

SUMUS LEONES

November 2020

An Election to Remember

By Zoe Edelman, senior, and Niamh O'Donovan, eighth grader

Joe Biden has won the popular vote and the Electoral College, leading him on the path to become the 46th president of the United States, following days of vote counting, anxiety, and 24/7 news watching. Dawning in the months following a summer of country-wide demonstrations for racial justice, and amidst a pandemic which has left hundreds of thousands dead, the 2020 presidential election may have felt like the most important of people's lives.

The Washington Latin community was not immune to following the election. In fact, for some, a desire to create change and protect Americans left them inspired to volunteer and support their candidates of choice - all up and down the ballot. For others, frustration with the election system left them fuming. And for some select seniors, first time voting brought excitement.

For first time voter senior Nikolas Davis, this election "most definitely feels special." He explained, "This election determines what place the U.S will hold in the coming years. This election determines how African Americans and other minorities will be treated... I do not want to have to deal with another four years of Donald Trump." Niko also emphasized the importance

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of voting, which allows for “my voice [to] be heard,” and reaffirms that “the fight to vote [by African Americans has not] been wasted.”

Although Niko's first voting experience was “kind of mediocre because I was voting via mail rather than in person,” Niko looks forward to voting in future elections, because “if you don't vote, don't complain.” One surprise for Niko? “I was surprised at the amount of sections that the ballot had. I thought that the ballot was just for the presidency, however, there were a lot of other positions that were on there as well.”

Fellow senior Jada George was similarly excited about voting for the first time this year. “I want to vote to help make a change (or at least try to),” she explained. She decided to do a mail in ballot, as opposed to her initial plan “of going to actually vote in person.” Although she noted the election “feels strange, to say the least,” the process overall “felt pretty good.” She also was not alone in casting her ballot, as she was voting with her mom, which she described as “really fun.”

While many first time voters were excited to be sending in their ballots, voting is a source of frustration for Washingtonians. Mr. Anderson, the head of school, explains, “DC is home to over 700,000 people who do not have a say in how their federal tax dollars are spent... Many DC voters might wonder whether they are part of a true democracy given that we do not have the same right to voice and vote as our neighbors in Maryland, Virginia, or elsewhere.” He compares Washington DC's situation to that of the colonists during the American Revolution, being that they received no representation in Parliament, adding, “If we were granted Statehood, we could change that.”

Mr. Anderson, like Niko and Jada, noted the importance of this election, stating, “I would not be surprised if at least 60% of the voting age population [in the US] turns out for this election.” Additionally, he predicted “more people vot[ing] early and more people vot[ing] via absentee,” this year. The enthusiasm was partly spurred by “concerns about the coronavirus and issues of racial justice... motivating [Americans] to get engaged.” He has also seen an uptick in people “getting involved” in the election, through “registration drives, hosting “meet and greet” sessions, voting early, and phone banking for candidates.” Personally, he has made an effort to remind others “that the November 3rd election is about more than choosing a new president.” Other important races for Washingtonians include council seats and Board of Education members. “To that end, I have hosted virtual “meet and greet” sessions for specific candidates, attended open forums and engaged personally with several of the candidates.”

Finally, Mr. Anderson addressed why he “absolutely support[s] talking about political topics like [the election] in school.” Latin students should strive “to understand how to engage in respectful dissent, to become empathetic to the problems of others, and to be committed to action in

solving these problems.” Thus, discussing the election can provide the opportunity to understand “divergent viewpoints and... have one’s views of the world be challenged.” This is a lesson even the presidential candidates could learn, “I wish more of our candidates... understood how to engage in civil discourse,” Mr. Anderson mentioned.

Ninth grader Willa Roemer further emphasized the importance of this election, noting, “We all are at risk here whether you’re POC, LGBTQ+, a young person, or an elderly person who needs health care or Medicaid. We will all be caught in the crossfire.” And with so much depending on the outcome, she is still uncertain on what each candidate would bring to the table if they win, “I hope he [Joe Biden] will actually reform the police and I trust him to take more action on climate change, but I’m really just hoping for the best.”

Beyond strong opinions about the candidates and this election, other students also voiced their desires for strong voting reform. “I would make voting mandatory,” writes eighth grader Oscar Murray, “this is already in place in countries like Belgium and Australia, and they have voter turnouts in the 90th percentile. The fact that in this country, we sometimes have voter turnout as low as 40% makes a mockery of this democracy and it is not fully representative of the people.” Beyond voter turnout, Oscar attacked the election system generally, “the electoral college is a stupid system, the fact that you can lose the popular vote and still win the election just does not make sense, it is another one of those things that just purely is not democratic.”



