

A Note from the Editors

Washington Ross (2020)
Savannah Waymer (2020)
Editors In Chief
As the decade comes to a close, we wanted to take a moment to look back on what happened this year and this decade, to possibly predict for what this decade will be known. We often separate the culture of the twentieth century in the United States by decade, indicating each decade had a distinctly different

culture. However, people living at the time were likely not aware of how the decade they lived in would be perceived as different from others. Hopefully this issue can give a glimpse of how this decade will be remembered. As many of us will head off to college and then enter the workforce, we will soon be those in charge and capable of changing the world. Look back on the successes and failures experienced

this decade (it certainly has been an eventful one) and from it determine what paths you wish to see continued and what you think should change. Remember not to look back on this decade and this year not only with a focus on the negative. Remember what experiences have brought you joy and have given you hope. Don't let 2019 or the 2010s be remembered a "the bad year" or "the bad decade."

We hope this issue allows for you to take the time to reflect on how much you've grown this decade. To put it into perspective at the beginning of 2010's most the seniors were 7 or 8 years old. I that change from an innocent 2nd graders to senior year, we've changed a lot. Also even looking back at the beginning of this year we were juniors, now that we are seniors there are times that we can see where we have

grown a lot. We hope that you enjoy our issue of reflection and that you enjoy what remains of the 2010s.

A Decade of Resistance

Caedmon Kollmer-Dorsey (2020)
Staff Writer

Zora Neale Hurston wrote that "There are years that ask questions and years that answer them." This decade contained both.

In the political sphere, this decade asked the people of the world if we would continue to accept the status quo. This was a decade not of passive acquiescence to the political tides, but active resistance to the way things had always been done.

As the years since 2010 progressed, we saw larger and larger waves of resistance rise, crest, and then break on the rocks of government repression or inertia. The Arab Spring shook the Middle East in the early years of the decade, and led to substantial regime change in some countries. But in others, violent repression of dissent has only strengthened authoritarian regimes, with many, having overthrown one tyranny, found it only replaced with another.

In the UK, young people took to the streets against a rise in university tuition implemented by a Conservative-led government that seemed guided by greed. In this country, the Black Lives Matter movement demanded that this nation, and particularly its police and justice system, treat black people as

fully human - with worryingly limited support, and often even less success.

In the later years of the decade, protest movements against anti-democratic governments and elite greed have sprung up in many countries including Algeria, Chile, France, Indonesia, Lebanon, and Spain. In the United States, the most popular active politician is a democratic socialist running for president on a program of political revolution and wealth redistribution. Clearly, the answer to whether we like the status quo is a resounding no.

Having answered the question of this decade, we must look to the next. We don't like the present order. In this next decade, we will have to decide what we want to replace it with. Support for change is one thing, but once the people promising it obtain power, we have to start to be specific about what we want.

Luckily, most Americans agree on what we need to do. Substantial majorities agree on the need for higher taxes for the rich, government-guaranteed healthcare, and a Green New Deal.

The 2010s showed that the people can be in the driver's seat of history. The 2020s will ask them where they want to take the car.

Clara Shapiro Morton (2022)
Staff Writer

As the year comes to a close, a few people deserve special recognition for their impact on 2019. Activists, politicians, protesters - only a few of the many who inspire and represent change. We can only hope that these individuals (and more) continue to have an impact in 2020.

Greta Thunberg

The 16 year-old Swedish activist has inspired millions of people worldwide to demand climate action of the world leaders. She has given powerful speeches at climate conferences all over the world, and started the movement FridaysForFuture, where students skip school on Fridays to protest for climate justice. She was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, and has empowered and inspired student activists to stand up for what they believe in and protect their future.

Meghan Rapinoe

A star midfielder on the US Women's National team, Megan Rapinoe followed Colin Kaepernick's lead by kneeling and refusing to sing the national anthem before her games. She uses her platform to speak out for the rights of women and the LGBTQ+ community, absolutely refusing to go to the White House to meet Donald Trump when she and her team won

the world cup. She and some of her teammates filed a gender discrimination lawsuit against the US Soccer Federation, demanding that the women's team receive the same pay as the men's team for international games. And while at age 34, her soccer career may be coming to a close, her fight for human rights is far from over.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is one of the most talked-about politicians in America. As a young hispanic woman from the Bronx who ran on a very progressive campaign, she is wildly popular among democrats, especially millennials. Her platform supports Medicare For All, a Green New Deal, a federal jobs guarantee, and the abolishment of ICE. "We are fighting for an unapologetic movement for economic, social and racial justice in the United States," she explained. Arguing again and again about the urgency of these issues, she has made a big impact on the United States 2019 political scene.

