

New Affordable Housing Plans

Emila Bebic (2020)
Senior Writer

On Tuesday, October 15, Mayor Muriel Bowser’s office released a report proposing the expansion of affordable housing into affluent neighborhoods in D.C. It outlines the locations of 12,000 new units, part of a larger goal that Bowser has set of constructing 36,000 new units by 2025. D.C. is one of the first cities to set numerical goals for expanding affordable housing. The wider distribution of locations is intended to combat the inequitable distribution of housing, described in the report as “racially discriminatory and exclusionary”. The report defines affordable housing as costing less than 30 percent of a household’s income for households that earn under 80 percent of the city’s median income of \$97,050 for families or \$67,950 for a single person.

Currently, a disproportionately large amount of the city’s affordable housing is concentrated in certain lower-income areas, mostly east of the Anacostia River. The plan proposes adding a smaller number of units to these areas, while wealthier neighborhoods such as Woodley Park and Capitol

Hill will receive a higher proportion of units compared to the amount that they already have.

According to officials at the District’s Office of Planning, the decision was motivated by hearing from thousands of residents who believe that the current distribution is unfair. It is a wise move for Bowser, who has been criticized in the past for supporting development projects that raise housing prices for long time D.C. residents. Given that gentrification in the District is displacing low income residents at one of the highest rates in the nation, Bowser is working to make affordable housing a significant part of her platform. Although Bowser previously suggested raising commercial taxes to fund the construction of more affordable units, the Office of Planning has not yet specified the cost of the project or a detailed plan for its implementation.

While the proposal certainly represents an advancement in the District’s housing policy, there are challenges to its implementation. The cost of incentivizing developers to construct the kind of housing necessary will be high for the city. Space is also limited in some areas where the construction of units is proposed.

Capitol Hill, for instance, is set to receive 1,400 new units, but zoning restrictions severely limit the capacity for large scale development. Further, the plan is facing criticism from NIMBYs, named for

their response of “not in my backyard” to suggestions of expanding affordable housing. Their concerns are often driven by stereotypes, with many claiming that the initiative will increase violence and crime in their neighborhoods. Other concerns include the potential worsening of traffic or overcrowding of schools.

The proposal for expanding affordable housing into affluent neighborhoods certainly holds promise for improving the equality of housing in the District. Due to the lack of a concrete plan for implementation and additional challenges, however, it remains to be seen whether the goals laid out will actually be achieved.

Choosing the Nobel Peace Prize by Anticipating More Peace

Manuala Silva (2022)
Staff Writer

Every year in the beginning of October, the Nobel Committee announces the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate that they have spent months carefully selecting. As stated by the Norwegian Nobel Committee, the committee that decides on the winner of the famous prize; it spends months looking at possible recipients, creating reports and building biographies on the candidates, and then unanimously votes on the recipient. The process of choosing a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate begins in February and ends in the first week of October. This year the Committee announced on October 11th that they had chosen Abiy Ahmed Ali as the recipient of the 2019 prize.

Abiy Ahmed Ali is the Ethiopian Prime Minister who, after taking over a

country plagued by war at their border with Eritrea, worked to secure peace at this border after years of no peace talks. In his first one hundred days in office, Ali freed all political prisoners and ended most government-run media censorship. Additionally, half of the Prime Minister’s cabinet are women, a significant and symbolic step in the fight for gender equality in Ethiopia.

Due to Ethiopia’s diverse population and multiple clashing ethnic groups, there are often violent ethnic rivalries that can cause displacement of peoples. However, Ali has worked hard to promote unification and peace at a time when these issues seem to only be growing larger. While some may be skeptical of the Committee for having chosen Ali for the prize, the Committee writes on their website, (Continued on page 4)

The Value of the “Ellen Question”

Tillman Peele Lanyi (2020)
Senior Editor

After the recent Democratic presidential debate, moderator Anderson Cooper faced wide backlash for his closing question about Ellen DeGeneres.

A week earlier, DeGeneres, who is gay, had come under fire for attending a Dallas Cowboys game with former President George W. Bush, who opposed gay marriage while in office. DeGeneres

responded to the criticism on her television show, explaining that “I’m friends with a lot of people who don’t share the same beliefs as I have.”

On October 15th, Cooper asked the candidates to describe a friendship with someone different than themselves. Shortly after the debate, candidates and commentators took to social media to blast Cooper for spending time on what they saw as the vacuous “Ellen Question” instead of something more policy-related.

Julían Castro criticized the moderators for avoiding questions about more important, substantive issues like climate change, housing, or immigration. Yet Castro failed to acknowledge that the “Ellen Question” also addresses a major, substantive issue: the rise of American political hatred, and what ought to be done about it.

Castro in particular

really seemed to misunderstand the purpose of Cooper’s query. He gave a brief, vague response about how he had learned from “people older than me,” then transitioned into a criticism of DeGeneris, arguing that “we can be kind to people and also hold them accountable for their actions,” which is reasonable, if not especially profound.

The other candidates didn’t do much better in their answers.

Kamala Harris, Beto O’Rourke, Cory Booker, and Tulsi Gabbard all took the easy way out, naming Republican colleagues in Congress. Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders, and Amy Klobuchar all named John McCain. Tom Steyer gave a bizarre non-answer, naming a fellow Democrat he met in South Carolina. Only three candidates seemed to actually understand the purpose of the “Ellen Question.” (Continued on page 2)

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Democratic Candidate Preview:

Tulsi Gabbard

Clara Shapiro Morton (2022)
Staff Writer

Tulsi Gabbard's campaign proudly claims that their candidate will protect and invest in issues that middle class Americans face every day. A decorated War Veteran and the first American Samoan and Hindu Congresswoman, Gabbard's platform is very similar to some of the other democratic candidates, in that she plans to stop fighting what she states are wasteful wars and invest that money in affordable healthcare, higher-paying jobs, and a green and sustainable future for America.

While only 38 years old, Gabbard has as much experience in policy and politics as many of the presidential candidates years her senior. With a Hawaiian Senator (Mike Gabbard) for a father, and a mother on the Hawaiian board of education, she co-founded an environmental non-profit, called the Healthy Hawaii Coalition as a teenager. It focused on educating children about protecting Hawaii's environment. In 2002, she was elected to Hawaii State House at 21 to become the youngest female ever elected to the state legislature.

Gabbard has voluntarily deployed twice to the Middle East (Iraq in 2004 and Kuwait in

2008), and in 2007, she graduated from the Accelerated Officer Candidate School at the Alabama Military Academy as the first woman in academy history to finish as the distinguished honor graduate. At present, she is a Major in the Hawaii Army National Guard.

