this really the case?

See coverage, [pages 12-13](#)



DIRECTIONS After graduation, there are many different routes a Marksman can take during the next chapter of his life.

GRAPHIC / MORGAN CHOW

10600 IN BRIEF

DEBATE TOURNAMENTS

Juniors Sid Bidare and Ashrit Manduva won The Ed Long Invitational Debate Tournament, which ran from Nov. 11 to Nov. 12 at The Hockaday School, with seven varsity teams of Upper School debaters and one novice team of Middle School debaters competing. Including the winners, four out of the seven varsity teams made it to the elimination rounds. Sophomores Noah Grant and Andrew Jin made it to the quarter finals, and the novice team made it to the finals in their division and placed second.

COMMUNITY SERVICE DRIVES

In the past few months, the Community Service Board put together and ran multiple drives and donated to local shelters and community service organizations. The most recent drive, the candy drive, collected 620 pounds of

candy in three days, which was donated to West Dallas Community Center, Jubilee and The Salvation Army, with the current Gift Drive that ends Dec. 14.

MODEL UN UPDATE

The Model UN team participated in the Central Texas Model UN competition in Austin Nov. 5th, as well as the Model Arab League Nov. 12th. The team took on the roles of different countries and discussed how to resolve topics such as the regulation of bioweapons and Russian military intervention in Africa. After the Central Texas Model UN competition, freshman Reagan Graeme was awarded "Outstanding Delegate."

NO-SHAVE NOVEMBER A total of \$905 were raised to support cancer research during this year's annual No-Shave November tradition. The

event ran from Nov. 1 to Nov. 18 and sold 181 wristbands. Proceeds were donated to the No-Shave November Organization with the goal of growing awareness about cancer by embracing our hair. A wristband was required to have been purchased in order to participate.

RETURNING MARKSMEN

Recently graduated Marksmen will be invited to return to campus to reunite with previous faculty members and peers Jan 5. Suggested attire is casual, and the event will be held in Nearburg. Online registration is due Jan 2. The event will begin with lunch with faculty and a campus update followed by leveraging of the Marksmen Network. The returning alumni will then tour campus and meet with faculty members. The event is hosted by the Office of Development & Alumni Relations.

INSIDE

11 350 words (right column)

This cycle's 350 words follows an on-campus musician's passion.

12 The next step in our future

Alums explain how rejection doesn't have to be the final say.

16 Grandparents' Day

Grandparents around campus highlight what this tradition means to them.

350 WORDS ON...

The girl with the drums

FEATURE Zack Goforth

Most musicians start off with the piano. So did she. And she stuck with it for a while.

But then she got older, and her tastes changed. Out with the Mozart and Beethoven and in with the Nirvana and Red Hot Chili Peppers.

She got an electric guitar and took lessons, speedily strumming sweet solos to her heart's content. Over some time, she got pretty good, but there was something in the way — her fingers. Those twelve-year-old fingers just couldn't keep up with those of her rapidly growing friends. Out with the guitar and in with the drums.

"I noticed nobody had a drummer," she said.

With no scales to learn, why shouldn't she try it? The drums felt like a perfect fit. She quickly grabbed her headphones and put on Weezer, which she used to self-teach.

When eighth grade passed and it was time for high school, she went to a boarding school with freshmen who only wanted to play Nirvana and juniors who wanted to be in jam bands. She got to play with different groups of people on the quad, and it was great.



HOT PINK Her band, The Chloes, produced their own vinyl records with a creative artistic twist.

Time passed and one day her boyfriend, later her husband, struck up a conversation with a random guy. Turns out the guy knew a girl who needed a drummer, and it was as simple as reaching out on Facebook. She was all in.

Even though everyone in the band had day jobs, The Chloes were the closest she's ever been to making a career out of music.

"We produced our own records," she said, "and they were beautiful. We had one on seafoam vinyl with glitter, we did one with confetti and all sorts of things."

The group would rent an RV to go play at music festivals like Norman Music Festival in Oklahoma, which was a favorite. They went to New York and Austin and all over the map.

She felt every gig was like a personal invitation to connect with fun and interesting new people. And now that her kids are older, every gig is a personal invitation for Administrative Assistant Leila Wright to leave the house and perform with her current band — Paper Saints.

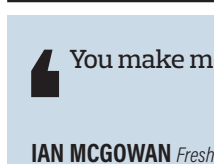
Editor's note: 350 words features hidden hobbies, talents and personalities on campus.

SAY WHAT? Quotes overheard around campus



Bro, why do they even make locks if stealing is illegal?

SAM LIGHT *Sophomore*



You make me blush a little.

IAN MCGOWAN *Freshman*



Every kick in America is a free kick.

AHSAN TAHIRKHELI *Junior*



International sports are lame.

HARRY FLAHERTY *History instructor*

CALENDAR

THIS WEEK

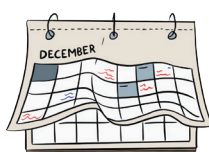
Saturday Second through fourth grade Admission Observation

Monday First grade admission application due

Tuesday Lessons & Carols @ 7 p.m.

Wednesday Community Service Gift Drive ends

Friday All-school Christmas Party



THIS MONTH

Dec. 16-Jan. 2 Christmas Break

Jan. 4 Parent Association Executive Committee Meeting @ 8:30 a.m.

Jan. 5 College Age Holiday Luncheon/Marksmen Day @ 12 p.m.

Jan. 13 End of First Semester Fan Blizzard Night

Jan. 19 Literary Festival

Jan. 20 Seventh grade Father/Son Breakfast @ 7:30 a.m.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

WHAT LIES AHEAD

When it's time for college admissions, there's always a few questions. After years of hard work with countless tests, homework assignments and late nights, has everything Marksmen done paid off? Will they be accepted into their dream schools? Does it even really matter?



FATHER AND SON
James Rogers '19 stands next to his father, Jamie Rogers '85, on the Champs de Mars, which overlooks the Eiffel Tower, during his time studying.

PHOTO / COURTESY JAMES ROGERS



PHOTO / COURTESY JOSH MYSORE

THE MOUNTAINS During one of his trips abroad, Josh Mysore '21 hikes with his host aunt in Switzerland.

STORY Zack Goforth, Aaron Liu, Morgan Chow

All good things must come to an end. Whether it started in first grade, fifth grade or tenth grade, every Marksmen's journey has a finishing line. The realization that the days of playing spike ball on the quad, getting hyped in assemblies and watching the sunset on Friday night lights are numbered is a tough one.

But as Marksmen turn to the next chapter of their lives, walking across the commencement stage every May, one question lingers in the back of their mind like a memory you just can't forget.

What's next?

For some, like Josh Mysore '21, dreaming big and planning for the future starts way before that diploma hits their fingers.

"My dream school all my life was Stanford," Mysore said. "Most of my friends and classmates knew this."

The path seems clear — find a college you want to go, work hard to get in, and go there immediately after graduation. But sometimes things don't work out the way they're planned.

"I applied in the fall of 2020 and didn't get in," Mysore said. "I was incredibly dejected. It really felt to me that all of the things I'd been doing in high school and all of the programs on the side weren't enough. I was like, 'Are you serious?' I had done all of this work just for a few people to read a piece of paper and say, 'Nope.'"

For Mysore, not getting into his first-choice school, along with previous experiences in high school, helped him realize that the traditional path to college wasn't for him.

"After I finished my sophomore year [in high school], I applied to a program which let me move to Spain in the fall of 2019 and study abroad," Mysore said. "There, I realized that a part of me wanted to go explore things outside of where I'd grown up in Texas. Honestly, to get the fullest education possible, there was no way I could go through my time at St. Mark's and then just go straight to college. So when I graduated [from St. Mark's], I found a program that I could pursue to study abroad and took a gap year where I lived in Germany

for 11 months."

Mysore is a strong believer in the benefits of gap years as opposed to the traditional route to college and believes that everyone should at least consider them.

"My best friend from high school, [Max Palys '21], and I both took gap years," Mysore said. "We talk about this a lot — it was literally the best decision I have ever made in my life. It was the first time I was totally independent, totally away from home and with nobody telling me what to do. There also wasn't a set structure in my life — no 'get good grades,' no 'do this to get into college.' I think the most important things about a gap year, especially abroad, are the social maturity, self confidence and maturity that come from it."

Director of College Counseling Veronica Pulido played a part in helping Mysore find the programs that would shift his perspective on life after St. Mark's. Pulido also believes gap years can provide some benefits to students.

"A traditional gap year could be a formal program to decide what to do [after the gap year]," Pulido said. "Colleges have always enjoyed students taking gap years to do something different, whether that's to explore new interests like cooking or learning a new language. And the extra maturity definitely can't hurt."

However, Pulido stresses the importance of treading with a little caution before diving in headfirst.

"For a St. Mark student, I think it's a family decision, to say 'what's going to be most helpful or important for the student's next steps?'" Pulido said. "I don't think it's a bad idea to take a gap year or do something different, but I do think that it really needs to be a reflective family conversation, and not just, 'Sure, take a gap year and we'll figure it out.'"

Just like Mysore, James Rogers '19 had set his eyes on only one institution years before graduation.

"I had always wanted to go to [The University of Southern California (USC)]," Rogers said. "I spent a lot of time out in southern California and met a lot of people who were pointing me towards USC during the

college admissions process. I was really focused on ending up there no matter what it took."

And, just like Mysore, things didn't work out exactly the way they were supposed to.

"When I got the news that I hadn't been admitted USC, I was obviously really bummed out," Rogers said. "But they offered me this thing called the Trojan Transfer Plan, which basically meant I would have to live abroad in Paris for my freshman year and then I could go to the school for the next three. It's almost like a conditional acceptance. The thing was, at this time, I'd been accepted into the University of Texas at Austin [UT Austin]. So when it came down to it, I could stay at UT and get a great education there or I could step way out of my comfort zone and be able to go to a school that I really wanted to go to."

For Rogers, the decision was a no-brainer.

"[The gap year] was really just a great experience for me," Rogers said. "I had been born and raised in Dallas for 18 years at that point and didn't want to stay in Texas. So not only was I able to eventually land at USC, where I am now, but I was able to go abroad and learn so much about independence and self-sufficiency. I'd absolutely recommend going abroad and taking an alternative path."

Sam Morgan '21, like Mysore and Rogers, is very familiar with detours and obstacles along the college route. Except his experience revolves around the service academies — a different experience entirely.

"My mom went to the Air Force Academy," Morgan said, "so I always knew that the academies were something I wanted to consider. I really started training for it during COVID in my junior year, but when it came time for college applications, I put more effort into your standard Harvard or Yale type schools. When I got denied from the Naval Academy, I really thought, 'Crap, I actually really want to do this,' and so that became my goal."

After graduating, Morgan went to UT Austin and enrolled in the school's Navy ROTC program.

**AFTER
HIGH
SCHOOL**

4.9%

decrease in college transfer students from the 2020-2021 to 2021-2022 school years.

via National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

3%

of students take a gap year immediately after graduating high school.

via Cooperative Institutional Research Program at UCLA

76%

of first-time college applicants are accepted by their first choice schools.

via UCLA Higher Education Research Institute

63%

of college students graduate in six years or less.

via National Center for Education Statistics



THE SQUAD Morgan stands with his NROTC battalion at the University of Texas.

PHOTO / COURTESY SAM MORGAN

“When I was [in Navy ROTC], I was somewhat involved in the Navy,” Morgan said, “and I got to see the career paths and professionalism of the officers. I also got to see their job opportunities and education opportunities and learned more about the naval academy so that I could reapply and do a better job.”

Morgan believes getting rejected from a dream school or, in his case, a service academy doesn’t justify throwing in the towel.

“I think that for a lot people it’s very discouraging to not get in somewhere,” Morgan said, “and I think the immature response would be to think, ‘Oh, well they don’t want me so I’m not good enough,’ or, ‘they don’t want me, but I know better than them and am not going to apply there again because they’re jerks.’ The stance that I’m very glad I took was both realizing that I made the mistake of not applying to the academy early enough or putting enough emphasis on it and also realizing where my shortcomings were and taking a year to work on those. Instead of giving up after not getting in the first time, which seems like a setback, I actually took it as an opportunity to do things like go from a good fitness test to a great one.”

Similarly, Mysore holds that, with college admissions, things might not initially go as planned — but there is a reason.

“Things work out the way things are meant to work out,” Mysore said. “A lot of kids seem to be set on a single, structured path to college and ultimately their future, and when something goes wrong, they get really discouraged. But I would bet there’s a 99.9% chance that, five years down the line, everyone will look back and think, ‘Oh, of course it had to happen that way.’ Someone once told me that when you live life as a human, it’s like a series of random dots. When you’re in the moment, it’s can be really confusing and a lot of times you won’t understand why these dots are showing up. But the cool thing about being human is, once you reach the end of all these dots, you find the line that connects them all.”



PHOTO / COURTESY SAM MORGAN

KNOCKOUT During his plebe summer, which are a few weeks of training during the summer before a midshipman’s first academic year at the Naval Academy, Morgan boxes in a tournament.



PHOTO / COURTESY JOSH MYSORE

WINTER WONDERLAND During his time in Switzerland, Mysore vacations to the mountains and skis with his younger host brother.



PHOTO / COURTESY SAM MORGAN

HANGING BY A THREAD During a test of fitness at the Marine Corps obstacle course, Morgan pulls himself up a rope.

Sophomores pursue unique fine arts passion

BY Neil Yepuri

At 10600 Preston Road, opera has found a home. Sophomores Daniel Deng and Lukas Palys have both pursued opera outside of school for multiple years. Even so, their paths have been different. In Palys’s case, a passion for choir blossomed into new opportunities.

“My old choir teacher inspired me to join the Children’s Chorus of Greater Dallas,” Palys said. “And through the chorus there, they offered auditions for The Dallas Opera.”