Hong-Kong Protestors

While these protests are composed of thousands of people, not just a single individual, what the protestors have set out to do is dangerous and beyond brave. The Hong Kong protests began in June to fight against plans to allow extradition of criminals to mainland China under some

circumstances. Protestors feared this would decrease Hong Kong's autonomy and the rights of their citizens. Protests have grown increasingly violent, with several deaths and many protestors arrested. The bill was withdrawn in September, but it was "too little, too late." The protestors are now also demanding amnesty for their fellow protestors who have been arrested, a formal inquiry into the alleged police brutality that caused multiple deaths, and Hong Kong citizens' right to vote. This type of persistent activism in the face of violence has had a massive impact in 2019.

The Whistleblower

Perhaps one of the biggest events in the US government in 2019 is Trump's impeachment inquiry and hearings. For this, we must credit the whistleblower, a CIA analyst (who will remain anonymous) responsible for a 9-page memo proving Trump's abuse of power in an attempt to use Ukraine to get himself reelected. While this memo was most likely sent out of duty, not out of protest, the whistleblower has been attacked by Trump supporters and right-wing politicians. Among people who had a large impact on 2019, the whistleblower is pretty high up on the list.

2019 Shoutouts

In This Issue

Reflection on Scrunchies?
Pg. 2

Sudoku
Pg 2

Reflection on DC Statehood.
Pg 3

Promise on 2020
Pg. 4

Reflection on Commercialism and Christmas

Katrina Tracy (2023)
Staff Writer

Every year, as soon as Thanksgiving is over, all the stores decide that it is Christmas time! Even before Thanksgiving, there are holiday stations on the radio, nutcrackers in the CVS. Of course, there might be some Hanukkah and Kwanzaa stuff mixed in, but mostly everything is red and green and screaming Santa. But Christmas is also the time for confusion. Wasn't Christmas a religious holiday? How did Santa get involved?

Christmas started as a purely religious holiday for Christians celebrating the birth of Jesus, though no one actually knows his "real" birthday. Eventually people started celebrating it on December 25, possibly because of the Roman festival of Saturnalia that happened around this time. Regardless of why the Church picked this date, it was started as a day for worship and prayer, not necessarily gift giving and candy canes. Sure there were some stories about St. Nicholas, Kris Kringle, and Father Christmas floating around Europe, but they were never associated with the day.

This is where Coca-Cola comes in. The Christmas we have today is a Western spin on these friendly figures.

Starting in 1920, Coca-Cola began ad campaigns featuring Santa Claus, showing him enjoying a beverage, sometimes with children staring adoringly at him. Over the next 50 years, they continued to shape the holiday season, with ad campaign after ad campaign, each starting earlier than the next, until every store was crazy not to run a Christmas ad in November.

At the end of the day, Christmas is not really a religious time anymore, and perhaps that is a good thing. It is a time for celebrating winter, and spending time with family, giving gifts. But just think about how this all came to be, and if you have time, google those Coca-Cola ads, and reflect on what November has come to—Christmas hype time.

Reflection on Freshman Year

Gabriel Kraemer (2023)
Staff Writer

The majority of the freshman at School Without Walls had an eighth-grade class larger than their ninth-grade one. Around half of the entire class went to Alice Deal Middle School, which had 1,507 students as of the 2018-19 school year. That means a class at Walls is around three-tenths the size of a class at Deal. Walls calls this approach a "student-centered environment" in order to create a "rigorous college-preparatory, humanities program", but is it the right approach?

Contrary to the bulk of the Walls' students, School Without Walls seemed massive to me compared to my middle school. My eighth-grade class was only 30 students, so Walls is five times the size of any class I've had before. Though many of my classmates have variously described School Without Walls as "calm", "quiet", and "orderly", at the beginning of the year, to me, Walls was chaotic and crowded; and part of the reason I came to Walls was because of the larger size — because of the increased clubs and other opportunities.

Usually, I think that the larger a school or community is, the more clubs and student opportunities there are; so does that

change what we think of Walls' smaller approach?

Walls is supposed to be an alternative, rigorous, and academic option, an option with more opportunities, just a second choice — so is it counterintuitive that the second choice be smaller? Does a smaller choice really yield fewer options than a larger one? In my experience, it seems so; but that might be more due to the unusually small nature of my previous school than the size of the larger one.

The goal seems to me to be to achieve the balance between the opportunities offered by a larger school and the increased focus on individual students that can only be achieved in a smaller school; the question is exactly where on the scale that balance is.

Why scrunchies?

