



# Man Alive!

WESTERN ACADEMY  
ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018



# YEAR OF THE GREEN



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*Our passion is to help parents raise boys to become men capable of transforming  
the world because they see what is true, do what is good, and love what is beautiful.*



# Western Ford



## HAVE YOU SEEN MY SON?

After each day's dismissal at Western Academy, parents are often seen wandering about the sprawling campus looking for their child. The search can take anywhere from five to twenty-five minutes! These parents ask the same question to anyone they come across: Have you seen my son? Eventually, the boy is discovered perched on a tree, or in the dirt tunnels, or somewhere in the bamboo forest, or in the back part of the field.

We take this first section to highlight some recent accomplishments of our WA boys. Whether it be speech, or music, or sports, or science, our boys thrive and flourish in their time at school. Each end of day at Western may hold a story for parents to delight in.

(Note that this is a short selection of a few boys, many more deserve to be in these pages!)



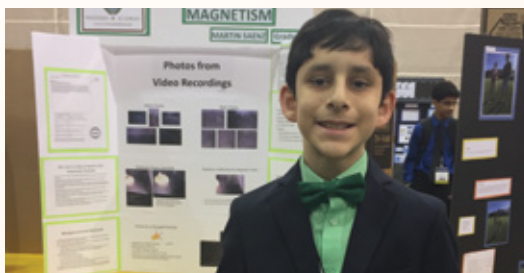
LUKE ANIBOGU (7th Grade) tried out Track and Field in the spring. In his first ever competition in the 400 meter run, Luke was the lone 7th grader competing against eighth graders. Luke's coaches knew he was fast but they did not expect him to win his first race! Along with his gift of athleticism and the endless running around the Western campus in P.E., Luke has grown into a strong all around competitor. Besides being a star athlete, Luke maintains a high average in academics.

MARTIN SAENZ (7th Grade) competed at the Houston Science and Engineering Fair on February 24th. This fair brings in 1,300 students from 130 schools across the city. It is the largest fair in the state and one of the largest in the country. Martin won first place in Astronomy & Physics with a project that studied the effects of magnetic fields on subatomic particles using a homemade cloud chamber. His project involved a lump of uranium ore as a radiation source! Way to go Martin!

THE PARMENTER BOYS entered Western Academy this school year, and it did not take long for the boys to put their mark in the life of the school! Benjamin (3rd Grade) tied for first in The Bard Competition in the fall presenting A Poison Tree. He won again in the spring Bard Competition with The Tale of Custard the Dragon, and then won the Hero's Bard in the Days of the Cup with Casey at the Bat! He endeared the guests at Western Academy's Founding Roots Dinner by reciting The Tale of Custard the Dragon in the middle of the stage under a spot light. The guests were impressed at the oratorical skills of this young man!



Not to be out done by his younger brother, Matthew (5th Grade) won the spring Bard Competition with Casey at the Bat and won again in the Hero's Bard with Casey's Revenge! A nice back to back victory on the same theme of Baseball on the year of the Astro's World Championship! Well done Parmenter boys!



ROBERT SELLERS (6th Grade) entered Western this year and hit the ground running in Speech and Debate. In the fall St. Thomas tournament, he won 2nd place in Novice Poetry (A Boy Named Sue, written by Shel Silverstein) and advanced to semifinals in prose (The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster). He is pictured here taking home the big trophy for 2nd place in Small School Division! In the spring St. Thomas tournament, he won 3rd place in Sports Broadcasting, 6th place in Reader's Theater (Knights of the Round Table), and advanced to the semi-finals in Novice Poetry (A Boy Named Sue), Novice Prose (The Phantom Tollbooth), and Group Improv.

His parents said afterwards: "Being a part of the speech team was a great way for Robert to connect with other WA boys and to feel pride in himself and in his school. He also enjoyed performing as Harry Houdini in the spring musical, Sherlock Holmes & the Curse of the Dunhill Diamond, and in the theater class's production of Hamlet where he played both Laertes and the King. Robert is really looking forward to competing for WA's speech team next year and to performing in Beorn Hall in Bard competitions and theater productions!"



JOE RICK MADDEN (8th Grade) entered Western in the 5th grade kicking and screaming as he didn't want to leave his former school. But it didn't take long for Joe Rick to fall in love with Western. Joe Rick led the Varsity Basketball team to its best year with a 10-2 Record, scoring nearly half of the points in each game.

In all of his years at Western, Joe Rick did not receive a grade lower than an A. Toward the end of the year he scored a gold medal on the high school freshman level National Latin Exam. As a fitting end to his years at Western, Joe Rick ran the Heroes Race for the House of Green who won the House Cup.



Art by John Dodson (5th Grade)

MATTHEW BATES (4th Grade) entered The Houston Open Champions Challenge last spring as the lone entry from Western Academy. Matthew won first place in a field of 400 4th graders from 236 schools. In addition, he also won first place with the Holmes group in team competition. Great job Matthew!



SEBASTIAN ARGUELLES (5th Grade) has quickly become the 'keeper of the beat' in his first year at Western Academy. He played the drums in the Christmas Show and the Spring Show. His snare, bass and top hat have given the plays and shows an added flair. He will be the young man behind the drum kit at Western for years to come! In the fall, he competed in Scotland for the International Drumming Competition and won 3rd place for his division. We have one of the best drummers in the world in campus!



BENNETT GROOVER (5th Grade) celebrated his 9th birthday in the middle of the summer of 2017 and among his presents were cash gifts from family and friends. On the heels of his first year at Western Academy, Bennett decided he could do something good for the school and thought of donating a big portion of his money to the school! By this act of generosity, Bennett launched the Annual Drive of 2017-2018 which was one of the most successful annual drives in the school's history! He is our youngest philanthropist to date! Thank you Bennett for being a part of the 'builders' of Western Academy!



