

• first day august 26, 2014

The first day of the 2014-2015 school year began with a bang. New Headmaster David Dini started off the year right with his first opening convocation in Hick's Gymnasium, Aug. 26. The response from the student body and faculty was positive and everyone was looking forward to a successful year with the school's 18th headmaster at the helm.

• seminar books august 25, 2014



CHANGE After being introduced to the annual book seminars, new English Department Chair Michael Morris now advocates their continuation.

reading BY CHOICE

Every summer, Upper Schoolers get the chance to select a book of their choice, then read it over the summer and discuss it — seminar-style.

DURING A THREE month summer vacation, the summer reading seminar books served to provide students an enjoyable method to keep up with reading.

Although the new chair of the English Department, Michael Morris, discussed having seminar leaders write reviews on each student for their respective English teacher, the final decision was made to keep the Summer Seminars a completely separate entity from English class.

Morris advocated for separation because the seminar books show students how reading transcends English class into all parts of their lives.

Headmaster David Dini agreed with Morris on the importance of the seminars; Dini led a seminar group this year and experienced firsthand the enjoyment and fulfillment that some students got from reading a book purely for the read rather than a grade.

No papers or thesis statements were due, but Dini believed students who participated fully in the seminars learned from the experience.

14 | 15 YOUTHFUL DAYS | reading seminars, opening convocation, first varsity game, organ arrives



With a smile on his face, seventh grader Chris Castaño rolls up to the first day.



With hands on their chests, Marksmen recite the Pledge of Allegiance Aug. 26.



Seventh grader Aaron Weiser walks in with his diorama on the first day.



At opening convocation, lower schoolers sit with athletic trainer Doc Browning.

first day!

HOW WAS YOUR FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL?

"The first day of school was really exciting because I got to see all my friends and meet my new teachers."
— freshman **Kobe Roseman**

"I'm trying to remember that first day. It was a bit of a blur. I found the first day to be so fast-paced that I can hardly remember it. Maybe that's the quotation right there."
— English Department Chair **Michael Morris**

"It was one of the first times I've ever actually looked forward to going to school. It was really weird. I walked in feeling weird as a senior, kept feeling weird during the day, went home feeling weird. But overall it was a great day."
— senior **Roland Baumann**

"I enjoyed the convocation as it looked like our new headmaster is making a real effort to include student leaders in those kind of functions. I thought having Carrington and Nathan speak was cool."
— Math Department Chair **Joe Milliet**

"I was a little bit nervous, actually, but it turned out to be good."
— third grader **Lucas Blumenthal**

"I was pretty confident that it was going to be a good year."
— fourth grader **Morgan Chow**

• first football game august 29, 2014

THE safety DANCE

Sophomore Luke Rogers starts his varsity football career with promise, playing safety. Learning from upperclassmen, he starts the year off right with a victory in his first game against Cistercian Aug. 29.

"First game of the season. Home. New position. Representing my class as the only starting sophomore. All of this added up to one thing: pressure. I was anxious, I was excited. As I walked onto my home turf, a field of opportunities, I forgot about the pressure and nerves. I just wanted to play hard, smart, and play to win."

"Being tall, lanky and skinny, I can't rely on sheer strength and power to tackle an opponent; I've had to learn how to get low and tackle well in order to play my position efficiently. I attribute a lot of my progress in my new position to some of the seniors on the squad, espe-

cially Corson Purnell. He taught me that most people don't have every trait that needed to do their job. At the end of the day, you have to make the best of what you do have, and complete the job to the best of your ability."

"Overall, I think I played well in the first game, but as any athlete would say, there's always room for improvement. I don't want to toot my own horn, but I was quite proud and honored to be the only starting sophomore in the first football game. At the same time, I look upon this starting position as a privilege and hope to continue playing well to keep it."

— Luke Rogers, as told to Josh Bandopadthay



UNITED During the pre-game playing of the Alma Mater, the varsity football players Eugene Song, Clark Wood, Case Brabham, Jackson, Justin Jones, Grant Brooks, Thomas Mattingly, Case Lowry and Graham Gillespie stand as a united team and listen to the familiar tune as they do before and after every game.



