

Nats Win It All

Caedmon Kollmer-Dorsey
(2020)
Staff Writer

After 95 years, it finally happened. A baseball team from DC, and an underdog at that, won baseball's ultimate prize. On October 30th, 2019 the Nats, on the back of a late-game rally, defeated the Houston Astros in Game 7. The bare fact of it is astonishing enough, but the underlying story is what truly made these Nationals special. This team wasn't supposed to win.

At the start of the century, DC had a different baseball team: the Washington Senators. The Senators were famously lackluster and, despite their three World Series appearances in the 1920s and 30s, the common saying about Washington baseball was “First in war, first in peace, last in the American League.” It's worth noting, though, that the District had an excellent Negro League team, the Homestead Grays, in the early twentieth century. The Grays won ten Negro National League pennants, and three Negro

League World Series Titles in the face of hideous discrimination.

In an end fitting the grandeur notably lacking from Senators history, the team was unceremoniously moved to Minnesota to become the Twins. In 1972 another attempt at a Senators franchise moved to Texas to become the Rangers. The Senators' last game in DC was forfeited, due to a fan riot before the last out was called.

For 33 years, the district's baseball fans were in the wilderness. With no team to represent the city, some fans

turned north to the Orioles and Cal Ripken. Many simply stopped paying attention. It was a stroke of luck that in 2005, after years of Senators-esque ignominy, the Montreal Expos were to be moved. At the beseeching of a baseball hungry city, they came to DC, as the Washington Nationals.

The new team experienced some success within a decade, as homegrown players Stephen Strasburg and Bryce Harper blossomed into stars. Harper even won the MVP in 2015. The Nationals won the NL East in 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2017. But time and time again regular season success wasn't rewarded with postseason glory; the Nationals, before this year, hadn't won a single playoff series.

Before the season, the Nats seemed to be running out of time. Harper, still a star right fielder, left in free agency to the Philadelphia Phillies, a division rival. Indeed, despite the addition of up and coming pitcher Patrick Corbin, the Nationals seemed to be losing ground in the NL East to the Phillies and to the Atlanta Braves, the incumbent division champions. The patience of a fanbase that expected regular excellence from their team grew increasingly thin. It was now or never for the Nats.

They started their season 19-31, only a game and a half ahead of the abysmal Miami

Marlins. Good offense and above-average starting pitching were overshadowed by a bullpen so weak it verged on historically bad. Days when the Nats would lose a big lead late in the game went from horrific to annoying to routine, and hopes of playoff contention rapidly deflated. Davey Martinez, the embattled manager, began to lose the confidence of a fanbase that increasingly felt like these Nats were heading toward a dead end. Attendance at the ballpark fell to its lowest levels since 2011, and morale steadily worsened

Then something miraculous happened. That embarrassing 19-31 start gave way to a 74-38 finish. Ever the sign of winning baseball, certain players went from men on a baseball diamond to minor deities among fans. Gerardo Parra was no longer just a journeyman outfielder; instead he was Parra Shark, the instigator of dugout shenanigans and the source of the team's unofficial anthem. Juan Soto was no longer just an excellent young player with great batting stats; instead he was Juan GOATO, the Childish Bambino. The team acquired a new confidence, and the ability to come back late in games.

Still, Nationals fans went into the playoffs with low expectations. How could they have anything else with so much history weighing them down? The Nats faced an immediate (continued on page 2)



Source: Wikimedia Commons

For Nationals, Championship Flag Will Fly Forever

Tillman Peele Lanyi (2020)
Senior Editor

There's a saying in sports: “Flags fly forever.” A team's fans never forget its championships; pennants will never be lowered from above stadium scoreboards and banners will never be removed from arena rafters. But fans will never remember the mediocre seasons that precede or follow championships; no flags fly for .500 seasons.

The Washington Nationals probably won't win the World Series in 2020. Most oddsmakers in Las Vegas heavily favor the Astros, who came eight outs away from beating the

Nationals in Game 7, along with the Dodgers and Yankees. Washington is considered a contender, but not a favorite.

The Nationals won't be rolling out their championship roster in 2020, either. Six of the twelve players who saw the field in Game 7 are on the open market, including NL MVP finalist Anthony Rendon. Eleven of the 25 players on the World Series roster are free agents, including World Series MVP Stephen Strasburg. Forty-nine percent of at-bats and thirty-two percent of innings pitched in the World Series are no longer under contract for 2020.

Although the Nationals will make strong offers to both

Rendon and Strasburg, neither are certain to return. And key veterans like Howie Kendrick, Yan Gomes, and Daniel Hudson are likely to sign elsewhere in free agency.

