



Return of the Space Cowboy

We've been practicing for weeks, constantly preparing for this moment.

Everything has to be perfect. A legend like Steve Miller is going to want nothing less than perfection.

So when we're just an hour away from our performance, and we still haven't even met Steve, I begin to get a little nervous.

We're rehearsing one of Steve's songs, "Mercury Blues," when I see him walk in Spencer Gym.

As he walks toward us I concentrate on hitting every note correctly and trying to perfectly imitate his voice, but I could tell he thought something was a little off.

He loops his arm in a tiny circle and clenches his fist, the universal musical cue for "stop" that was terrifyingly used in the movie *Whiplash* by J.K. Simmons, who plays a strict and ruthless jazz band teacher.

Steve is the opposite of Simmons's character in nearly every way, but one thing they share is a passion for getting the perfect sound.

We stop playing, and Steve greets all the band members—which include Nick Buckenham on keyboard and saxophone, Walter Johnson on fiddle and mandolin, Chirag Gokani on bass, Umer Nadir on drums and me on vocals and guitar.

He asks to borrow my guitar and immediately fires off his version of "Mercury Blues," a thumping, slow, deliberate blues song full of attitude.

We stand staring in awe as he starts explaining exactly how he wants the song played, and I worry that he'll use complex musical terms that will go right over our heads.

But that's where the inner Rock and Roller comes out of Steve.

He describes the beat not in the standard beats per minute, but with adjectives like "menac-

ing" and "angry."

It's these paradoxical, hyper-specific and completely vague terms that define Steve's music, and I start to appreciate his casual and spontaneous personality.

I'm still watching Steve play my guitar when Mr. Dini leans over to me.

"Steve didn't bring a guitar," he says.

Suddenly this spontaneity doesn't seem so great. I race over to the band room and grab a spare guitar, cursing and laughing to myself at the same time.

When I get back to the gym, it's just half an hour until the performance, and we start playing together as a band for the first time.

It's thrilling and terrifying, but finally, we've got the guitar and we've got the songs down. No more surprises.

Now the stands are full of people. The entire school is watching, and I'm ready to put Steve's advice and our hard work to use.

"To start off, we're going to do one we haven't rehearsed," Steve's voice booms through the speakers like a bomb destroying all our practice.

I glance over at Nick, and we share a brief what-is-this-guy-thinking look before Steve tells us the key and counts us off.

Suddenly, we're performing with a rock star.

We aren't trying to sound like someone else because we have no idea what to try to sound like.

We aren't struggling to count beats. We're just feeling the groove.

We aren't just performing a song. We're playing Rock and Roll.

STEVE MILLER'S PERFORMANCE AT THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION AUCTION GIVES STUDENTS A CHANCE TO PERFORM WITH A TRUE ROCK ICON.

SHORT & TWEET

A peek at Marksmen's tweets

- @groovykhan

On the Monday after the Oscars last year, we didnt have school..and that's about to happen again #freaky

— Sophomore Shaheer Khan
- @purnellc71

Mic doubles as a Wii remote. I see you KP

— Senior Corson Purnell
- @joshbando17

Thanks to @jackfoto9 I was introduced to heaven today. It is known as the Patty Melt from @Whataburger.

— Sophomore Josh Bandopadhay
- @angel_reyes44

Been in Miami for a day and I've already heard enough Pitbull to last forever

— Junior Angel Reyes
- @charlieobrien22

Earthquakes are cool/fun

—Junior Charlie O'Brien
- @WillDiamond16

Happy National Pickle Day. I guess it's not that big of a dill but try to relish these last few hours

—Junior Will Diamond

target practice

things that hit or miss their marks at 10600 Preston Road

Library behavior | too loud

C'mon guys.

The library has gotten out of hand.

It really is not all that hard.

All we have to do is obey what all of the librarians are telling us, and not only will the library be quiet, but those of us doing homework due the next period just might be able to get it finished, too.

Just respect the librarians and the intended environment of the library. Trust us, everything will work out for the better.