Lilly Shaw (2023)
Staff Writer

Nowadays, scrunchies are a top hit. Everyone from parents to children to stuffed animals and water bottles wear scrunchies. Some despise them, while others love them. VSCO girls are commonly associated with the hair ribbon in fashion back in the 1980s. Loved by some and hated by others, scrunchies are common fashion statements years later in 2019.

Why? For starters, movies and shows such as All The Boys I've Loved Before, and Heathers, revolves some parts of the plot around a scrunchie. Take the Netflix movie, All The Boys I've Loved Before, the scrunchie involved in the movie provides insight into the love and battles the main characters fight between themselves. Viewers who support the movie search for merchandise similar to that of the movie, and with the scrunchies heavily highlighted on TV, it's expected for audiences to decide on their new hairstyle: scrunchies.

Fashion also plays a key role in the return of scrunchies. Old fashioned culture and fashion such as the shoe brand converses have begun to make new fashion trends. As they were once popular, today's culture finds interest in scrunchies once again.

A new culture, VSCO, also plays a role in the trend in scrunchies. A key characteristic of VSCO, are the scrunchies, specifically loads in their hair and on their arms. Sometimes, the hydro flask has scrunchies to even more clearly show the extent of being VSCO. People who want to be in with the fashion trends, often wear scrunchies to show popularity.

Personally, I think scrunchies are just a hair adornment. Comfortable and fashionable, they are worth wearing, not just for popularity or to show support of shows and movies. Since scrunchies do not stick to my hair, they are easier to wear than regular hair ties, and more fashionable, too. Even though they are associated with VSCO girls, they are still comfortable for everyone to wear and enjoy as part of today's fashion.

Sudoku

6	3	2		8	7		9
	9				4		
	5					6	
		4	3		7	8	
5							1
		2	9		1	5	
	4						3
		1				6	
7	6	4		5	2		8

Fill all the blank squares with the correct numbers. In a 9 by 9 square Sudoku game:

* Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order

* Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order

* Every 3 by 3 sub-section of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9

At the End of the Decade, Liberalism is Doing Just Fine

Alexis Mundle (2021)
Editor

*They're so resigned to what their
fate is
But not us (No never)
But not us (Not ever)
We are far too young and clever
Under the terrible burden of
destiny laughing as a young man
laughs*

A resurgence of far-right political power and authoritarian policies throughout the world - especially in Western Europe, America, India, China, and parts of Africa and Latin America - has led some to sound the death knell for liberalism.

This is certainly an attractive idea in many ways, and not just because pessimism so often feels easy and smart. Democratic institutions and values are eroding as lessons sealed with blood into the minds of the postwar world are slowly forgotten. We see a rise in hate crimes against Jewish people in Europe, Latino and African-American people in America, and Muslim people worldwide, often accompanied by systemic abuses perpetuating inequality and white supremacy. A crushing, palpable apathy has bored into our perception of politics.

But the Earth we will be spun into at midnight in a few short weeks is not the one our parents inherited. For all liberalism's lost elections and quagmired policies, its values are what we take with us into the new decade. The idea of respect for - and of a responsibility to - all life is radically liberal. So is equality, and majority rule with minori-

ty rights, and the primacy of a government's institutions over the individuals who represent them - and in much of the West, and increasing swaths of other parts of the world, these values are now entrenched, ubiquitous. Even the regressions forced by a certain brand of terrified, angry conservatives are couched in the language of these very same liberal values - and people are growing aware of this hypocrisy.

What's more, the left has come out from under the table. New leaders like Greta Thunberg, Jacinda Arden, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez are standard-bearers for a new and unafraid progressive movement. Ideas like single-payer healthcare and heavy carbon taxes, bolstered by rigorous studies and generational changes, are gaining new traction in America. The new liberals are proud, not just of their identities or politics, but of their humanist, pragmatic, urgent and driven leadership. Their ideas are popular and they are not afraid to make them happen.

God, if we are to believe Nietzsche, has been dead for only a little more than a hundred years. The majority of people are not atheists, but secularity is the law of the land for perhaps six out of seven billion people, and we need, I think, some kind of guiding star as we adjust to this brave new world. The limits of human societies are not endless or unreachable, and at times we appear as far as we have ever been from a new level of humanity. But the core of liberalism still feels right and worth the fighting for - and it is still a force to be reckoned with.

Noa Schleifer (2021)
Editor

DC may be a relatively small city, but the political implications and news here are eventful and impactful. This year, I started to cover local news and politics more often for the Rookery, which opened up my eyes to DC government legislation and other political decisions in this city. In 2019, DC has faced a new referendum on statehood, as well as new legislation and corruption in local government. The coming year will also hold new challenges for the nation's capital, but at the moment, we can reflect on what has happened this year. Hopefully, more of us can be informed about what is going on around us politically in DC in the coming years, because though DC is small, the impact it can have should be large.