Major sacrifices were necessary just to construct the 2019 championship team. The Nationals traded their top prospect, Lucas Giolito, to the White Sox in 2016 for Adam Eaton. And the Nationals traded another top prospect, Jesus Luzardo, to the Athletics in 2017 for Sean Doolittle. In 2019, Giolito started 29 games for Chicago, posting a 3.41 ERA and 228 strikeouts; Luzardo is now the 18th-ranked prospect in baseball.

In the World Series,

Adam Eaton went 8-for-25, scoring five runs and driving in six. Sean Doolittle pitched three shutout innings, recording a save in Game 1. Flags fly forever. Washington has seen more than its fair share of baseball heartbreak. Just name Drew Storen, Daniel Descalso, and Pete Kozma. The eighteen-inning game. Joe Panik scoring a series-winning run on a wild pitch. A 2-1 series lead blown in 2016. A passed ball, a dropped third strike, a catcher's interference, and a hit batsman. The list could continue.

But, in the end, those demons have been exorcised. Nationals fans will no longer look back at the 2010s as a

decade of failure, but a decade of success. The curse is over.

The heartbreak that came before this World Series title will someday be forgotten. The eventual slide back to mediocrity that will inevitably follow will someday be forgotten. But that 2019 World Series Championship pennant will fly high above the scoreboard at Nationals Park from now until the end of time.

Moments are fleeting. Flags fly forever.

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elimination game in the Wild Card against the Milwaukee Brewers. Things got off to a bad start, despite Trea Turner's third-inning homer, with the Brewers scoring 3 runs in the first two innings. But then something changed. With the bases loaded, against Josh Hader, one of the best relievers in baseball, Juan Soto hit a 3-RBI single, giving the Nats a 4-3 lead they didn't relinquish. The dam broke on years of playoff frustration. Next, the Nationals beat the National-League-leading Dodgers in five games, with a climactic Howie Kendrick grand slam in the final game off of star closer Joe Kelly. In the National League Championship series, the Nationals swept the Saint Louis Cardinals easily, allowing only 16 total hits.

The World Series wouldn't be as effortless. The Nats faced the terrific, and heavily favored, Houston Astros. Baseball media's consensus was that though the Nats were a fun story, they would soon be shredded in the teeth of AJ Hinch's buzzsaw.

The Nats took the first two games of the World Series in Houston and neither were particularly close. Goliath would have a tougher time with David than he thought. Fans in DC looked around, not daring to

imagine the possibilities. And dare they probably shouldn't have because the Astros stormed right back into the series with three straight wins in DC. The home games blown, the Nats journeyed back to Houston with everything on the line.

The Nats won Game 6. Despite a truly horrific - and potentially game-changing - call that enraged Nats manager Dave Martinez so much he was ejected, it wasn't close with a final score of 7-2. This game was Anthony Rendon's masterpiece: the All-Star 3rd baseman filled the box score with a 3-hit, 5-RBI performance, including a 2-run double in the 9th inning that put the final nail in the Astro's coffin. The series was tied 3-3 and Game Seven loomed on the horizon.

The Astros opened up the scoring and were up 2-0 by the 7th inning. The Nationals were behind late in the game in a life or death scenario. How many times had fans heard that sentence this year? Of course Rendon homered. Of course Soto got on base. And of course Howie Kendrick, who had come through so many times before, hit a baseball 336 feet into the stands to go ahead, 3-2. They never looked back. On October 30th, 2019, at last, the Nats became World Series champions. Is it possible to sum up

the season in words? Probably not. Like all great sports stories this was more than the sum of its statistics. Baseball, despite the primacy of the NFL, is still the national pastime. For its fans, it still pulls the heartstrings in a special way. Yes Howie Kendrick's homer in Game 7 caused a 30% swing in win probability, more than any single hit before. Yes Stephen Strasburg was the first pitcher to ever go 5-0 in the playoffs. Yes the Nationals were the biggest World Series betting underdogs since 2012. But focusing on these things would be missing the point.

So what's the point? The point is that this team did more than win enough games at the right time to get a trophy. They thrust our city into the spotlight - not the collection of transplants in suits who run our country, but the man who did a shirtless slide on the dugout when the last out was called. The people who booed our criminal president when he came to game 5. The fans who waited 95 years for this moment. The real DC.

This trophy isn't just for the players on the diamond. Those rings don't just show the greatness of a 25-man roster. That pennant, when it's raised on April 2nd, 2020, won't just fly for some numbers on a box score. It'll fly for our city.