MASON SMITH PHOTO

The Sound of Music | bullseye

The St. Mark's and Hockaday performance of *The Sound of Music* Feb. 6-8 was spot on all around.

Whether it was the singing, the acting or the sets, the show ran smoothly throughout and left no one bored or unimpressed, even with its length of around three hours.

Applause for the performances echoed throughout the auditorium constantly.

Props to the talented cast for putting on a great show.

Old chairs | fix them

You know what the best part about St. Mark's is? The chairs.

Just kidding.

The chairs, specifically those located within the science study center (next to the tile-assorted periodic table), are an outright danger hazard; at most, they can support roughly 980 Newtons of weight, which is discriminatory... and discrimination isn't cool.

Not to pick out a single genre of hazardous chair, but again, those in the science building – having been devoured by many a termite – are aesthetically unpleasing, functionally threatening and sadly old.

Let's fix the problem before it gets out of hand: save the chairs.



CAMERON CLARK PHOTO

Fire drills | getting closer?

As the siren rang while students chowed down on their fifth period lunch, problems arose with this most recent fire drill.

The main one being that it was during a lunch period.

While it may not have been planned, it was very inconvenient for some students whose only free time in the day comes during their lunch period.

Also, students talked too much throughout the drill, especially for a surprise drill – one in which we do not know if there is an actual fire or not.

We're improving, but we definitely need to keep quiet just in case there's a real fire.

Starbucks odyssey: coffee, drugs and smooth jazz

“I used to work for a drug dealer,” I heard a voice say behind me. I nearly whipped my head around but caught myself. The words sucked the sound out of the small coffee shop. It was one of those moments when the music dies, the conversations stop, and that one thing you didn’t want anyone to hear slips out.

I was almost positive the voice would disappear now, blend into the background and slip away. Too bad. I wanted to hear more.

“You say those things so loud!” the barista hissed with an uncomfortable laugh as the ambient noise returned. She obviously knew him, but it sounded like she wished she didn’t.



My back was turned to the two, but I was close enough to hear every word. I tried to twist in

my swivel stool to get a better look at them. They were talking in a corner of the restaurant, far from everyone except one kid, swiveling.

“Yeah, well, that’s just what my life was,” the voice continued. “That’s part of my past. That’s who I was. When that’s your life you have to be used to having guns pulled on you, to security searches. Eventually I got involved with the guy who made the heroin down in Mexico.”

My eyes widened. This guy just wouldn’t stop. The music wasn’t masking his voice anymore either. In fact, now he was trying to talk over the music.

I quickly glanced over my shoulder and was able to get a good look at him. Black leather jacket, dark jeans, black beanie, huge earrings that stretched out the lobes of his ears. His story checked out.

He went on to talk about his trouble with addiction. Pot. Shrooms. Ecstasy. I was frozen, trying to listen without looking like I was listening, cringing every time a new drug popped up.

But it wasn’t even his crazy story that shocked me. It was his exhibition. He was putting on some sort of twisted show, performing his life’s story to Starbucks branch #682.

Why did he put himself on display like that? I guess it’s good that he wasn’t hiding anything, but he was so blatantly confessing everything. I didn’t get it. Why was he telling her this? Why was he telling all of us this?

He spewed his story on the coffee shop walls. He knew everyone could hear him. He knew everyone could see him. Every aspect of his life was loud.

He kept talking, but I was starting to lose interest. I could almost feel him sense that he was losing his audience.

He was putting on a show. He was trying so hard to be *that* guy, to wear *those* clothes, *that* jewelry. Live *that* life.

He looked like a bad actor, struggling to play a role.

His story unfolded over the soft jazz playing at the coffee shop. The music was complex and interesting. Subtle yet powerful. Natural. But then again, I couldn’t really even hear it. It was drowning under the story of a real-life Jesse Pinkman.

It slipped away, but I was left wanting more. Wanting to hear more. Wanting to know how *that* story ended.

hot or not?

30-word thoughts on some recent events at 10600 Preston Road.

Heating up | Graduate Hall
With the addition of new computers and the inscription of every St. Mark’s graduate on its walls, the recently renovated study hall room now boasts much more resourcefulness and school history.



