

DESIGNER OF THE YEAR APPLICATION ESSAY

- Michaela Manfull

This year was my third year on my school's newspaper staff and my second year as the design editor, with this year's title being Creative Director. However, I'd consider myself more of a Creative Facilitator. I don't direct people, I give them the opportunity to express themselves through creative designs while always maintaining the level of professionalism befitting the North Star. The hardest part of being a good design editor is being able to not only make my own designs stand out, but teaching others how to see and plan out designs in the same way I do.

I learned a lot this year and my portfolio is a reflection of that, it's not just things I created to publish, but it's also things I created to help others become better designers and to give our publications a more unified look. As a designer, not everything is just about creating the best works for yourself. If there's only one good designer in the entire newsmagazine staff, the entire paper just feels unbalanced. My focus this year was to empower other designers on my staff to set them up for success and be prepared to take over the place I will leave behind when I graduate in a year.

While many of these designs are my own, I worked very hard on them and communicated with other designers on my staff about the decisions I made and why I made them, I also had a hand in every single page design that was printed in our newsmagazine this year. Whether it was explaining to someone how to sketch out a thumbnail for their page, showing the staff how to use Adobe InDesign, or fine-tuning pages at the end of the cycle with fellow editors, making sure everyone was sticking to the style guide, my goal was to make sure that every page in the North Star was held to the same standards. Everyone has their name on a page in the paper, and everyone deserves the same chance to have their work look professional and put-together.

I think a Designer of the Year should be someone who is not just designing things to be published, but also helping lift others up to be the best they can be as well. Thanks for taking a look at my application for Designer of the Year. I hope you enjoy seeing my work as much as I enjoyed working with it this past year.

Item 1: Roller Derby Spread

RIVALS SKATE TOGETHER

The Arch Rival Roller Derby league creates community between the athletes and their fans (Photos by Michaela Maruffi and Cherry Clark. Content by Michaela Maruffi)

While many who step onto the Midwest Sport roller rink on game night on Feb. 17 don their well-worn skates and flashy outfits, the Head Non-Skating Official (NSO) Steve Brown does not. Instead, he avoids the center of the track, where players warm up and makes his way to a table sitting on the far side. He's comfortable wearing his simple tennis shoes, jeans, a flannel shirt and a zip-up jacket. His white beard and gray make him instantly recognizable for all who've seen him before.

When Brown was younger, his friend invited him to a roller derby fundraising event, giving him his first exposure to the sport.

"It was an idea of something to do that you step outside the box," Brown, whose derby name is Count Strachewski, said. "Everybody does baseball, basketball, football, whatever. Stay out of the box."

While he didn't catch a game the night of the fundraiser, he saw one a little while later when the men's national championships came to town. That's what hooked him. "I watched it all weekend and decided I can do that," Brown said. "Well, I didn't skate as well as everybody else. So, I said okay, I can do the non-skating one. Progressively, I went up and became the only person that knows how to run it."

Brown has served as an official for more than 12 years now, partly because of his love of the sport, but mostly for his love of the derby community. That community can be seen from the players battling it out on the rink to the fans in the stands. It's one of the things that people who are part of the fun keep coming back to when they talk about why they love roller derby so much.

"Roller derby is great and everyone is welcome at every skill level," Carol Hopfinger, also known as Cruella, a player on Arch Rival Roller Derby's (ARCH) All Stars team, said. "You don't have to know how to skate, you don't have to know how to play a sport, you can have no athleticism in your bones at all, and it's just a great organization."

That community can even be seen when the adult skaters show up for their practices on Sunday mornings just as the junior derby skaters are finishing theirs. Two weeks prior to tonight's matches, at one of these practices, two junior skaters, Maelo King and Abbie Wann, need to their bags to remove their gear, gapping and attempting to trip each other the entire way.

Wann (Roller derby is) football on skates without a ball.

King: Well, it's kind of like that, but it's not that bad.

Wann: Way more penalties.

King: Yeah. There are like thousands. I can't remember half of it.

Wann: I can't remember half of it.

Junior derby is relatively new, only becoming its own thing in the past two decades, giving younger kids interested in playing a chance to learn the basics of skating and the rules of the game before they go onto play full-contact.