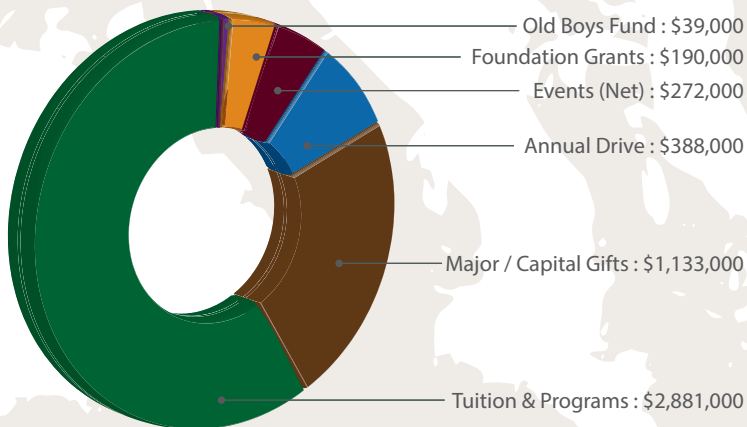
The 5th Graders test their speed and agility through one of the P.E. drills.



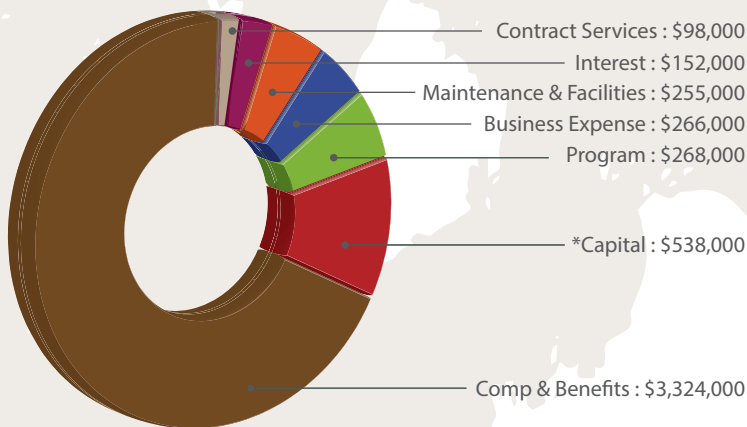
**WESTERN WORD** is our community's weekly source of news, events, parenting resources, and timely poetry. We appreciate Mr. Adam Thompson's diligent work, and thank him for keeping us up to date with all that is happening at WA!

# Financial Report 2017-2018

**TOTAL REVENUE: \$4,903,000**



**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$4,901,000**



## \*CAPITAL EXPENSES:

City Compliance	\$372,000
Fire Alarm	
Fire Watch	
Certificate of Occupancy	
Chapel, Music, Herot Hall	
Property Upgrades	\$148,000
Driveway	
Athletic Nets	
Desks and chairs (84 units)	
Tree Removal	
Storage Solutions	\$ 18,000
School Store	
Containers	

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

In 2017-2018, Western Academy identified code compliance upgrades that needed to be done to its buildings and fire alarm systems. The work began in the summer of 2017 and continued through the first half of the school year.

The structural joists of the Wrestling room were fortified to accommodate more weight and occupancy. All of the fire alarm system for all of the buildings were upgraded and brought up to code. Further capital projects were undertaken to modify buildings to accommodate the increased numbers of boys. The chapel was expanded to allow 30 more due to the increasing number of attendance at Mass. The Music Palace was renovated with improved spaces and acoustics to make the music program more attractive and pleasant for the boys. These improvements to the campus were accomplished and are currently in use by the boys, teachers and our families.

Western Academy owes tremendous thanks to Mr. and Mrs. David and Ashley Coolidge, one of our graduate families who generously made a major donation to allow the school to take on these capital improvements, pay down a portion of the capital debt, and fulfil our goal for the Annual Drive. Their heroic support through the years has helped Western in our mission to provide a top quality education for boys in Houston. The Coolidge family has been one of the quiet foundations that provides the support necessary for Western to thrive.





# Friends of Western Academy

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Throughout the years, the charitable foundations who support Western Academy are the silent yet indispensable partners in the success of the school. Their gifts in the form of grants allowed our school to grow through its inception, help its infrastructure, grant scholarships to families, and assist in operational funding. These friends of our school continue to support the education of boys through their ongoing gifts. We thank them for their valuable contributions to Western Academy for the school year of 2017-2018.

*The Clayton Foundation*

*The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation*

*Williams Stamps Farish Foundation*

*The Albert & Ethel Herzstein Foundation*

*The Strake Foundation*

*The Marek Family Foundation*

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# Annual Drive



The Annual Drive plays a key role in funding the difference between tuition income and the school operations budget. Annually, the Drive's goal is to cover a third of the needed funds to balance the budget. Elizabeth and Vincent Higgins, chairs of the Drive, wish to express their appreciation to all of the families that made this Annual Drive a great success.

Western Academy received pledges from 100% of our families, Board and school staff. It is the second straight year of full participation, a powerful testament of every family's investment in the school! The Annual Drive received 370 gifts, totaling \$388,000. Company matching gifts played an important part again this year, contributing \$29,500, from 12 companies.



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Mr. and Mrs. Raul Abello  
Mr. and Mrs. Preston Young

## STUDIUM (\$10,000 - \$14,999)

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Shell Foundation Matching

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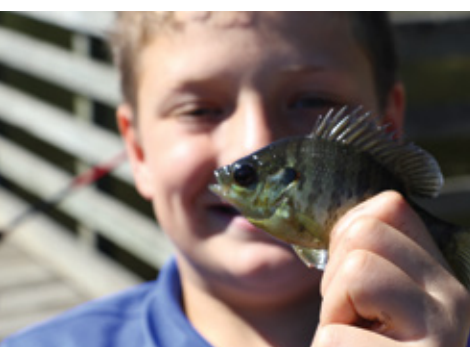
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Shell Oil Matching Gifts Program  
Suntrust Foundation Matching Gifts

**3RD ANNUAL  
GO WESTERN!  
BOOTS AND  
BLUE JEANS  
WITH TRAVIS TRITT**

Go Western was held on February 24th this year under a lingering threat of heavy rain. 330 guests and 40 volunteers were determined to see Travis Tritt perform a magical acoustic set on our very own Beorn Hall stage. Opening for Tritt were Greg Vann (father of Garrett, 8th Grade) and our very own teacher, Mr. Whitebread, backed up by the Cowpunks Band.