Palys would next receive a spot in the opera chorus, and quickly find a passion for it.

However, Deng has had an on-and-off relationship with opera.

“I started five or six years ago, and I was a high soprano back then,” Deng said. “I sang for a couple of years, but then my voice started dropping down, so I quit, because there’s not much you can do during that stage.”

More recently, Deng has re-engaged himself with the art.

“Last year, I started again as a low bass, because that’s what my voice had dropped down to,” Deng said. “I’ve sang for one year with this teacher, and we’ve progressed a lot, so over the summer, she invited me to this performance camp in Italy.”

And for Deng, this camp in Italy was eye-opening.

“Everybody there was at a very high level, and I made a lot of great friends and connections,” Deng said. “There’s just something about singing opera in Italy and performing for Italian people. It really brings out the true nature of opera, and what it was intended to be.”

For Deng, exposure to different points of view has allowed him to appreciate his art even more.

“The things I’ve done to perform opera for other people allowed me to experience the way opera impacts people in other countries,” Deng said. “It’s part of their lives and how it’s a tradition that’s been upheld.”

Over the summer, Palys also attended opera camps which were rigorous but beneficial to his singing ability.

“We had classes and voice lessons every day,” Palys said, “which were mostly individual. It was focused on improving yourself as a singer.”

And now, Palys is trying to break down the stigma around opera.

“The conception is that only old people go to the opera and that it’s very pompous and high class,” Palys said. “But that’s not the case. Once you get to know the actual art form, it’s much, much more than that.”

19M high school graduates enroll in college every year after graduation.

via National Center for Education Statistics

16M college students change their major throughout the course of their education.

via Current School News

6.3M college students drop out of the college they enrolled in every year.

via Education Data Initiative

7.6M undergrad students enroll in graduate school every year.

via Post Secondary National Policy Institute

RELIGIOUS REFLECTIONS | CONTINUED FROM COVER

A spiritual education

Unlike many other private schools in the area — such as the Episcopal School of Dallas, Jesuit Dallas and Cistercian Preparatory School — St. Mark's, being nonsectarian, has no codified connection with any religious institution. However, Marksmen are still required to attend weekly chapel meetings, which are rooted in Christian tradition. Despite this, the school aims to maintain nonsectarianism while also providing a spiritual education for all.

STORY Shreyan Daulat, Will Spencer, Grayson Redmond

Every week, students from all 12 grades pray, listen to sermons and sing hymns in the school's center of religious and spiritual learning: the chapel.

For any institution that puts itself forward as culturally egalitarian, two options are available when it comes to the matter of religion: either the institution can forgo religion altogether or attempt to equally embrace every religion at once.

St. Mark's, being no exception to this rule, has firmly settled itself in the latter camp. On campus, weekly chapel services feature sermons consisting of a variety of religious or unspecifically "spiritual" themes, Judeo-Christian prayers and hymns and occasional interfaith observances for holidays such as Diwali and Yom Kippur.

Despite the school's efforts to embrace religious diversity, certain parts of the St. Mark's experience continue to leave some with a sense that education at the school has certain Christian elements, per a poll sent to Upper and Middle School students by *The ReMarker* which received more than 200 responses. Examples of this include an Episcopalian chaplain, stained glass windows in the chapel depicting scenes from the New Testament and a metal cross behind the Chapel's pulpit.

In addition to this conflict between the school's quest for religious diversity and Christian traditions, the completely

secular nature of the rest of the curriculum leaves others wondering why mandatory chapel services are a part of the school at all.

With these inconsistencies, several questions emerge: Why does the school value spirituality? What does it mean to be nonsectarian? Do elements of the school's past hinder the full potential for students' spiritual growth?

The story of religion at the school is best understood by beginning before the school's founding — during a religious disagreement between the school's two predecessors.

"The direct predecessor schools were the Cathedral School, founded in 1946, and the Texas Country Day School, founded in 1933," English and history instructor Dr. John Perryman said. "The Cathedral School was located at St. Matthew's Cathedral, which is the Episcopal cathedral in Dallas just northeast of downtown, and Texas Country Day had no religious affiliation."

The consolidation of a religious school with a secular one gave birth to a unique environment.

"The merger produced an institution that had a strong element of spirituality," Headmaster David Dini said. "The chapel retains certain historical elements that are so crucial to tradition and continuity over time that we value here. We're not going to deny that heritage. At the same time, the merger created a setting that was inclusive to a wide array of perspectives when it came to religiosity and spirituality."

During the merger, The Cathedral School fought hard to retain many religious components. While some of these have died out over time, some clearly remain, most notably the school's name itself.

"The two candidates for the new school's name were St. James and St. Mark's," Perryman said. "The Cathedral School decided that the name was one aspect of

the cathedral inheritance that they wanted to consider keeping, and they opted for St. Mark's."

Now, as the school strives to become increasingly diverse and representative, a possibility remains that the name St. Mark's could be misconstrued. The Alcuin School, just down the road, addressed this in 2013, when it altered its original name — St. Alcuin.

"As an international school and community, we value the education of all religions and perspectives," Alcuin Head of School Walter Sorenson said. "The school changed its name from St. Alcuin to Alcuin to more accurately reflect the school's diverse community and its dedication to including students from all faiths and belief systems."

Sorenson — who led the initiative to change the school's name — saw it as a problem for two reasons.

"Firstly, it falsely identified us," Sorenson said. "We are a nonsectarian school, and the name carried certain religious connotations. Secondly, it was an inhibitor for us. Many families would not apply or even look here because they didn't want their children to attend what they thought was a religious school. The name was preventive for becoming a more diverse program, which is in essence what we all need to be doing as independent schools."

Largely because of the school's name, Dini has had to deal with inquiries regarding the school's religious and spiritual status.

"Certainly, the name St. Mark's may have certain religious connotations and may push people to conclusions without fully knowing the school," Dini said. "There's a St. Mark Catholic School in Plano; I've had people ask me if St. Mark's is also a Catholic school. My goal is for people to understand the school and to associate it with a place of excellence and a values-oriented environment."

Student ambassadors, including Lion and Sword Society Co-President senior Aadi Khasgiwala, have also received similar questions.

"I'm often giving tours to prospective parents," Khasgiwala said. "On multiple occasions, I've had a diverse group of prospective parents ask me about the role of



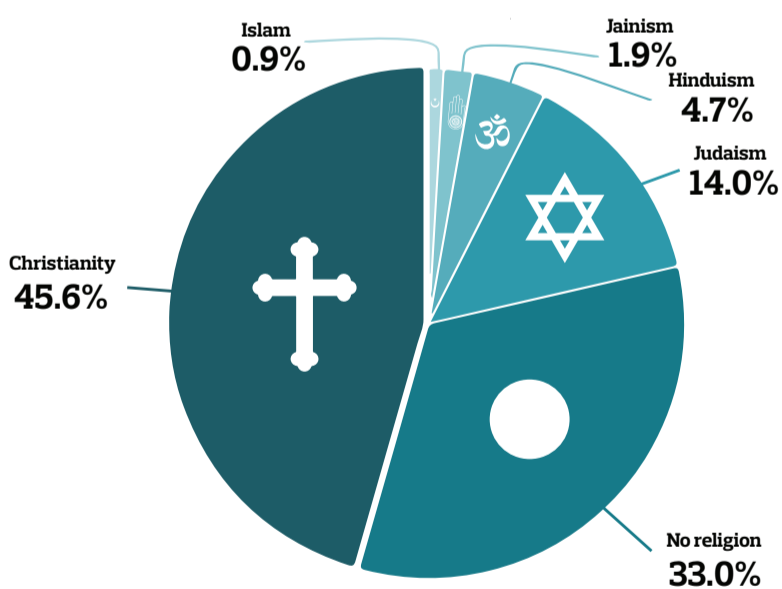
JOHN PERRYMAN
English and history instructor



WALTER SORENSON
Alcuin Head of School

Religious affiliations of students

Data collected from self-reported information from 215 students via a digital form.



Much of the choir's repertoire is Christian church music. What does that mean for students of other faiths?

BY Dillon Wyatt

The St. Mark's Choir of Men and Boys sings many Anglican works and perform many services such as Evensong, Festival of Lessons and Carols and Baccalaureate.

In addition, the choir has been affiliated with Royal School of Church Music since 1951. This allows the singers to be awarded for their efforts and continue to perform at a high level.



ISHAAN SIDDAMSHETTY
Sixth-grader

Given the school's diverse student body, the choir's focus on Anglican songs and performances are executed by a diverse group of students who don't all practice the Christian religion.

For sixth-grader Ishaan Siddamshetty, following the Hindu religion while also being a part of the choir is a new environment for him, but Siddamshetty embraces his role.

"Choir is about spreading stories of Christianity," Siddamshetty said, "but there's no harm in a Hindu going into

a Christian choir, because our goal is to tell a story. The Christian religion may dominate, but it doesn't really affect me at all."

Siddamshetty believes the choir is a tight-knit community that focuses more on the experience than its Christian background.

"It's fun to sing," Siddamshetty said. "Personally, I don't really feel awkward because when we are singing in events, I am more focused on my singing. I don't really have time to focus on the Christian aspect of all the songs."



PROPHET displayed a wall of these Greek icons of the prophet Jeremiah; are just one of Judeo-imagery of

BANNERS OF FAITH Every year, students in the fourth grade participate in the traditional Banner Chapel ceremony, in which students create cloth banners decorated with religious imagery of their choosing and display them during a special chapel service.



PHOTO / COURTESY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

tion

religion at St. Mark's: 'How often is chapel? Does it preach specifically about Christianity?'"



DAVID DINI
Headmaster

Following the shift in name, Sorenson witnessed a profound impact. "We have more families here who follow religions from all over who understand what we stand for," Sorenson said. "Not having an impediment in our name helped us organically in terms of people looking at our school and applying, and it helped our community embrace diversity and want to learn about how other people around the world think."

While the name St. Mark's may externally give the school a religious — specifically Christian — image, Rev. Stephen Arbogast asserts that, internally, the school doesn't promote one religion over another, solidifying itself as a nonsectarian institution.

"The school definitely values religious experience," Arbogast said. "But it definitely does not say what kind of religious or spiritual tradition you need to follow. So you could be a faithful Hindu, Buddhist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist or anything else."

Yet, 45 percent of poll respondents believe the school's approach to religion and spirituality does not align with the definition of nonsectarian.

"Our modern chapel was partly born out of a Christian school," Dini said. "Inevitably, there are still Christian elements. We have an Episcopalian priest as our chaplain. We have an Anglican choir, which is obviously out of a Christian tradition. Yet, in my mind, our chapel is not an either-or. It's an inclusive environment. It's shared and overlapping."

During chapel services, Arbogast strives to give students opportunities to further themselves spiritually — which can certainly live outside the realm of religion.

"Spiritual practices often have value in and of themselves, whether or not they are embedded in a particular religious tradition," Arbogast said. "For example: the practice



REV. STEPHEN ARBOGAST
School chaplain

of learning how to be quiet, thoughtful and reflective, whether or not that's in the context of prayer, the effort to have a relationship with some kind of divine being or the effort to be more in touch with yourself or with the universe."

Much of the school's Christian legacy is evident in the Worship Book used during chapel services. Litanies, prayers, psalms and hymns contain words like "God" or "Lord" or "Almighty," and many of these orations come straight from the Bible. Several poll respondents say their faith or religion is not included in the various elements of chapel.

"We did not have a worship book until about 30 years ago," Arbogast said, "and the book that we've been using for all those years was largely based upon the Episcopal Church's Book of Common Prayer and hymnal."

On Nov. 17 — after an approximately five-year long process that entailed reviewing recommendations on music and prayers from members of the school community — Arbogast and a committee of faculty, staff and students released a revised Worship Book for the first time since the last revision in 1998.

According to Arbogast, the impetus to revise the publication was to create a book that would better reflect the school's religious and cultural diversity.

"The prayers and the music better represent the community here at the school now, as opposed to what the community was like 30 years ago," Arbogast said. "Now, there are several dozen authors — men, women, Christians, Muslims, Jews, contemporary and historical people."

Many followers of minority religions in the school's community are noticing and appreciating this shift. Senior

“We hope that this book, designed to serve as a vehicle for common prayer in a religiously diverse community, will enrich our worship, give glory to God, unite us in community, and honor and respect the wonderful varieties of faith which come together for worship in St. Mark's Chapel.”

PREFACE
2022 St. Mark's School of Texas
Worship Book

Arjun Badi, a chapel council co-chair, for instance, applauds the greater degree of diversity in the new worship book while pointing out room for improvement.

"The chapel program — and Father Arbogast in particular — is making great strides to include many religious perspectives in services, such as Hinduism, which I am a devout follower of," Badi said. "This is a work in progress, however, because there are still many things that may be lost in translation. For example, Hindu prayers in the worship book end in 'Amen,' which is unfamiliar to me because that denotes Abrahamic religions in non-Abrahamic prayers."