Gabbard graduated from Hawaii Pacific University in 2009 and was elected onto the Honolulu City Council a year later. In 2012, she earned a

spot in the US House of Representatives. A few months later, she was elected vice chair of the Democratic National Committee (DNC).

When she launched her campaign for presidency in February of this year, Gabbard's platform focused on ending the war in Syria and investing that money in affordable housing, Medicare for All, environmental action and renewable energy, gun control, and criminal justice

reform, among other programs. However, she was immediately confronted with instant criticism over her past action against the LGBTQ+ community. In the early 2000s, Gabbard worked for her father's organization that worked to pass measures against same-sex marriage in Hawaii and supported conversion therapy. Gabbard has since apologized, and is a member of the LGBT Equality Caucus in the House, co-sponsoring pro-LGBT

legislation such as the Equality Act. Even so, her past action against this community have left voters wary.

Gabbard's campaign also came under intense scrutiny due to her 2017 visit with Syrian leader Bashir al-Assad. Gabbard insists her sit-down meeting with Assad was a necessary dialogue to resolve the Syrian conflict, while others denounce her for voluntarily meeting with a man who had killed over 500,000 people, and criticize her for not having informed top democrats that this visit was to happen. While these issues may have prevented her from gaining enough support to qualify for the September debate, Gabbard qualified for the debate on October 15th, with just about 2% in the polls. During her relatively infrequent speaking opportunities, Gabbard managed to express certain agreement with President Trump about pulling the troops out of Syria, although she said the best way to approach that would have been through negotiation. Gabbard also attacked the hosts of the debate, CNN and the New York Times, for the way they portrayed her in the media, and it seems as though her ratings in the polls may have dropped further after the debate, as watchers were generally disappointed by her performance.



Tulsi Gabbard (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Does Columbus Day Mean Anything?

Adam Burch (2021)
Senior Editor

When Christopher Columbus weighed anchor from southwest Spain in 1492, he didn't know what he was going to find. Reading an old manuscript that had misinterpreted ancient units of measurement, he had become convinced that the Atlantic Ocean was much smaller than it really was, and would be a much shorter path to the lucrative trade found in Asia. Of course, had the Americas not been in the middle of his planned route, his expedition would have ended in mass death by dehydration. The Americas were, however, and the result would change the world forever.

Columbus' "discovery" of a population that modern historians peg at about 100 million people may have created America as we know it, and it certainly filled Western European coffers, but it also marked the start of the near-eradication of Native American life. It's estimated that up to 95 percent of Native Americans lost their lives in the century following Columbus' arrival because of warfare, slaughter, forced labor, and malnutrition along with the spread of new diseases. Columbus himself was one of the more vicious conquerors; while seeking wealth on the island he named Hispaniola,

his forces caused the deaths of nearly all its one million native inhabitants.

Columbus hasn't always been celebrated - he died estranged from the Spanish crown, which once had him arrested for misadministration and other abuses of power. However, he eventually became a hero to Italians facing discrimination in nineteenth-century America, who emphasized his prominence in the creation of an "American identity." In 1892, President Grover Cleveland declared a national holiday on the 400th anniversary of his landing, after the brutal lynching of eleven Italian-Americans in New Orleans, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt later declared it an annual holiday.

The issue of Columbus' legacy today is, of course, considerably more complicated than it was in 1892. Some American states and cities - South Dakota was the first, in 1990 - have stopped celebrating Columbus Day, sometimes replacing it with a day dedicated to Native Americans. Some critics have argued that replacing Columbus Day is an oversimplified approach to confronting the racism that often underlies American history. In Mexico, for example, Columbus Day is celebrated as "Día de la Raza" ("Day of the Race"),

which celebrates the interaction between Europeans and Native Americans that created the Mexican cultural and ethnic identity. Others complain that condemnation of European conduct towards Native Americans too often focuses on Spanish conquistadores, as opposed to English "settlers" (whose association with the United States, the argument holds, makes them less popular to examine critically). More simplistically, another common sentiment is that the carnage caused by Columbus, however regrettable, was necessary for the advancement of a certain kind of civilization. Of course, Native American societies in the somewhat unobliquely-named "pre-Columbian era" had also realized impressive cultural, political, and technological accomplishments. Christopher Columbus managed to secure for himself a place in our history books and our national debate. Whether he deserves any more than that is a much harder question.

"Ellen Question"
(cont.)

The first to actually answer the question was Elizabeth Warren, who discussed her family. Two of her three brothers, she said, were Republicans, but that didn't make a difference in their relationships. Andrew Yang recounted a truck ride he took with a Trump supporter - although the story ended with him convincing the Trump supporter to support his candidacy. And Pete Buttigieg drew on his military service: "People who were radically different from me, different generation, different race, definitely different politics... we learned to trust each other with our lives."

A sports fan might scream their hatred for a bitter rival during a big game, but they walk out of the stadium shoulder-to-shoulder with the other team's fans. Even enemy soldiers in World War I played soccer together in no-man's land on Christmas Day. To stand for something and fight for it is of paramount importance; but to take the abstract concept you oppose and apply that same hatred to the individuals on the other side does nothing to advance your cause. Anderson Cooper gave the Democratic candidates an opportunity to share their image for a more pragmatic America, focused on progress, not animosity. That was the value of the "Ellen Question."



Photo by Shaun Meintjes on Unsplash

Democratic Candidate Preview:

Pete Buttigieg

Maggie Modovsky (2020)
Staff Writer

With the debate out of the way, and Democrats are still vying for your vote, now is truly time for voters to narrow down who they will back in the 2020 Election. Since they are all Democrats, you may wonder, what is going to set a candidate apart and make them a strong opponent to Donald Trump? This is where Pete Buttigieg, the thirty-seven-year-old mayor of South Bend, Indiana, comes in.

On the surface level, of course, Buttigieg is different in that, if he were to be elected, he would be the first openly gay American president. However, what makes him the most appealing and different candidate of this pool is that he is just the opposite of what so many Democrats are trying to be: a political game piece engineered to defeat President Trump. While many other candidates, and rightfully so, have focused on why Trump should be beat, Buttigieg has taken this opportunity to shine serious light on the issues that are most pressing in this nation.