The auctioneer, Mr. David Ackle, roused the crowd in the Live Auction. This event gathered an outpouring of donated auction items, trips, event sponsors, and gifts. West, the endearing English Cream Golden Retriever was the star of the evening's live auction. Western Academy received net proceeds of \$255,400, our best ever! These funds aim to support the retention of our excellent faculty. We are deeply grateful for Kristin and Raul Abello for making the vent happen for the third year in a row! Thank you!

*“What this country needs are positive male role models and teachers who can lead our young boys into being good men. And if there is anything our country needs, it is good men.”*

*-Travis Tritt*

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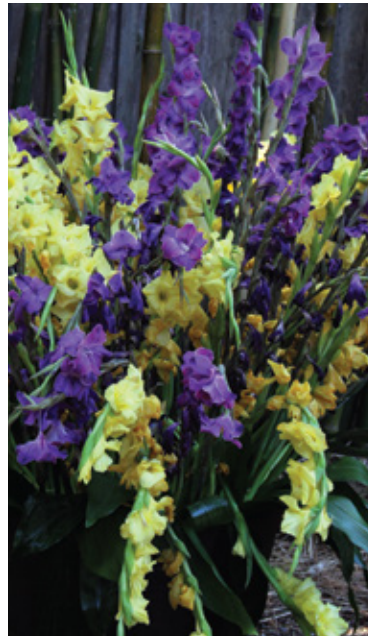


# Mother's Tea

WESTERN ACADEMY

Our annual Mother's Tea was held on May 10, beneath the shade of the great room porch, trees, and gazebo. 120 moms embraced the delightful tradition, wearing colorful hats and enjoying great company and refreshments. With the beautiful flowers and the lovely finger foods, dessert and teas, this intimate and elegant affair was a smashing success. Jason and Albert used the occasion to wish everybody a Happy Mother's Day and offered a great THANK YOU to all the amazing moms who volunteered and chaired our many events throughout the year, and there were many! The event honors all our moms, the heart of our Western community, whose grace and strength benefit our faculty and students every day.

We would especially like to thank our wonderful Chairs Susan Parker and Jodi Malanga, along with Maria Luisa Jimenez and Jessica Joseph, for the beautiful work they did in preparing this wonderful event. We would also like to thank all the volunteers involved with set-up, decorations, take-down, and the check-in table. Lastly, special thanks to the Glueck family for their generosity in once again lending us the luxurious plants for the occasion.




# CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION

AT WESTERN ACADEMY

For the past three years during May, Western faculty, students and families celebrate a Eucharistic procession full of pageantry, song and color to mark the feast of Corpus Christi. This year's procession was celebrated on the afternoon of Friday, May 4th, with the entire school and countless siblings, and other members of our community present. Eighth

graders and faculty from each of the Houses did the loving work of creating carpets made from colored wood chips for the four altars spread throughout the campus. School staff members prepared two additional beautiful carpets for the start of the procession. At each of the altars, Fr. Pete offered moving homilies honoring Christ in the Eucharist and thanking him for his many blessings on our school. At the final altar, 8th grader Federico Celis offered his personal thanksgiving prayer on behalf of all Western students. We are deeply grateful to Fr. Frank Vera, Mrs. Carmen Bello, Mrs. Toni Vera, Mrs. Veronica Barud and Mrs. Nadine Heffernan (and to many others) for bringing this important tradition to life at Western.



# Founding Roots DINNER

The 8th Annual Founding Roots Dinner this year was a memorable tribute to the culture of joyful arts at Western. We are especially grateful to Western's Founding Headmaster, Mr. Jeff Presberg, who came to enjoy the festivities with us. Jeff will be leaving with his family this summer to northern Virginia.

Dinner Co-Chairs, Sofia Riches and Michele Dodson, along with Nadine Heffernan and her amazing team of volunteers, prepared a delightful evening at the Junior League of Houston.

The highlights of the evening were the House Toasts offered by Dan Callahan (Water), Dan Murphy (Shell), John Power (Green), and Justin Hebert (Raven). Student poets Benjamin Parmenter (3rd grade) and Andy Caranti (8th grade) waxed strong, delivering their festival day poems for our enjoyment.

Thomas Armentor (Old Boys Class of 2014) gave the Old Boy Address, reminiscing about the founding years of the school, and his friendships with Western teachers that remain strong to this day. Thomas developed his calligraphy skills at Western Academy. He is the official calligrapher for the diplomas of graduates of the school. He sat with many of his classmates from the Class of 2014. Thomas will attend Texas A&M next year.

Mr. Hebert commended the work of Mr. Patrick Miggins and Mr. Doug Klatt, who are leaving Houston this summer to return to The Heights School (Washington DC) and Northridge Prep (Chicago), respectively. Their contributions to the school have been priceless.

Mrs. Wendy O'Bar spoke about the challenge of getting Western off the ground in those beginning days, and how Western has helped her three sons, including Johnny, who is graduating this May. She confessed that the school has developed and grown far beyond her imagination. Wendy made an appeal for the Financial Aid Fund which raised \$40,090 to support Western families this coming year.

Student and faculty singers sang two songs composed by Mr. Doug Klatt. Western, Dear Forge of My Soul and Arise to the Tolling Bell.