Clara Shapiro Morton (2022)
Staff Writer

In the past years, the Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences has been awarded to pioneers of theories or methods in the field, and this year it is no different. However, this year's laureates (Nobel prize winners) are operating much more closely with their experiments than past winners. In mid-October, Michael Kremer, Esther Duflo, and Abhijit Banerjee were awarded the prize for their "experimental approach to alleviating poverty." All three laureates are economics professors: Kremer at Harvard, and Duflo and Banerjee, a married couple at MIT. Duflo was only the second woman to receive this prize, and the youngest ever. She has been using her new platform to advocate for women's rights, specifically in the economics profession. The "experimental approach" for which the three professors were awarded the prize refers to a method called Randomized Control Trials (RCTs). It is a process commonly used in the medicinal field using independent and dependent variables to target the root of a problem, but was not previously a frequently used method in economic sciences. Kremer and some colleagues pioneered the experiments in the mid-'90s to pinpoint the cause of poor educational performance of students in Western Kenya. The group split this problem into smaller, more manageable questions, and continued the research close up. For example, a few Kenyan schoolchildren

were given textbooks and their results in school were compared to the results of those without textbooks, keeping every other aspect of the childrens' lives as similar as possible (the controlled variables). The results were relatively similar, with or without textbooks, so Kremer and his colleagues conducted the same experiment with free school meals instead of textbooks. Free meals had no significant effect on the students' performance either. They continued these small, manageable trials until they found their answer - performance improved the most when students who had fallen behind were given remedial education. Kremer said that many students missed school to work or look after their siblings, and remedial education caught them back up to speed, the most effective method to improve student performance in developing countries.

Though a common medicinal method and a relatively simple idea, an effective RCT took years to develop and perfect. After Kremer's original experiment, Duflo and Abhijit conducted similar studies on different issues in different countries using RCTs. They continue even now to adjust and improve the process. RCTs will help find the root of the problem so that developing countries won't spend money on ineffective solutions, and with the help of other governments or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), can target and solve key issues, thereby relieving poverty globally.

ISIS Leader Abu Bakr Killed

Gabriel Kramer (2023)
Staff Writer

Last month, President Trump announced that an American military operation had located and killed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the former leader of the Islamic State, in Syria.

The Islamic State, also known as ISIS, is a major terrorist organization operating in the Middle East that previously controlled land throughout Syria. U.S. forces have sought to kill al-Baghdadi, the group's self-appointed "caliph", for more than five years.

In an announcement from the White House on Sunday, October 27th, Trump discussed how this was an important event in his administration's campaign against terrorism. "Last night, the United States brought the world's number one terrorist leader to justice," he said.

According to multiple officials, United States forces found al-Baghdadi in the Idlib governorate in northwestern Syria, close to the Turkish border and near the city of Aleppo. Trump displayed his usual flair for the dramatic in his message to the nation, calling the operation "dangerous and daring" and claiming that "[Al-Baghdadi] died after running into a dead-end tunnel, whimpering and cry-

ing all the way... He reached the end of the tunnel, as our dogs chased him down. He ignited his vest, killing himself and three children."

Trump's 40-minute announcement of al-Baghdadi's death received criticism for its language. Called by many a "spectacle", with Trump using language such as saying al-Baghdadi was a "coward" who "died like a dog, whimpering and crying". Some compared it negatively to former president Barack Obama's much shorter, sober, and solemn announcement of the killing of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in 2011.

Officials have confirmed that this operation has been planned for months, and used a combination of U.S. and Kurdish intelligence. Trump recently pulled almost all U.S. troops from Syria, which drew much criticism from both parties as "abandoning" the Kurds, a large ethnic minority in Syria and a long-term ally of the United States. Trump's removal of troops from Syria opened the door for a Turkish military incursion into northern Syria, so the fact that their intelligence helped this joint operation fueled further criticism of the withdrawal.

In addition, Trump angered congressional Democrats by failing to inform their

leadership in either chamber of Congress before the operation, which he attributed to a lack of trust and fear of interference, despite bipartisan support of the operation. The Trump Administration notified Russia and Turkey due to logistical reasons, but excluded Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY).

"The House must be briefed on this raid," said Pelosi. "The Russians, but not top congressional leadership, were notified in advance, and on the administration's overall strategy in the region. Our military and allies deserve strong, smart, and strategic leadership from Washington."

It is unclear how the Islamic State will continue in the future, or how much damage the death of its leader caused. ISIS has since named a new leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi al-Qurayshi, and gave warning to the United States: "Do not be happy."