Buttigieg has grown up with many of the problems that younger generations face today: His campaign website notes he “belongs to the generation that came of age with school

shootings, the generation that provided the majority of the troops in the conflicts after 9/11, the generation that is on the business end of climate change, and the generation that—unless it takes action—stands to be the first to be worse

off economically than their parents.” Buttigieg’s primary issues are climate change, affordable health care, and gun control. On climate change, he pledges to make the United States a net-zero emissions country by 2050. To do so, he would implement

a realistic Green New Deal, tax carbon emissions (and direct the money to middle and lower classes as rebates), and support the communities most affected by climate change.

He has many comprehensive plans on his campaign website which are too detailed to even summarize, which just goes to show that he has a true understanding of the steps that are necessary for change. On his push to invest in black America, his “Douglass Plan” is a ten part process that he says are the “bold steps toward fulfilling long-broken promises of true equity.” Buttigieg wants to ameliorate racial disparities in access to health care, as well as work towards criminal justice reform and promote the celebration of black history and its inclusion in education.

Pete Buttigieg stands apart from the field, both in his age and ideas. He sees a future where everyone is equal no matter their background or circumstance. There is no telling where the debates will go, or if Buttigieg will even make it past the primaries, but what we know is that this election will be unlike anything we’ve seen before.



Pete Buttigieg (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Freshman First Month Experience

Indigo Domenici-Mills
(2023)

Staff Writer

In general, freshmen have had positive first month experiences at Walls. Many students I interviewed have said that they enjoy the school, have good teachers, and like the greater amount of freedom they have at Walls.

One of the main things students have enjoyed in their first month is the freedom and trust of School Without Walls. In stark contrast to middle school, we can eat lunch off-campus, have no formal bells, and are trusted enough to have our phones in class. Freshmen have especially enjoyed off-campus lunch. Several students I talked to said it was one of their favorite parts of the school, along with the kindness of fellow students. Nobody who I talked to said that other students had been mean to them, and many freshmen said they have made new friends.

However, freshmen have not enjoyed the workload at Walls. Several pointed out that in middle school, they could usually do their homework in class. However, at Walls almost all class time is used by teachers, meaning that homework must be done outside of class. This change can be a major adjustment for students, and it forces us to hone our time-management skills. Adapting to the styles of teachers has been another part of the freshman experience. While many freshmen said they like their teachers, some have pointed out that it has been hard to get used to the different teaching methods of their teachers.

Overall, many of the freshmen at Walls have enjoyed their first month at their new school.

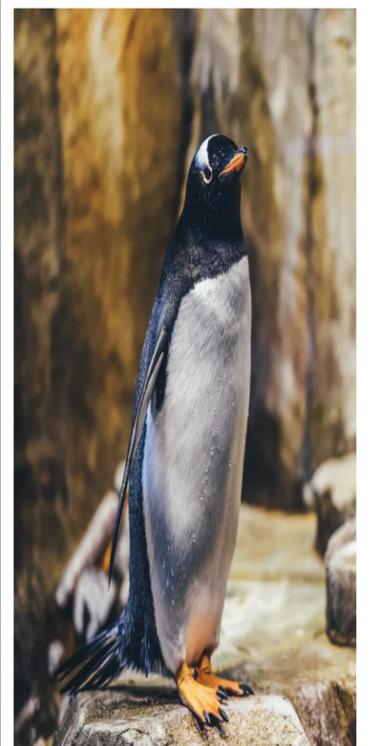


Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

Open Streets in DC

Noa Schleifer (2021)
Senior Editor

What would a city without cars look like?

On Saturday, October 5th, a stretch of Georgia Avenue in Northwest, from Missouri Avenue to Barry Place, was closed to car traffic from 8a.m. to 5p.m. Open Streets DC, a District Department of Transportation program, hosted various events up and down the street and opened the area to pedestrian, bicycle, scooter, and skateboard traffic. These few hours offered a window into a city with more spaces dedicated to people, not cars. However, some took issue with the Open Streets event, citing disruptions to regular traffic and inconveniences for commuters.

Open Streets raises questions about sustainability, city planning, and how to navigate those facets of a changing city and a changing climate. The Open Streets concept started in Seattle, which closed a public parkway to car traffic in 1965. The weekend closure of Beach Drive in Rock Creek Park, initiated in 1981, follows this model. Washington is one of four cities in the United States with more than one Open Streets initiative, along with Seattle, New York,

and San Francisco.

Although there are a variety of Open Streets concepts, most in the U.S. follow the Seattle model, which entails a publicly funded parkway

closure with a focus on bicycle access. However, the recent Open Streets DC event, which involved the closure of a major urban thoroughfare, breaks from that model.

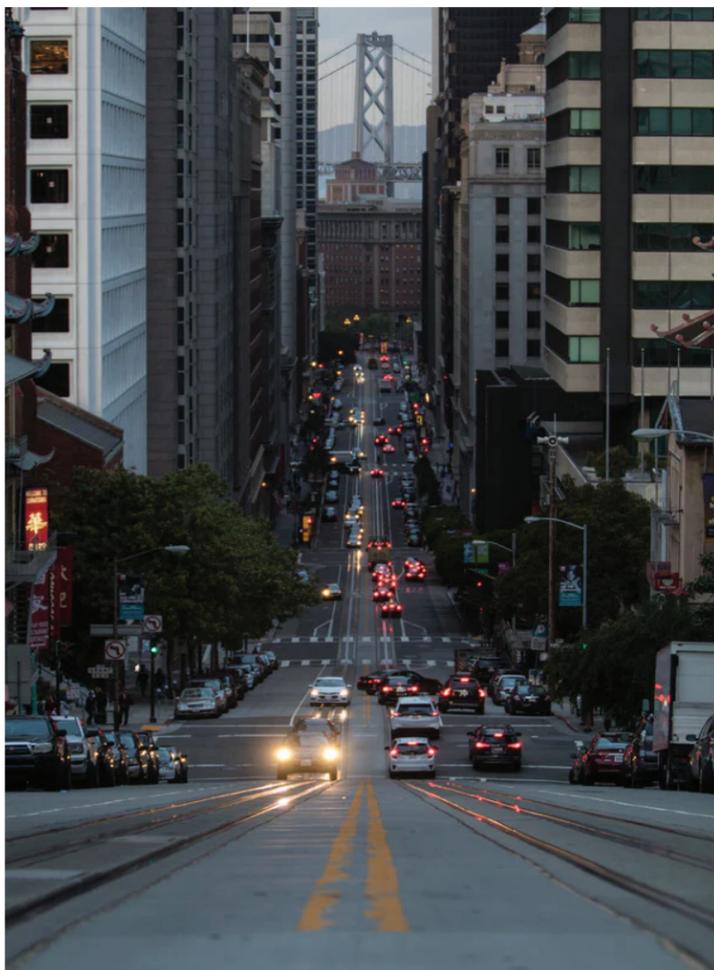


Photo by Alex Radelich on Unsplash

Since a 2012 report by Street Plans Collaborative and the Alliance for Biking & Walking, even more Open Streets initiatives have begun across the country. Those more similar to D.C.’s recent event, which include supporting activities sponsored by local organizations, have also become more popular in recent years.

