



# Those pesky mosquitos

I have always been the kid asking questions. It started in pre-kindergarten, when I made my mom take me to the ESD Lower School chaplain so I could ask, "Why are there mosquitos?"

Father Harmuth had no answer for that one, which is honestly pretty disappointing. They don't make much sense. I get that spiders eat them and everything, but what purpose do mosquitos serve? They just spread disease and make Texas summers worse than they already are.

But I didn't give up.

In a third grade parent-teacher conference at another school, my teacher, who called me Jack 60 percent of the time, told my mom two things. First, she diagnosed me with a handwriting 'disease' — which was silly because I'm left handed and she just didn't like how some pencil marks would smear across the page as my hand moved. It's a struggle to be lefty.

Second, and more importantly, she said

I raised my hand too much to ask questions. Apparently, I was intimidating the other students by trying to participate in the institution designed as a place to ask questions: school.

No middling third grade teacher could stop my questions though. I only picked up the pace.

I asked about baseball, kangaroos and how trees got so tall.

I asked if pizza was good for me and what if all desserts became main meals.

I asked why grandparents have to die and how I could live forever.

I got answers for some, 'I don't know's for others, and I got questions asked back at me for a few (How do you know narwhals aren't real?).

My questions eventually grew from a child's to a young man's.

I asked why the Watsons did go to Birmingham.

I asked why MLK fought for peace and

Malcolm X advocated retaliation.

I asked why Barry Bonds gets to have the home run record when Hank Aaron never took steroids.

This school has provided a platform for even more.

**W**hy do colleges send out 30-page paper packets advocating how 'green' they are?

How does Sisyphus roll his rock to the peak of a mountain each and every day, only to have it fall back down?

What is the 'Path to Manhood' and does it come with a map?

I realize that some questions might never be answered.

What can we do to help our nation's veterans who go through indescribable anguish after war?

How can someone wake up every morning and challenge himself to be his truly best self? It's pretty hard not to have some bad days.

How does anyone answer the question 'Who am I?' It seems that English teachers can ask it ad infinitum but does anyone really know?

I think these are the questions it takes a lifetime to answer. I'm sure Dr. Ploegstra up in Michigan would have a few answers. I know that the maintenance staff and food service staff have figured out how to devote themselves to the community that they're a part of. It seems Johnny Hunter, Dwight Phillips and Greg Guiler are well on their ways to figuring out how to present their best selves every day. And I'm almost positive that Mr. Holtberg has figured out how to give all of himself to something he truly believes in.

But with a handful of answers in my back pocket, a few half-answers that I'm working on finishing and a enough unanswered questions to fill the Mariana Trench, one thing really bothers me.

Why in the world are there mosquitos?

## target practice

### The New Headmaster | On point

Headmaster Arthur Ruff '23 rapidly scaled the promotion ladder when he rose from third grade student directly to headmaster Jan. 21. Donning a black bow tie and taking over the headmaster's office, Arthur treated the student body to the greatest lunch of the year, complete with pizza, chicken fingers and Indian food. Still, he couldn't figure out why they switched the salad and sandwich bars.



ANDREW GATHERER PHOTO

### Lit Fest | Enlightening

The annual Literary Festival provided students with a taste of writers' worlds, while the classy library reception after school transported us into an 18th century writer's guild, complete with silver sterling ornaments and live orchestral music. We thank the library staff, the musicians and the student and faculty chairs for the well-planned event.

### The cold | Too cold

It's been a weird winter. The temperatures even dipped to the ages of some of our older Marksmen. We checked with NOAA and are pretty sure it's never been that cold in Texas... like ever. Ice patches have been popping up like clingy old friends that everyone thought moved to California and sweatpants (however against the rules) have been a much needed commodity to keep us Marksmen's grey-shorts-clad calves from freezing in the deadly cold.



SHOURYA KUMAR PHOTO

### College Applications | Off-target

College deferrals: Who came up with this vague ambiguity? Just give us a "yes" or a "no." Scrap the intolerable "maybe," which gives deferred seniors a speck of hope that they rekindle until March and April, when regular decisions arrive. A black-or-white answer is all we ask.



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