



## OLIVERIAN

**Dear Oliverian Parents,  
Students, and Friends,**

SEPTEMBER REOPENING!

We are reviewing applications for fall term and already have enough commitments for a solid September enrollment quite a bit earlier than usual. This is very encouraging and we are super excited to finally have students back on campus! Pike is lonely without you. We will use the relative quiet of this summer to prepare for your return. This preparation is well underway and includes campus maintenance and upgrades, exciting programmatic improvements, and--of course-- a thorough infection protection plan.



Our infection protection plan is based on CDC, NEASC, and NHDE/NHDH best practices and will include testing, social distancing, staff use of masks, low-density programming, daily staff and student evaluation, daily disinfection protocols, dining room Safe-Serve and infection control measures, physical plant upgrades (e.g. plexiglass barriers, disinfection stations, hands free towel dispensers and trash cans, et cetera), strict traffic control, and many other measures. Our location and relative isolation is a great advantage once students are cleared and admitted.

Feel free to contact Barclay MacKinnon at 802.384.7126 or [admissions@oliverianschool.org](mailto:admissions@oliverianschool.org), or me at 303.898.5792 or [wlaughlin@oliverianschool.org](mailto:wlaughlin@oliverianschool.org) for more details.

FREE SUMMER PROGRAM

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, even with the strong fall interest most families are opting to forgo distance learning this summer. Many, though, have requested some form of distance support. We think summer support is a great idea for all of our families so that everyone starts the new school year feeling supported, connected, and excited.

So instead of charging just a few families for summer school, we have decided to offer a free student and parent support program to all families who enroll for fall term. This is in lieu of a full summer program. While it is a bit radical to offer a free summer program, we feel very good about this investment in our families.

Once formally registered for fall term (**contact Barclay Mackinnon at 802.384.7126 or [admissions@oliverianschool.org](mailto:admissions@oliverianschool.org) to sign up**), families will have full and free access to the following services:

### **Returning Students**

Weekly from June 29 - August 14:

- Mentoring session (1 x 30 min, by appointment)
- Student virtual hangout (1 x 60 min, scheduled, Zoom or phone)
- Academic office hours to support completion of spring credits (1 x drop in session, scheduled, Zoom)
- College counseling (1 x shared drop in session, scheduled, Zoom)
- Parent coaching session (1 x 30 min/family, by appointment, Zoom)
- Parent peer support group (1x 60 min scheduled, Zoom)

### **New Students**

Weekly from June 29 - August 14:

- Mentoring session (1 x 30 min, by appointment)
- Student virtual hangout (1 x 60 min, scheduled, Zoom or phone)

Weekly August only:

- New student meet and greet (1 x 60 min, scheduled, Zoom)
- New parent peer group (1 x 60 min, scheduled, Zoom)

LETTER

Dear Oli Family:

When my grandfather was 18, walking the shipyards near his home in Oakland, California, he saw a hulking, steel-hulled Australian square-rigger named Alta unloading timber for a year-long, round-the-world voyage. He immediately signed on as crew, ran home to grab his dunnage, kissed his mother goodbye, and was soon sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge toward the open ocean. Now, 102 years later, I am reading his journal.

I am reading it partly for perspective. Perspective as we navigate this world of masks and distance and shutdowns and daily death counts. I wonder, how did my grandfather, and those around him, navigate the war and influenza-hammered world of 1918? What was it like to live through the double tap of a world war that killed 20,000,000 people and a pandemic that killed 50,000,000 more? Did they struggle just to get up each day? Did they board a ship to flee the terrors of a lethal world? Did they retreat from each other, eye foreigners with suspicion, avoid ports of call, and assiduously evade risk?

Not really, it turns out.

In fact, there is only one mention of the war in his journal and no mention of the pandemic. His focus instead was on learning the complexities of Alta's rigging, improving his boxing, seeing kangaroos, writing, taking photographs, getting to know his diverse shipmates, and thoroughly exploring every new port of call. The hundreds of pages of notes he recorded of his shipmates' conversations indicate that they were kindred in their hunger for experience. Life on a square rigger did not mitigate risk in any way; it was dangerous work and my grandfather and his shipmates knew this and seemed to relish it. The Alta sank on its very next voyage, in fact, with all hands lost.

Maybe the ubiquity of death had a distilling effect on life, making it sweeter, stronger, more intoxicating. It was clear to me while my grandfather, "Poppy," was alive and, again, now, as I read his journal, that his time "before the mast" was not about running away from death, but toward life in defiance of death. His lifelong appetite for adventure, creativity, and connection, it seems, were born of catastrophe.

Reading Poppy's journal gives me hope that these times, too, will yield more good than bad, more creation than destruction, more connection than isolation, and more life than death. It reminds me of something else I learned from Poppy when I was a little boy following him through his orchards with wheelbarrows of manure--shit makes things grow. He would have agreed, though he might have asked me to phrase it a little differently. But then again, he was a sailor.

Like my grandfather's shipmates, my crew on the S.S. Oliverian has only seemed more alive, creative, connected, and adventuresome in the face of global threat and uncertainty. In just a few months, under significant duress, they invented a distance version of boarding school--complete with therapeutic support and a recreation program--that actually works. They orchestrated a virtual graduation that may have been the most intimate, moving graduation I have witnessed. They are planning a grand reopening for September that will not only be safe, but innovative too--hopefully our best fall ever.

When so much has been uncertain, we have clung to simple certainties--our love for our families, each other, and you. And, so, it's been a remarkably joyful, creative, connected adventure, despite the rough seas. I look forward to the day, very soon, when you can climb aboard and join our happy voyage in person again. We miss you!

Warmly and hopefully,

*Will*

Will Laughlin, Head of School/CEO  
Cell: (303) 898-5792  
Email: [wlaughlin@oliverianschool.org](mailto:wlaughlin@oliverianschool.org)

STAY CONNECTED:



The Oliverian School, PO Box 385, Pike, NH 03780

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