Icy | 7:30 a.m. meetings
This year, early morning meetings are occurring much more frequently, some in place of the busy ninth period slot. A problem arises, however, for those who have long commutes to school.

On fire | Strength & fitness
With coach Kevin Dilworth now officially in charge of the school’s strength and fitness, students have the opportunity to participate in a fantastic strength and conditioning program in after-school P.E.



Warm | New football field
The new football field has lived up to the hype thus far. Sporting a new logo with a lion and sword, it provides for a beautiful setting during football games.

EDITORIAL

School photographer makes impressive debut

As the school has recently turned over a new leaf in many positions including Headmaster, Head of Upper School and Chaplain, a new photographer has also joined the community.

Scott Peak has done a fantastic job thus far, efficiently taking high quality photos for students and faculty.

He made an excellent first impression during senior photos and during Blue Shirt Day, putting in up to a couple hours of work at the school for each student at special discounted prices.

He also enabled families to decide on a purchase during the shooting sessions by putting the photos up on a television screen.

However, Peak is not the only one providing this great service — his entire team can get the job done well.

Even when Peak was out of town during certain photo shoots, one of his partners took the photos in his place and still did an outstanding job.

This kind of convenience and quality has been unparalleled in recent years, and we look forward to working with Peak for many years to come.

HEARD IT HERE

1st

The voices of the first graders, the class of 2027.

What is your favorite P.E. game, and why?

“Lion Ball, because you get to catch balls.”

— Collier Day

“Football, because I like to get touchdowns.”

— Braden Scott

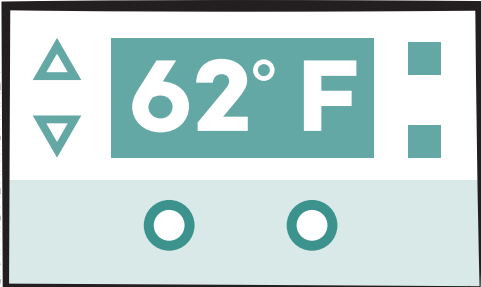
“Lion Ball, because I like making diving catches.”