Jack Evans Investigation

Noa Schleifer (2021)
Editor

Jack Evans, the longest-serving member of the DC City Council, has been asked to leave his position as council member for Ward 2. After the results of an ethics investigation came out on Tuesday, November 5th, a majority of Evans' colleagues on the council had called on him to resign. The report in question was 97 pages long and was the result of an investigation initiated in July and undertaken by O'Melveny and Meyers, a law firm hired by the council. The results demonstrated that Evans had allegedly violated ethics regulations in the "following eleven particular matters affecting the financial interests of employers (or prospective employers) and clients for which Evans took official action in violation of the conflict of interest provisions of Rule I of the Code of Official Conduct," the report reads. Essentially, he was violated rules in the Council's Code of Conduct regarding conflicts of interest, having been paid hundreds of

thousands of dollars by employers or clients in the past five years. The investigation concluded that Evans did not properly disclose his clients, as DC Council members are allowed to have outside employment but must avoid conflicts of interest and disclose such employment. Evans was found to have allegedly violated the Council's ethics rules 11 times since 2014, the instances relating to his consulting business and law firm. Many of his fellow council members have spoken out against his actions, and their statements are important indicators for Evans' future on the council. All council members except Evans are part of an ad hoc committee regarding this ethics investigation, and they will decide whether to reprimand, censure, or expel him in the next 90 days.

Democratic Candidate Preview: Amy Klobuchar

Tillman Peele Lanyi (2020)
Senior Editor

Minnesota U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar declared her intention to seek the Democratic presidential nomination in February of 2019. Although Klobuchar, 59, is not considered one of the frontrunners, her candidacy has gained enough traction to put her square among the major candidates.

Born and raised in Minnesota, Klobuchar was elected County Attorney of Hennepin County, Minnesota, in 1998 and reelected unopposed in 2002. Hennepin County is the most populous county in Minnesota and approximately contiguous with the city of Minneapolis. During her tenure as County Attorney, she was viewed as a rising star in the Democratic Party. In 2006, she was elected to the U.S. Senate, and was reelected in 2012 and 2018.

Klobuchar has embraced mostly left-center positions during her political career. Klobuchar is generally socially liberal, supporting abortion and LGBT rights, but is more centrist on fiscal issues, supporting partial forms of government involvement like the Affordable Care Act while opposing more large-scale programs like single-payer healthcare.

Klobuchar's campaign has been focused on appealing to moderate Democratic voters, especially

in her native Midwest, and emphasizing her ability to win over Republican voters; Klobuchar has regularly ran ahead of other Democrats in general elections. Although Klobuchar is not

considered one of the frontrunners for the nomination, she has managed to keep herself in the picture. She has qualified for every Democratic debate so far. Klobuchar is currently polling in

the mid-single digits, behind second-tier candidates like Pete Buttigieg and Kamala Harris but above the bottom-tier also-rans.

Klobuchar's chances of winning the nomination are slim. Her best-case scenario would likely involve a major implosion of Joe Biden's campaign, allowing her to emerge as the primary candidate of the moderate lane. Klobuchar needs a strong showing in the Iowa caucuses, where the state's mostly-white, Midwest profile fits her target demographics well. Otherwise, she is likely to drop out sometime within the next few months.

Although she is a possible candidate for Vice President, Klobuchar is best poised to have a long career in the Senate as a popular incumbent holding a fairly safe seat in a blue-purple state. And if she fails to win the 2020 nomination, she has realistic prospects to try again sometime in the future.



Amy Klobuchar (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Pro-Democracy Protests in Hong Kong

Lily Cason (2020)
Staff Writer

Since June, pro-democracy protesters have flooded the streets of Hong Kong, demanding greater independence from mainland China and amnesty for arrested protesters. Original protests were spurred by an extradition bill that would have weakened Hong Kong's judicial autonomy by allowing the extradition of some criminals to mainland China, where speech is extremely limited and punitive measures can be harsh. This bill was formally struck down in September, but the protests have not ceased. Many believe that the extradition bill was just the tip of the iceberg and that Hong Kong, which is considered a limited democracy, is losing autonomy in many other ways. Protesters cite city leader Carrie Lam, often regarded as being in mainland China's pocket, as a large part of the problem. Lam supported the extradition bill and has frequently bent to meet the requests of the mainland. It is important to note that, while Lam is an elected official, there are extensive claims that mainland China meddled in her election.

Another, equally notable, reason that protests have gone on for months is anger with Hong Kong's police force. Hong Kong, unlike Beijing and the rest of mainland China, has freedom of speech and assembly, but protestors feel that the police are not respecting these rights. Police have brutally tear-gassed, water cannoned, and have even shot at, crowds in attempts to force them to disperse. In addition to their brutality, police have arrested thousands of demonstrators and prominent pro-democracy lawmakers in an attempt to halt the protests. This has achieved nothing but the adverse effect; protesters have made it clear that, until the over 3,000 people arrested for protesting are pardoned, the protests will go on. Going forward, Hong Kong's future is unclear. The law allowing Hong Kong to function as an independent region inside China expires in 2047, but many don't believe its autonomy will last this long. Much of Hong Kong's future is contingent on Carrie Lam, Chinese president Xi Jinping, and the actions of the international community.