AN EDUCATION That first varsity football game is something a player never forgets. Safety Luke Rogers lines up (right), listens to coach Bart Epperson (above) and gets in on game action (left) in the team's 27-19 season-opening win against Cistercian Aug. 29.



Luke had an awesome game,, strong tackles and good passing skills. I think he will have a great impact because of his great attitude and his hard work.
—senior captain Corson Purnell

• new organ september 3, 2014



organ TRANSPLANT

Workers begin installation of custom-made organ that will mark an historic change in all things musical in the chapel.

The process of installing the new organ began two and a half years ago. The previous organ was part of the former chapel, which was smaller than the current one. So the school organ was too small for the current chapel and the sound wasn't filling the whole building. The combination of a broken pedal division of the organ and the inadequate size of the chapel urged the school to replace it. In total, the process took about two and a half months to complete.

1. The school hired the firm, Le-tourneau, based in Quebec, Canada, which came up with a spec sheet, built the instrument in their factory, disassembled it, and sent it to St. Mark's.

2. During the months of September and October, workers labored arduously to set up the organ in the chapel.

3. After set up, a four-man team tuned the organ and ensured all pipes were at the correct pitch.

4. The process of voicing the instrument was completed by a director of Tonal Design who came in and listened to each individual rank of the organ pipes. This painstaking procedure made sure all pipes were the correct sound and volume. The director can change the sound and make it warmer, brighter, direct, loud, or soft. The process took about five weeks.

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18.

David Dini takes the reigns as the school's 18th headmaster.

SLEEPING from the trophies, books and furniture, the history of St. Mark's runs rampant through Headmaster David Dini's office. Yearbooks from early in the last century and the hard-won trophies of long-gone athletes line the walls and wrestle for space atop crowded bookshelves.

Purple and gold patches from the old St. Mark's lettermen jackets are glued side-by-side in a simple black frame, reminding visitors of the old school colors. In the middle of all the old paraphernalia stands a modern desk with a sleek Mac desktop, the working area of the school's 18th headmaster, who took over his new role July 1, 2014.

CONTINUED, PAGE 18

SPEAKING OUT Sharing his excitement for the year to come, Headmaster David Dini addresses the student body and faculty at Opening Convocation Aug. 26. Dini's appointment in November 2013 made him the 18th headmaster in the school's history.

16 | 17 YOUTHFUL DAYS | the new headmaster

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InDesign CS3
Macintosh

9 Right
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Macintosh

JOSTENS

JOSTENS



I was pleasantly surprised to learn that Mr. Dini was our summer reading group leader. With all the things he had to do to start the school year in his new position, I thought it was great that he took time to share his insights with us."
—sophomore Gopal Raman (far right)

My initial thought when I learned that David Dini would be our next headmaster was that we would be in such capable, great hands with someone who loves St. Mark's with as much devotion as David. There was a palpable sense of happiness, support and relief about his appointment that permeated the campus immediately.
— Suzanne Townsend, director of Finance and Administration

HISTORY As Dini settled in to the headmaster's office, he called on his wife Nancy to help him add items from the school's past to his surroundings. Now, trophies, lettermen regalia and plaques line the walls and shelves.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

As the school's 18th headmaster, Dini appears not to stand over the affairs of the school, but rather to be enmeshed in the commonplace interactions that make St. Mark's the school it is.

Transitioning into his new role as headmaster after 20 years heading advancement efforts, Dini changed the office to fit his style, fulfilling a few must-haves in the process.

"I wanted the desk facing the quad," Dini said. "Even if I'm at my computer, I can see the reflection of the quad off my screen. It's almost like having a mirror, so I always know if people are walking around. It gives me a sense for what's going on."

Besides knowing what's going on around him day to day, Dini also knows what's happened at St. Mark's in

the past. He incorporated artifacts from the school's 108-year-old history.