Statehood

There has been a long history of discussion of the status of the District of Columbia and its residents, whether through voting rights or statehood itself. In the past few years there have been various different statehood initiatives, including the referendum proposed by Mayor Muriel Bowser in 2016. That year, 86% of DC voters voted to advise the council to approve the proposal that would make DC the 51st state. In 2017, DC's congressional delegate, Eleanor Holmes Norton, introduced a bill that proposed DC statehood to the US House of Representatives, which was subsequently introduced to the Senate. This year, the Democratic leadership of the House declared their support for DC statehood legislation, and passed H.R. 51. On the other

hand, in a recent Gallup poll, 64% of Americans said they opposed DC statehood, and the Republican majority (who have consistently opposed the addition of a 51st state of DC) of the Senate, which are not positive for the DC statehood campaign.

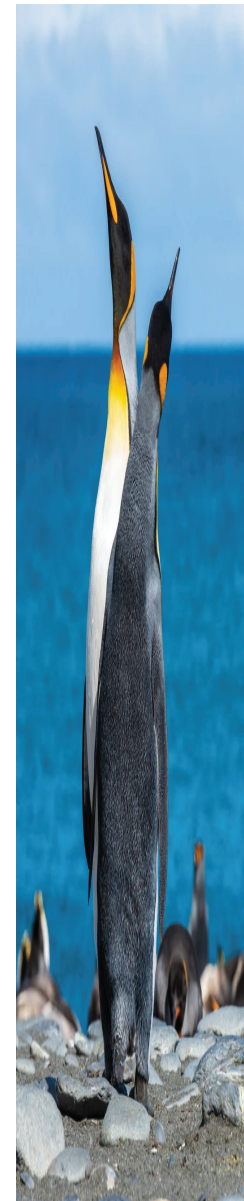
Nevertheless, during the introduction of the DC statehood bill in the House of Representatives, there was an outpouring of support for the cause within Washington DC. Mayor Bowser paid for an ad campaign highlighting the lack of representation faced by DC residents, which was circulated on television in various states, including Kentucky and South Carolina. Bowser also led a parade of 51 DC veterans and flew 51-star American flags in a show of support for the statehood bill. Various politicians, including Senator Elizabeth Warren, spoke out in favor of the bill as well. The Washington DC Admission Act of 2019 states that if admitted as the 51st state, the area would be known as Washington, Douglass Commonwealth, in reference to the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who lived in DC. The territory of this state would encompass all of the District except select areas surrounding monuments and federal buildings. It would be represented by two senators and one member of Congress, as it has a population of 700,000. DC's population is larger than that of Wyoming and Vermont. Notably, the Democratic voting majority in DC (only 4 percent of residents voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 elections) would make an impact on the majority held in Republican-held Senate, which is the cause for widespread Republican opposition to proposals for statehood.

Most importantly, admission of DC as a state would give voters here real representation in Congress, as our one delegate is not able to vote on bills, and because currently Congress can override bills passed by elected DC officials.

Democratic representatives in the House, Delegate Holmes Norton, Mayor Bowser, and others have expressed hope for the passing of this bill in the Senate. Other politicians have declared stances in opposition, and President Trump commented that DC statehood was unlikely to occur. A similar bill failed on the House floor almost 20 years ago, so it has surpassed past expectations. Either way, the bill faces an uncertain future, which could significantly alter our city, if it remains just a city for much longer.

Comic

Erin O'Neill (2022)
Staff Writer



The Rookery

Editors in Chief

Savannah Waymer

Washington Ross

Senior Editor

Adam Burch

Tillman Peele Lanyi

Noa Schleifer

Editors

Brendan Klein

Alexis Mundle

Senior Writers

Emilia Bebic

Nicholas Cassol-Pawson

Maddie Enggen

Staff Writers

Lily Cason

Indigo Domenici-Mills

Toni Jackson

Liya Johnson

Alejandro Jorge

Caedmon Kollmer-Dorsey

Gabriel Kraemer

Minnie Koppenheffer

Maggie Modovsky

Bella Moore

Clara Shapiro Morton

Erin O'neill

Lilly Shaw

Manuela Silva

Staff Adviser

Shakir Ghazi

Who are we?

The Rookery is an independent student newspaper of School

Without Walls High School (www.swwhs.org), located in Washington

D.C. The Rookery works to serve as the voice of the School Without

Walls community and report on accurate and newsworthy stories that pertain to the SWW community. The Rookery is located in room 404.