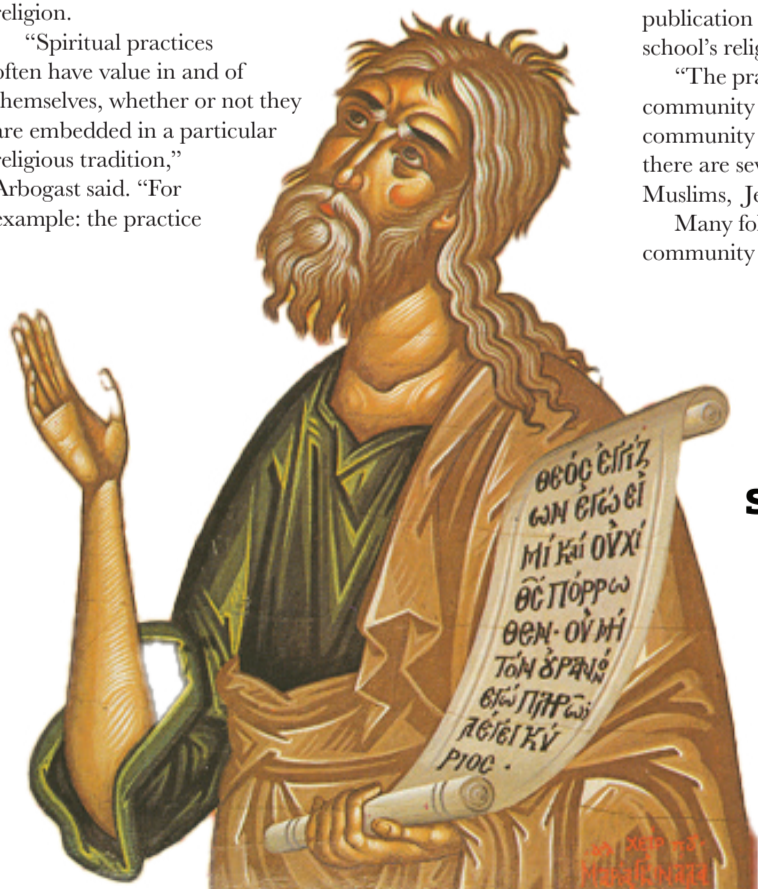
Though the school's relationship with religion has changed a great deal in its past and will likely change in the future, Arbogast asserts that a spiritual education is a vital component in setting boys on the path to manhood.

"Students in grades one through 12 are at a formative time of their lives in which they are thinking about their religious identity," Arbogast said. "So, part of what we do is help these students make informed decisions about who they want to be in a religious or spiritual context — Because I think that's part of being a mature, wise, thoughtful adult."

Dini — who has experienced chapel for nearly three decades — has had the unique opportunity to witness the chapel transform along with the school.

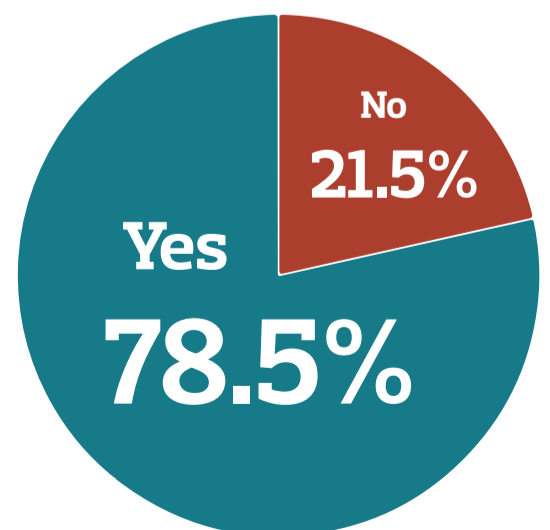
"As the community of the school has widened and become more representative of the world at large," Dini said, "our chapel program and focus on spirituality have remained at the literal and figurative center of our campus. To me, that's a blessing."

Grandly in the west of the chapel, the Orthodox and prophets and Isaiah are example of Christian campus.



Do you think chapel services address aspects of all religions?

Data collected from self-reported information from 215 students via a digital form.



GRANDPARENTS' DAY

In the spirit of giving

On his visit to Grandparents' Day from Baltimore, John Griggs II packed suitcases full of toys to give to the annual Gift Drive.

STORY Arjun Poi, Akash Manickam

Alongside a large donation to the Gift Drive, John Griggs II — from Baltimore — attended Grandparents' Day to spend time with his grandson, fifth-grader John Griggs IV, to learn more about the school.

"I want to meet the teachers to see what our grandson is learning and get a feel for the culture at St. Mark's," Griggs said. "It's extremely important to us as far as the culture that allows boys to grow into men."

Griggs believes Grandparents' Day has an important purpose beyond showing grandparents what their grandchildren's classes are like.

"It allows the whole community of grandparents and all the people that have an influence on a young

man's character to be involved," Griggs said.

Griggs, along with his wife, Diane, donated several gifts to the Gift Drive during Grandparents' Day. Coming to Dallas, he packed four suitcases full of gifts.

"We tried to bring the gifts down to our grandson to include in the drive," Griggs said. "And last year we weren't able to get here in time because of the pandemic. We had accumulated a whole bunch of these things to donate, so we decided we'll just bring them down."

Griggs makes a special effort to involve his children and grandchildren in service opportunities.

"Both of our families — my wife's family and my family — have always been involved in charitable works for the community for people in need," Griggs said, "and we instill that in our children, and we want to make sure that that's instilled in our grandchildren as well. We only have two and both of them are here at St. Mark's and at Hockaday, so we've always found opportunities to involve them in the giving process."

The Griggs family places a strong emphasis on community service because they believe aiding those who need help in the world is essential. In fact, they even made hundreds of blankets by hand and donated them to Ken's Man Shop, a clothing store near the school.

"It's the idea that we all have to help each other," Griggs said. "If you can ever help those in need, then go ahead and do it. It's all part of good character development and one of the things that we believe is necessary in this world."

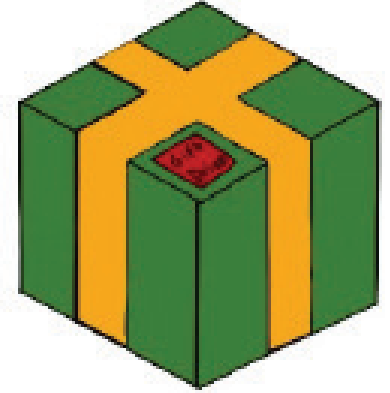


PHOTO / CHARLIE ESTESS

FESTIVE Diane Griggs poses in front of a Christmas tree. With her husband, she has donated many gifts to the Gift Drive.

FACTS & STATS

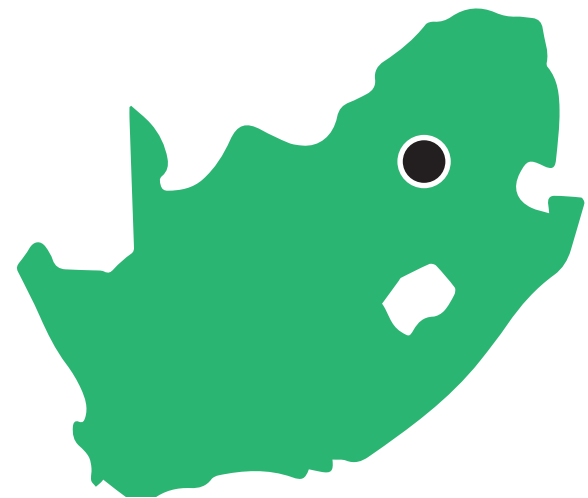
2,022 goal for last year's Gift Drive

3,000 goal for this year's Gift Drive

14th last day to give gifts



VISITING FAMILY María and Fernando Gonzalez came to the school from Mexico City.



A LONG JOURNEY From Johannesburg, Charles Pierre Francois Marais visited his fifth-grade grandson on Grandparents' Day.

Dropping by from miles away

Although Dallas may be a long trip from their hometowns, some grandparents traveled from across the world to visit students during Grandparents' Day.

After missing the last two Grandparents' Days because of the pandemic, Fernando and María Gonzalez, grandparents of freshman Sebastian Gonzalez, finally made it this year.

This was the fourth time they came for the event — held the Friday before Thanksgiving — and even though they live in Mexico City, they still believe that coming in to see their grandson on Grandparents' Day is worth the trip.

"We live out of the country, and Sebastian is our only grandchild living [in the US]," María Gonzalez said. "We have two more grandchildren that live in Mexico. We feel it's a very important bonding time for the three of us. We have been keeping track of his successes and his achievements all these years, and we like to be there to see him perform how he does in a classroom."

Grandparents' Day matters to María and Fernando Gonzalez because they get to learn more about their grandson and his interests.

"It's an opportunity to see your children grow up and predict what they're going to do in life through looking at them perform in their classes," María

Gonzalez said. "So then we start saying, maybe he will go into humanities. Maybe he'll be a scientist. Because it's a great opportunity to see how you develop yourself in a classroom in your beautiful school."

As a psychologist that researches learning programs and learning models to apply in schools and the industry, María Gonzalez notices things about the school that many others don't.

"Along my career in life," María Gonzalez said, "I have been studying a lot of issues that have to do with education and the way people learn and how, if the school makes you independent, you will grow independent. The school gives you the experience of learning which is very, very valuable and is completely different. Learning is repeating things, but here, it's living the experience, and so you will never forget it."

María and Fernando Gonzalez were in Dallas from Thursday, Nov. 17 to Sunday, Nov. 20. On Grandparents' Day, María Gonzalez wanted grandchildren to know an important message.

"Grandchildren always make grandparents proud," she said.

Grandchildren always make grandparents proud.

MARÍA GONZALEZ
Grandparent

From South Africa, Charles Pierre Francois Marais, grandfather of third-grader Connor Steinhoff, came to Grandparents' Day for the first time.

Marais contrasts his grandson's education to the one he had in South Africa.

"It's important for a grandparent to be able to interact with his grandson or granddaughter as they get their education," Marais said. "It's always interesting to compare what I went through to what they're going through and to see what the differences are."

Marais is impressed with the school and believes that going here means something special.

"We're always looking out for excellence," Marais said.

"When I meet new people back home, it was very interesting to see where they went to school. And certain schools mean something special. And I have no doubt that St. Mark's is one of those schools that you'd mark as being special when you came across somebody who was there."

Even though Marais lives in South Africa, he has been able to see his grandson perform at the school virtually. In fact, he even watched Steinhoff being carried by his senior buddy from back home in Johannesburg last year.

"The wonderful thing about present day communications is that you can have access to other places quite easily through WhatsApp or through cell phone technology and so forth," Marais said. "You can sit at your desk in Johannesburg and go onto the St. Mark's website and see what it's like there."

IN THE FILM INDUSTRY

Behind the SCENES

Leading as casting director in the film and television industries, Josh Einsohn '90 shares his journey.
See coverage, [page 20](#)



PICTURE PERFECT Josh Einsohn '90 has been nominated by the Casting Society for numerous Artios Awards in television.

PHOTO / COURTESY JOSH EINSOHN

The gallery

Hear from one of the creators of the latest art featured around campus.

INTERVIEW Aaron Liu



Print Grid by Aidan Moran
Featured in Nearburg Hall

What's going on with this print?

Sophomore Aidan Moran: This is a print that I made of my dog in the kitchen, with a kitchen tile background added in. He's a weapon and loves to trip people up in the kitchen.

What was the development process like, after you took the photo?

AM: Printmaking is a little trickier than regular drawing because you only have two shades. You have what's on the paper, and the part that's flushed with ink pressed onto the paper. When I inked up the brick for these prints, I put more than one color to give it a sort of a gradient and make it pop a little more.

CULTURE IN BRIEF

DECEMBER PIANO RECITALS Angela Hendricks, the school's piano instructor, and her students held a Christmas recital Dec. 5. Due to COVID-19, the recital moved away from being performed at a nursing home to back on campus. All Upper School students performed duets with younger students, upholding a longtime tradition. The assortment of songs included various Christmas songs and Hanukkah songs, with students who aren't religious performing secular Christmas songs too.

ORCHESTRA WINTER CONCERT The annual winter orchestra concert was hosted Friday in Decherd Auditorium. All Upper School and Middle School strings students performed. There were a variety of genres of pieces played such as folk, baroque, romantic, movie music and holiday music. There was also an All-Region Orchestra concert on Dec.

3 at Berkner High School, in which seniors Akash Raghunathan and Svanik Jaikumar and sophomores Daniel Sun and Andrew Xuan performed. All four students who auditioned secured spots in the orchestra.

ATPI FALL PHOTO CONTEST Photography students submitted photos to the Association of Texas Photography Instructors (ATPI) Fall Photo Contest Nov. 18. The statewide competition has students submit their work into categories based on the theme of the photo. The submission categories range from sports photos to landscapes. A panel of judges will grade the submissions behind closed doors and return the results by late December. Last year, three students won first-place awards at the competition.

CHRISTMAS COFFEEHOUSE On Dec. 10 at 6 p.m., the Elevated

Cooking Club and the Fine Arts Board are hosting the Christmas Coffeehouse. The Elevated Cooking Club will be making a variety of Christmas treats. Students from the school and Hockaday will have a chance to perform their talents in front of an audience. Anyone is welcome to attend and participate. The theme of this coffeehouse will be gingerbread houses.

BAND WINTER CONCERT The Winter Band Concert was held Dec. 2 in Decherd Hall. The Beginner Band, Middle School Band and Upper School Band all performed. This concert was one of two band concerts held all year. The Upper School Band played a piece called "Heaven's Light" as a tribute to the late band director Tim Hicks. Additionally, seniors are working on creating a commemorative plaque to hang in the band hall to honor his legacy.

INSIDE

18 Authors on campus

A preview of the upcoming 2023 Literary Festival.

20 Into the industry

Looking at an alum's journey into the film and television industry.

21 Holiday season recs

A giftgiving guide for the upcoming Christmas holidays.



Linear Perspective by Aidan Moran
Featured in Nearburg Hall

What's depicted here?

AM: This is El Convento, one of the oldest hotels in the world — during my last vacation at Puerto Rico, I got to see it in person. Before it was a hotel it was a monastery for nuns and monks, around the 1500s or so. Later, it was converted into a hotel, and it's a huge Puerto Rico tourist spot now.

What was the hardest part?

AM: The part that took the longest time was measuring all the angles. For this piece, we used linear perspective, which is the theory there's this central vanishing point which all the angles of the figure converge into.