Worn benches and tables from the Cecil Green Estate, dented plaques and scuffed-up furniture all fill the room. Dini not only embraces these less-than-pristine artifacts, he cherishes them.

"You have to think about where you've been so you have a sense of where you want to go," Dini said. "I incorporated the school chairs. When they were being moved over someone asked me if I wanted new chairs, and I said, 'I don't want the new chairs, I want the ones that are all scuffed up and have some sense of history to them.'"

Supported by history and tradition, Dini now looks ahead to the future.

Remembering the fun he had throwing the Frisbee with his son, he stocked his office with neon orange Frisbees for everyone's use — just one way he plans to connect with students.

"My style is a little informal,

so I like the interactions to be a little informal. I suspect that a lot of the many interactions students will have with me will be in that context.

"The daily, constant interaction that I have with you guys in the halls is one of the things I've enjoyed so much more than I thought I would."

Looking forward, Dini plans to continue to improve the character building and collaborative aspects of the school. With almost 110 years of history behind him, he steps in to lead a fully developed institution toward a new level of unity.

Whenever he comes upon a stumbling block, he only needs to gaze around the walls of his office to find inspiration.



BRING IT ON "My first thought was 'Is he actually doing this? And he trusts me to pour it?'" said senior Corson Purnell as Dini invited him to pour the ice water over him. "It was then that I realized we had someone special as our headmaster." Dini accepted the football team's challenge on the spot and even encouraged football coach Bart Epperson to join him in the fundraiser for ALS awareness.



SETTLING IN As the school's 18th headmaster, David Dini greets Student Council president Carrington Kyle (above) at the Homecoming pep rally Oct. 17, enjoys a walk around campus (above right) with lower schoolers and flew out to the New Mexico wilderness (right) to be with rising freshmen along with Athletic Director Mark Sullivan on the annual Pecos wilderness trip.



18.

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With relics from the past dotting his office, Dini's focus is clearly on the future

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• AP bio chicks hatch | november 4, 2014

chick MAGNETS

USUALLY COOPED UP in the daily routine of the typical science class, students in Mark Adame's AP biology class are able to participate in a unique lab involving the raising of baby chickens.

After caring for the eggs for a few weeks, each student was paired with an egg that would ultimately hatch into a baby chicken. Once born, the chicks are named by each student and then they continue to raise the chicks, learning about the biology of chickens along the way.



CHICKS One of the most popular parts of the AP bio class, students hatch and raise a group of chicks. Each student in the class gets the opportunity to name and nurture a chick on his own throughout the second trimester.

• SPC cross country | november 8, 2014

ANOTHER GO

Through senior leadership and commitment from each of the runners, coach John Turek's cross country team made it a goal to repeat as SPC champions.

With a smaller team than the previous year, runners knew they would need to push themselves harder to compete for the lost bodies.

A main attribute of this team was its ability to run in groups. Junior J.T. Graass led these packs with determination and persistence during the races.

Despite practices that took them

from summer training in the slopes of the Hill Country in Wimberly to late into the evenings during the school term, it wasn't meant to be, as the squad took third in the SPC championships.

Even though the two-peat was not meant to be, runners were philosophical about the season.

"It really depended on how well we ran as a pack," said sophomore Daniel Cope. "Our lead runner, J.T., really kept us on track about having a good mindset."

The team's main competition was

St. John's, St. Andrews, and John Cooper as their top times matched well with Lion runners' top times.

John Cooper had the fastest runner in the conference giving them a distinct advantage. St. Mark's had a solid top three runners which led the group and kept the team's cohesiveness together.

"It's just the bonding between us all and we all know each other really well," said senior captain Nick Buckenham. "There is a lot of mutual support and encouragement on the team which gives us a big advantage."



ENCOURAGEMENT Holding the big heads of the different Lion runners, members of the cross country team stand on the side of the course in full body paint, cheering on their team as sophomore Daniel Cope, senior Nick Buckenham and junior JT Graass and run by.