King, known as Rocky Road, and Wann, who goes by *Queenie the Mermaid*, have skated derby together for over a year. They frequently finish each other's sentences and fill in information about each other like an old married couple would— with just a little more energy. They race up and down the track to see who can win the loudest while skating.

"The moment you start playing with ARCH, you automatically have friends," Hopfinger said. "If something were to happen and I'd say, hey, I need help with X, Y, Z, there would be 20 people willing to help with whatever I needed. If I needed to move, they would come and help me move. If I needed food, they would bring me food. If they needed to take me to the hospital because I broke something or practice, they would take me to the hospital."

While the two couldn't show their skills on Feb. 17 as there was no junior derby scrimmage, another new face made its way across the track that night. Emma Moscatello, whose jersey reads *Timidolli*, was finally allowed to play her first derby game that night. She joined ARCH after attending one of the bootcamps held every winter.

"I miss when we used to travel a lot," league photographer Bob Durnell said. His derby name is Mr. McWhistle, but he doesn't use it often anymore. "We used to go to different towns and I've traveled literally around the world with Arch Rival so it's really nice to see that kind of stuff coming back."

ARCH is part of the Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA) and, as of just last year, is ranked number two on an international level and number one in their regional level in the U.S. As of now, the ARCH league has one junior team and three women's teams, those being the Four-de-Linquents, Nemesis and All Stars, their C-, B- and A-teams, respectively.

"For me, being able to be part of the All-Stars and continually trying to get play time with them I think is really cool because I was able to check off my list and participate in really competitive play with the top athletes," Hopfinger said.

During the games that took place on Feb. 17, each of the three teams played two scrimmages, ensuring each team played each of the others once. While not yet cleared to skate in games, first-year ARCH member, Reba Polzin, could be found next to the announcer the whole night, manning a video camera.

"I found out about derby because I was dating someone for most of last year who was also freshly new to the team, so I would stand practice to help keep an eye on her list," Polzin said. "I attended games to support the team and from the minute I started hanging around, I just found this to be a lovely community of people who I really seemed like I wanted to be around more, not just as a plus one, but as part of the actual team."

Polzin, whose tentative derby name is *Cruella Lovelland*, has been working up to being able to play full-contact games with their teammates. While ARCH was originally Arch Rival Roller Girls, they changed their name in 2016 to Arch Rival Roller Derby "to reflect and include our transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming league members." They also have an affiliated men's league known as the Gatekeepers, which also has female-presenting players within its ranks. "I'm single and I'm a co-parent," Polzin said. "My ex-wife and I have a toddler together and it's been pretty easy for me to work around both with supportive people in derby and outside. If I need someone to keep an eye on him while practicing, it's available. Also, no one worries if I'm showing up late to practice. Like today, because I had to drop him off later than usual, I work a 9 to 5. It's easy for me to be here outside of that generally, and evening practices and weekends mean that it's worked pretty well."

No matter a person's identity or preferences, ARCH has a spot for everyone on their teams.

"It's an immediate group of friends that you have from day one, which is really cool," Hopfinger said. "Especially as an adult, it's hard to make friends, it's just a weird situation, but it's immediate as soon as you step on the track."

Though there are a lot of newer faces to derby, when it comes to retiring, many players never really quit. They find themselves back on the track year after year, even if it's worth it in the same position they started out in.

I've a skater for seven years," outside pack referee Kim Mason, whose uniform boasts the name *Sunday School Skammer*, said. "I started playing in 2012 and I had heard about it for years before that. My job tonight was to watch the skaters from the outside of the track and watch for penalties."

There were plenty of penalties for Mason to call that night, as there are any time she officiates a derby game. The night's final jam ends with the pink team leaving their hefty lead over the white team, sending players to the high five line as they cheer and make their way off the track for the night. The crowd trickles out and the referees find their way to their locker room while Polzin and Brown help pack up the cords then follow suit until they are called back for the next contact. Members take off their jerseys, and, in turn, their derby names they don every time they're around their teammates.

They may be done for this game, heading home at 10 p.m., but they'll be up for practice tomorrow, Sunday morning, as always. That practice, they'll discuss what went well and what they could improve on and keep rolling forward together.