Still, there are downsides to consider. Closing a large section of a busy street causes disruptions to vehicle traffic. Bus routes need to be changed and drivers must take alternate routes, disrupting commutes. Open Streets initiatives can also be oblivious to the fact that many people do not have the privilege of enjoying these public events on weekends; in fact, Open Streets DC has been referred to as an explicit symbol of gentrification.

The question remains: do the benefits of Open Streets outweigh the drawbacks? As we become more conscious about sustainability and urban management practices, we must also remain aware of their role in the context of a city with a variety of competing needs and interests.

Federal Reserve Data Shows Seriousness of US Inequality Crisis

Caedmon Kollmer-Dorsey
(2020)
Staff Writer

In recent years, the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots in the US has become a hot button issue in the press and among politicians. On the campaign trail, this inequity has been in the forefront of public discussion since the beginning of Senator Bernie Sanders' candidacy in 2015. The Federal Reserve, the USA's central bank, recently put out a series of statistics called Distributive Financial Accounts. What they essentially show is the distribution of wealth in the US since 1989. The results are shameful; according to a simple statistical analysis of the data by economist Matt Bruenig the top 1% have gained \$21 trillion in wealth since 1989. The bottom 50% lost around \$900 billion. To put this in perspective, the bottom 50% of people in the United States are so deep in debt that they now have a negative net worth while the wealthiest people have more than tripled their wealth.

These numbers are more than surprising, they're evidence of a deep crisis. Our

current system is based on the assumption that by making the economy favorable to the wealthy, everyone can benefit even if they're not gaining as much. The saying used to explain this is "a rising tide lifts all boats". On this assumption, lawmakers from both parties have cut taxes on the wealthy, allowing them to pay lower rates of income tax from wages and from stock ownership. According to the prominent economist Emmanuel Saez, the top 400 families actually paid a lower effective tax rate than the bottom 50% last year. This is supposed to lead to growth that helps everyone. But it hasn't.

Most of the wealth the 1% bring in is from stock ownership - not from actually working. They take a cut from every dollar brought in by the workers of companies they own a stock in. So when the government stops taxing that income and returning it to workers in the form of funding for schools, roads, health care, etc. it means that the people at the top keep their money and it does not go back to the rest of society. American workers, who are 80% more productive since 1975, have not only not gained anything from this economic model, according

to these new statistics, they've actually lost \$200 billion.

It's fairly clear from this that something must change about our economic system. It simply is not sustainable to have more and more people sink into debt while a few profit from the hard work of others. Luckily, there are several policies available to help fight the imbalance. Whether it's a 7-8% wealth tax on fortunes over \$32 million proposed by Bernie Sanders or a new model of company ownership where workers are guaranteed a cut of the profits, there is a vibrant debate in the US today about how to curb (or end) the excesses of capitalism. With luck, this problem can be solved soon.

Nobel Peace Prize (cont.)

"it is now that Abiy Ahmed's efforts deserve recognition and need encouragement." While there is no doubt (that Ali has already done a great deal for Ethiopia's peace, there is no doubt that there is still so much to do, and the mere act of recognizing what he has already done encourages not just him, but others in Ethiopia to do more as well.

It is also important to bear in mind the importance of Ethiopia on a global scale. As stated by the World Bank, Ethiopia's close proximity to the Middle East and the powerful markets there gives it a strategic advantage. Ethiopia also has the largest increased economic growth, that can be attributed to the newfound peace in Ethiopia. As stated by the United Nations, now that Ethiopia and Eritrea have found peace and have resolved their 20-year war, they can move on to focusing on their development goals. Notably, in a speech given after signing the peace deal with Ethiopia, President Afewki said that now that the war is over, Ethiopia and Eritrea's "focus from now on should be on developing and growing together... Now is the time to make up for the lost times."

The Rise of Vaping

Lily Cason (2020)
Staff Writer

The global e-cigarette market is estimated to be worth \$19.3 billion, up a staggering \$6.9 billion from 2014, according to the BBC. The U.S. provides the largest demand for such vaping products, with a market worth around \$7 billion.

The sudden rise of vaping has come with a host of marketing and health controversies. Companies selling vaping products, the most popular being an e-cigarette company called Juul, have been accused of false advertising and for targeting teenagers. Juul, and many others like it, have marketed their products as a way to stop smoking. The high potency of nicotine in Juuls, especially when compared to other e-cigarettes, makes Juuling highly addictive. Many e-cigarette companies focus their ad campaigns only on the flavors of the products rather than the addictive aerosol inside, making vaping seem harmless and fun. Along this same vein, companies have been criticized extensively for their flavor choices, especially sugary-tasting candy flavors that seem especially attractive to middle and high school age consumers. (Continued on page 5)

Forever 21 Bankruptcy Shows a Change in Overall Consumer Preferences

Clara Shapiro Morton (2022)
Staff Writer

On September 29th, 2019, fast-fashion clothing chain Forever 21 filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy. This specific chapter of the Bankruptcy Code allows for reorganization of a corporation. Forever 21 follows an ever increasing line of fast-fashion chains, that focused on trendy affordable apparel appealing to young adults, into bankruptcy filings. Charlotte Russe, similar to Forever 21, filed for bankruptcy in February. Unfortunately for these brands, consumer tastes have changed drastically over the last decade, and their business model no longer appeals to the young women of Generation Z.

Over the last decade, fashion influencers on social media have increased in popularity and significance, rising almost to the level of quasi-celebrities. With the ability to influence the consumer choices of the majority of the Gen Z'ers, many of the influencers have begun to promote sustainable and more ethically manufactured products. In their messaging, many influencers berate fast-fashion chains for their poor product quality, disregard for sustainability, and the miserable working

conditions for overseas workers.