THROUGH THE RACES The teams started off jam packed (above) before they all separated into small groups. The Lions aimed to get a quick headstart in the race to further improve their chances. Freshman Mateo Diaz (left) doesn't falter, pushing himself towards the finish line. This race was what the team had been training for and lethargy wouldn't stop them now.

Even though we didn't get first place like we wanted, we learned valuable lessons that will stick with us forever. One of which is that you can't ease up when you see the finish line.

— Junior J.T. Graass

• SPC volleyball | november 8, 2014



BACK ON TOP Holding up the St. Mark's flag after his final game in a volleyball uniform, senior captain Timothy Simenc sits on top of his fellow students' shoulders who came out and supported Simenc and the rest of the volleyball team in its fourth straight SPC championship game appearance.



CHAMPIONS After winning their third straight SPC championship, players hoist the trophy up in celebration of their close victory over the Casady Cyclones.



HOLDING BACK Waiting to storm the court, students eagerly hold each other back as they prepare to celebrate with the Lion's volleyball team.

ONCE more ONCE AGAIN

Winning once is great. Winning twice is awesome. But winning three consecutive times is unheard of. But that's just what Lion volleyball players did as they bested Casaday in a five-set nail biter to earn a three-peat in SPC championship play.

UNDEFEATED in the counter season, the Lions definitely played to their potential as their captains knew they would.

After cruising past their first two games of the SPC tournament — against St. Mary's Hall and The Greenhill School — with relative ease, all the players were pumped to play against the Casady Cyclones in a 2014 SPC title rematch — which St. Mark's had won three sets to one.

This year's match against Casady was surely one to remember. The Lions dominated the first set but after losing two of the next three sets, the team was forced into a fifth set. The game went back and forth until the Cyclone's setter errored on the last point of the set giving the Lions the victory, 17-15, and a third straight championship.

It was a nail-biter and a dog-fight all the way. Those who attended the match called it the most intense and exciting volleyball match they've ever witnessed. We had our ups and downs, but when we played up to capabilities, we dominated.

— Senior Wesley Cha



**where,
oh where,
will i be
going?**

THE COLLEGE PROCESS HAS ALL THE MYSTERY AND INTRIGUE OF AN OLD-TIME HOLLYWOOD WHO-DONE-IT. AFTER ALL THE PREP WORK, TESTING, ESSAY WRITING AND CRAMMING TO MAKE GOOD GRADES, IN THE END, IT'S ANYBODY'S GUESS WHERE SENIORS END UP

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moving on.

Anxieties of all sorts typify the college hunt. Just ask senior Luke Hudspeth.

It's nearly always on a senior's mind: when will I know? Where am I going to be next year? Will this uncertainty ever end? Those anxiety-inducing thoughts dot a senior's year. Luke Hudspeth, who is heading to Dartmouth on a crew scholarship, shares his thoughts on this long, often arduous, process:

"There's a pressure, always present, fluctuating with the seasons, building toward this moment. White walls, a

wooden desk, number-two pencils, and four hours determine the next four years of my life. The subtle squeak of my pencil bubbling in the letters of my name released the butterflies in my stomach. This was it: the SAT. The most important test of my life started with the flip of a page.

"I remember freshman year, floating on Bachman Lake, bobbing with the waves on the surface of the water under the clear Texas skies during crew. Wiping the sweat off my brow while stretching my the thought of college never entered my mind. Groaning with exhaustion, I pressed my calloused hands back to burning thighs, the oars

and kept rowing, the spring sun beating down my neck.

"The cool New Hampshire weather nipped at my skin as I walk onto Dartmouth's campus, the late September weather marking the beginning 2014's fall. It was a stretch school for me, as any Ivy League is for anyone. While talking to their crew coach, my heart started racing. This school that seemed so far away for me in freshman year became a near actuality.

"My countless hours spent training for crew changed my pastime from a sport to an opportunity. Walking off the campus, my high school goal, acceptance into Dartmouth, became a reality. After sending the admissions office my early application, prioritized because of crew,

I had to wait expectantly, hoping for a likely letter. Orange and red hues painted the trees on my street. My mail sat idly in the box, like it did every other day. That day, however, something special came. Perched upon stacks of magazines and mail, an envelope from Dartmouth sat pristinely, unblemished from its travels.