WHO KEEPS TRACK ON THE TRACK?

Very different wheels turn all over the track to keep derby games rolling smoothly

Legal Name: Kim Mason
Derby Name: Sunday School Skammer
Position: Game Announcer— Gives a play-by-play relay of the entire derby game through the loudspeakers.

Legal Name: Steve Olson
Derby Name: Star-Spangled Hammer
Position: Game Announcer— Gives a play-by-play relay of the entire derby game through the loudspeakers.

Legal Name: Bob Durnell
Derby Name: Mr. McWhistle
Position: League Photographer— Takes photos of every ARCH league game and travels with the teams.

Legal Name: Steve Brown
Derby Name: Count Strachewski
Position: Head NSO (non-skating official)— Coordinates all other NSOs during the game and runs the scoreboard.

WHO ARE YOU?

Scan the QR code to the right to find out what position on the track fits you best.

For more derby content, check out the photo gallery, video and more on [RivRival.com](#) by scanning the QR code below.

Players communicate with each other as the jammers make their way down the track on Feb. 17 during the second scrimmage. This game was a very close matchup between the black team and the white team. Usually, roller derby games have two 20-minute halves, but for their season opener, the three dual ARCH teams were divided evenly and each played one 20-minute scrimmage against each other, allowing players of all skill levels to have an equal playing field.

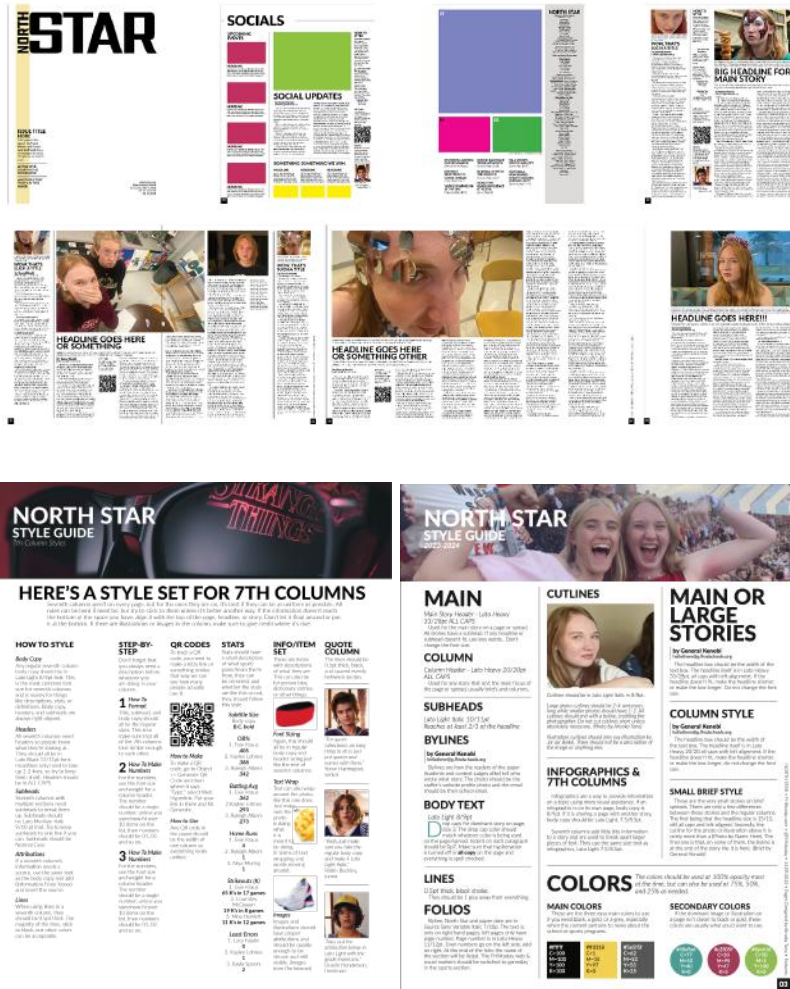
View a PDF of the design: [Here](#)

See how the design looked in the paper: [Here](#)

I wrote the entire story, gathered all the additional content, and took all of the photos (the photos were taken along with the help of another staffer) for this spread. I also coordinated with a videographer who put together a video that went along with this story. I went through many different sketches and versions of this page before landing on the final, which focused on a varied eyeline and consistent colors and energy across the page.