## EVENT DONORS

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## PROGRAM AD DONORS

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## EVENT CHAIRS

Mrs. Sofia Riches  
Mrs. Michele Dodson

## STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Nadine Heffernan  
Claire Pelletier  
Alberto Barud  
Veronica Barud  
Richard Gosselin  
Adry Gosselin  
Rhoda Johnson  
Monique Close



# Grandparents Day

Our school events team and music teachers prepared another wonderful morning for our most honored members of our school community, our Grandparents! This year was our largest and most beautiful grandparent's morning, with an elegant brunch in Beorn Hall prepared by school moms and served by 7th grade students. 8th grade boys joined the tables of their grandparents for brunch. Four groups of singers and musicians and two poets offered their artistic gifts to the grandparents during a brief interlude. At the end of the event, Western boys presented a red rose to their grandmothers in an elegant gentleman style.



## WAC GOLF CLASSIC BLACKHORSE GOLF CLUB

The 4th Western Academy Golf Classic on March 8th was a great success! Western boys along with their dads, moms and grandfathers turned up on this beautiful breezy day. House of the Green had the biggest showing and won the day! This year's Golf Classic committee, Ben Bates, David Hanse, Jeff Madden, John Malanga, and Glen Klimchuk, put together a great afternoon. We would like to extend a big thank you to our sponsors who made this year's tournament so much fun and valuable to our school, and for helping to raise \$12,400 for Western!

### EVENT SPONSORS

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### TOURNEY COMMITTEE

Mr. Ben Bates  
Mr. Albert Chincuanco  
Mr. Jeff Madden  
Mr. David Hanse  
Mr. Glenn Klimchuk  
Mr. John Malanga

### STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Albert Chincuanco  
Mrs. Nadine Heffernan  
Mrs. Veronica Barud  
Mrs. Claire Pelletier





Our eighth annual Fall Garden Party was held on October 14 on a beautiful autumn evening. It was the largest Garden Party to date with 280 guests! Highlights from the evening were short skits, jokes and songs by Mr. Hoff and his ragamuffin cast of eighth graders. Mr. Hoff sang 'If I were a rich man, I would donate to the Western Wish List' from the roof of the storage room. After all the fun, Western received a total of \$47,625 to purchase many needed items for the school. This year's main need was 50 new desks, and \$20,000 of the total raised helped pay for new desks and cubbies. Mrs. Michelle Ritchey and Mrs. Courtney Moore, this year's Co-chairs, did an outstanding job preparing one of most delightful evenings ever!

### EVENT CO-CHAIRS

Mrs. Michelle Ritchey  
Mrs. Courtney Moore

### WISH LIST DONORS

Athletics & Team Sports  
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Callahan  
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Dr. and Mrs. Bryan Ritchey  
Mr. and Mrs. Scott West

### EVENT DONORS

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Mr. and Mrs. Gaston Arguelles  
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Dr. and Mrs. John Stewart  
Mr. and Mrs. Andy Suman  
Mr. and Mrs. David Thorson  
Mr. and Mrs. Scott West

### CHAPEL NEEDS

Mr. and Mrs. Andrea Benedetti  
Mr. and Mrs. Mike Chennault  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Chincuanco  
Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Dodson  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fowler  
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Kaetzer  
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Mr. and Mrs. Sam Mancuso  
Mr. and Mrs. Lee Mediamolle  
Dr. and Mrs. John Stewart