The reorganization would be a perfect chance for Forever 21 to make their style more lasting, their manufacturing more ethical and sustainable, and their business model more

tempting to the new generation of shoppers. However, Forever 21 plans to shut down stores across Europe, focusing more on stores in the US and parts of Latin America, and they do not plan to alter their brand signifi-

cantly. They are failing to take advantage of the opportunity to reorganize and reestablish the organization in a way that best fits new consumer preferences. Linda Change, Executive Vice President of Forever 21

announced, "With support from our key landlord and vendor constituents, we are confident we will emerge as a stronger, more competitive enterprise that is better positioned to prosper for years to come, and we remain committed to delivering the fast fashion trends that our customers have come to expect from Forever 21."

Fast-fashion is going out of style. Sustainable, ethical brands are taking their places in the spotlight. Thrifting is becoming increasingly popular, and people with limited access to good thrift stores have initiated the rise of online secondhand sites like Depop, Poshmark, ThredUp and the RealReal. As the consequences of past generations' unsustainability become more apparent, new generations are innovating, and creating new ways to prove that there are more than enough clothes to go around.



Forever 21 (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

The Syrian Problem

Nicholas Cassol-Pawson
(2021)
Staff Writer

So far, Donald Trump's presidency could be described as a series of unmitigated disasters. But as he faces impeachment for allegedly requesting damaging information from Ukraine about Joe Biden's son Hunter, Trump is creating larger messes than ever before. In fact, Trump recently committed one of the most serious blunders of his presidency. Trump's decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria is leading to a potential ethnic genocide of the Kurdish people living there.

The Kurds are an ethnic minority group spread across several Middle Eastern countries. For the past 100 years, there have been rising tensions between the Kurds and the Turks in the region. The Kurds worked with the US in the fight against ISIS, which has allowed them to take control of a large area of Syria on the border with Turkey. Recently, as the strength of the Kurdish military has been increasing, Turkey is beginning to look at the Kurds as more of a threat - right on their border no less. For the past year or so, Turkey has wanted to invade the territory that the Kurdish people were living in, but has been put off by the presence of American forces in the region. Last December, Trump threatened, via Twitter, to pull our troops out, as he claimed the battle against ISIS was over and it was a waste of American military strength to have troops deployed in the region. This threat unleashed a wave of bipartisan backlash - several of his top aides even resigned in protest because of it. In the end, however, nothing came of Trump's tweet and the situation blew over. At the UN's September General Debate, the President of Turkey, Tayyip Erdoğan, repeated his wish of invading Northern Syria to set up a buffer zone between the Kurds and Turkey. Fewer than four weeks after Erdoğan's mention of this wish, President Trump announced a plan to withdraw all of the US's troops from the Turkey-Syria border region. This was widely seen as a green light for a Turkish invasion of the area and was widely condemned the world over, as many world leaders believed it was likely to lead to an ethnic cleansing of the Kurdish people and possibly a resurgence of ISIS.

If I have to point to one instance in which Trump really went off his rocker and made decisions that are most likely to lead to a crisis, it has to be this situation in Syria. He claims that ISIS has been defeated, which is considered to be untrue, but even if it is so, he should be thanking our Kurdish allies.

What does he do instead? He betrays them.

For a long time, the US has been considered a strong military power and a reliable ally too. By turning his back on the Kurdish people, Trump is showing other countries that they should not trust the US to protect them. The Kurdish forces have now even allied with Russia and Iran, two of the US's largest foreign adversaries, as a way to keep themselves alive, something that the US should be doing instead. By betraying our allies, Trump communicates that the US should no longer be a trusted to uphold promises. The removal of troops also helps to strengthen hostile powers of the US in the rest of the world.

Additionally, since the collapse of ISIS in Syria, more than 11,000 of their fighters have been held by Kurdish forces in detention camps. By abandoning our Kurdish allies as they now need to fight to stay alive, Trump is forcing many of the Kurdish guards of the ISIS prisons to go support troops on the front lines, which weakens the prisons and makes it easier for the detainees to escape. The Kurds themselves have said that guarding ISIS prisoners is no longer their priority. If these thousands of ISIS fighters do manage to escape their prisons, ISIS could resurge. Even if the

caliphate does not become as strong as it previously was, it could mean even more fighting before Trump can once again claim that ISIS has been "defeated." To defeat ISIS again would require the deployment of more US forces to the region - exactly what Trump campaigned against.

Trump's response to Turkey's attack on the Kurds has been poor. After announcing the withdrawal, he faced heavy criticism from Republican leaders and, via tweet, he warned Turkey not to do anything to the Kurds that he "did not like," lest Turkey face economic sanctions. This warning was ignored by Turkey as they knew he would do nothing much about it. Several days after Turkey invaded Kurdish territory, Trump finally imposed sanctions on Turkey. Erdoğan continued his invasion, one of the goals of which was to increase government support in Turkey. In a country with an economy reeling from a whole host of American economic sanctions, the new ones barely make a blip on the public's radar. When Trump withdrew the troops, he knew he could not take back what he was doing, not through sanctions or any other means, short of a full US military intervention.

Trump's withdrawal of American forces from Syria

was a terrible thing to do as it creates a large mess for both the Kurdish people, as they may soon be wiped from the map, and the world at large, as there is a potential for the resurgence of ISIS. But for Trump's campaign, the withdrawal played out well. His approval rating among Republicans, which, remember, was at an all-time low, has shot up after his withdrawal. A new poll shows that the majority of Republicans support his withdrawal of troops from Syria. So, while the US withdrawal created a huge disaster in the region, Trump does not seem too concerned about it, because, at least for right now, he is scoring political points by doing so. However, for the fate of the US and many other parts of the world, the decision to pull American troops out of Syria will be one that shall be rued for a long time and will most likely pan out to be one of the worst mistakes of the Trump presidency.