— James Hoak

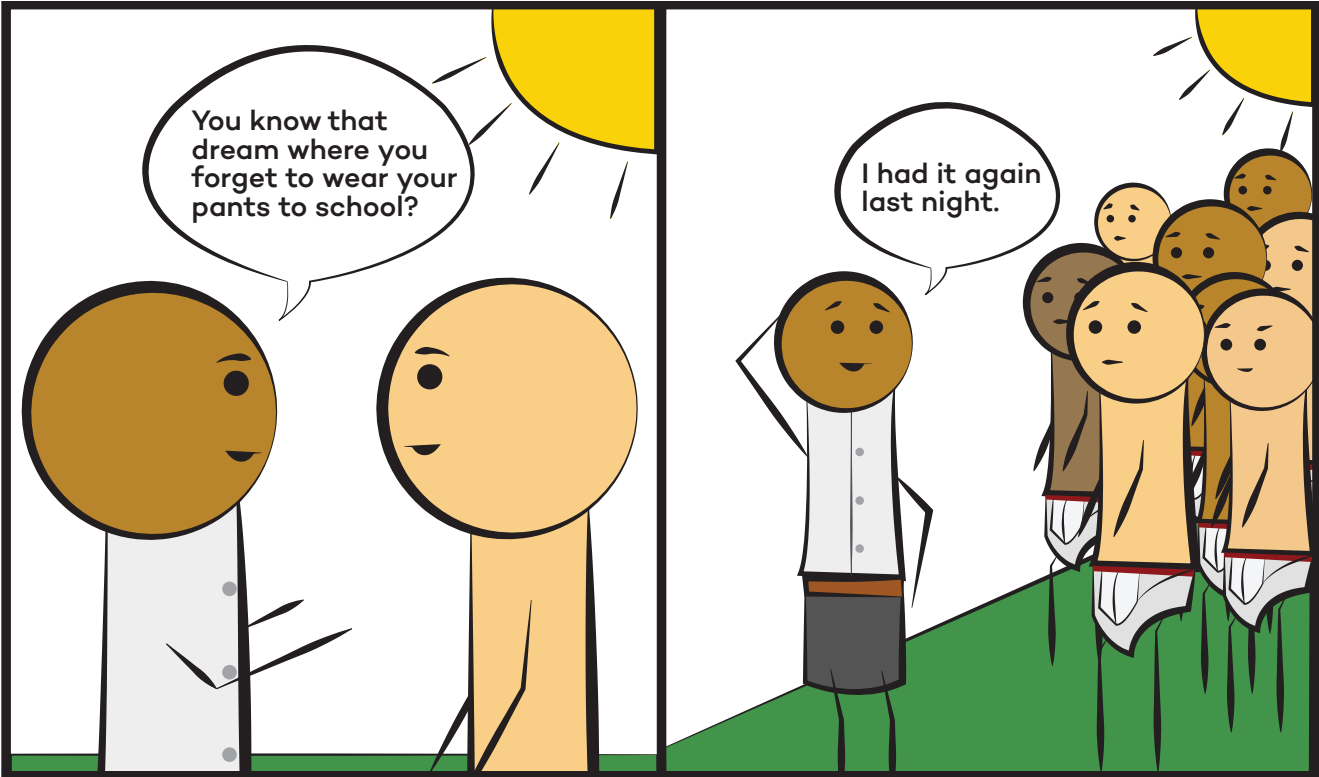
WAKE UP CALL



CHAPEL CHILL The chapel thermostat sits at a cool 62 degrees, nearly freezing hymnals to hands and causing mass shivering among the unsuspecting students.



BAD DREAM | CARTOON GRAHAM KIRSTEIN



Five day — the hardest kind of love

I'm sitting across from the Head of Upper School. He's studying me, interrogating me.

Every now and then he'll write something down on a clipboard and urge me to go on or tell me my story doesn't add up. And I just sit, wondering how did it come to this?

I know he can see the truth hiding behind my wide-open eyes, my airtight fists and the mangled words that sputter from my mouth.

I can feel it in my gut — there's no way out.

But of all the terrible moments that lead up to, consist of and linger long after a suspension, that's not the worst. It's not even that bad compared to the others.

There's the moment I feel like a prisoner in my own school, locked in the conference room for four hours. They take my phone, my computer, my schoolwork. They leave me with just my thoughts, the walls and decades of yearbooks.

Or the moment I stand in front of



WILL CLARK

my peers on the Discipline Council and ask for mercy, trying to speak clearly through the lump in my throat and the tears welling up.

There's all the times people tell me I've blown my chance of going to college, and now there's all the times I get to prove them wrong.

Or the day I spend at Hillcrest High School and see exactly where I'm going if I slip up one more time. I've never walked through metal detectors on the way to class before.

There's all the moments when the moms in the cafeteria line won't even look me in the eye. People I've known for years suddenly turn their backs on me.

Or the moment a teacher I think I can count on sees me in the halls and walks the other way. Too ashamed to even look at me.

But none of those come close to the worst moment.

That's when my mom walks into the Upper School Office — still in her tennis clothes, blonde hair flowing from under her visor.

Her face, usually a bright smile and radiant eyes.

Her face, blank and confused.

I look into those hazel eyes we share, and I know this isn't going to be easy. I'm ordered to explain.

At first it's just few trickles of truth. I can't do it. But then the dam bursts. And as it does, she doesn't strangle me.

She doesn't scream, "Will, you're such a idiot."

She just takes my hand in hers, squeezes it tight and tells me everything's going to be all right. Tells me she still loves me.

Why didn't she yell at me? Why didn't she get mad?

It would've been easier I think.

But her holding my hand, supporting me, loving me — that's a hundred times worse.

How could I do such a terrible thing to such a kind woman? How am I worthy of her love?

Being suspended for five days didn't change me.

Visiting Hillcrest High for a day didn't change me.

Writing the required reflective essays definitely didn't change me.

But her holding my hand. Her loving me when nobody else would. That changed me.