Crowds celebrated Joe Biden’s victory near the White House on Saturday, November 7th



Teachers Ms. Kolb (left) and Ms. Thompson (above) voting in the election

In Person Learning: Opening the Floodgates

By Micaiah Jegede, Claire Campbell, and Lydia Park, eighth graders

When will school return to live in-person instruction? Right now it is hard to know when school will resume fully in person. Since the start of distance learning, students and staff have been eagerly awaiting the arrival of in-person classes. Latin has been working hard to try and bring students in for in-person learning in small groups by checking temperatures, practicing social distancing, and they require both students and staff to fill out a health check app before entering campus. The Washington Latin staff has been working hard to make sure the school building will be safe and clean for returning students.

One opportunity for students and staff to return to school are Chemistry labs. Chemistry teacher Mr. Zinck explained that the procedures are very cautious and make sure everyone is safe. "The labs contain only a maximum of 10 students at a time," said Mr. Zinck. "The Chemistry classroom has been set up to maximize the distance between each student and each lab group has [its] own sink for frequent hand washing. Before arriving each student must fill out the Health App and then at the door their temperature is taken again."

Even with one Chemistry lab student contracting COVID-19, the precautions taken by WLPCS have resulted in no one else testing positive. Dr. Smith, the principal of Washington Latin, included this in an email to all students and parents after a student tested positive, "The good news is that no one else has tested positive for COVID. We have a good confirmation of our procedures and policies and can move forward with this pod's next lab on Thursday 10/15. Of course, the infected student and the person who was in close contact will not participate in the Thursday lab."

In the Legenda, sent out to parents the week of November 6th, Head of School Mr. Anderson explained his hopes for future in-person opportunities. The school has already hosted several, including the Chemistry labs and "field days for grades 5, 6 and 8." He also detailed upcoming activities, "such as 7th grade field days and a second community service day for 9th graders." Regarding future in-person opportunities, he noted "every in-person activity is optional, with families retaining the right to opt for a virtual option without any negative repercussions in terms of student grades or anything else." Finally, he affirmed the importance of safety, stating, "Between now and the end of 2020, we will be working with our faculty to determine which hybrid option we can offer, depending on both Health Department guidance and faculty ability to return in-person. We will not require faculty to return before they are confident in the safety of this arrangement, both for them and students."

Ms. Mujal, the fifth-grade geography teacher, has been teaching virtually but doing so while on campus. “The biggest difference is the lack of noise. It makes me sad, but I enjoy working in my classroom. It's a good way to keep my work life separate from my home life...I feel really blessed that I am able to go to school to work. I know lots of people do not have that luxury.”

When asked about what Latin is planning to do for future in-person learning assistant principal and middle school director Mr. Kelly explained, “We will do several things as a school to ensure classrooms are safe, including limiting the number of people in each room, spacing out the desks within each classroom, and mandating the use of masks throughout the day.”

Ms. Barley, the eighth grade Earth Science teacher, said, “Whatever Latin does it will be thoughtful and intentional because that is the community that Latin is.”



Fifth graders meeting up at Rock Creek Park to create an art project



Middle school students meeting up for a recent field day



An Online Operation: College Applications

By Nile Thaxton, senior

High school can be tough to go through. Sometimes there's lots of adjustments, but this year, the biggest one has been the transition to online schooling. This change affects each grade differently, but the seniors may have it the weirdest. Their last year of high school is when they prepare for their next chapter in life, including, for some, applying to colleges. Seniors have been sending those applications virtually, which may or may not be less stressful for them.

Mr. O'Brien, one of Latin's college counselors, has viewed the college application process in a positive light. "I love seeing the creative ways you express yourselves or the things to which you dedicate your time given the relative flexibility of our current learning model. For some of you, this has taken the form of protests, for others, it means learning new instruments or pursuing your own reading pathway. Of course, all of that provides new insight into how you may fit at a college campus. We can therefore recommend you differently than we would have any other year."

Mr. O'Brien sees this experience done virtually as an advantage to really dial in on senior's fit and preference for institutions and their future post secondary education. He likes the fact that students have taken their time away from school to develop new hobbies and explore new interests. He points out that has brought a brand new wrinkle to the process that previously wasn't available.

"It's definitely not how I imagined I would be applying to college but it's something that I must learn to adjust to," said senior Yao Calhoun. "The most difficult thing is not being in the presence of college counselors and peers. I feel like we're just so distanced from each other and as we're not going through the process together. A positive benefit would be not having to wake up at 6am everyday."

Yao feels that sometimes he's been doing this all independently, but he's not anxious about that. He likes having to make his own schedule.