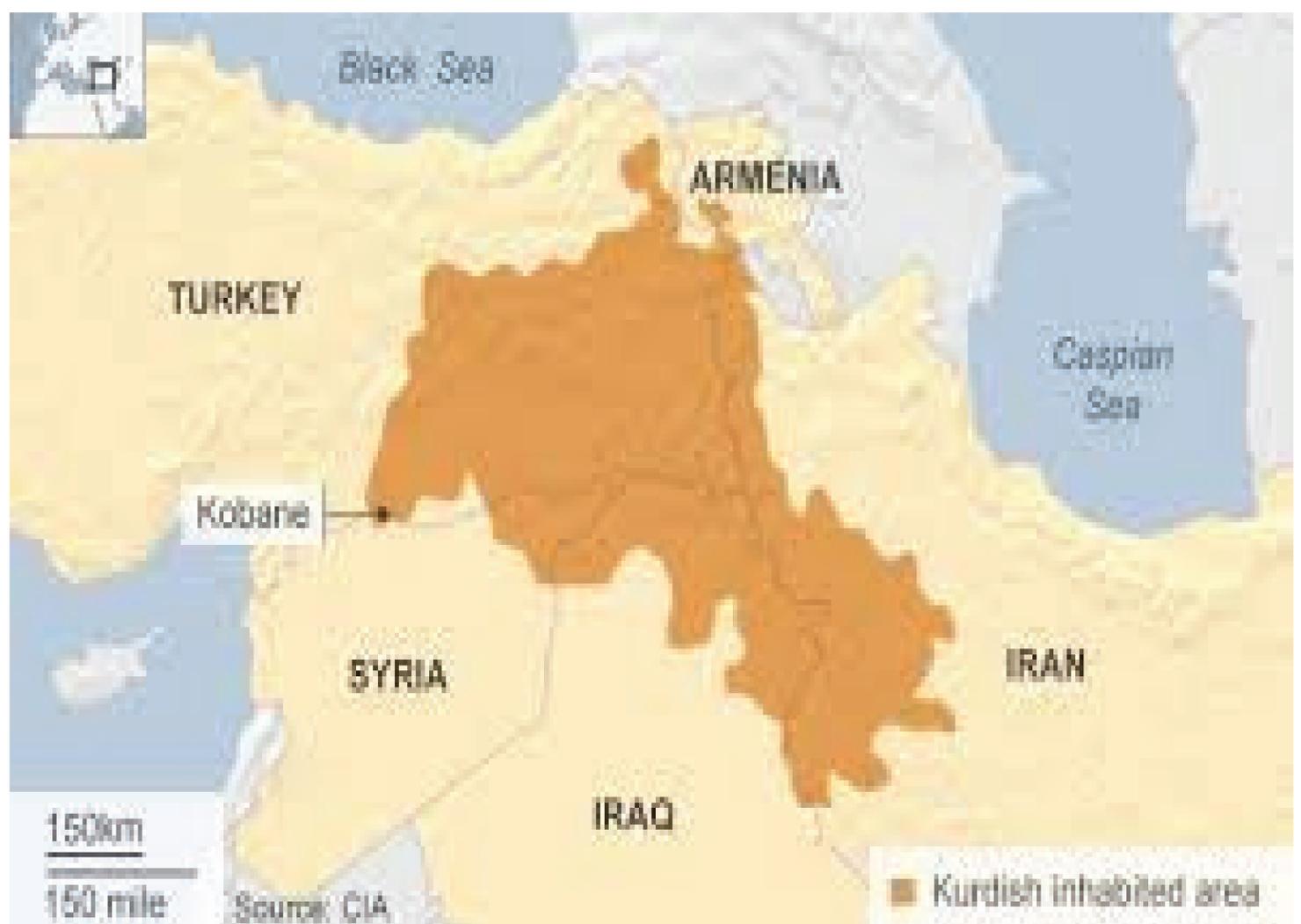
Vaping (cont.)

Another major point of contention around the rise of e-cigarettes is their potential for harm to users' health. Because vaping is a relatively new phenomenon, the full extent of its short and long-term health effects is still unknown. Initially marketed as a healthier alternative to smoking, some ingredients in vapes are turning out to be just as or more damaging compared to those in cigarettes. Recently vaping-related illnesses and deaths have occurred, spurring panic and leading to the creation of new bans on purchasing e-cigarettes. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 33 vaping-related deaths and 1,479 lung injuries have been confirmed as of October 15, 2019. Due to these deaths and hospitalizations, the CDC issued warnings urging people to avoid the use of vape products, especially those containing THC (the psychoactive compound in marijuana).

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the agency in charge of regulating food and drugs in the interest of public health, had no regulatory oversight of e-cigarettes before 2016. As an unregulated industry, many vaping companies used misleading and targeted advertising without informing the public of potential harm from the product. Companies created before 2016 avoided the FDA authorization process. Juuls, one of the largest vaping companies, was created in 2015. Because of the gap in federal oversight, states are starting to take action on their own. On September 17 New York became the first state to execute a ban on flavored e-cigarettes, and more states are following suit.

Map of Kurdish Territory

Source: BBC



Horoscopes

Alejandro Jorge (2020)
Senior Writer

Scorpio: On their deathbed, nobody wishes they'd kept their mouth shut. Leave less unsaid; make your feelings known.

Sagittarius: Struggling? Try a new constructive hobby- go biking, or make art, or listen to music! Beauty in the world is everywhere.

Capricorn: Don't listen to those who disparage your dreams; there is no nobler aspiration than to help others. Add to the world!

Aquarius: Too many people leave feelings unsaid. You must help the quiet make themselves heard.

Pisces: Momentum is a powerful property. Preservation of it is powerful in of itself, but only in changing it does it become truly a game-changer. By changing yourself, you change the world.

Aries: Remember Murphy's Law: you must account for all possibilities. Make the effort to create many options for yourself.

Taurus: Begin with the end in mind. There's an ending for you that is attainable and ideal- take the steps needed to get there.

Gemini: Relationships require effort but they are valuable. In coming times, maintaining relationships will provide a good foundation to getting more done.

Cancer: While the task at hand is hard, many methods exist for accomplishing them. Find one that works for you and make yourself unstoppable.

Leo: You are set from here on out, but before you start your next journey, take time to smell the roses and say goodbye.

Virgo: While you've never enjoyed the adage "less is more", there are certainly times when it applies, and one approaches soon.

Libra: Nobody wins unless everybody wins. This applies to all aspects of life; you believe it in one but you must expand your applications.

Get to Know an Exchange Student: Zlata

Bella Moore (2023)
Staff Writer

School Without Walls is known for its academically driven community, but not so much for the diverse group of exchange students. Most often juniors or seniors, exchange students are able to come to the U.S through a highly selective program that only admits about five percent of applicants. Zlata Semionova, an exchange student from Lithuania, told me about her experience coming to the United States.

Zlata is a junior here at Walls, and is so far is enjoying her stay. Zlata applied to come to the U.S "to get a new experience, I've never, ever been to the U.S before... it's really cool to gain this experience living with a different family and culture." She's only been to Maryland and Virginia, but she plans to go to New York in December. Zlata's favorite place in DC is Georgetown, for all of the stores, and her favorite restaurant so far is Cava. I asked her to compare Walls with her school in Lithuania. She told me "the architecture is really different, this building is more colorful. The teachers here are more friendly, you can find more support here. It was much more formal in my school." She also said that while the assign-

ments at Walls aren't necessarily harder, writing and reading is difficult because she has to do it in English, not her native language. To me, the most interesting thing Zlata told me during the interview was the difference in culture.