Ripping apart the thin package, the likely letter jumped from its restraints, forming my face into a wide grin. Its arrival not a complete surprise, the thin package still represented my fifteen year-old dreams blossoming into reality.

"The painstakingly slow onset of landmarks like talking to the coach and the likely letter slowly released the pressure that started building the moment high school began. The college pressure induced from my advisor's warnings that grades count, college counseling meetings

and visiting college speakers faded as subtly as it appeared.

Focusing on learning now instead of the grade, the St. Mark's work ethic still drives me to push myself on the athletic field and in the classroom.

The pressure of school work, sports, and college applications forged a work ethic that will stick with me through college and through the rest of my life. But for now, the end of the college application process is a welcome relief. The familiar pressure of college on the backburner of my mind is gone.

The stress of the first SAT, the furious scratching sound of graphite on a carbon-paper form and the flood of college emails are finished, replaced by the warmth of friends and expectant looks to the future.



IVY BOUND Senior Case Brabham, who was a wide receiver for Coach Bart Epperson's Lions, was recruited to be a tight end for Harvard.



EDUCATED Alums matriculate literally around the United States in their quest for higher education. His lacrosse skills garnered senior Connor Mullen (top left) a scholarship to Colgate University. Crew members Cameron Baxley '14 (above, front) and senior Luke Hudspeth (above, back) both earned scholarships — to Navy and Dartmouth, respectively. His smooth shot and composure during critical moments of the game landed Jack Gordon (right) a spot on Cornell's Ivy League basketball team.



I am excited to play for Cal next year. I have to find a way to differentiate myself because now everyone will be the same size as me. The hardest part will simply be adjusting to the high speed pace of college workouts and of the game itself.
— senior Tim Simenc

It [Dartmouth] was a stretch school for me, as any Ivy League is for anyone. While talking to their crew coach, my heart started racing. This school that seemed so far away for me in freshman year became a near actuality.
— senior Luke Hudspeth, who received a crew scholarship to Dartmouth later in the year

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THE GIVING TREE

The school's Christmas tree, waiting at the end of a 96 foot walk, welcomes handmade ornaments, made by lower schoolers, who carefully place them from atop their senior buddies.

From school uniforms to the Christmas Party, traditions mark life at 10600 Preston Road at every season. No ceremony, however, is more iconic than the annual All-School Christmas Party. Cemented in time by the Path to Manhood statue in the Perot Quadrangle, the timeless image of the senior bearing his first grade buddy on his shoulders epitomizes the ideals of integrity, confidence, judgment and spirituality in the community.

On Dec. 19 anxious seniors and excited lower schoolers lined up in the Commons, preparing to enter the Great Hall.

Runny noses, cheery smiles and Santa hats generated the loving and merry atmosphere of the Christmas Party. Then the music started.

Marksman, parents and grandparents joyfully belted "Jingle Bells" in a discordant, elated manner, the sound containing the pent-up stress from the three weeks leading up to Christmas Break, considered the hardest weeks in the school year.

A roar erupted as Senior Class President Nathan Ondracek began the processional, striding down the corridor with his wide-eyed first grade buddy, William Taylor, on his back, officially beginning the end of school for the year.

The noise kept building as more seniors walked down the hallway, basking in their continuation of the tradition.

Students first through twelfth grade anxiously squirmed on the hard floor as Student Council President Carrington Kyle addressed the school, followed by Salvation Army's Major Ward Matthews and Headmaster David Dini.

And then it was over. Students joyfully filed out of the doors while the seniors basked in the glory of tradition and the tedium of photographs.

Although many know what the Christmas Party looks like, few know how the seniors and lower schoolers felt as they walked down the aisle.

CONTINUED, PAGE 56



AHEAD The 18-foot Christmas tree awaits second grader Surya Dinesh, perched securely atop the shoulders of his senior buddy Tim

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'Don't drop him.'