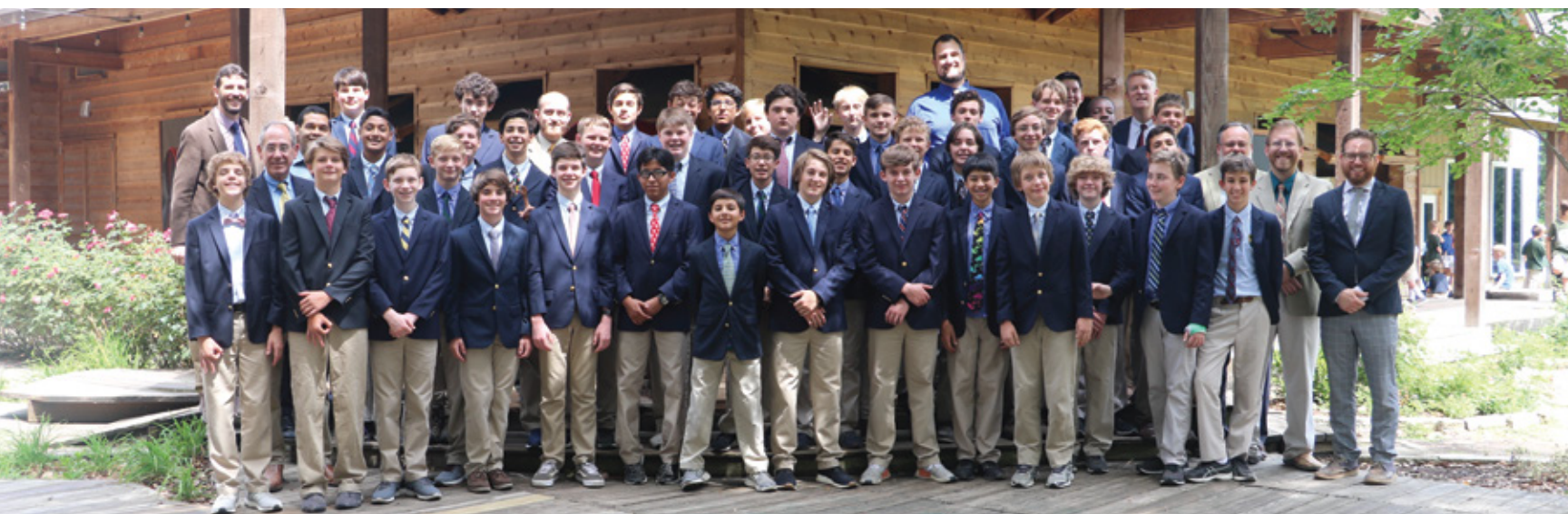
# Class of 2018

On the beautiful morning of May 25th, the graduation ceremony for the class of 2018 was held in Beorn Hall. Prior to the ceremony, a Baccalaureate Mass was celebrated by Fr. Peter, with 8th graders tending to the readings and the faculty choir, led by Mr. Whitebread, providing the music. During the ceremony we heard reminiscences from Colin England and Johnny O'Bar of their years at WA. Homeroom teachers Mr. Miggins and Mr. Thompson also shared their personal memories of each of the young men. The 40 students of the class of '18 comprised Western's largest graduating class ever. 13 will go to Strake Jesuit, five to St. Thomas High School, six to Memorial High School, three to Frassati Catholic, and the rest to a host of others. One of our graduates is headed out of state to attend Woodberry Forest School in Virginia.



## 2018 GRADUATES ATTENDING HIGH SCHOOLS

Aristoi Classical Academy  
Cypress Ridge High School  
Frassati Catholic High School  
Houston Christian High School  
Memorial High School  
St. John XXIII High School  
St. Pius X High School  
St. Thomas Episcopal School  
St. Thomas High School  
Strake Jesuit College Prep  
The Saint Constantine School  
Woodberry Forest School (VA)  
Xavier Academy









## Annual Spring Show

Sherlock Holmes & the Curse of the Dunhill Diamond, was performed before a wonderful audience of 400 under Beorn Hall and the Great Oak. There was a cast of 30 students, including many 8th graders, a our choir of 80 boys, a band, a stage crew, a tech crew, and much more! The intriguing script, co-written by Doug Klatt, Alex Hoff and Tony Janiero, kept everybody riveted until the final scene when the murderer was revealed by Sherlock (Ben Aycock). Other main actors were Nate Twardowski (Watson), Nathaniel Polzer (Sir Phimore Dunhill), Andy Caranti (Officer Max Small from Scotland Yard) and Robert Pounds (The Dunhill Ghost). Mrs. Kristina Leyden and Mrs. Jessica Joseph did a beautiful job dressing the actors in Old English period costumes. We are deeply indebted to the incredible Doug Klatt for his beautiful music which will be remembered forever at Western; Sherlock was his last show. Mike Whitebread conducted the musical side of things and was terrific. Original songs included: The Dunhill Ghost, To Progress, Simply Supernatural, No One's Above Suspicion, and Sherlock Holmes. Mike McManus did a great job handling the many complicated stage set changes and Norman Barud served as our very first student assistant director!



Phinimore: It's an exciting technological discovery, but it may be bad for business.

Watson: Well, what is it?

Phinimore: Fingerprinting! Any object touched by a criminal's hand can be dusted and traced back to him by his fingerprints.

Watson: Amazing!

Phinimore: You're not impressed Sherlock? Maybe you're a bit worried that this new technology will flood the market with detectives that can solve crimes like you?

Sherlock: I know the technology. My brother Mycroft is the one developing it and I think it will be very helpful. But Phinimore, fingers don't commit crimes, men do. To solve a crime, you need more than matter, you need the motive, and to determine the motive, you need a mind! Human reason will surpass any technology, no matter how helpful it can be.



# Our "Old Boys"

Graduates of Western are familiarly referred to as our Old Boys, reminiscent of a British boys school tradition which we share. The Old Boys continue to be part of our Western Community well after they graduate. They return to school during the year to attend annual events like the Pigskin Classic football tournament and the El Classico soccer game. Many also maintain close friendships with faculty members who continue to mentor them. As we follow these young men grow through high school, college, technical school or the military, we witness Men Truly Alive!



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Thomas Armentor (2014), (pictured on the left) now at Texas A&M University gave the Old Boy address at the Founding Roots Dinner. Below is an excerpt from his speech.

"The Glory of God is a Man Fully Alive," the idea that through school and our parents we would develop into a "whole" person: intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual. One of the first experiences of this journey came in the form of Mr. Hebert's art class when he taught us calligraphy. The beauty and difficulty of it drew me in completely. Over the course of my time at Western, I continued to develop apprentice skills and after graduating, I have been asked to write the calligraphy all of Western's graduation diplomas. I cannot think of another school where a student has the opportunity to learn an intricate art form and then give back that skill as an Old Boy. That is something very special to me. My journey to become a man fully alive continued through the many plays of Western Academy. These are not your ordinary middle school plays, they are based on classic tales (like *Where the Wild Things are* or *The Wind in the Willows*) but written by the faculty and tailored to the Western boys. And they are not only plays but musicals! One of the more traditional manly aspects I enjoyed most about WA was the competition that it fostered in its students. Western Academy could not be Western Academy without it's group of men fully alive, its incredible teachers. In their everyday lives, from teaching to coaching, their commitment to us and to the school taught us what it means to be a man. We are all part of this tree, branches, limbs, leaves, and trunk. Each family, each student, each teacher plays his part - and we have produced a tree that is fourishing! A tree that will last forever, but we will always remember our roots.

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Stephen Dunne (2012) was a founding student when Western opened its doors in September, 2010 and a member of Western's first graduating class. Stephen attended St. Thomas High School, and later, at age 17, qualified for a National Merit Scholarship.



Stephen used his scholarship to attend the University of Oklahoma, and graduated in December 2017 Magna Cum Laude in Biochemistry at the age of 20. Stephen is officially the first college graduate of Western Academy. Stephen currently works in a research lab at OU and is applying to medical school.

## FIELDS OF STUDY

Western graduates currently study in these fields, among others:

Architecture & Environmental Science  
Biochemistry  
Biology  
Business Management  
Computer Engineering  
Computer Science  
Mechanical Engineering  
Music Education  
Petroleum Engineering  
Physics  
Theology & Philosophy

"Only upon reflecting on the significance of the liberal arts and Western culture, do I come to fathom its relation to our lives and how fortunate I have been to have experienced it.