Facebook Under Fire Again

Alexis Mundle (2021)
Editor

An accumulation of Facebook documents have recently surfaced revealing that the social media giant has been using users' data to conduct business with app developers and other competitors.

On November 6th, 2019, NBC News publically released more than 7,000 pages of incriminating spreadsheets, emails, presentations, and web chats revealing that the management at Facebook, including CEO himself Mark Zuckerberg, used users' personal information, such as that pertaining to friends and relationships, to gain leverage over other companies and to partner with others. Amazon was one of the many companies to deal in business with Facebook and was granted "special access" to many of the sites' users' data for spending money on Facebook advertising. While Facebook granted "special access" to users' data to some companies, they barred access to others. In one case documented in the pages published by NBC, Facebook had allowed the messaging app MessageMe access to consumers' data, but soon cut them off because the app had

begun growing in popularity, posing a threat to Facebook's profit.

While behind the scenes Facebook handed out consumers' data like candy, Facebook planned to publically stage the transactions as ways to protect user privacy in a plan referred to as the "Switcharoo Plan".

Considering that this is not Facebook's first user privacy slip up, state and federal authorities have not wasted time in deciding whether to take a deeper look at Facebook's business practices or not. In October of this year, prior to the document leak, 47 attorneys from the United States and its territories commenced a New York-led antitrust probe into Facebook, and on November 6th, no more than a few hours after the documents were released, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra filed a lawsuit against Facebook to obtain more emails and documents pertaining to data dealings. California has been conducting a probe of Facebook since long before the New York-led one materialized. Becerra commented that they had been taking allegations that Facebook was violating California state law very seriously.

New Cystic Fibrosis Treatment

Minnie Koppenheffer (2021)
Staff Writer

On Oct. 21, the FDA approved a new drug for cystic fibrosis, a potentially life-changing development for tens of thousands.

Cystic fibrosis is a genetic disease caused by a mutation in a gene that controls the body's mucus production. For people with cystic fibrosis, the mucus in the lungs and digestive tracts become thick and sticky, clogging airways and increasing the likelihood of infection. Cystic fibrosis is currently treatable, but cannot be cured.

The new drug, Trikafta, makes the mutated gene behave more like normal. According to the Trikafta's producer, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, "Trikafta adds elexacaftor to tezacaftor and ivacaftor to target protein defects." These three drugs help more proteins reach the cell's surface, while also keeping the proteins open for longer at the cells' surfaces. The combination of the three drugs allows the proteins to work properly and minimize respiratory symptoms

in patients.

Trikafta was tested in two clinical drug trials on a total of 510 cystic fibrosis patients, resulting in promising reports of improvement in sweat production, lung function, and BMI scores. There are some negative reactions to Trikafta, like rashes and influenza, but the treatment comes with fewer disturbing side effects than alternative drugs. Despite those risks, Trikafta presents a viable new option for treating cystic fibrosis and is indicative of a hopeful future for patients.

Democratic Candidate Preview:

Bernie Sanders

Maggie Modovsky (2020)
Staff Writer

Many are “Feeling the Bern” this election season, but has this flame died out since Sanders first ran in 2016? Vermont U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders has decided to find out and is back for the 2020 presidential campaign. His old progressive economic proposals like free public university, Medicare-for-all, and a \$15 minimum wage still hold a prominent place in the Democratic electorate, but concerns over his age and electability are holding him back in this primary.

The Sanders campaign centers its focus on economic equity. One of his most notable plans is the “College for All” plan, which aims to cancel all student debt and make all public universities in the U.S. free to attend. Sanders believes that among the freedoms granted to us as American citizens is the ability to freely graduate college without the burden of student debt. He plans to provide a minimum of \$48 billion per year to eliminate tuition at four-year public universities. In addition to eliminating public college tuition, Sanders would also provide \$1.3 billion to private, nonprofit HBCUs in order to reduce tuition for low-income students. In addition to affordable college education, Sanders believes in

affordable, high-quality health-care as a basic human right.