Seniors nervous about dropping little buddies as they take that long walk towards the tree.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 54

Here's what a few seniors and lower schoolers remembered about the day:

What did it sound like when you were carried through the door?

First grader Cooper Guiler It sounded super noisy!

Senior Jack Gordon It sounded like a really festive concert.

First grader William Taylor So loud my ears were going to burst into flames!

Senior Nathan Ondracek Honestly, it sounded like a huge mash of joyous noise as the music played and people cheered. The loudest noise of all, though, was my heart beating really hard.

First grader Rohan Kakkar Like a volcano!

First grader Ronen Verma It sounded like... yeah, a volcano!

Senior Momin Siddiqui The last thing I remembered hearing before walking through the door was, "Momin! Where's your lab report?" So I took a deep breath and walked as fast as I could into the Great Hall, doing my best to pretend to ignore [physics instructor] Dr. [Stephen] Balog's words.

What were you most scared about?

Cooper Guiler Nothing. Well, he's so tall, I was really high up.

Jack Gordon: Tripping and dropping Cooper.

William Taylor I was scared because I kept slipping down.

Nathan Ondracek Dropping my buddy or tripping. Somehow, when everybody is watching, simple actions like walking become a lot harder.

Ronen Verma Nothing.

First grader Rohan Kakkar I was afraid I was going to fall off!

Momin Siddiqui: Tripping and falling in front of the entire school. Not the way I want the St. Mark's community to

remember me after I graduate.

What were you most excited about?

William Taylor Seeing my senior buddy, all of my friends and getting snacks.

Cooper Guiler Me too, Me too, Me too. **Jack Gordon** I enjoyed the anticipation of walking down the Great Hall once through the door.

Nathan Ondracek Not only walking in, but watching all my classmates, some with whom I've gone to school with for 12 years, walk with their buddies and a smiles on their faces. It was hard for me to believe that we were finally seniors walking down the aisle.

Ronen Verma Everything!

Rohan Kakkar Everything!

Momin Siddiqui Listening to the 800 or so Marksmen, anxious to start their break, half-heartedly singing Christmas carols.

As a senior how did it feel to finally be a part of the age-old tradition of the senior party?

Nathan Ondracek It was surreal because, coming in first grade, I've been carried in by my buddies and watched year after year as past seniors carried their buddies. The tradition makes you feel like you are linked with everyone who's come before you; it is definitely a moment and feeling that I will never forget.

Jack Gordon The senior party is always an unbelievable and unique St. Mark's experience; walking down to the Christmas tree is really gratifying but also saddening because I know that my time at St. Mark's is almost up.

Momin Siddiqui It felt like a blur. One moment we were taking pictures in the chapel and the next I had a first grader holding on to my hair for dear life. Overall it was a surreal experience and I was truly proud to be a Marksmen.



THE LEADERS As Senior Class president, Nathan Ondracek, along with his buddy, first grader William Taylor, had the honor of leading the procession of seniors and buddies in to the ceremony. Each little buddy carried a handmade ornament to place on the school's Christmas tree.

I was a little nervous because I didn't want my buddy to hit his head on the door, but the experience of having everyone watch and clap was extremely exciting. After all, the Christmas Party represents one of those senior moments that is incredibly special. — senior Luke Hudspeth with little buddy, second grader Jack Tholking

The tradition makes you feel like you are linked with everyone who's come before you; it is definitely a moment and feeling that I will never forget.

— Senior Class President
Nathan Ondracek

CAREFUL! The highlight of the annual Christmas Party is watching little buddies — carried precariously down the aisle by their senior buddies — placing handmade ornaments on the school's Christmas tree. Doing their job are first grader Reagen Graeme and his buddy Mason Smith (far left) and senior Rishi Kshatriya and his second grade buddy Charly Gordy (left). Senior George Lin (in Santa cap) listens to Student Council President Carrington Kyle (below) as he speaks before the presentation of gifts to the local Salvation Army group.



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