There's a lot in my sketchbook, mostly just practicing, but also applying ratios from real life into my art through sightseeing, to make it look a little more realistic. All those calculations took a while, but they were definitely worth it.

IN THE CITY

An upcoming event worth checking out.

Fire! The Resurrection of Mr. Imagination

WHEN Through Jan. 7

WHERE African American Museum of Dallas



MR. IMAGINATION

Local Connection: Visited St. Mark's and other Dallas schools in educational program with Dallas Museum of Art

Works Featured in: Smithsonian, Halle St. Pierre (Paris), American Visionary Art Museum, Dallas Museum of Art, and more

Artwork Style: Based on everyday objects, in particular bottlecaps

Exhibit Features: There are circa 80 of his artworks from different career periods.

LITERARY FESTIVAL

Sharing their stories

This year's Literary Festival marks the 16th year that authors, journalists, songwriters and poets will be brought together to spread the knowledge they've gained as writers. We interviewed the people who helped make it happen.

STORIES Nikhil Dattatreya, Arjun Poi, Linyang Lee

Providing an opportunity for students, faculty, and members of the community to connect with novelists, poets and artists, the Literary Festival is returning this year Jan. 19-20.

The first event of the two-day act will be the Writers' Forum Jan. 19 at 7:30-9 p.m. in the Science Lecture Hall.

Victor F. White Master Teaching Chair David Brown says the Writers' Forum is a great chance to meet with the guests and purchase books for those who may be interested but cannot attend the events during the day.

"I will chat with all four writers that evening, who will have a chance to read from their work briefly," Brown said. "It's open to the whole DFW community. We have a partnership with Interabang to supply the books, and they will set up a table outside the Science

Lecture Hall. They will sell the books to any and all who come, and the writers will be at the tables to sign the books for those who would like them to do so."

Though there will be a reception in the Cecil and Ida Green Library Jan. 19 at 3:30 p.m., Brown says that instead of books being held at the reception, students will be able to purchase them in the Student Store.

"We plan to have the Student Store of their books," Brown said. "It will be open for a little while after school, so they can get them there if they want. They can then come over to the reception and the writers can still sign their books there."

While selecting writers to invite on campus every year, Brown says he makes sure that he covers a wide range of genres and areas of interest.

"We like to have a fiction writer, a nonfiction writer, we'd like to have a poet," Brown said, "and we always try to have something a little different, like a journalist or a screenwriter. We also like to have a performance artist, like a singer/songwriter, so that the Middle School will have an opportunity with the writer to either have someone read their poetry or to sing their songs."

Brown says he discovers guests primarily through their published pieces.

"I also like to bring writers to campus whose works I have read," Brown said. "For instance, I had a book by

Rebecca Makkai, who is this year's fiction writer, called *The Great Believers* which I read and really liked. I read more of her work and really liked it, so I thought she would be a great writer to bring to campus."

Yet another pool of writers Brown may choose from are his former students.

"We have a screenwriter and director coming to campus this year, Josephine Decker, whom I taught around 30 years ago at Highland Park High School," Brown said. "She is a writer, director and actor in some of her own movies that are getting quite a bit of attention as an independent filmmaker. I have also taught Ben Mercer back in the early 2000's, and he works as a senior editor for the Criterion Collection. For the first time ever, we are bringing an editor to campus."

Still, finding a diverse array of guest speakers is not a job Brown could effectively manage on his own, and he encourages suggestions from students and faculty for future literary festivals.

"We have a director, two junior co-chairs and three sophomores who are learning how to plan [the Literary Festival]," Brown said. "It helps that a number of faculty members over the years have recommended writers; I wouldn't have known about Sam Kean if [science instructor Dan] Northcut hadn't recommended him last year."

WRITING
CONTEST
WINNERS

Fiction Myles Lowenberg for "Duggin"

Nonfiction Ishaan Devalla for "A Lantern in the Philosophical Dark"

Poetry Bijaan Noormohamed for "Borscht, 2022"

THE PANELISTS

The Literary Festival panelists: a prologue

The four scholars leading the Literary Festival panel this year come from a variety of backgrounds, hobbies, fields, and interests. These are their stories.

Martín Espada

Raised in the Linden projects in the East New York section of Brooklyn, Martín Espada has been involved in activism his whole life.

He saw his father arrested for demonstrating on behalf of civil rights against racial discrimination at seven, and went on his first protest march when he was nine.

His father, Frank Espada — a community organizer and documentary photographer — is commonly known as the leader of the Puerto Rican community in New York City in the 1960s.

"I grew up surrounded with this ethos of activism," Espada said. "Not only that, activism connected to [my

father's] art," Espada said. "From a very early age, I thought that's how everybody did it."

At 20, Espada was opened up to the world of poetry when a family friend, Luis Garden Acosta, gave him a book and told Espada that he was going to be a poet.

"I looked at this book he gave me," Espada said. "It was called *Latin American Revolutionary Poetry*. It was edited by a man named Roberto Marquez, and it was bilingual. I opened it up and there was, page after page, poetry that I suddenly understood and could identify with very strongly."

Before writing, however, Espada was unsure about what he was going to do with his life.

"I was the first one in my family to go to college," Espada said. "And I had no clue what was going to come after I

got my BA. Neither did anybody else. My parents didn't know. They had not been to college either. And my father had decided that I should go to law school. And he wasn't the only one. There were other wise old men in my life, and they were old men, who urged me to do the same thing."

So he became a lawyer. And being a lawyer comes with certain opportunities as well as responsibilities.

"As a lawyer and poet, I'm an advocate," Espada said. "Speaking on behalf of those without an opportunity to be heard. They don't have the platforms that I do. They don't have the opportunities for public speaking or interviewing or publishing a book. And so I take it very seriously as a responsibility and an obligation to tell the stories of those who don't have the opportunity to tell those stories for themselves."

Also visiting:

Josephine Decker



PHOTO / COURTESY JOSEPHINE DECKER

Part of Time Warner's 150 incubator, Sundance Institute's New Frontier Lab and one of *Filmmaker Magazine's* 25 New Faces of Independent Film, Josephine Decker has been said to be ushering in a "new grammar

of narrative" by *The New Yorker*. Her feature *Madeline's Madeline* premiered at Sundance 2018 and was nominated for Best Picture at IFP's Gotham Awards and for two Independent Spirit Awards. Josephine premiered her first two narrative features at the Berlinale Forum 2014, and her documentary work has played SXSW, Tribeca and aired on Netflix and MTV.

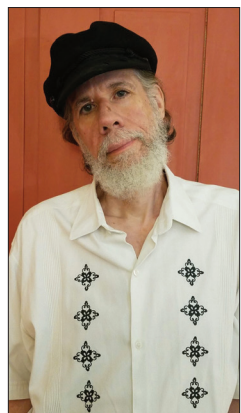


PHOTO / COURTESY MARTÍN ESPADA

Benjamin Mercer '03



PHOTO / COURTESY BENJAMIN MERCER

From science fiction and Hong Kong action cinema to the golden age of Hollywood, former Marksman and Senior Editor at the Criterion Collection Benjamin Mercer's '03 love for cinema knows no boundaries. Nineteen years later, Mercer has returned to campus for the Literary Festival.

As a young kid, Mercer grew up watching films and developed a large interest in cinema.

"I was really into movies, I don't know really when it started," said Mercer. "It started by Middle School at some point when I was at St. Mark's. I just remember going to a bunch of movies in a row and essentially realizing that I wanted to keep doing that."

In his high school years, Mercer joined *The Remarker*, going from a staff writer in his earlier years to writing reviews and ultimately becoming a section editor in his senior year. Mercer's passion for journalism ultimately led him to attend Brown University, further

solidifying his career in journalism.

"I continued doing a similar thing in college at a paper called *The College Hill Independent*, which was a weekly [paper] on campus at Brown," said Mercer. "Once I started working, I worked a lot as a copy editor and that led me to land my current job."

Although Mercer was passionate about journalism and editorship, his love of cinema did not fade. While studying at Brown, he discovered the perfect opportunity to pursue both interests.

"While I was working as a copy editor for Brown's newspaper, I found out about The Criterion Collective, allowing me to combine the editorial stuff with my love of film," Mercer said.

Mercer hopes to share his love for film and journalism. To him, writing, reviewing and working with film critics isn't just a job, but a way to connect with and understand the creative processes of artists of all backgrounds.

"It is fun when you can get a good back and forth with the writer," Mercer said. "It feels like an incredibly rewarding experience because discussing their pieces all the way to the small edits and revisions reveals a tiny, but interesting window into their creative minds."

Rebecca Makkai



PHOTO / COURTESY REBECCA MAKKAI

An author of four novels and dozens of short stories and a Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award Finalist, Rebecca Makkai's career as a novelist started a bit

slower than one might expect. "All through school, I was really dedicated to writing, but you don't just graduate college and write a novel," Makkai said. "I taught elementary for 12 years, and in that time it took me years to fully flesh out my first novel. I would write sometimes, then abandon it. From the time I first had the idea for the novel until publication was just about ten years."

Though she is very busy during the writing process, Makkai says she is still required to read as part of her work.

"When you are publishing actively, there's a big part of your professional life that is reading books that you are professionally obliged to read," Makkai said. "It might be for reviewing, or it could be someone that I'm interviewing on stage. I've also judged major book awards."

Although Makkai finds herself reading often, she noticed that her selection was confined to mostly contemporary American literature, a tendency she challenged herself to change.

"I've read some wonderful stuff, but there really has not been a lot of room in my reading life for nonfiction, books from other countries, something from the 1800s or poetry," Makkai said. "I'm doing this big project where I read basically nothing but books in translation for a couple of years, partly as a memorial for my dad, who died in 2020. He was a literary translator, among other things, and he lived to be 84. So I'm trying to read 84 books — each work from a different country."

And, reading those 84 novels has led her to have some truly unique experiences while traveling.

"I read this Austrian novel a few weeks ago while I was in Austria," Makkai said. "It wasn't like 'Oh wow, I'm seeing all these parallels!', but a friend told me to have dinner one night at this old, giant greenhouse. I sat down, read the book, and I had a great dinner. Then a couple of days later, I'm still reading the same book, and a character goes to the exact same restaurant where I was just reading the book. It felt like it was magic."

'TIL DEATH: A SHORT FILM

Student-led cinematography

The advanced film studies class recently began filming "Til Death" from Nov. 21-22, and they expect to finish the film around Jan. 13. We talked with film studies instructor Mark Scheibmeir and senior Andrew Kogan about the movie's development.

INTERVIEWS Linyang Lee, Will Clifford

How are the members of film split into different groups?

Mark Scheibmeir: It's a team effort. It really is. There's so many different roles on set and a lot of the time, from an outsider's perspective, we only hear about particular roles like either the director or the cinematographer, but there's so many other positions too. A big goal this year that I've been talking about is film as a team — just like a sports team. You wouldn't march out on the football field with just a quarterback and running back on the team.

Is this the first year the film studies classes have worked together on a project like this?

MS: I do think we're kind of really doing something a little bit new here. And so especially with certain aspects, like doing casting, dividing up the roles and making sure that everybody is a part of the same project. This serves as a model for how to go forward, because they may not have considered all these things before — the costumes, the casting, the sound, the cinematography, the food on set, and lighting. There's just a lot to consider.

Will the film studies classes do a project like this every year?

MS: What I like to do is have a flagship project for both the advanced and honors classes. One of the things that we did early on in the semester is all the students formed small teams of two and created pitch decks. I took those pitch decks, and I gave them to people in the entertainment industry — friends of mine — in Los Angeles. And I had them rank the projects. Two projects [including 'Til Death] were chosen. So it wasn't me picking people who are writers, directors and producers. I'd like to do it every year because I think it's fun. It's also a little competitive, and it continues to build the idea of our team. Because I really do feel that way. We're a team. Just like soccer or football, it takes a lot of time and effort to make something quality that you feel good about putting out.

Could you describe the film?

Andrew Kogan: We filmed in one location, and it is pretty much just one scene. It's a comedy about a newly deceased couple who go to a marriage counselor in heaven. They go to dispute their wedding vows, specifically the "til death do us part" vow. It turns out the only thing the couple can really agree on is how horrible the therapist is. It's not super action based — it's more nuanced and focused on character growth through dialogue. There are not a lot of moving parts in terms of big set pieces or big action scenes.

Who are you working on the film with?

AK: Hayden Myers and I co-wrote and are co-directing the screenplay, along with advice and help from Mr. Scheibmeir.

How did the process of hiring professional actors work?

AK: Mr. Scheibmeir showed us these two websites called Actors Access and Breakdown Express. They are real talent services that are used in professional productions. We posted a casting call with information about our project. We shared that the film was a student short film, not-for-profit, and descriptions of the four roles. From there, we went into auditions, where we sent out script excerpts for the applicants to have a virtual audition. We had four character roles up. In total, we had 77 local actors express interest. We narrowed that down after they sent in auditions, ultimately picking the best four for our film.

How have you used collaboration skills throughout the process of production?

AK: As they say, it takes a village. From the very beginning, Mr. Scheibmeir wanted everyone to be



SETTING THE SCENE

The production team works together to film a scene for 'Til Death. Actors were recruited off campus as well.

PHOTOS / LINYANG LEE

involved. Everyone will be there for both of the shoot dates next week. Everyone pitched ideas and worked to improve the script after we decided the film topic. Seeing everyone in their own department come together on an active film set makes you feel like you are part of something bigger than yourself. It isn't a one man job, we wouldn't be here without each member of the class.

How did Mr. Scheibmeir help with the film throughout the process?

AK: The most interesting aspect Mr. Scheibmeir brings to the table is how he actually has experience being an actor and director. It's really cool how he brings that knowledge to class every day. You can just talk about what you can do on when on the set, but to actually be guided by someone who has experience directing a set, someone with the first-hand experience makes that incredibly valuable.



