

# Do you have any ideas to help me design my cover?

FOR THE



TIME!

How do you design a yearbook cover that is creatively stunning, widely popular among the student body and reflective of the year it is published? Add the fact that it is the 100th anniversary of your school and you have the dilemma that was presented to the yearbook staff of Bret Harte High School, Angels Camp, CA last year.

I had the opportunity to talk to adviser Amber Pappé Reynoso about this very thing at Yearbook by the Lake, a summer camp for yearbook staffs, held at Lake Tahoe by Herff Jones Sales Professionals Joan Selna and Sara Cowen. Amber is a yearbook veteran approaching her eleventh year as an adviser.



WHERE DO YOU START  
IN CREATING A COVER?

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The cover can sneak up on you. We generally begin developing a look for the entire book as soon as we have a theme, which can be as early as June, prior to the coming school year. We start by taking a look at the types of covers we have had in the recent past so as to avoid repetition within the senior cycle. The look for the book is confirmed by midsummer and we solidify the finished cover by October.



WHERE DO YOU “HUNT” FOR  
DESIGN ELEMENTS AND LOOKS?

A

You never know from where an idea is going to come. We use magazines, art books, advertisements, professional brochures and books on design. We look for elements that clearly begin to define the theme and concept of the book. The ideas we glean from outside materials give us the inspiration to begin our own development and design.



WHO DO YOU WORK WITH DURING THE SUMMER  
TO CREATE THE “LOOK” FOR YOUR COVER?

A

While the entire new staff works during the close of the school year to develop the theme, only the editor, the assistant editor and myself work on creating the look for the cover. We begin hunting for elements that tie everything together and then we bring our ideas to the table and begin a discussion about the theme concept and how the look of the book and the cover will reflect that.



DO YOU EVER USE A PROFESSIONAL

## Q TO HELP CREATE THE COVER?

When we want a look that is beyond our technical skill level we have a Herff Jones plant artist develop an element of the cover. We have had one book that was student art – to this day it is a beautiful piece. It had the type of staying power good art should have. The art was so professional looking that it has held up over the years as being one of our favorite covers.

## Q ARE THE SCHOOL COLORS AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR COVERS?

We are not tied to using school colors every year; we don't necessarily limit the design process. On the year of our 100th anniversary we did think the school colors were appropriate and we used purple and gold as an important part of the total look for the book. You really have to know your school and your students. We try not to give up what we want to make the school happy, but we do consider the students our customers.

## Q HOW DOES THE BUDGET FIGURE IN?

I really consider the cover an important part of the book development and a crucial part of book sales. I am prepared to spend money on the cover and endsheet. If the design and material calls for more money than what we have allocated in the past, we make decisions to raise money or to save money on the inside of the book to keep a beautiful cover.

## Q WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT CREATING A GREAT YEARBOOK COVER?

After 100 years, we know we are never going to create something entirely brand new, but we do begin each year with the intention of creating an innovative cover. In our school archive there are books going as far back as 1906. Each one is a treasure; the covers of the old books have some very cool elements. In looking at the books, it was easy to see how the covers reflected the era and time in which they were created.

Samples of Bret Harte High School's covers through the years





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