Our advisor is Shakir Ghazi, who can be reached at shakir.ghazi@k12.dc.gov.

Our office is open to all students that would like to contribute to the paper every Tuesday morning at 8:15 in room 404. If you are interested in joining or submitting an article, art work, etc., please contact Washington Ross at washington.b.ross@gmail.com, or Savannah Waymer at scwayfls2@gmail.com or email us at theswwrookery@gmail.com.

Reflection on My First Experiences at Walls

Indigo Domenici-Mills (2023)
Staff Writer

My first fourth months at Walls have been very interesting. I've met new friends and reconnected with old ones. I've expanded my academic horizons and social circle. The beginning of the year has been full of new ideas.

Going into this year, I held mixed feelings of excitement and nervousness. I'd had not enjoyed middle school very much. Teachers and administrators abused collective punishment, and students disrupted the learning environment. I was uncertain of what to expect from a School Without Walls High School experience, and I worried that high school would be another four years of the grueling grind.

However, my experience exceeded my expectations. At Walls,

I've come to enjoy many classes such as biology, math, and history. I've enjoyed freedom and academic rigor, both of which have contributed to a positive experience as I started high school.

From an academic standpoint, my first experiences were very interesting. I was pushed in many different subjects, such as humanities, math, and biology. I had to learn effective time management, and set my priorities straight.

I learned volumes of facts, history, and literature along with valuable skills, like annotation, efficient note-taking, and proper MLA formatting. I also learned individual and group organization strategies. My first term at Walls was packed with essential skills and practices that will continue to help me through

the rest of high school and life afterwards.

I also had to adapt to the freedom of SWW. Free lunches and frequent phone use were surprising adaptations I learned to use responsibly. Balancing freedom and responsibility is a big challenge for me in this transitional period.

The transition from middle school to high school has had its challenges, but was an overall rewarding experience. I look forward to seeing what happens next.

A Note on 2019 and a Promise for 2020

Manuela Silva (2021)
Staff Writer

As 2019 comes to a close, there are many topics and events to reflect on. 2019 has been a difficult year, one that at times has felt insanely long, yet when Snapchat memories bring up a "one year ago today", reminds us all that in fact 2019 has gone by extremely fast.

If one thing characterizes 2019, it would be that it has been a year full of growth through connectedness. In and out of school, this year has not only shown us what we already knew; that we live in an increasingly connected world, but rather that we have to learn to use that to our advantage.

It can be scary to think that

Washington Ross
Editor in Chief

Wrap on your scarf
Pull up your gloves
Tighten those laces
Bundles up of love

Fit on your hat
Slip your hoodie on top
Throw on a jacket
Off to school in a hop

Sway 'round your weight,
Fight your stiffening knees;
Shuffle not to slip-
As you brace 'gainst the breeze

we're always a second away from impulsively contacting anyone, or everyone, we know, and that the idea of disconnecting is increasingly unrealistic, but if we take away those concerns, we're left with a plethora of resources and opportunities that had previously been inaccessible.

2019 has carried on the legacy of the years past in that people are increasingly mobilizing and movements are gaining traction not through word of mouth, but rather a connected online presence. For example, in 2019 alone, there were many climate strikes in September, the Extinction Rebellion Rallies, and the Indigeonous Peoples March in January, that happened on the same day as the March for Life. Not only does social media allow these marches to gather such

large crowds and participation, but it also allows their message and outcome to be spread further. We are increasingly able to connect with and learn about what happens to people in every corner of the earth whom carry very different opinions and thoughts than us.

As we enter 2020, my new year's resolution is to listen for more perspectives. Given the increased opportunity to learn of what occurs all over the world to it would be ignorant not to pay attention. So as 2020 starts, it is only right to continue the process and pathway of learning and growth that comes with having increasing access to more people with experiences very different from our own.

Winter Walk

Cover your chin,
Just a bit more to go;
Shame that your laces loosened
Set your burden pack behind.

Drag off your gloves,
Ignore your dried crackled skin.
Tie up your boots;
And do what you undid.

Breathe your hand,
Warm off the frost;
Admire the clouds,

Of warmth that you lost.

Look just ahead,
There's your warm sweet hut;
Enter in there
And slam the door shut.

Throw off your jacket
Your gloves, scarf, and hat.
Then bundle them on
It's too cold for that.

Pause

Washington Ross
Editor in Chief

Let us stand frozen in time.
Let these moving shapes that surround us become a blur.
Let my thoughts become as still as my self.
Let me find piece in these moments of melt.