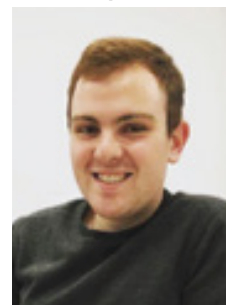


What had begun as a vague understanding has transformed into a special lens, if you will, with which I engage others and my aspirations."

— Miguel Caranti (2013), now at Princeton

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"Western Academy gave me the ability to add both color and vibrancy to my work in both the liberal arts and otherwise. This became pivotal in my acceptance to the University of Manchester, and it has allowed



me to write on a level above my peers since I graduated. Western Academy has been a part of my heart and soul, and I have never discounted being a graduate of a great Houston liberal arts school."

— Garrett Kindle (2013) now studying International Business at University of Manchester, UK.

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# "Old Boys" Fund

Western Academy is completely dedicated to our boys and families. Our graduated families are a vital part of our school. They continue to participate in the life of the school, attending and volunteering in school events.

In September 2017, Western Academy launched the Old Boys' Fund to provide a way for graduated families to continue supporting the mission of the school. The fund is dedicated to the operations, scholarships and minor capital improvements of the school.

Thirty five families generously launched the fund with recurring or annual gifts, providing \$48,570. Western Academy is especially grateful to these graduated families who have taken the school's mission to heart! Here are some quotes we received:

*After graduating from Western, our son has gone forth joyfully in his high school years. We have always credited Western Academy with their part in encouraging him to freely express the pure passions of his heart, and helping to shape his desire to contribute to Goodness, Truth, and Beauty.*

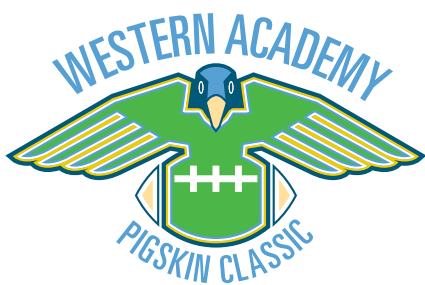
– Kermit & Elizabeth parents of  
**Jake Moreau (2014),**  
Texas A&M, Corpus Christi

*Western gives boys the confidence not to second-guess themselves and always do what is right. Western Academy is a place where your son can reach his greatest potential and become the virtuous man he was always meant to be!*

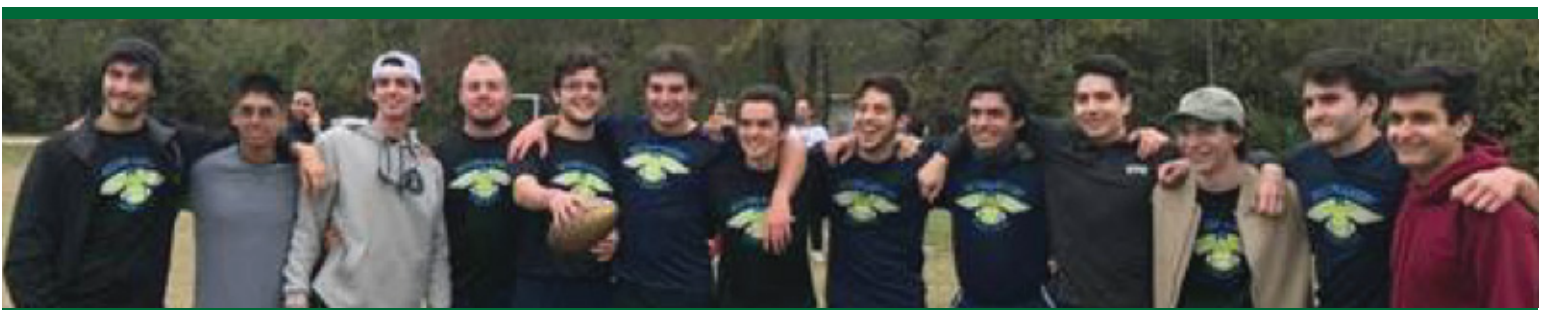
- Carlos and Elizabeth parents of  
**Carlos Cerda (2014),**  
Benedictine College, KS.

Rohan Aggarwal ('18) Family in honor of Shalini (1971-2017)  
Thomas Armentor ('14) Family  
Nicholas Ballew ('17) Family and Grandparents  
Brooks Brickley ('14) Family  
Jimmy Broussard ('17) Family and Grandparents  
Jett ('15) and Joseph ('17) Bush Family  
Joaquin Calvillo ('17) Family  
Matthew Christopherson ('14) Family  
Will Coolidge ('16) Family  
Ben Cramer (Old Faculty)  
Stephen Dunne ('12) Family  
Nicholas Favoriti ('17) Family  
Jake Frizzell ('17) Family and Grandparents  
Christopher ('12), Anthony ('14) and Andy ('16) Gosselin Family  
Pablo Granados ('17) Family  
Joseph ('13), Jacob ('15) and Nicolas ('17) Gutierrez Family  
Anton Horak ('14) Family  
Noah Huckaby ('14) Family  
Kyle ('12) and Nathaniel ('15) Johnson Family  
Ross Jones ('16) Family  
Peter LeBlanc ('16) Family  
Joe Rick Madden ('18) Family  
Jose Carlos ('14) and Felipe Javier ('18) Martinez Family  
Charles Martin ('17) Family  
Nicholas ('12), David ('13) and John ('18) O'Bar Family  
Luke Pelletier ('13) Family  
Chase Picheloup (15) Family  
Stephen Rocha ('15) Family  
Matthew Saye ('17) Family  
Kyle Smith ('12) Family  
Gabriel Vauthey ('12) Family  
Luis Ignacio ('13), Juan Patricio ('16) and Diego ('17) Vera Family  
Felipe Vilalta ('13) Family  
John Villanueva ('14) Family  
Western Academy Family ('14)

Matching Gifts for the Old Boys Fund:  
Shell, Conoco-Phillips, Chevron



This year's 7-on-7 Pigskin Classic on December 16 featured teams from all six graduating classes (2012-2017), a big dads' team, and a strong faculty team. After several competitive rounds of play, the combined Class of 2012-2013 team defeated the Class of 2015 to claim the championship title for this year's Pigskin. Chris Gosselin (2102) was awarded the golden football as the MVP of the game, presented by Mr. John Rocha who returned from Arkansas as last year's MVP. Well done, boys!