EDITORIAL

The next Upper School head

Feedback — not just involvement

In the wake of the hiring of the new head of Upper School, we have some recommendations as how to get students even more involved in the process.

While we recognize that six students were invited to interview the three finalist candidates for the position, the school never asked for feedback from the students.

Students invited were led to believe after all the interviews had occurred, administrators would seek the their feedback about the three finalists.

Considering this position is directly involved in student relationships, we feel it is important to receive student feedback regarding the applicants.

After interviewing each of the candidates, the students themselves talked about which candidate they would prefer. A majority of students thought Patrick Andr n — the candidate ultimately chosen for the position — was the right choice, but the school never heard the students' opinions.

Even though we know student involvement has improved, there is still a lot of room for even more improvement.

As of now, the student interviewing process seems to be fake, for the administration is not receiving any student feedback.

We know the administration is making an effort to hear the student body's voice, but we believe the administration could improve its approach.

One simple and obvious way to get student feedback is for the administration to sit down with the groups of people involved in the interviewing process and ask them for their opinions.

We believe this would be the easiest and most effective way to get student responses.

We have no doubt that the administration will be able to improve their ways of receiving student feedback into large decisions.

We commend administrators for allowing students to meet with candidates before the hirings, but we would like students' time with the candidates to have an actual impact. This will only happen when administrators actually hear us.

EDITORIAL

Be pragmatic this election season

There's no doubt this election cycle has been one of the most media driven campaigns in American history. News channels and websites are driving focus on candidates like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, following their every move and analyzing their every word.

But as young voters, we should ignore the media's sensationalism. We should focus on the attributes a candidate shows that will help them in the Oval Office.

It isn't the president's job to excite crowds or gather media attention. Then, why should that be a driving factor for a candidate's popularity? Sure, it may be fun to feel a part of a "political revolution" with lofty goals to "end Wall Street's influence on politics" or "make America great again," these

mantras don't go very far to describe a candidate's abilities as president.

While it is encouraging to see more attention given to the most important election in the world, it still is critical to look at what your ideals and opinions are, then compare them to the candidates, rather than picking whoever your parents like or whoever is currently in the lead.

Also consider a candidate's experience; this, combined with a solid moral backbone, has defined many of our most beloved presidents of the past.

Regardless of your preferred candidate, remember to respect the opinions of others.

No, not everyone who supports Donald Trump is a racist, and no, not everyone who supports Bernie Sanders is a communist.



POLITICS A discussion of issues outside the scope of campus, around the country and across the globe.

hot or not?

30-word thoughts on some recent events at 10600 Preston Road.

Hot | Junior Class secret Santa
With gifts ranging from a Dora the Explorer DVD to a betta fish, the Junior Class secret Santa is hopefully a tradition that will grow in the next years.



PHOTO RILEY SANDERS

Icy | Preston road construction
Closing all but one lane for construction, Preston road became a logjam during the mornings, giving chronically late students one more excuse to give to their teachers.

Warm | New crew boat
The "Bruce C. Westrate" joins the ranks after its predecessor snapped during a hailstorm. Hopefully, the christening ceremony ward- ed off any bad omens.



PHOTO CHRIS MCLEHANEY

Cool | Reckless driving
We know how excited everyone is to get to school in the morning, but does the school really need to place a traffic director at the Orchid entrance to prevent us from hitting each other in our immense hurry?

SHORT & TWEET

A peek at Marksmen's tweets

- @willgarden1

I really need someone to see queen of pop/unproblematic fave Carly Rae Jepsen in February.

— Senior **Will Garden**
- @17paynew

Cheaters never win.

#GoBroncos

— Junior **Whit Payne**
- @ashtonhash

It's 2016 and we're the class of 2016 #what.

— Senior **Ashton Hashemipour**
- @currywithepot

drake drops mixtape instagram captions for a year...

—Junior **Dhruv Prasad**
- @angel_reyes44

Let's talk about the fact that my uber driver last night is a known billionaire.

— Senior **Angel Reyes**
- @lildrew1515

Tbt to the funny PSAT questions that Twitter roasted.

—Junior **Andrew Whigam**