CUT! Cast members and other production crew work together in organizing a cut scene for the film. Film students were given the opportunity to participate in all parts of the "movie-making team," working together.

'Til Death

Directors: Senior Andrew Kogan and junior Hayden Myers

Advisor: Film instructor Mark Scheibmeir

Production Team Members: Advanced Film Studies students, actors recruited from off campus, and more



MOVIE MAGIC

Advanced Film Studies students Sebastian Kiehn, Sam Light and Cam Hurley orchestrate the filming of the next act.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Joining the film industry

STORY Matthew Hofmann, Morgan Chow

Josh Einsohn '90 visits with film students and discusses his experiences in the industry, offering advice and perspective, and answering questions.

The home of the television and movie industry. And the home of casting director Josh Einsohn '90. Einsohn's job is an often overlooked but is a crucial part of the film and television production process — narrowing down the perfect actors and actresses for the characters millions enjoy.

The journey leading to his role on hit shows like "This is Us" and "Love, Victor" was unexpected, from drastically switching majors from psychology to drama and going weeks without jobs.

But even after grinding through an extremely competitive field, here he is inspiring younger generations of Marksmen to further their careers in film.

Einsohn visited high school Marksmen in film class Nov. 17, delving into the logistics of picking prospective actors and teaching the students the inner workings of a misunderstood industry.

But the film program here is much different than when Einsohn first began his exploration of film and media. In fact, a separate program didn't even exist.

"The only outlet when I was [at St. Mark's] was doing theater and musicals with Hockaday," Einsohn said. "I took the drama classes, but it was never my intent to do anything with them other than having it as a fun elective."

During college, Einsohn continued taking drama classes for enjoyment while working on his psychology major. However, Einsohn was worried about his major and decided to switch to focusing on drama.

"I took a much harder psychology class than I should have and barely passed it, at which point I had sort of dug myself a hole," Einsohn said. "But I am glad because I believe the class put me on the path I was supposed to be on. That is how I accidentally found my way to a drama major."

But this proved to be a beneficial choice as Einsohn now loves what he does.

"I have an awesome job," Einsohn said. "I work with some of the kindest, smartest, most creative, and most talented artists in the entire world. I get paid to help people make-believe. It's ridiculous that this is a 'thing' but I'm so thankful that it is."

And this thing produced an outlet for people to survive during the pandemic, causing the industry to flourish.

"Everyone started watching TV shows and movies, and then being able to talk about those with their friends and family was how people stayed sane and connected," Einsohn said. "The hunger for new entertainment as an escape was so palpable that it felt like we were doing more of a service than just making TV."

This pressure is something not uncommon in an industry that is known for the tight film deadlines and



PHOTO / MORGAN CHOW

IN THE CLASSROOM Josh Einsohn '90 visited film students during class, sharing his stories and experiences with the group.

fast-paced production of the entertainment millions enjoy weekly.

"You have five to eight days depending on the episode length," Einsohn said. "You get a script at the beginning of the week and then meet with your team."

Next, a breakdown with all the characters with all the new characters in this episode that we're looking for is sent to the agents and managers, who submit it electronically online.

"Once deciding between people and the team already thought of and the agencies recommended, its time to start setting up auditions," Einsohn said.

But sometimes there is a disagreement between the creative team and the casting department over who should land the final role.

"I start to lose sleep," Einsohn said. "With such a deadline-orientated job, there's a lot of pressure to find the part. Sometimes everything will be fine until the network doesn't approve a person and it's back to the drawing board."

But often he discovers the best talent for solving this issue.

"I meet new actors that I wasn't planning on the meeting who were exciting and new to my creative team," Einsohn said, "and then they become part of my mental acting troupe that's always up there."

A crucial part of making these successful outcomes is Einsohn's teamwork ability — a trait he developed at the school.

"I learned how to be a team player and I learned how to work with other people who strive to be the best at what they do," Einsohn said. "I've worked on some amazing projects where everybody is at the top of their

THIS IS US

Einsohn's role: Casting Director

Episode Count: 106

Total Nominations: 286

Total Wins: 65

Awards Won:

39 Primetime Emmy Awards Nominations,
Seven Screen Actors Guild Nominations,
Six Golden Globes Nominations
25 Image Awards (NAACP) Nominations

Source: IMDb This is Us Awards

game, and it's important to feel like I can bring my best and be a worthy part of those creative teams."

Furthermore, Einsohn believes that the continual learning that St. Mark's emphasizes is one the school's best qualities.

"I think the biggest thing is the intellectual curiosity that St. Marks encourages, which is invaluable," Einsohn said. "And I advise people to never lose that. It makes life more interesting. It makes you better at your career, and it makes your relationships more interesting."

Alumnus featured in "Guardians of the Galaxy Holiday Special" for song work

BY Joseph Sun

Songwriter Rhett Miller '89 appeared in the Guardians of the Galaxy Holiday Special as an alien in a band.

The 44-minute science fiction and comedy started streaming on Nov. 25. Directed by James Gunn, the Holiday Special features Rhett Miller's band, the Old '97s.

"My character sings this song to Chris

Pratt at the beginning of the episode on the street and the planet of Knowhere," Miller said. "It was so fun. It was so fun even just

collaborating with James about writing that song because we got to write about seven different versions of this really messed up Christmas song where my alien character gets all of the details of the Christmas traditionally wrong."

In addition to helping write song "I Don't Know What Christmas Is (But Christmastime Is Here)" the band also performed with actor Kevin Bacon in "Here It Is Christmastime."

"And so at the end of the episode, Kevin Bacon sings my song with a dance and me singing along with him," Miller said. "And the whole thing was just crazy. It was like a dream come true."

Filming and preparing for the shots were also lengthy, with hours alone spent on makeup.

"We had a three-day shoot, and then another two-day shoot," he said. "We had to go through about three hours of

makeup every morning. And that was nowhere near the longest. There were over two hundred extras, all of whom were in makeup."

The best part for Miller was working with director James Gunn. Even before Gunn's horror film, "Slither" (2006), Gunn had been a fan of Miller and wanted to include him in a movie.

"Before he was a successful director, he directed indie horror films, in which he included one of our songs in his movie, "Slither." I watched him ascend to the highest heights of Hollywood, and I understood why he did because he's such a talented, driven, self-motivated and intelligent guy," Miller said. "In the case of James Gunn, he's starting with a blank piece of paper, creating an entire world with every line of dialogue, and then bringing it all the way to the screen. That's pretty rare and when it works, it's

**FACTS
&
STATS**

1 new song featured in movie

3 hours of makeup on set every day

5 days of filming

HOLIDAY GIFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Great gifts and grandiose gadgets

We are right in the thick of the holiday season, so here are a few gift ideas for those you hold dear. This year, you won't have to scour the internet for the perfect gift. I have diligently chosen these three practical options to not only meet, but surpass the expectations of whoever is lucky enough to receive your gift this winter.

REVIEWS Hilton Sampson



M2 Macbook Air
\$1,199

This holiday season, Apple's new Macbook Air will delight almost any special someone. Despite its expensive price tag, this laptop will make your work smoother and more effective than ever before.

With a fresh, new design, the return of MagSafe charging, and seamless integration with your other Apple devices, there's little not to love about this mac.

But what makes the Macbook Air stand out is the powerful M2 chip.

Since Apple transitioned from Intel processing chips to their own M series chips, macs have gained unparalleled efficiency and processing power.

Now, having moved on from the first M1 chip, to the second in the series, the M2, Apple has added even more power capability to the new MacBook Air.

Yes, the price might make you second guess this device, but there are a few factors to consider that might sway your decisions in favor of purchase.

Due to diligent engineering, Apple computers outlast their competitors, so you will not need to replace your laptop as quickly as with other brands.

Therefore, paying a little more now might save you in the long run.

Additionally, while this product is expensive at \$1,199, the Macbook Air is on the lower end of the Mac spectrum in terms of price.

You might miss out on unnecessary upgrades or features, but you'll get the core Apple product, just what a student here needs to be successful.

So if someone in your life is in need of a laptop this time of year, it might be worth splurging on the new MacBook Air to make their day-to-day life just a little bit crisper.

A-



Therabody Mini Theragun
\$199

Have you ever heard a St. Mark's athlete complain about soreness after a sports practice or game? This tool will bring them some relief.

The Theragun mini is a massage gun used to treat muscle pain and soreness before or after activity.

From professional athletes to pickleball players, the Theragun will help loosen up muscles and hasten recovery.

This model, the Theragun mini, is the smallest and least expensive gun sold by Therabody. Other models come with additional attachments for more targeted massages, but the Theragun mini only has the baseline ball attachment.

The Theragun mini can provide up to 20 lbs of force to work out muscle soreness compared to 60 lbs on the most expensive model. While this differential may seem extreme, it does not take a tremendous amount of pressure to properly use the gun, and very rarely would you use the full force of the larger gun.

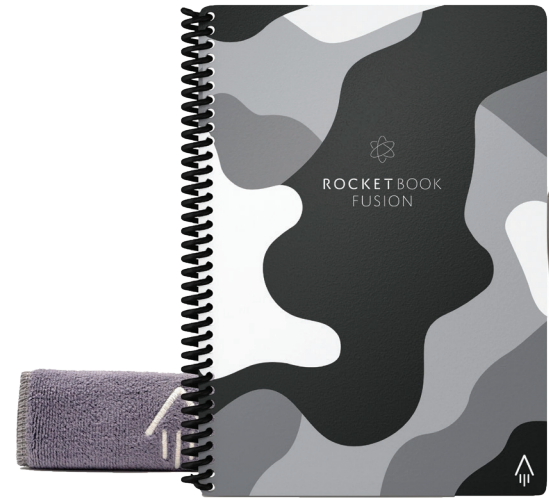
These drawbacks will not limit your effectiveness in any way, and you'll be able to have the same experience with this smaller model as you would with others.

The lack of attachments and size will actually help you save money as the Theragun mini costs hundreds less than other models.

Compared to other massage guns, the Theragun may seem expensive, but the powerful motors inside the device create a better overall performance than other products.

All in all, the Theragun mini is the perfect balance of quality and price, and it will surely brighten a Marksman's holiday season.

B



Rocketbook Fusion
\$39

Students will love the perfect balance of tech, pen and paper that the Rocketbook Fusion brings to the table.

Many students might be satisfied with taking notes online, but when it comes time to prepare for a test, they have a hard time recalling all the information learned in class.

After all, handwritten notes are proven to improve knowledge retention with less of a need to review and study, something that any student here would take interest in.

But basic spiral notebooks also have their flaws, such as an inability to be rearranged or manipulated.

Here's where the Rocketbook Fusion comes into play. Hand written notes that can be uploaded to your computer or phone with an easy to use app.

Text recognition can help you avoid digging through your notes for one specific piece of information, instead quickly directing you to exactly what you want to see.

The benefits of this notebook do not end here. Inside the Rocketbook Fusion there are more than just blank pages. There are calendars, to-do lists and day-to-day plans of action.

You might be wondering, do I have to buy a new notebook once I fill it up?

Of course not. Because the pages are made out of synthetic paper, by wiping a damp cloth across each one, you can erase the text.

This feature, however, is only possible when using Pilot FriXion writing utensils, one of which comes with purchase.

Considering that this notebook is infinitely reusable, the price is more than fitting, so spice up a student's note-taking this holiday season with the Rocketbook Fusion.

A

Enjoy this underappreciated Christmas classic this holiday season

BY Blake Backes

Every Winter Break, Marksman gather 'round the fireplace to watch an assortment of Christmas media. The watchlist usually comprises of wholesome '60s television specials like "Rudolph" or "A Charlie Brown Christmas," laugh-out-loud comedies like "Home Alone" or "Elf," earnest and evergreen classics like "It's a Wonderful Life" or "Miracle on 34th Street," and delightfully chaotic "technically set on Christmas but does it really capture the holiday spirit" movies like "Die Hard" or "Gremlins." Since no single Christmas film is hilarious yet heartfelt, anarchic yet affirming, the amalgamated efforts of these various subgenres provide the closest substitute. But what if there was a Christmas movie that could do it all? I would argue that film already exists.

Here's why you should watch "Scrooged" (1988) this holiday season.

While I am yet to see The Muppet rendition, I can say with fair confidence that "Scrooged" is the only Christmas Carol adaptation to start with Santa Claus defending his workshops with an automatic rifle. The opening scene of this movie, a series of graphically violent commercials for fake holiday specials, lets the audience know that this modern twist on Dickens' novel isn't afraid to have a little fun. Although itself a modern twist on a classic story, this

scene demonstrates mindfulness. The movie is aware of the absurdly commercialized "Age of Television." Such remakes are born out of and poke fun at how recognizable stories are distorted into unrecognizable shells of their former selves. In our age where lifeless live-action renditions of Disney classics make billions of dollars at the box office, this satire feels especially poignant.

Fresh off "Ghostbusters," Bill Murray continues his comedic hot-streak with a wonderfully wicked Scrooge rendition who doesn't merely assert power over others to cut costs, but often causes pain for the cruel enjoyment of reveling in their misery. In an era where many turn to apathy because of bad news fatigue and so many corporations and politicians seeming evil for the sake of being evil, this nasty take on the character reflects our reality more aptly than Scrooged's creators could have possibly imagine at the time.

Throughout the movie, however, these initial layers of gruff cynicism peel away to reveal a warm and hopeful core. Beneath all the dark comedy and violence lies Dickens' original message about how the power of empathy and compassion can help build a better world. Murray, then, acts as a much-needed guide to navigate the audience through both humor and heart. Although Murray is a comedic powerhouse as the meanest person in the world—screaming

at homeless shelter volunteers and gleefully watching through a telescope as an employee fired over a simple disagreement breaks down in tears—the beauty of his performance is that he also nails the eventual redemption.