To Zlata, "some people are kind of fake here. It's not bad actually, but everyone is always happy and smiling, and Lithuanians understand that you can't be happy twenty four-seven, and that's what is kind of unusual to me." She explained how Lithuanians are more honest about their emotions, and here people try to hide their feelings. "We are not really optimistic or pessimistic, we are just realists" Zlata noted.

Overall, Zlata has had a good experience as an exchange student. She has found everyone to be super friendly and interesting. The only suggestion she has for next year is to assign Walls students to new exchange students on the first day of school. First days are overwhelming, even more so when you don't know anyone and aren't from that country. Upperclassmen that would be willing to show exchange students around would be a huge help.

Toni Jackson (2022)
Staff Writer

Before you question my credibility and taste, I know that "Tall Girl" is a poorly written and the acting is bad. That being said, if you saw the poster of "Tall Girl" and expected a well performed, well written, outstanding film, that is your own fault. The film stars newcomer Ava Michelle, who in real life was kicked off of So You Think You Can Dance: Next Generation at age 15 for her height. At the time she was 5'10. Currently she is 6'1, the same height as her character in "Tall Girl", Jodi. The film also stars Griffin Gluff of "American Vandal", and Sabrina Carpenter of "Girl Meets World".

Since "Tall Girl" came out, this movie has taken a new life as a meme making a satire of the oppression of white women. Countless TikToks have been made featuring the infamous line spoken by the titular "Tall Girl": "you think your life is hard? I'm a high school junior that wears size 13 nikes." Naturally, I had to check it out. Simply put, "Tall Girl" is satire at its finest. At first glance, "Tall Girl" falls under the genre of movies and shows such as "The Kissing Booth", and "Riverdale": movies made by people in their 40s trying to mimic how 'kids

these days sound. But "Tall Girl" has a certain self awareness that those films do not; the main aspect of "Tall Girl" criticized is the premise that in southern Louisiana, a white woman that is of above average height (Jodi) will face more oppression than a black woman (Jodis best friend, Fareena). All of this happens while behind the camera, the films director Nzingha Stewart, is a black woman who undoubtedly was aware of this anomaly. Not to mention the fact that the high school attended by the main characters is entitled 'Ruby Bridges High.' This and so many other quips are what makes the movie awfully good. It has the kind of humor where a character is completely ridiculous, and unlikeable to the point where you can't get enough of it. What is most satisfying is that "Tall Girl" doesn't take itself too seriously, or try to appeal to the masses. It simply exists. I can genuinely say that even with some cringey moments, there was never a moment in this movie where I was bored. For most of the movie I laughed with the film instead of at it. Perhaps Jodi's height is symbolizing a teenagers plight of believing that their flaws are the most important thing in the world, or maybe it points out our own self hatred in loathing the parts of ourselves we can't

Alexis Mundle (2021)
Editor

Founded in 1892 by violinist William Egbert, Ithaca College is a small private liberal arts college located in the city of Ithaca, New York. Ithaca is best known for being a top school for journalism, film, media and entertainment majors. The college is also ranked #8 in Regional Universities North, #5 in Best Undergraduate Teaching (North), #11 in Best Value Schools (North) and has produced successful alumni such as wealthy Disney executive Robert "Bob" Iger and Emmy-award winning actress and television show host Ricki Lake.

Ithaca's campus is fairly small, being only about 670 acres. The surrounding city of Ithaca is on Cayuga Lake and is home to many natural attractions such as Ithaca Falls, Stewart Park, and Buttermilk Falls State Park. For reference, it is roughly 200 miles northwest of Manhattan. The city is also home to a plethora of museums, most famously the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art. Alongside museums, Ithaca's Kitchen Theatre Company and the Hangar Theatre also entertain the city's growing population. Because of the other colleges in the area, such as

Cornell and Tompkins Cortland, Ithaca is said to have a "college town" atmosphere.

With a gender distribution of 57% female and 43% male, the student body is made of roughly 6,059 undergraduate and 457 graduate students. Ithaca requires that freshmen and sophomores live on campus in college-owned, operated or affiliated housing. Student organizations on the campus include those focusing on Pre-Med, Pre-Law, Gay and Lesbian advocacy, theatre, greek life, and numerous academic based clubs. As for sports, Ithaca College is a part of the NCAA III and the Bombers (Ithaca's mascot) have won a total of 15 national titles in five individual sports and seven team sports.

Ithaca College's regular decision deadline is February 1, its early action deadline is December 1, and its early decision deadline is November 1; the application fee is \$60. With an acceptance rate of 70%, the average GPA of a student applying to Ithaca is 3.56, and the average SAT and ACT scores are 1330 and 25.

On average, tuition and fees for attending Ithaca are about \$58,158. Even though it looks a little pricy, don't fret because Ithaca offers a variety of financial aid options; 91% of applying students receive some sort of grant aid (the average is about \$24,170), 19% receive Pell grant aid (averages about \$4,523), and 64% of full-time undergraduates receive federal student loans (averages about \$6,832).

change... either way "Tall Girl" is an amazing rom-com and I support it.

In Defense of "Tall Girl"

Fun Facts

Savannah Waymer (2020)
Editor in Chief

- Instead of pumpkins Jack-o-Lanterns used to be made of squashes, gourds and Turnips.
- Samhainophobia is the fear of Halloween.
- Halloween started as a Celtic Festival called Samhain.
- Halloween is the second largest commercial holiday in the United States.
- Harry Houdini died on Halloween in 1926.

Club Spotlight: Robotics

Gabriel Kraemer(2023)
Staff Writer

"[Robotics club] allows students to learn about engineering in a friendly environment," Ms. Hannah McLaurin said.

"There are a lot of things that this club does," Isabel Mejia-Roberts said, "such as business, management, [and] photography."

"The Robotics Club is a fun extracurricular activity where you can gain and apply STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Math] knowledge in order to compete in robotics competitions," said Mejia-Roberts, who is one of the three student leaders of the club, "Robotics isn't just about STEM. We are a very tight-knit group and have fun all the time."

"I was involved [in robotics] at the school I used to teach at," said McLaurin, who is a co-sponsor of the club along with Mr. Adam Vrooman. "[I] loved watching and helping students learn various aspects of STEM content in real time, so I wanted to continue that when I began teaching at [School Without Walls]."

The Robotics Club competes in FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition events. Around January, things speed up and they try to build the robot that will compete.