He campaigns with the goal of lowering the cost of healthcare and prescription drug prices. Sanders is a strong proponent of single-payer healthcare, in which all Americans would be insured by a Medicare-like program. And Sanders advocates for allowing patients, wholesalers, and pharmacists to be able to purchase cheaper prescription drugs from Canada. Much of Sanders’ criticism is based on concerns about his age and electability. At 78 years old, some Democrats would prefer a younger nominee, and his advanced age comes with health issues, exemplified by a non-fatal early October heart attack. Some Democrats also worry about Sanders’ ability to appeal to moderate voters based on his strong progressive ideas and uncompromising attitude. Nevertheless, Sanders has a dedicated base of support and has been recently polling in the high single digits, in third place behind Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren.

Third Party “Spoiler” Candidates in the 2020 Election

Clara Shapiro Morton (2022)
Staff Writer

While the Democrat and Republican parties dominate our screens, elections and government, Independent and third-party presidential candidates can sometimes have more power than one might think. And as the 2020 election draws closer, Democrats are keeping a wary eye on some of the lower-polling candidates, fearing an announcement of third-party candidacy.

The danger with third-party candidates is not that they may win, but that they will receive more votes than the winner’s margin of victory, meaning that they have the power to entirely change the results of the presidential election. If a third-party candidate, sometimes dubbed a “spoiler” candidate, can garner enough support to split the vote of one of the major parties, the other party is much more likely to win. The threat of a third-party candidacy is not an abstract concept. In the 1992 election, Independent candidate Ross Perot, running on a conservative-leaning platform, received 19 percent of the national vote, splitting the Republican electorate and paving Bill Clinton’s path to the presidency. A similar situation manifested itself in 2000, with Ralph Nader’s candidacy costing Al Gore the election, and again when Jill Stein split the Democratic vote in 2016, securing

Donald Trump the seat in the Oval Office.

As for the upcoming election, suspicion surrounds Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard’s intentions as Hillary Clinton warned Democrats that the Republicans were grooming a current democratic candidate to run as a 2020 third-party spoiler. Gabbard accused Clinton of being the “queen of warmongers, embodiment of corruption, and personification of the rot that has sickened the Democratic party for so long,” claiming that Clinton is behind a campaign to destroy her reputation, and even going so far as to challenge Clinton to join the presidential race. She has declared multiple times she has no interest in running for the third party candidacy, but Democrats remain doubtful. If, indeed, she decided to run, it is possible that she could act as a spoiler, splitting the Democratic vote and improving Trump’s chances of reelection.

Like Gabbard, Andrew Yang is another current democratic candidate who some believe may be considering third-party candidacy. His platform is based around economy and helping the lower classes, and less concerned with foreign disputes and war. This type of platform has not been seen since aforementioned 1992 Independent candidate, Ross Perot.

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Club Spotlight:
Electric Car Club

Bella Moore (2022)
Staff Writer

At the club fair this year, you probably saw a go-cart shaped machine with wires protruding messily from it. It belongs to Electric Car Club, an organization that has been at Walls for at least five years. Run by Quinton Cunningham and Alex Landinez, meetings are held in the library on Tuesdays with the help of Mr. Ghazi. The goal for this year: build a car from scratch that can compete in the 2019 Washington D.C Electric Vehicle Grand Prix at the end of the year. In 2019, the club got fourth place, and Quinton, one of the group’s leaders, hopes to make top three this time. So far, Electric Car Club is making a lot of progress; right now they are teaching new members and planning the structure of the new car. The long-term goal for the club is permanence. They don’t want to expire after the current members graduate. It is a great club to join for multiple reasons. People can learn how to use everything from a screwdriver to a table saw. As Quinton said, “people can learn how to fix their own problems using what they have instead of needing to call someone. It gets students into the world of STEM and is a great place to take advantage of creativity and intellect.” As a member, I can say that it is also super fun and accessible, and no prior experience is required.

Homecoming Review

Liya Johnson (2023)
Staff Writer

On November 1st, 2019, I went to homecoming for the first time. Located in the commons, the tables were pushed aside and the room was transformed into an evening rose-themed party space. Colorful lights flashed across the ceiling of the dimly-lit dance floor, and there was even an area for rose-themed photo taking; the perfect environment was made for a night of socializing and partying-- and for that I congratulate the team who worked hard to do this. Good job, guys!

With the room set for the dance, people started to filter in around 7-- these were the early birds. They consisted of mostly seniors and a few others (including me). The seniors were the ones who got the party started. They formed a mini circle in the middle of the dance floor and got right to having fun.

As more people began to come, the room became more crowded. At first, we (except those seniors and a few other people who were still dancing) were just talking as we took in the surroundings and met up with our friends and peers. But

soon mostly everybody started to dance, too, especially as the music got better and louder.

Let me just mention now that before everybody started dancing, everything was relatively peaceful. But when everybody started to dance, things started to get... a little out of control.