"Scrooged" released in between Murray's slapstick comedy SNL era and his later dramatic work with Wes Anderson and Sofia Coppola, the perfect time in his career to make the audience first cry tears of laughter, then tears of joy.

"Scrooged" is a loud, strange, confusing, complicated film. It not only makes you burst out in laughter, but also grabs you by the shoulders to shake you out of your apathy and give you a reassuring hug.

To use an earlier example, it's what is created when you play every Christmas movie at the same time. It addresses cynicism like "A Charlie Brown Christmas," testifies for the importance of maintaining childlike joy like "Elf," and highlights the impact of each individual's actions to bring hope to a community like "It's a Wonderful Life" . . . all while wrapped in anarchic dark comedy like "Gremlins." If you can only watch one holiday movie this Winter Break, I can't recommend "Scrooged" enough.



BLAKE BACKES
Staff writer

MAIN EDITORIAL

Zero-sum GAME

Inside the world of highly-competitive college admissions that so many at St. Mark's will tackle, one debate has been raging for years and may soon reach a legal conclusion in the Supreme Court: whether to continue race-based affirmative action. We believe that in the present day, the practice remains justified. Here's why.



PHOTO / CREATIVE COMMONS

DEFENDANT
One of the nation's most iconic institutions, Harvard University, has become embroiled in Supreme Court debates.

In recent months, a decades-old controversy has been reignited: race-based Affirmative Action in college admissions. Students for Fair Admissions, an anti-affirmative action group that represents over 20,000 students and parents, the majority of whom are Asian Americans, has brought cases against Harvard and the University of North Carolina now reaching the Supreme Court. With a 6-3 conservative majority in the Court, many now expect a landmark decision which could restrict or even overturn this policy.

Affirmative Action at its most basic level is positive discrimination: the boosting of certain groups, in this case based on race, due to their background. But in the zero-sum game of competitive admissions at highly selective colleges, this can seem to some like a much more negative disadvantage against groups not benefiting. Surely, the United States has advanced greatly in racial equality since the days of the late 1960s, when Affirmative Action was implemented. Yet, the harm a sudden end to Affirmative Action would cause for not only historically-disadvantaged groups—Black and Latino applicants in particular—but also for the perks that come from having a diverse campus for all students makes the solution worse than the problem. For now, we believe Affirmative Action should stand.

At first glance, Affirmative Action may seem like a relic of the past: positive discrimination as a blunt instrument only suitable for correcting an equally drastic one of negative discrimination, the legacy of America before civil rights guaranteed by law. Why should a group like Asian Americans be harmed in their admissions chances today due to the transgressions of white Americans in the past? It would seem to be a compelling case, until one realizes the flood this gate is holding back. And we have seen real-world examples of the unintended consequences of removing that fence.

In 1996, a state proposition banned all consideration of race in the University of California system, home to many schools with places highly-sought around the country. In the year this ban went into effect, there were less than half as many Black and Latino students admitted as there were in the year before with Affirmative Action. One considering Affirmative Action today has no reason to believe that despite it being over 20 years later, the effects of removing Affirmative Action would be the same.

There is a devastating consequence in the government suddenly pulling the rug out from the status quo. To overturn Affirmative Action would not just remove race-consciousness from admissions—it would also be taking away opportunity from that portion of Black and Latino applicants whose places in a college class would be cut off by its removal. The fact that our country remains in the position where the removal of positive discrimination would result in such huge underrepresentation for certain races compared to their population in America means that some of the effects of years of institutionalized racism remain in place.

However, all of these arguments are moral, not legal. In court, the lawyers for each side are debating the 1978 Supreme Court's reason for upholding Affirmative Action: that increased diversity on a campus benefits all students educationally. Perspectives from people of all races would enhance not just the schoolwork aspect of education, but also make a college student someone who is more empathetic and open to new ideas from people they

may never have met without affirmative action. Since that ruling decades ago, the principle of the educational benefit of diversity has not become any less true. But questions have been raised as to whether the consideration of race alone truly constitutes a diverse learning environment. Colleges should also consider other socioeconomic factors, mainly family income and wealth, that would allow them to extend a hand to others who faced disadvantages to their schooling caused by other factors than race.

Race-conscious admissions remain a drastic tool for eliminating drastic inequalities. No Supreme Court decision upholding them has ever insisted they should remain in place forever. The sheer amount of colleges in the United States should provide competition to see what policies regarding affirmative action, whether based on race or finance, are the most effective at creating a diverse student body and alleviating inequality. But we live in the present state of inequality in 2022, and our opinion is clear: Affirmative Action should remain legal.

LISTENING PROBLEM

MORGAN CHOW



REMARKER.

Student newspaper of St. Mark's School of Texas
10600 Preston Road
Dallas, Texas 75230
214.346.8000

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief
SHREYAN DAULAT
Managing Editors
MORGAN CHOW
ARJUN KHATTI

Assignments Editor
IAN DALRYMPLE

Editorial Director
KESHAV KRISHNA

Executive Content Editor
DILLON WYATT

Focus Magazine
MYLES LOWENBERG

Front & Center Editor
WILL SPENCER

Head Photographer
CHARLIE ESTESS

SECTION EDITORS

News & Issues
GRAYSON REDMOND
DAWSON YAO

Environment & STEM
AARON AUGUSTINE
Life & 10600, Arts & Culture
ZACK GOFORTH
AARON LIU

Ratings and Reviews
HILTON SAMPSON

Health & Sports
BEN ADAMS

Photos & Backpage
NOLAN MARCUS

NEIL SONG

BRAND MANAGER

WILL CLIFFORD

WRITERS

BLAKE BACKES
NIKHIL DATTATREYA
LAWRENCE GARDNER
MATTHEW HOFMANN

LINYANG LEE
AKASH MANICKAM

AKASH MUNSHI
OLIVER PECK

ARJUN POI
VIKRAM SINGH

JOSEPH SUN
NEIL YEPURI

ERIC YI

PHOTOGRAPHERS

ZACHARY BASHOUR
HUDSON BROWN

SAL HUSSAIN
AKASH MUNSHI

NEIL SONG
TIGER YANG

ADVISER

JENNY DIAL CREECH

HEADMASTER

DAVID W. DINI

AUDIENCE

The ReMarker is intended for the students, faculty, staff and alumni community of St. Mark's School of Texas. Press run is 4,000 copies, with more than 2,600 of those mailed out to alumni, courtesy of the school's offices of External Affairs, Development and Alumni divisions.

OPINIONS AND EDITORIALS

Editorials represent the views of the Editorial Board and are not necessarily those of the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty or staff. All personal opinion columns, bylined with the writer's name and photo, represent the views of that writer only and not necessarily those of The ReMarker, Board of Trustees, administration, faculty or staff.

SOCIAL MEDIA

online viewing

www.smtexas.org/remarker

podcast

@focalpointpodcast

instagram

@remarkernewspaper

READER INVOLVEMENT

The ReMarker encourages reader input through guest columns and story ideas. Contact the appropriate editor for suggestions.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are welcome and encouraged. They must be typed, signed and not exceed 300 words. Submissions are not accepted.

ADVERTISING

Contact the business staff at 214.346.8145. We reserve the right to refuse any advertisement. Inclusion of an ad does not represent an endorsement by the school's administration, faculty, or staff or The ReMarker staff members.

MEMBERSHIP

The ReMarker maintains membership in the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, New York City, NY; National Scholastic Press Association, Minneapolis, MN; and the Interscholastic League Press Conference, Austin.

SIDE EDITORIAL

Relationship with Hockaday as a sister-school deserves reinspection, improvement

Decades ago, the relationship between St. Mark's and Hockaday was rooted in frequent brother-sister interaction. Finding the time to connect with a fellow student from the other school was as easy as attending class together. It was natural, and it was accepted. Back then, there was no question what our relationship meant. We relied on each other and worked in tandem to create the best environment for our collective student body both in and out of the classroom.

After meeting with the leadership of *The Fourcast*, Hockaday's student newspaper, to discuss relevant issues, we ask ourselves, what are we now?

Of course, times have changed. For example, the idea of joint classes may not be feasible anymore due to changes in schedule formats. But the issue lies far beyond how we interact. The real problem is that there's no longer a consensus idea of what our relationship entails. There's a disparity — especially among students' opinions.

The overarching discussion about St. Mark's and Hockaday's partnership was addressed in an issue of *The Fourcast*. In their November issue, two staff members gave

differing perspectives on whether we should really be brother-sister schools. While the "pro" argument claims that an official brother-sister school partnership would bring us back to our traditional ways of interacting, the "con" argument states we each thrive on separate agendas and don't need a formal relationship. As evident in these two contrasting opinions which exist beyond that one article, the traditional, well-accepted dynamic between St. Mark's and Hockaday is deteriorating. Students have conflicting opinions at both schools, and there doesn't seem to be a clear idea on what we want our relationship to be.

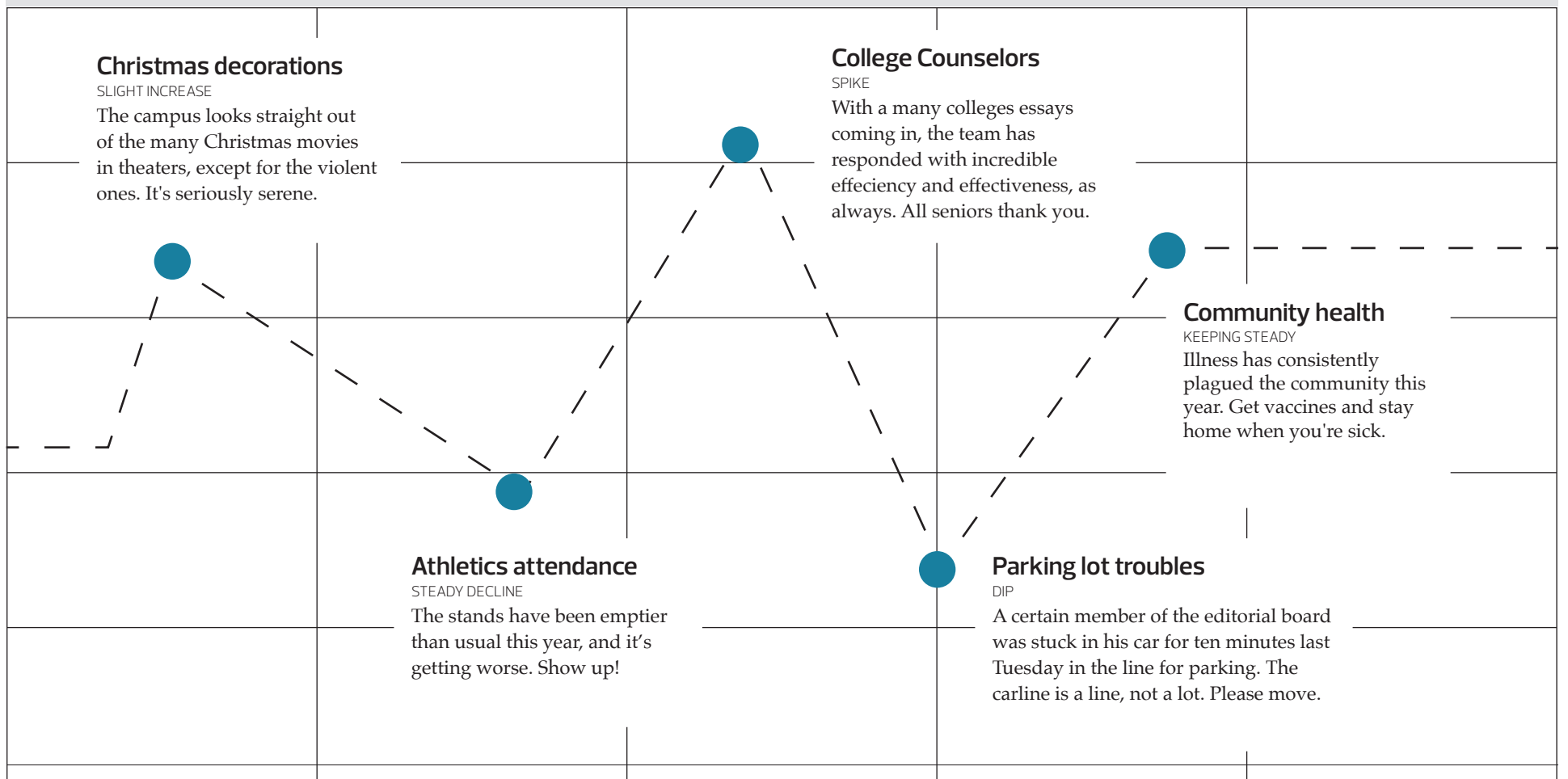
Homecoming, for instance, has brought up major discussion. Students at Hockaday and St. Mark's have questioned why many Hockaday girls were not invited to the dance. Because this dance is fully hosted by St. Mark's, Marksmen are allowed to invite whomever they want and are not forced to include Hockaday girls — though it's strongly encouraged. This situation creates an awkward cause and effect, where girls who weren't invited to Homecoming don't feel the need to in turn ask St. Mark's boys to Hockaday's Winter Formal, even though those boys

are expecting invitations. While this decision, again, is up to the student, this scenario shows the discrepancy between the way our relationship is labeled and the way it actually plays out. The two schools' deep history as brother-sister institutions leads many students to believe the dances are supposed to be joint events, when in reality, they are entirely individual efforts.

With this in mind, it's up to administration on both sides to fully explore and indicate what relationship they want to have. If maintaining the brother-sister title is important to them, perhaps school dances should be reformatted to be co-hosted. Either way, it's not fair to expect Marksmen to buy into the traditional brother-sister bond if it's not even emphasized at the school's biggest social events like Homecoming.