# Thieving Arsonists

*The men of Western, aside from title as Thieving Arsonists, are also known as Rowers On The Sea. Led by our very own southern poet, Mr. Mitchell Thomas, our faculty barnessed together a humble volume of original poetry by that very title. Each person is a rower on the sea of life, striving toward a final and good end. While on the journey, one finds struggles and hardships, but also friendship, wisdom, and peace. Filled with insightful reflections on the smallest to the grandest of things, this collection of verse has the power to surprise and delight the reader. Best of all, it comes from the minds of our very own faculty who have put pen to paper to reveal what is true, good, and hopefully beautiful.*



## JOHN CREECH

Born in Torreon, Mexico, we to the U.S. at age two and grew up just down the road in Nederland, near Beaumont. I came to Houston to attend the University of St. Thomas where I received a BA in philosophy with a minor in Literature and Classics. After graduating, I taught 9th and 11th grade Literature at St. Thomas High School, leaving after two years to enter a doctoral program in philosophy at Rice University. Eventually, the demands of supporting a family pulled me away from my philosophy studies and so returned to teaching, this time at St. Pius X where I taught Latin for four years. Although feeling called to teach, concerns about providing for my family led me to seek more lucrative employment. I entered law school at the University of Houston, and practiced in healthcare and regulatory law in Austin for five years. While not particularly fond of practicing law, finding out about Western Academy drew me back to my true vocation as a teacher. I jumped at the chance to become one of its founding faculty. Moving back to Houston, I volunteered as part-time teacher for Life Science and Latin. Upon Western's second year I was hired full-time and continue to be grateful for the opportunity to teach at such an outstanding place. Now in my 8th year at Western I still marvel at my good fortune of being part of a dynamic and enriching community of students, families and teachers and being able to contribute to Western's unique educational endeavor. Western has been so much more than a job. It has been great godsend not only as a unrivaled placed to pursue my teaching vocation but also for my entire family, which includes my lovely wife, Stephanie, my three boys, Ben (a new 3rd grade Green Jay), Dominic (7), Paul (5) and my three daughters, Mary (23), Annalise (2) and Josephine (6 months). When not teaching, herding small children at home and assisting my wife with her homesteading projects of gardening and raising egg-chickens, I enjoy brewing beer, woodworking, camping, fishing, and raising and slaughtering meat rabbits.



## ISAAC BLOCK

I was born in the Bronx and grew up in New Mexico, the son of two converts (from Judaism and Protestantism), and the eldest of seven. I began flying sailplanes before I drove cars, taught by an aged instructor who had learned to fly from Orville Wright. My love for the outdoors was fueled in part by summers spent backpacking in the Pecos wilderness, at times in camps directed by U.S. Special Forces personnel. In 2006, I convinced Colleen to marry me (despite a somewhat unsuccessful first date flying), we now have six children, with two boys enrolled at Western.

I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Pure Math from the University of New Mexico and an MA in Philosophy from the University of St. Thomas, where I am currently writing my doctoral dissertation. I also have a pontifical Masters in Sacred Theology (STM) from the International Theological Institute located in Austria. In Austria I taught English and catechism at the Language and Catechetical Institute to students from former Soviet-bloc countries, and even enjoyed working a summer camp in the Czech Republic. I have taught a variety of philosophy classes at Lone Star College and the University of St. Thomas as an adjunct professor.

I have been teaching at Western Academy since 2011, and have taught middle school Science, Latin, Math, and lower school Art and Natural History. I particularly enjoy my Natural History classes, an important part of the curriculum that distinguishes Western Academy from other schools, in part by putting boys in contact with the outside world. I consider it a privilege to work with a cadre of faculty that take seriously both their own and their students' spiritual and intellectual development, with colleagues who are filled with intellectual curiosity and enjoy reading and discussing books, articles, ideas, poetry, music, and art.



## DANIEL CALLAHAN

Born and raised in Northern Virginia, I am the fifth in a family of fourteen. I went to The Heights school in Maryland from 3rd to 8th grade. Having then a desire to go to high school alongside my sister, I transferred to a diocesan school in Virginia called Bishop O'Connell.

For college, I attended Belmont Abbey in Charlotte, North Carolina. I earned my B.A. in English literature, competed in Division 2 wrestling all four years, and most importantly, met my fiancée, Anja. We will marry in December of 2018. My first year out of college, I crossed the globe to volunteer at an all-boys boarding school in Tanzania for a school year. There, I enjoyed waking up each morning in a new and strange land, listening to massive rainstorms crash down on the tin roofs, working alongside Tanzanian Teachers, as well as learning the native language, Kiswahili. I even got fluent with the village slang which I used to converse with the villagers. Just a few months afterwards, Western Academy offered an internship and a chance to teach boys alongside an impressive faculty.

To me, what is most attractive about Western is its intimate scope and size which fosters a deep rooted human fellowship among faculty and students alike. By scope and size, I refer not only to the relatively small number of students and class sizes, and the primary focus on the liberal arts, but also the open yet manageable landscape of campus, where boys are free to play, roam, wrestle, ramble and grow. Whenever I walk from the faculty kitchen to my 4th grade classroom during school days, it gives me great pleasure to have jovial conversations with every boy I encounter. Though only five or so of these brief exchanges occur per day, by the end of the year I am always delighted when I realize how much better I have gotten to know a great number of the boys.