For one, the dance floor turned into something like a mosh pit. People would crash and dance wildly in the crowd. I even noticed a process: during the part in the song that was not as hype, people would form an empty circle in the middle of the crowd. When the hype part of the song that everybody liked

came, the people would all crash into the circle and start jumping. To me it was generally fun... as long as I wasn’t in the center of the circle, where things were the most sweaty and “dangerous.” I mean, some people liked it and were actually having fun. However, some people didn’t. It really depended on what type of

party person you were.

At one point, the homecoming court was announced, at another there was a slow dancing, and after that things reverted back to being a crazy mosh pit, the “chill” people around it, and the “others” who were near the back of the room; either at the snack table (which was a spread of lemonade, water, candy, and chips) or hanging around the school.

So, in general I had a pretty good time. To me, though, the music could have been just a little better, but those two DJ’s did a great job anyway. I think everyone had a good time coming to school-- but for a reason other than taking classes. I think even the people who didn’t go to Walls probably had a good time seeing our school and having fun.



Homecoming (Per: Liya Johnson)

Movie Review:
The Lighthouse

Toni Jackson (2022)
Staff Writer

“The Lighthouse” is undoubtedly my favorite film of the year. This movie is vile, weird, and haunting, which is what makes it so amazing. The film set in 1890, follows an older lighthouse keeper (Willem Dafoe) trapped with his young apprentice (Robert Pattinson), and their descent into madness. With this synopsis, the film sounds bland, but it is so much more. This description is the best way to describe the movie without spoiling anything. I definitely recommend this movie if you love films that leave you thinking. For days

after I watched this movie, every second I was coming up with theories about the ending and deciphering the meaning of different scenes. The acting truly pushes this movie from great to exceptional. There were moments from both Pattinson and Dafoe where I felt as if I was in the room with them and felt genuine anguish.

The director Robert Eggers breaks the sophomore slump seen in many directors' second films. I highly recommend you see his first movie The Witch (2014), before watching Eggers' newest feature. Currently on Netflix, The Witch truly shows Eggers'

style and gives you a taste of what to expect from “The Lighthouse.” Eggers' films are often unusual in not only their plot but additionally the way they're filmed. Camera lenses from the 1920s and 30s were used in “The Lighthouse,” along with film that made the scenes look as grainy and dirty as possible. The movie is so complex it almost doesn't have a genre. There are elements of comedy, drama, suspense, and horror. This movie is inexplicable, and I implore everyone to see it to truly understand what a masterpiece it is. 10/10 stars.

Before a test:



After a test:

I Even Studied
For It



Erin O'Neill (2022)
Staff Writer

Recall

Washington Ross (2020)
Editor in Chief

These sounds, sensations, sentiments,
Are all too far familiar.
The air of the room, the unspoken tone
I swear I know it - I do.

They look to be different, but their souls
Remain the same people I met long ago.
I am changed, my personality shifted.
But at my core, I only wear a new name.

Wish my wisdom would carry over.
I hear the whispers of past times,
But still I push forward no matter how I
try.
I know what's to come but still I swim
ahead.

Wish I could remember exactly how it
was
Instead of having to grasp the reaches
for hints of here.
Surely then I could decipher
What I feel's the same

Was it this world, or another?
Did I live in a foreign land?
What language did I speak?
And did I have the same friends?

Still it's nice to know
That nothing will ever change.
I'll be left of this life soon.
And then wear a new name.

Third Party Candidates (Continued)

As Yang's views on many issues differ from the general Democratic stance, it is not unlikely that if he is not nominated in the primaries, he will run as a third party to make sure his views are represented. A third-party “spoiler” candidate with a democratic leaning platform would be a catastrophic obstacle for Democrats. Fortunately, both Yang and Gabbard seem to realize that the party's main goal is to unite to prevent Donald Trump's reelection, and have told various sources that they do not mean to jeopardize the party's position. However, in the political world, nothing is static, and Gabbard's temper has shown that she (and possibly Yang) could very well change their minds.

Fun Facts

Savannah Waymer (2020)
Editor in Chief

- Thanksgiving was declared a national holiday by Abraham Lincoln in 1863
- In 1939 Thanksgiving was celebrated on the 3rd Thursday in November

The Rookery

Editors in Chief

Savannah Waymer

Washington Ross

Senior Editor

Adam Burch

Tillman Peele Lanyi

Noa Schleifer

Editors

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Senior Writers

Emilia Bebic

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Maddie Enggen

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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.](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 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.

Texas is About to Execute Another Black Man

Adam Levine Burch (2021)
Senior Editor

Rodney Reed is set to be executed on November 20th for the murder of Stacey Stites in Bishop, Texas. He is innocent.