It's great that administrators from both schools get along, but our brother-sister dynamic doesn't work if that relationship doesn't translate to the students. The potential for stronger connections between Marksmen and Hockadays is evident, but we must make sure that we label our relationship to accurately reflect its reality.

Stocks to watch The bulls and bears of stocks on campus



PERSONAL COLUMN

Elon Musk's Chief Twit Tenure

SHREYAN DAULAT
Editor-in-Chief



We're all witnessing the Twitter mayhem, spearheaded by the world's richest man — Elon Musk — who bought the company in October 2022 for \$44 billion.

Musk revealed — in a tweet, of course — that he acquired Twitter to bring humanity together, saying it is "important to the future of civilization to have a common digital town square."

While many naysayers speculate Twitter is just another way for him to make money, it's completely unreasonable to say that. For starters, Twitter's business, which relies on the sale of advertising services and data licensing, has experienced billions of dollars of net loss over the past decade. At this point, making Twitter profitable would be nearly unfeasible for anyone, even for one of the world's greatest businessmen in Musk; although, he is trying to make some money back by charging users \$8 a month to have the verified blue "check mark."

Amid this chaos, 50 of Twitter's top 100 advertisers have left the platform. While Musk ultimately wants Twitter to

become less reliant on advertising, he'll need to learn to adapt to Twitter's current business model for the time being, in order to keep the company afloat.

If Musk is really striving to decrease polarization at the expense of his own pocket, I'd say that's a noble endeavor. But his actions recently have been doing more harm than good.

One of Musk's main objectives with Twitter is to foster more free speech. Musk has been completely inconsistent in laying out what "free speech" and acceptable content means for the platform. Spelling that out for the public would increase trust in the company. He has also fired half of existing Twitter employees. This has resulted in poorly managed content moderation, which led to a steep uptick in racist comments, hate speech and misinformation — all factors that are pushing away those top advertisers.

Musk says he hopes to develop a platform that can serve as an open forum for all ideas and opinions and foster non-violent dialogue — But that's extremely idealistic. When you grant millions of users on a single platform a greater degree of "free speech," it's impossible to simultaneously create a "safe" environment.

Kicking half of Twitter's staff out the door certainly isn't helping Musk's case. Right now, he's operating under a God

complex. He once said that he would put together a committee that would review the reinstatements of previously banned accounts as well as the present removal of users, but Musk has been acting of his own accord, suspending users who mock him and reinstating former president Donald Trump, among other accounts. We're seeing firsthand that Musk's actions have simply created more polarization and allowed for more extreme content.

There's also a rather comical angle to Musk's failures. His alteration of Twitter's verification spawned memes of internet trolls imitating celebrities, companies and politicians. Some pursued highly-sophisticated social commentary. Others were just goofing off. Regardless, it's apparent that Musk is quickly turning Twitter, one of the world's most prestigious tech corporations, into a laughingstock.

It's time Musk takes a more realistic approach. He needs to stop firing long-time Twitter employees, hire new experts and find the middle ground — reconciling free speech with content moderation, which should prevent hate speech and misinformation from reaching large audiences.

It's no easy task, but Musk has taken it upon himself to see it through. Time will tell what's in store for Twitter's (and Musk's) future. But from what we've seen so far, Musk was better off building rockets and electric cars.

What does it mean to be a St. Mark's athlete?

BY Nolan Marcus

Character and leadership: these two qualities define every athlete at school here, according to Athletic Director Sean Lissemore.

"First and foremost, we are focused on character and leadership in our program," Lissemore said. "We often talk about how we are not only focused on our wins and losses but how we win and or how we lose."

To Lissemore, the way athletes and fans carry themselves extends to the whole program and community. "You see how we play in all our athletes, coaches and student fans," Lissemore said. "We are focused on the process and doing things the right way."



SEAN LISSEMORE
Athletic Director

This mantra has led to a lot of success in the athletic program over recent years, and Lissemore wants this to be the way athletes continues conducting themselves going forward.

"We do have a lot of success in our program," Lissemore said. "But we ensure that we are handling that success the right way."

However, as with all things in life, eventually an athlete comes up short, which, to Lissemore, is all part of the process.

"The great thing about athletics is at some point you are going to fail," Lissemore said. "That is a given. These failures, in many cases, can help our student-athletes develop and improve. Athletes are going to face adversity through injury, losses or potentially losing your starting role on the team and it is all about how you respond to that adversity."

In order to ensure that the athletes receive the right message, coaching is a vital part in building an athlete as well as a man.

"Number one, our coaches understand and believe in the mission of our school," Lissemore said. "They believe in creating young men of character and leaders in the modern world and they understand what our athletic program is all about."

In addition to athletics, it is Lissemore's goal to develop the whole boy as not only a great athlete and man, but also a balanced student.

"Everything at our school is focused on building a well-rounded young man," Lissemore said. "Whether that be fine arts, clubs, academics, or any of the extracurricular activities that we offer, it is not solely focused on just one of those things. I think everyone in our school understands that there is a larger purpose and greater meaning to what we are doing here."

SPORTS BETTING

A controversial pastime

Is sports betting a fast-growing industry that provides entertainment value, or is it a hotbed of addiction?

See coverage, page 27



TAKE THE OVER Popular sports betting apps have made the activity convenient for many, leading to an increase in bettors.

PHOTO / NOLAN MARCUS

SPORTS IN BRIEF

COMMITMENT SEASON

With the athletic season fully underway, many seniors have committed to playing their respective sports at the next level. Senior Radford Green recently committed to pitch at John Hopkins University. After working hard all year, Green increased his fastball to a scorching 91.5 miles per hour. When deciding on his commitment, Johns Hopkins' high-level academics and focus on STEM immediately attracted him to the school. He also found the culture to be just what he was looking for.

Senior Zane Wallace recently committed to Harvard to compete on the track and field team. Wallace was heavily recruited by many schools, such as Stanford, Dartmouth, Yale, Brown, and Penn, but Harvard's diverse community and size of their jump squad drew him in. Wallace believes being ranked fourth in the nation and holding an unweighted 4.0 GPA

throughout his years at St. Mark's allowed him to get offers from so many prestigious schools.

COLLEGE STARS

With fall sports coming to a close, winter sports are starting up again in college. Many alumni athletes are making their impact felt at the college level. Harrison Ingram '22, a forward for Stanford University, has been playing well since the beginning of the basketball season with seven rebounds per game, the second-highest on the team. The Stanford Cardinal will be coming to American Airlines Center to play against UT on Dec. 18. Julian Ivarra '21 and the Babson College cross country team competed in the NCAA Division III East Region Cross Country Championships where he ran an 8k, placing in the top 25 percent of runners.

CREW REGATTA

The crew team dominated at the

Waco Rowing Regatta Nov. 6. Senior captain Brendan Kelly and freshman Ian McGowan took first in the Youth Double event out of 19 total doubles. The varsity quads also did well, taking third and fourth in the youth quad division. Along with the varsity boats, the novice quads also gave performed well, with the top novice quad taking second out of ten total boats.

MAVS FALL CLASSIC

The varsity basketball participated in the Mavs Fall Classic Nov. 17-19th. The team has played in the tournament since its inception in 2018. Sixteen programs from across DFW played the tournament in Frisco this year. The basketball team has seen success in the tournament, having reached the championship in 2018 and having won it in 2019. This year, the team was invited to the top bracket, but it bowed out in unceremonious fashion after three straight losses.

INSIDE

25 Athletes on the way out

Student-athletes continue to leave for better athletic futures; is it the right decision?

26 Fall SPC recap

Coaches and athletes discuss the ups and downs of their respective seasons.

27 Sports betting

Editors from *The Athletic* and Director of Counseling Dr. Gabby Reed discuss the pastime.

2-MINUTE DRILL

A quick glance at the stats, scores and schedules headlining Lions athletics.



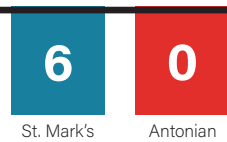
PHOTO / COURTESY GAIL SOLIZ

DOMINANCE

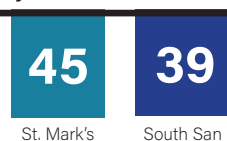
Despite battling an early season injury, junior forward Alex Soliz has scored three goals in his four varsity games played this season, which leads the team.

Scoreboard

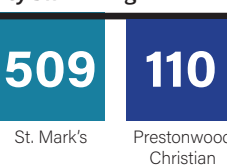
varsity soccer 12/3/22



varsity basketball 12/3/22



varsity swimming 12/1/22



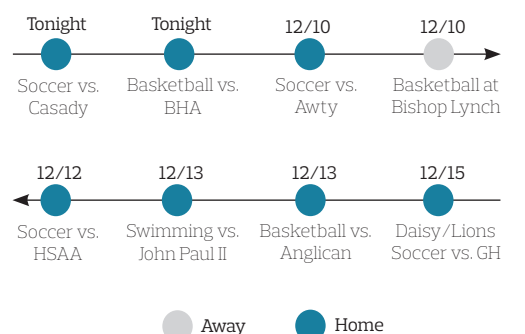
19.7 points per game by guard Luke Laczkowski

6 pins by Hayward Metcalf this season

4 wins in November by the varsity soccer team

FACTS & STATS

On Deck



ATHLETES LEAVING



TOE DRAG As he weaves his way through the defense, Militello gets ready to take aim at the goal and fire away from distance for the Dallas Stars Youth Hockey Team.

PHOTO / COURTESY PEYTON MILITELLO

Leaving for a different future while endowing lasting legacies

Former Marksmen choose their own destiny as they give their farewells to the school and set their sights onto making colossal impacts for athletics program across the United States.

STORY Nolan Marcus, Ben Adams

Which matters more: sports or academics?

Your athletic future, or a sense of community?

A chance of a lifetime, or a stable personal foundation laid with bricks of education and experience?

For talented student-athletes attending this school, these are the questions they struggle with as they make decisions that could affect their lives for decades to come.

The culture of established schools with enthusiastic, multidimensional student bodies can greatly influence one's high school experience, while most sports-specific schools often lack that sense of school spirit. As the varsity basketball head coach, Greg Guiler has dealt with multiple varsity basketball players leaving to attend basketball prep schools to have a better chance at playing in college.

"I think you are better off to graduate from St. Mark's, have a meaningful homecoming and be part of an entity that has a history and a future than be in a class of 17 guys because a school offers boys and girls basketball and that is who you are and what you do," Guiler said. "That has to be a really unique situation for that to be a fulfilling experience."

To Guiler, the main difference between athletes here compared to sport-specific schools is the willingness to invest themselves in endeavors outside of their sport.

"You guys [students here] choose to put your time into academics and a variety of other things instead of just

one sport that you care about," Guiler said. "The reason why kids come to school here but then decide they want to go to a home school instead is that they want to spend seven hours a day on the golf course instead of seven hours a day in the classroom."

An athlete looking to play at a high level often lacks time in his or her day to engage fully in academics and athletics; in order to fully dedicate themselves to one or the other, there has to be a definitive decision.

"If you are going to come to school here for seven or eight hours and have a couple of hours of homework and be a part of a club and a couple of sports, that just takes time and life is full of choices and that is OK," Guiler said. "If you want to work at a sport and try to be the next Tiger Woods, go for it."

An example of a student-athlete who has faced these issues is hockey player and former marksman Peyton Militello. Militello thoroughly enjoyed his seven years here, but he ultimately was forced to make the tough decision to attend Phillips Academy in Andover to play hockey.

"Texas hockey is not very competitive, and I missed around 25 days of school last year," Militello said. "My teachers were always very helpful to help me make up work, but missing that many classes is hard to recover

from."

Choosing to attend a college preparatory school instead of training to become an elite athlete limits the potential to pursue athletics. Instead, that decision opens different doors for student-athletes.

"Unless you are a freak, or really tall or have an incredible gene pool, the amount of time it takes for you to be an elite athlete is not well conducive to being at St. Mark's," Guiler said. "Here, we are first and foremost an academic institution, so if athletics are your number one priority then maybe this school isn't for you. People come here because we are an academic platform that will unlock doors that other schools cannot unlock because of how rigorous we are academically."

However, Guiler still has faith in the athletic program here due to the effort athletes invest in their sports, even with the time they spend on academics.

"For us to still produce athletically across the board is sensational and a testament to you athletes who want to show up, work hard and do it all," Guiler said. "You are not satisfied with just being great students you want to be great athletes. The people who make the jump to other schools regret it."

Although students may feel their decision to leave this school will benefit them athletically, Militello and others who leave miss both the education and camaraderie the school provides.

"St. Mark's definitely challenged me more than my current school," Militello said. And then personally I was there for seven years, so I naturally miss a lot of the school and just being around everyone."

Football finishes fifth in SPC 4A

BY Eric Yi

The football team ended with a 4-6 record with many highs and lows throughout the season with varsity head coach Harry Flaherty leading the team.

Despite the losing record, Flaherty feels that the season was a success.

"I think that the team had ups and downs," Flaherty said. "But on the arc of the season, I felt that they got a lot better from the first scrimmage through the last game and we played more and more as a team."

Early in the season, the team suffered from injuries to starting players, but that didn't slow them down.

"It was frustrating to have some key players get injured early on in the season," Flaherty said. "But we need to have a next man up mentality and every player needs to anticipate that they're going to be called upon to perform and be ready to go so we can't make excuses about injuries."

Playing more as a team also led to team growth throughout the season.

"We played with more and more toughness and resiliency, and we executed our schemes better down the stretch," Flaherty said. "Sometimes the outcomes don't tell the full story. I think the guys improved a lot week to week"

With this past season under his belt, Flaherty is excited for next year's team.

"I'm looking forward to seeing who those guys are going to be that maybe played peripheral roles, but are gonna step up and play real impact rolls, and year to year you never know who those guys are going to be," Flaherty said.