Item 2: Style Guides & Templates

PAGE TEMPLATES



View a PDF of the Template Preview Page: [Here](#)

View a PDF of the Regular Style Guide: [Here](#)

View a PDF of the Seventh Column Style Guide: [Here](#)

As the Creative Director for the North Star News magazine, it is part of my job to create the style guide and templates for all of the staffers to launch their work off of. I make templates for all potential basic pages staffers may need and create a regular style guide along with one for

seventh columns, which are on almost every page as a way to break up the text and draw in readers' eyes. With these templates and style guides, I am able to help others by showing them an overall vision for the paper and making training for new staffers easier, cutting down on the work everyone else needs to put in so they can devote time to other things while keeping the whole paper looking consistent.

Item 3: Alternate Covers

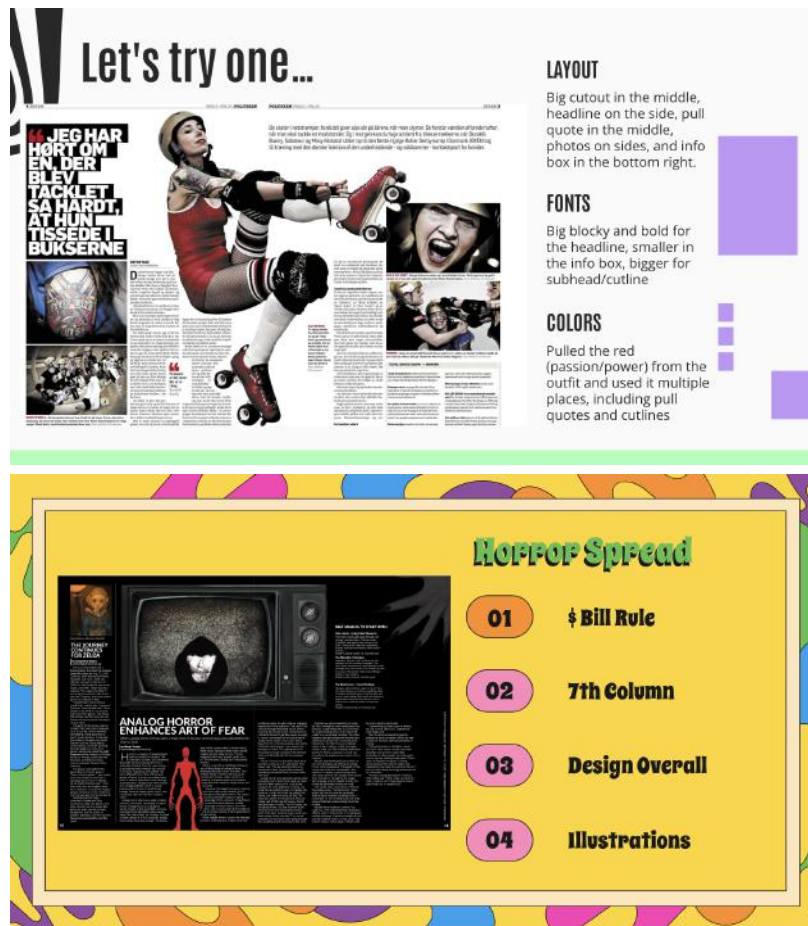


See how the designs looked in the paper: [Here](#)

Check out the Instagram post: [Here](#)

This year, I wanted to create a new, interesting way to incorporate more designs and promotion into the newspaper and landed on alternative covers as that. Every cycle, we make four covers that could be used for the paper and put all of them out on social media for people to guess which is the real cover. One cover is used on the front and the rest are placed throughout the paper so more people can have their hand in creating the cover and more photos can be used throughout it.