In 1998, Mr. Reed, a black man, was convicted of the murder of Ms. Stites, a white woman, by an all-white jury after evidence emerged that they had a sexual relationship - one that Mr. Reed, and people close to Ms. Stites, insist was consensual. A belt found at the crime scene was never tested for DNA, despite repeated requests for testing, and experts from Mr. Reed's trial have recanted their testimony on the timing of Ms. Stites' death; the new timeline would place white ex-police officer Jimmy Fennell, Ms. Stite's then-fiance, with Ms. Stites at the time of the murder. Mr. Fennell was the prime subject of the murder investigation before Mr. Reed's semen was found in Ms. Stites's body. Finally, Arthur Snow, who was in prison with Fennell (then serving time for rape), recently "came forward with information that 'Fennell complained that his fiancée 'had been sleeping around with a black man behind his back' and that he had to kill his 'n----- loving fiancée,'" according to a sworn affidavit.

Given this evidence, the idea that Mr. Reed could have been considered "guilty beyond a reasonable doubt" by twelve well-informed, sane adults is fairly ridiculous. Of course, they were likely not well-informed - much of this evidence was not ruled admissible, or was otherwise unavailable, at Mr. Reed's trial. Still, it's obvious that the members of this jury, like the member of every other that administers the death penalty, were not acting as sane adults.

That the death penalty ever existed at all is a testament to an embarrassing, primal part of the American psyche. It is based on the idea that government exists to hurt people we don't like, to make us feel better at any cost. It is justified by a conception of the penal system as existing not to rehabilitate most criminals and keep society safe from those who cannot be rehabilitated, but to somehow balance the scales of karma by making people convicted of crimes suffer. If the state ever has the right to kill people, surely it does not have the right to kill people who pose no immediate threat - say, for example, an unarmed, shackled inmate in a maximum-security prison. (For what it's worth, I found no evidence of successful escapes from American death row in the 21st century.)

That the death penalty exists today is a testament to the power of institutionalized racism and apathy. Black people convicted of killing white people, for example, are much more likely to be sentenced to death than white people convicted of killing black people, and multiple studies have shown that juries are more likely to sentence black people to death than white people. Moreover, a group of statistics and criminal-justice researchers recently conducted a study using a regression analysis of exonerations granted to people accused of capital crimes. It estimated that at least 4 percent of people executed in the United States are innocent. In a country where racial and economic bias so openly dominates the entire criminal process, the death penalty's ostensible compliance with the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment ought to be called seriously into question.

That the death penalty is, in all likelihood, going to be applied to Mr. Reed should come as no surprise. What makes this case special (though by no means unique) is the outpouring of public support recently: a Change.org petition demanding a stay of execution has, as of November 10th, 450,000 signatures, and a similar request was issued by the European Union. Even some celebrities have gotten involved in the movement for a stay of execution, and hundred of people demonstrated outside the Texas Governor's Mansion on Saturday.

A stay of Rodney Reed's execution - or a commutation of his sentence, or even a full pardon - by Texas governor Greg Abbott would be a nod towards the values of equality, duty, and respect for human life that America claims to champion. The total abolition of the death penalty would be a meaningful step towards a fair justice system. But unsurprisingly, true progress still seems hard to even define, let alone accomplish.

Walls Sports Update

Indigo Domenici-Mills (2023)
Staff Writer

The weekend of November 2nd was a big one for School Without Walls. Both the girls and boys soccer teams, as well as the volleyball team, competed in the DCIAA (District of Columbia Interscholastic Athletics Association) championships. All three teams played very well, and our school was well-represented in the final games of this tournament. For all scores shown below, our school's scores are first.

The School Without Walls volleyball team played against Wilson in the DCIAA Championship this past weekend. While they lost, zero sets to three, they played incredibly well. Be sure to congratulate the volleyball team!

Another game that was played this weekend was the DCIAA championship for girls soccer. The girls also played very well, ultimately losing to Wilson with a final score of zero to three. The season would have continued, if not for a loss this past Monday. Still, congratulations girls, and great job in the championship!

Finally, the boys soccer team played against Roosevelt in the DCIAA. They ended up winning the championship with a final score of two goals to one! Congratulations boys! Zach Barrette (a senior midfielder), who scored both goals for the Penguins, deserves a special mention here, but all members of the team played an extremely good game of soccer, and deserved this hard-earned victory.

In the coming winter sports season, let's keep up our school spirit and inspire our athletes. Be sure to go out to the games to show your support! Go SWW Penguins!

Spirit Week
Schedule Next
Week

Spirit Week
Monday: Pajama Day
Tuesday: Throwback
Wednesday: Jersey
Thursday: Class Colors
Friday: Jersey Day