"You always have an idea of maybe who a few of those impact players are going to be based on them being starters the year before, but who are those guys going to be that go from occasional players to full time impactful players?" Despite the record, the team still fought hard every game.

"A core principle to the St. Mark's football team was all we have is all we need," senior Silas Hosler said. "We knew that regardless of our opponent, we could always win the controllable aspects of the game which are: effort physicality and finish."

Similar to Flaherty, Hosler has faith in the Class of 2024 to lead to charge next season.

"While we did our best to win the controllable parts of the game, there is always room for improvement," Hosler said. "I think with the Class of 2024 leading the team next year we can definitely get better in those categories."



PHOTO / COURTESY PETER MALOUF

RUSH In perfect unison, Lions football players push through the line in an attempt to block the Kinkaid Falcons' place kicker's kick to prevent the Falcons from tallying on three points.

FALL SPC

Work to be done

Volleyball, cross country and water polo all performed well enough in their respective regular seasons to reach their playoffs. However, those seasons had many ups and downs – especially in the SPC tournaments.

STORIES Eric Yi, Ben Adams, Lawrence Gardner

After a rollercoaster season, water polo tastes state championship glory.

The water polo team began their season with two wins, two ties and two losses to Highland Park. However, from hard work and dedication the team was able to bring home a state championship.

“Our conditioning was better,” senior captain Michael Gao said. “Our swimming was faster, and we had trained with each other for so long that we could read each other’s facial expressions and understand whether a teammate was ready for the pass or where they wanted the ball for the shot.”

This team chemistry, made stronger through failure, helped the team dominate at the state championship Oct. 15.

“We won the state championship, but this league’s championship felt different,” Gao said. “The state championship we had this year was frankly disappointing. I recall the stands cheering so loudly with blaring airhorns and shouting, but this year, the stands were barely packed. Last year, after

our win, the opposing audience would boo us as we walked down to the locker room. But this year, no one could care less.”

Although the team dominated against Texas teams, compared to states like California where water polo is a primary focus, the team fell short.

“When we went to California to compete [in the Steve Pal Memorial Tournament],” Gao said. “We were determined to come out on top. But when we actually started competing, it was clear that those California teams were a step or two ahead of us.”

Even with the adversity faced throughout the water polo season, winning a state championship is no small feat, and the team remains proud of what they accomplished.

“This was the toughest season we were going to encounter, and we took it like champions,” Gao said. “So if we can power through this, I have no qualms that next season is going to be a blast.”



SHOOT AND SCORE Senior captain Aadi Khasgiwala looks towards net in a water polo match against Highland Park, ending in a close loss for the Lions, 15–12. PHOTO / XIAO-MEI ZHAO



TEAM SPIRIT The cross country team bands together to fill the shoes of star graduates, which helps create lots of individual growth and a respectable 5th place finish in the SPC championships. PHOTO / WILL CLIFFORD

Future looks bright, but unfortunate circumstances hinder cross country success.

This fall season, the cross country team coached by Ryan Hershner and led by captains junior senior Sky Park, senior Arjun Khatti and junior Raja Mehendale finished with multiple wins and impressive individual performances across the board.

Despite losing key runners, the team did not let their loss affect their effort throughout the season, fighting hard until the end.

“I think my fellow co-captains, Arjun and Sky, did a fantastic job filling the voids left by the seniors last year,” Mehendale said. “We were able to steer the team in the right direction all season and watched the team go from colleagues to brothers.”

Unfortunately, at the SPC championship, the team was plagued by injury and sickness, with three of the top five runners being out. Despite placing fifth, the team will not let one result define their season and plans to use it as fuel for next season.

“While this is a disappointing result compared to the high standards of achievements the cross country team normally attains, there is a fire in the belly of the team and a desire for revenge that will be demonstrated in the coming track season and in cross country next year,” Mehendale said. Though the results of SPC were not ideal,

the team learned many lessons throughout all of their competitions.

“They grew by leaps and bounds this year,” Hershner said. “With all the sicknesses and Raja and Arjun going down with injuries, there were boys who were put into positions they have never been in before. That’s massive growth and experience for the boys heading into next year.”

With two captains being out, the team could have backed down and lost their competitive edge, but they did just the opposite.

“We had two of our three captains on the injured list, but that didn’t stop them from showing up and contributing what they could in practice,” Hershner said. “Everyone has something to contribute to the team every day, and the captains didn’t shy away from it because they couldn’t contribute in the running. They found other ways.”

Overall, the cross country team gave their best effort throughout the season, and Park values his time on the team.

“Cross country is a very simple sport, and you get out of it what you put into it,” Park said. “It’s a sport of will, and I’m going to miss the beautiful simplicity of it.”

Despite finishing as the North Zone first seed, volleyball loses in semifinals.

The volleyball team started the regular season 0-6. Then came two losses in their first two counter games. The defending SPC champions were off to an unextended start.

According to senior captain Zach Nivica, the team lacked intensity during practice throughout the early part of the season. However, they were slowly able to turn their season around.

“We had a small team meeting and our coach told us the effort in practice wasn’t very good,” Nivica said. “But once we all figured out that the season is actually important and as counter season approached, we realized we need to hit the gas, and we started figuring things out.

We gelled as a team and worked for each other, not for ourselves.”

While the 0-2 start in counterplay was certainly concerning, varsity head coach Darren Teicher believed the team would be able to get back on track.

“We were a young team,” Teicher said. “It was going to take a minute to get everyone on the same page and figure out everyone’s roles on the team. Once we got there, we rolled.”

The Lions went on to win their next six counter games and finished the season as the number one seed in North Zone. Unfortunately, their winning streak came to an end in the SPC tournament semifinal with a loss to Trinity Valley.

“Trinity Valley ended up winning the tournament, and they played some of the best defense I have ever seen them play, hitting on all cylinders,” Nivica said. “We weren’t as hot as we were during the regular season and we kept it close, but it just didn’t work out.”

Fortunately for the Lions, they boast a talented group of young players, including all-SPC sophomores Jacob Lobdell and John Householder. Teicher believes the Lions will be a force in SPC for years to come.

“The future is extremely bright,” Teicher said. “We have a lot of talent returning next year. We will be a tough team to play against and I am looking forward to it.”



WHEN LIONS FLY The volleyball team dominated opponents Greenhill 3–2, with encouraging performances from junior Kevin Lu and sophomores Owen Ackerman, Jacob Lobdell, and John Householder. PHOTO / COURTESY SUPERFANMEN

SEASON IN REVIEW

6–2 volleyball counter season record

1000+ total rushing yards for the football team

“Viva La Vida” volleyball team anthem

8–5–2 Water polo regular season record

0 losses at home for the volleyball team

45 seconds between top 5 runners in cross country

37 different football starters over the season

16 personal records from the cross country team

20+ hours of travel for the water polo team

SPORTS BETTING

What are the ODDS?

Senior editors at *The Athletic* share how they entered the world of sports betting, their experiences with betting and where they think sports betting is heading.

STORY Nolan Marcus, Neil Yepuri

Hooked. Trapped. Addicted. It started as an innocent hobby, just a little bit of fun and nothing more.

How did it get this bad?

Sports betting for many starts as a blameless activity. Out of a survey of 700 people, more than 60 percent started betting as a fun passtime with their friends instead of a source of income according to Sportsbooks Online.

But as the losses pile up, the addiction grows until people become dependent on their gambling to recover what they lost.

“What actually has people coming back over and over again to gambling is being in a deficit,” Director of Counseling Dr. Gabby Reed said. “The deficit between the win and the loss and hoping that the win could come at any moment.”

While sports betting has been legal in 30 states and Washington D.C. since 2018, the last effort to legalize it in Texas failed in 2021. The next vote to legalize gambling in Texas will not be held until 2023.

There are a plethora of ways people begin healthy participation in sports betting. The Associate Editor for Sports Betting at “The Athletic”, Danny Santaromita, the path to sports betting began through card games in high school.

“It started with poker, because I was big into poker in high school, which got me into gambling,” Santaromita said. “I realized – similarly to poker – in sports betting you have a chance to win, whereas with most table games at casinos you don’t. I think sports betting was an opportunity to gamble, which is fun, while also having a reasonable chance to win.”

Andrew Dewitt, the Senior Editor for Sports Betting at “The Athletic”, had an alternative route into sports betting, through his mom.

“She would go to the casino and grab the [betting] sheets, and sometimes I would pick games,” Dewitt said. “I was always a sports fan and I remember betting on over unders for NFL games when I was a kid. Then she would bet \$10 on a game.”

However, after pursuing successful careers elsewhere in journalism due to the landmark reversal of a nationwide sports betting ban in 2018, both entered into the industry professionally

“When the Supreme Court overturned the ban on



PHOTO / NOLAN MARCUS

sports betting, I knew that [the industry] was going to have huge opportunities and good careers associated with it,” Dewitt said. “I was really excited because we were starting the sports betting vertical, so it gave me an opportunity to create our own section from scratch, versus jumping in and taking over what someone else had done.”

Indeed, sports betting has been growing rapidly as an industry, with a current valuation of around \$75 billion, which is projected to balloon to over \$150 billion in the next decade.

“The big idea is the growth curve – it’s going to keep going up and then plateau,” Santaromita said. “What happens after, that’s the biggest unknown.”

Dewitt draws a comparison between the development of a child and the market’s growth, especially in the online sector.

“In Vegas, [sports betting]’s been there forever. But online sports betting in new states is super new - it’s a toddler,” Dewitt said. “It’s kind of walking, but it’s not really steady. It has moments where it loses its balance. But it’s becoming more mature, and it’ll probably get better and more well rounded as it ages.”

However, Santaromita notes that predictions for the future may not be the most accurate, because of the youth of the market.

“It’s interesting to think of what the environment is going to look like when it’s more mature, because it’s still not mature now,” he said. “But I don’t know what a mature sports betting market is going to look like. And



PHOTO / CREATIVE COMMONS

it’s going to be really fascinating.”

While sports betting may be a fun pastime in a growing sector, there is a certain amount of discipline and regulation required to prevent such a pastime from turning into a crippling addiction.

“There’s gonna be some issues of people who get addicted to it – and that’s true of alcohol, certain drugs, etc.” Santaromita said. “I think we need to be mindful in terms of how they regulate it. Maybe you have to put up more warning signs.”

One solution to prevention of addiction could be a regulation on betting amounts and frequency.

“There needs to be better stop limits for people,” Dewitt said. “There also needs to be better guardrails for people who are having problems with gambling, and I don’t think that companies like FanDuel, DraftKings or Caesars are doing a good job at it. Nor do I think they have an interest in doing it because if someone is losing money they want to continue to use them as a customer.”

HOW MUCH? Americans have spent over \$70 billion on sports betting since 2018 and projected to reach over 100 billion by the end of 2022.

THE BOOKS Thirteen percent of Americans participate in sports betting according to Mobile-sports-betting.com.

School counselor explains the dangers of addiction and how to overcome it

BY Nolan Marcus

Everyone is at risk of getting addicted to something, no matter what it is. But recently, gambling, more specifically sports betting, has increased in popularity in our nation. Contrary to what one may think, sports betting and gambling addictions do not begin when a better wins, the desire to keep betting burns brightest when they lose.

“It is knowing the win could come at any moment,” Director of Counseling Dr. Gabby Reed said. “It’s like pulling the slot machine: Everytime you pull it you think ‘come on, come on, come on.’ That is the feeling that is addictive, not the winning.”

In order to prevent oneself from addiction and remain safe, the bettor needs to know oneself and his or her family history.

“People who come from a background of addiction are the folks that need to avoid any kind of addiction,” Reed said. “The addictive gene does not specify what the addiction is, it really is more than you have a propensity for being addictive. For certain people it is

much more dangerous than others.”

In addition to limiting oneself, there are laws in place to prevent premature addictive habits from setting in place.

“Part of the reason that we set limits on things that are physically addictive and can be physically dangerous is because of brain development,” Reed said. “Your brain cannot make good decisions until you are a certain age, which is why following age limits is a good idea. You are way more likely to make good decisions around this stuff if you wait until your brain is fully formed.”

While the brain develops, the chances of developing long term addiction are much higher than when the brain has fully developed.

“Imagine you are 13, 14 or 15 and your brain is exploding in growth,” Reed said. “Giving it addictive material at that time is training addictive pathways. If I was 14 and drinking, using drugs, smoking or vaping, I would

be training my brain to be addictive. Which means later in life, if I have to get a surgery and take pain meds, I am around ten times more likely to be addicted to those pain medications.”

But if a gambler falls into the trap of addiction, there is hope to conquer his or her addiction from various websites, or with help from friends and family.

“There is Gambler’s Anonymous, just like Alcoholics Anonymous, and there are people who get together periodically to process their addiction together,” Reed said. “That is probably one of the primary ways people who really have fallen can get help. Also, support from people who will help you avoid the thing that you are addicted to.”

As one begins the process of breaking an addiction, it gets easier over time.

“We know if you can go 30 days, 60, days 90 days without overdosing on something, the physical addiction piece gets much smaller,” Reed said. “It’s easier to abstain the longer you do not do it.”



DR. GABBY REED
Director of Counseling



PHOTO / COURTESY CHARLIE ESTESS

ALL SMILES Eighth grader Blaine Henley poses for a picture with his grandmothers. During Grandparents' Day, Marksmen brought any number of grandparents to show around school.

REMARKER.

ST. MARK'S SCHOOL OF TEXAS
10600 PRESTON RD. DALLAS, TX 75230

RECYCLE ME 

GRANDPARENTS' DAY

An old tradition, a familiar feeling

On the Friday before Thanksgiving Break, the school hosted students' grandparents during the annual tradition of Grandparents' Day. This year represented a return to normalcy, as masking and COVID-19 precautions were much less frequent. Additionally, this year included an altered schedule with six shortened periods and 10-minute passing periods.