Item 4: Design Lessons

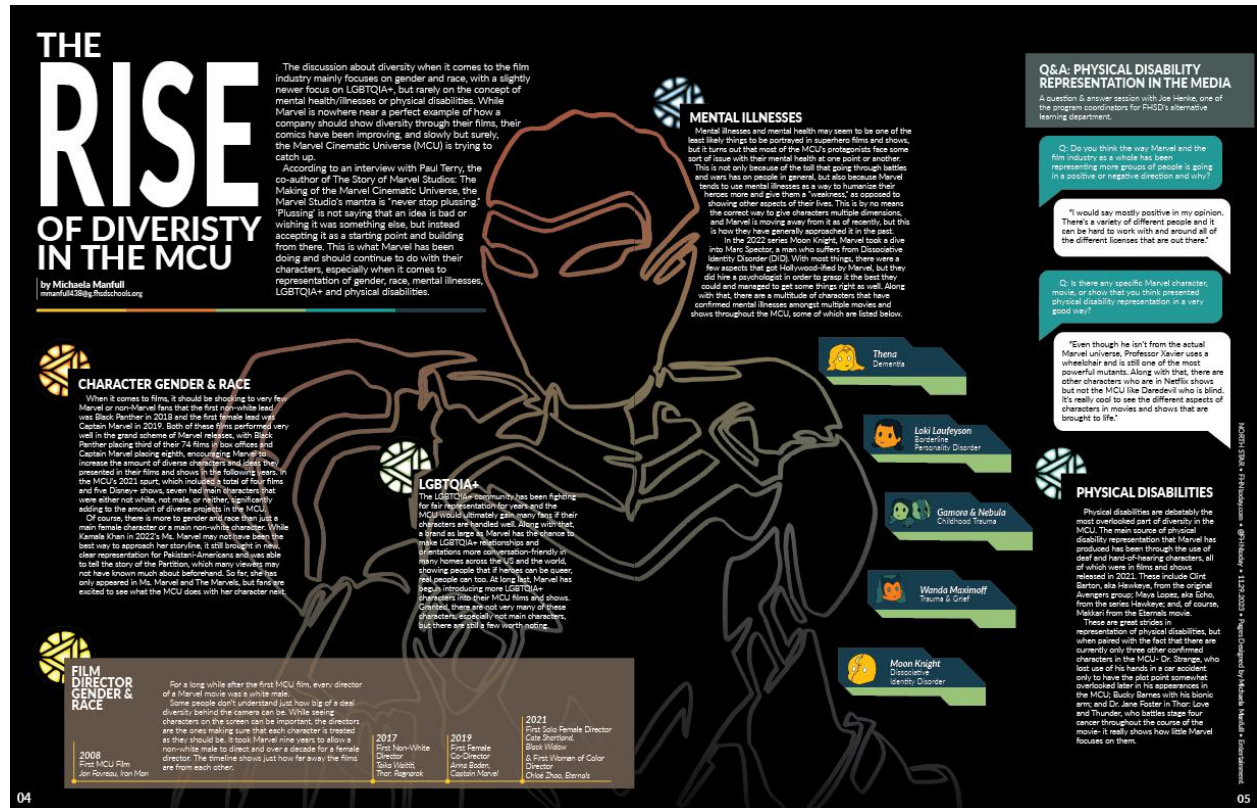


View the Design Lesson: [Here](#)

View the Design Critique Presentation: [Here](#)

As the Creative Director I was also in charge of creating design lessons for the staff, and the first presentation linked here was a lesson I did early in the year showing staffers and editors how to work more on their designs and come up with more original and interesting ideas while the second was a critique and praise lesson I led after the newspaper after giving the design lesson. These were just two of the many lessons I presented to level up the staff and encourage them to become better designers in the process by giving them ideas as well as feedback on what they were doing well and what they could improve upon.

Item 5: Marvel Diversity Spread



View PDFs of the design: [Here](#)

See how the design looked in the paper: [Here](#)

I gathered content for, illustrated, and designed this spread about diversity in the Marvel Cinematic Universe in the entertainment section of the newsmagazine. This was the first spread I designed completely using Adobe Illustrator and was based off of the Iron Man HUD used in the Iron Man suits. I made sure the spread had a strong dominant element, a variety of alternative copy blocks and I wanted to make sure the look felt like it belonged in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.