"We meet once a week up until build season," Mejia-Roberts said. "During build season we meet every day, sometimes Saturdays too."

The team is mostly student-led. "My role is simply to assist in logistics for meetings and event planning and give guidance for design and implementation along the way," said Ms. McLaurin. "Mr. Vrooman pulls most of the weight as he organizes the funding and registration for competitions." Mejia-Roberts said that the team is mostly made of men. "We would love to have more girls on the team," she said.

The day-to-day activities of the club change throughout the year. "In off-season, students get familiar with using power tools and learning safety protocols," McLaurin said. "In build season, they build and program the robot."

"I became involved because I really like STEM and thought that robotics would be a fun way to explore that field," Mejia-Roberts said. "It is really fun."

And the club always has aspirations. "One major goal we have is to win the [world] championship," she said.

Advice from Upper- classmen: Study Tips

Now that the School year is in full swing, it can be a bumpy road for some of us with studying, so upperclassmen at Walls have provided some advice for us Walls students.

Despite the importance of studying, students should refrain from pushing themselves too hard. Anna Kate Pittman, a senior here at Walls, urges freshmen to "try your best but don't overexert yourself, because you'll lose motivation."

Leaving the task of studying until the last minute can cause unnecessary stress and difficulty focusing. The American Psychological Association has written about how researchers have found that spacing out your study periods over a longer time span will increase the effectiveness of retaining information. "You should always do your homework the night it's assigned," attests Sarah James, a junior.

Distraction is one of the main challenges in focusing on study material. Senior Greer Marshall advises that "sometimes it's really difficult to study at your house, so it can help to study at a library over the weekend." Attempting to concentrate on dense notes or complex definitions is hard enough without the hindrance of clutter or noisy siblings.

Using your phone can also easily break your focus, so try time-management apps such as Forest and Stay Focused to help you resist the urge to check social media.

Calming music is commonly used among students to shut out other noises. Songs with lyrics can be distracting, but instrumental music or white noise can help block out outside noises as well.

Everyone's study preferences are different, and no specific study technique is universally helpful for students. Nonetheless, figuring out which study environment and schedule work best for you, especially early on in your high school career, is vital for reducing your stress surrounding exams.

Try Your Might

Washington Ross (2020)
Editor in Chief

Oh! To find fear under the willow trees.
To hear your heart flutter like wings of honey bees.
You duck and hide from the whooping winds.
This seasoned storm has yet to begin.

No moonlight is there to help or to guide,
Not even the stars could give you some might.
Light your fire if you dare,
But it just might ignite back and burn you scared.

Try to push against the these thousand forces,
You'll find your own powers zapped from its sources.
Twist, turn, jump or spring,
Nothing could save you this Halloween.

At Least I Feel Beautiful

Erin O'neill (2022)
Staff Writer

How I feel when wearing makeup:



How I look:



The Rookery

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Manula Sliva

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.](mailto:shakir.ghazi@k12.dc.gov)

dc.gov.

Our office is open to all students that would like to contribute to the paper every Tuesday morning at . 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 Wayner at scway-flys2@gmail.com or email us at theswwrookery@gmail.com.

Last Minute-Halloween Costumes

Liya Johnson (2023)

Staff Writer

Can you imagine a Halloween evening without trick or treating with your friends, wearing your awesome costume? Of course you can't, because it happens every year! Every year, you have been able to pull off a great (or not so great) costume that maybe you bought or made yourself. But what if something happens? What if you couldn't come up with an idea, or at the last minute your costume was destroyed by your dog (or cat, who knows)? What would you do? Well, I'm glad you asked, dear reader. One thing you could do is wear one of these last minute Halloween costumes.

Here are a few ideas:

- Let's start with a classic: take a white sheet. Poke two holes for eyes near the center to make a ghost costume to put over your head.
- Wear black clothing to be a comfortable vampire.
- Wear high-waisted baggy jeans and a collared T shirt (or any 80's shirt for women). Then paint blood under your nose to become Eleven from Stranger Things.
- If you have a long white dress and can produce the best side buns ever, then maybe you could be Princess Leia from Star Wars.
- Have Beats? Wear them (or any headphones) around a shirt with pinned leaves around the collar to become a beat-around-the-bush costume.
- Glue sponges on your shirt to become self absorbed.
- Put scrunchies around your wrist, wear a puka shell necklace, hop into ugg's (or just boots or birkenstocks), and hold a hydro flask-sksksk to become a VSCO girl.
- Bring a sketchbook to become an artist.
- Follow a make-up tutorial to become basically anyone you want.
- Tape purple or green balloons to your outfit to be a bunch of grapes.
- Wear round glasses, a pair of jeans, and a yellow sweater to be Arthur the aardvark.
- Wear goggles, black leggings and long sleeves to be a scuba diver.
- Or, if you are in a sport, wear your sport uniform with zombie make-up to be a zombie track star or ice skater.
- Use red lipstick and red lip liner to become IT's child.

Whether you use these to create your own ideas or end up really being in a last minute costume crisis, these ideas are funny and (mostly) creative.

Food Review: GRK

Lilly Shaw (2023)

Staff Writer

Buying lunch? If so, check out the GRK Fresh Greek restaurant at District House. GRK Fresh Greek serves salads, pita wraps, and frozen yogurt, among other items. Personally, I recommend the Pita Yeeros wrap with chicken, tomatoes, and GRK sauce.

First and foremost, GRK Fresh Greek has good food. The pita wrap filled with chicken, tomatoes, and GRK sauce was very tasty. Crunchy and warm, it was a perfect lunch to help me last through the remainder of the day. There are also many sides available, such as seasoned fries or Aegean slaw.

Also, GRK Fresh Greek displays considerable cleanliness for a fast food restaurant. Upon first approach, a white and blue sign pops out at you. Later, you notice the clean counters and walls, as well as an organized drink section located under the counter. The food comes tightly wrapped in a blue paper bag. The menu is conveniently located, featuring large print and intuitive layout. I would rate the appearance highly. The service was also good; my food was ready only two minutes after I ordered, with little waiting time.

Next Week in Walls Sports

Sport	Date	Opponent/ Event	Location	Time
Field Hockey	Saturday 10/26	St. James	St. James	1:30 pm

Student Government Association Announcements

Homecoming: November 1st

Spirit Week: November 18 - 21st

Pep Rally: November 21st

Spirit Week

Monday: Pajama Day

Tuesday: Throwback

Wednesday: Jersey

Thursday: Class Colors

Friday: Versus Day