Senior Helena Ikenberry has lots of thoughts on the process. "One positive benefit of all of this is the fact that I don't have an insane amount of homework each night, so I can use the time to work on applications. I'm mostly worried about finishing all of my supplemental essays that are due on November 1st. That deadline has come up so quickly! This whole process has definitely brought on a lot of stress, but I'm extremely grateful that all of the teachers at Latin are as involved as they are because they are definitely taking away some of it."

Ms. Latham, the Director of College Counseling, feels like everyone involved is missing out on some parts of a common time spent on applications. "My inbox has been a bit out of control all fall, and at some point I realized that all of the little "in-between" moments previous senior classes had don't exist for the class of 2021. Popping your head into my or Mr. O'Brien's office in-between class to ask a "quick" question, which was not always so quick, can't happen this year. Spending your study halls in the CCO working on college applications and being able to engage with the college counselors in unplanned, unscheduled ways are not an option."



Coumba Gueye (Latin class of 2014) winning the Trachtenberg Scholarship. This year, seniors are missing out on the opportunity to celebrate college and career success together.



Latin's graduating class of 2019 wearing the gear of their post-secondary plan. The class of 2020 was unable to take a similar picture due to COVID-19.

Feeling out of Sync on Wednesdays?

By Ella Hankins, freshman, Oscar Murray, eighth grader, and Mayowa Akinsanya, seventh grader

Last spring, the school's distance learning schedule was largely asynchronous, leaving students to complete all their work on their own time. This year's schedule, however, includes only one asynchronous day, Wednesday. Every Wednesday, students are given thirty minutes of work, per class, which is due at 9 pm. This allows for students and teachers to have flexible schedules, something that is not possible during the rest of the week. According to the school, asynchronous days also allow for students to take a break from constantly looking at a screen. Although asynchronous days do have their benefits, they cause a division in people's opinions.

Sophomore Madison Cerkey-Mcfaddin is a supporter of asynchronous Wednesdays. She said, "I love having an asynchronous day. It's my favorite part of the school week. No Zoom!" She went on to say, "I feel that asynchronous days are more beneficial for my mental health. They don't hinder my learning, and they are a great break from constantly having to be on Zoom."

Madison also is also a big fan of asynchronous Wednesdays because of the flexibility in her schedule, allowing her to do something she loves. "I go surfing a lot on Wednesdays. The asynchronous days give me more time during the day to do other things. Surfing is a great way for me to have fun and clear my head." Madison surfs at her family's home in Delaware.

Freshman, Willa Roemer, agreed with Madison saying, "It can be nice to have time to catch up on work besides a study hall... it does not hinder me."

Fellow freshman, Sanu Pandey, also likes asynchronous days saying, "There is less overall time spent on school for that day, and people can do the work when they have time." he also stated that "it takes me on average 25 minutes to finish my work for 1 class," which is not the case for all students.

Senior Graham Evans stated, "It takes me from 25 minutes to an hour, depending on the class, to finish the work on an asynchronous day. Usually it's in the middle, around 45 minutes."

Despite some classes taking him double the allotted time, Graham is still in favor of asynchronous days. "I am thankful for the asynchronous day once a week. It's a breath of fresh air in the middle and I can go through all of the work from classes without feeling too stressed... It gives me time to process the materials."

Like Graham, eighth grader Liam Saxon also takes longer on assignments, but unlike Graham, he is against asynchronous days, citing trouble managing his workload. “The teachers assign a lot of work, and all of the clubs are scheduled for Wednesdays, along with [middle school] advisory lunch. This gives us no time to actually finish our work.”

Liam also noted that when students need help or have a question, it takes some time to get a response from teachers via email, unlike on synchronous days when he can just raise his hand in class. “During asynchronous work, if you have one question, it takes hours upon hours for a response... and sometimes their email in response doesn’t fully answer your question.”

Liam did, however, have some suggestions for asynchronous days, that could make them less stressful. “I don’t think that we should have clubs scheduled for Wednesdays. I also think we should not have advisory lunch on Wednesdays, that’ll just free us up some time.”

Zoe Edelman, a senior, also dislikes asynchronous days. “They hinder me. Some work feels like busy work, assigned just for the sake of giving us something to do. Other work is useful, but super hard to focus on and find the motivation to do without allotted class times.”

Zoe also stated that although Wednesdays are asynchronous, that doesn’t mean her eyes get a break from blue light. “I’m still on my laptop a lot because of online assignments. I’m [also] still on Zoom because of clubs and college meetings. I find my focus and procrastination increases a lot on asynchronous Wednesdays, so I’d overall say that makes it less enjoyable.”

As for teachers, they are divided on asynchronous days, just like their students.