It is with deep gratitude and excitement that I enter my third-year of teaching at Western Academy. It is another opportunity to mold the hearts and minds of another doughy batch of 4th graders!

## Seed of Wisdom

By Alex Hoff

*A seed, small and safe, absorbed in earthen darkness.  
Splitting, shoots forth headlong toward unknown ground.  
Striving, grasping, pushing, out and upward.  
Drawn by light above and life newfound.*

*Braking Free yet bound by nature still.  
The sapling sallies sunward in the breeze.  
And busy branches broaden o'er the soil.  
Until fair shade is found beneath its leaves.*

*And such is wonder like the seed within.  
When souls so young and yearning do behold.  
A spark which lights the inner flame to know.  
And outward striving, grasping, do they grow.*

*Shall all who seek become a leafy tree?  
Only those who, blindly, beg to see*

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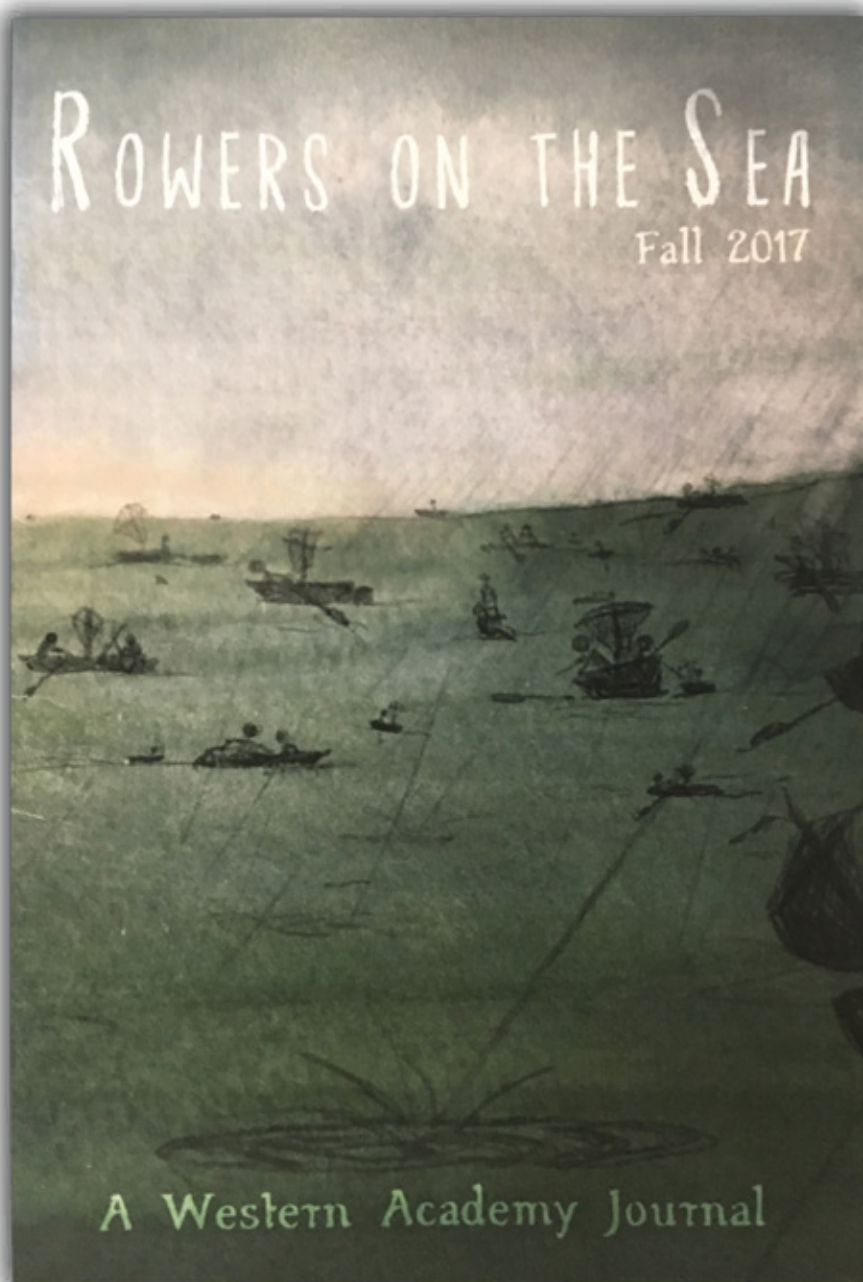
## A Shoeprint

By Mitchell Thomas

*There it was, the shoe print made twenty five  
years earlier, the one Daddy said not to make.  
But I was thirteen. It was summer. I was bored  
and restless from sitting in trees beneath indifferent  
clouds. My own coming life so unbearably distant,  
enduring the monotony made flesh in the drone  
of cicadas, I made a mark in defiance of my  
confinement to that sleepy, Mississippi town.*

*The miles were traveled, the days were burned.  
The first kiss, the prom, the graduations, the marriage,  
the children, all the awaited milestones accomplished.  
Here I stood, once again, the town still sleepy and  
the cicadas still droning and I wondering quietly over  
that mute mark of passion and the impossible distance.*

The men of Western, aside from their title as Thieving Arsonists, are also known as Rowers on the Sea. Led by our very own southern poet, Mr. Mitchell Thomas, our faculty harnessed together a humble volume of original poetry by that very title. Each person is a rower on the sea of life, striving toward a final and good end. While on the journey, one finds struggles and hardships, but also friendship, wisdom, and peace. Filled with insightful reflections on the smallest to the grandest of things, this collection of verse has the power to surprise and delight the reader. Best of all, it comes from the minds of our very own faculty who have put pen to paper to reveal what is true, good, and hopefully beautiful.





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