Honors Algebra 2 teacher, Ms. Bennett, enjoys the freedom of asynchronous Wednesdays. “Personally, I really like it. From the perspective of what is best for my students I have mixed feelings. I think for some students the freedom of asynchronous Wednesdays are a way to build some time management skills that will be critical at the college level (where that sort of additional freedom is a given).”

Ms. Bennett also said, “Maybe if we could find a way to teach, or at least help, students learn these skills as part of having asynchronous Wednesdays, they’d work even better.”

Ms. Sisk, the eighth grade Latin teacher, is also a fan of asynchronous days. “I think they help, it is hard to be on Zoom for four days a week, let alone five.”

Ms. Sisk also commented that, “It is always hard as a teacher to gauge how much time asynchronous work will take, and while I like to poll students about how long it took them, there is often quite a range from 10-15 minutes to an hour +, so then I just have to go off of the average time it takes students. That being said, it is also hard to determine, was that one hour of solid work, or did you get distracted, tune out, etc. It will take some time and require communication, but hopefully we can all find the right middle ground.”

Ms. Breitman, the eighth grade English teacher, sees both sides of asynchronous Wednesdays saying, “I see pros and cons. It is a day we can have some events like meetings done since no one has classes. However, I am not sure students are best served by having an unstructured day. When we were in person at school, we never had an unstructured day for students to just work independently, so I don't know why we do it virtually.”

Ms. Breitman also sees a change in the amounts of work turned in from on synchronous vs. asynchronous days. “The percent of student work sadly diminishes on asynchronous days. On the regular days, only a small number don't do work, possibly one to two of the 55 students I teach in 8th grade. On asynchronous days, between five and 15 students don't turn in work.”

Ms. Sisk also said she receives less work on asynchronous days. “I think the percent of work turned in on Wednesdays is somewhat less than on synchronous days. I often attribute this to the lack of schedule and, during distance learning, it seems that no one is really using a planner, so it is quite easy to forget to complete an assignment or keep track of their classes.”

One student, Yao Calhoun, a senior, stands out from the rest of the asynchronous critics, as he has turned his criticism into action. On November 4, Yao created a petition on [change.org](https://www.change.org) with the proposal of the upper school having Wednesdays off, and in just 2 days he got over 95 signatures.

In response to being asked why he was against asynchronous classes on Wednesday, Yao said, “The idea of Wednesday's schedule is an amazing one, and it's something that I think has great potential. Although, the execution of Wednesday's schedule is in need of much reforming.”

He went on to name similar problems with asynchronous Wednesdays many of its critics state.

“For starters, we were supposed to be assigned 30 minutes of work for each class....students work at different paces...10 minutes to one student could be 55 to another... Next, many students have been limiting their screen time...Wednesday, in no way acts as a given break from the screen. Headaches have become a constant occurrence in my life, something that directly stems from

the number of hours I spend looking at a screen. A quick break from that in the middle of the week can play a huge role in the lessening of headaches...One last reason I'll give is the one of motivation. Since online school, motivation has been a vital component to this new way of learning. On Wednesdays, we rely on ourselves to get the work done. With no teachers there for reassurance, it's just us, our laptops, and a thousand distractions.”

When asked if he was worried that a lack of work on Wednesdays would cause students to learn even less than they typically would, due to Covid-19, Yao said, “My proposal does not concern me that students will learn less with Wednesdays off. Asynchronous days consist of turning in assignments before a deadline, rather than retaining information. In my opinion, students' mental health should be a priority, as well as our enrichment of knowledge...Latin has done an amazing job of cultivating a schedule for this school year, I just think that there are areas that can be reformed.”



Madison Cerkey-Mcfaddin surfing in Delaware



The middle school video game club, advised by Mr. Coleman, holds virtual meetings on asynchronous Wednesdays

Plenty of Platforms

By Nina Jobanputra, junior

Since the spring, the school has been trying to make the switch to online learning move more smoothly. Despite a couple of problems students have encountered with Unified Classroom, overall it has turned into the go-to platform for classes. However, with distance learning continuing into the 2020-2021 school year, some teachers find that they want to use other platforms besides Unified Classroom.

Junior Ben Southworth, said, “I have been asked to use Google Classroom by a few teachers and a bunch of weird platforms by Mr. Canedo. I think that [Google] Classroom is generally a pretty good organizer, but students aren't used to it, and teachers will have to explain where stuff will be if they want to use it.”

Many teachers interviewed used Google classroom. Mr. Hotchkiss, an AP literature teacher, said he used the platform because he liked that, “it's reliable and almost never down, that it is intuitive and easy to navigate without a lot of training or coaching, that it syncs automatically with Google Calendar, that it sends direct email reminders when assignments are due, that it tracks who submits what assignments when, and that it's really easy to do essay comments in it. Additionally, it's familiar to me and consistent with how I operated class all year.”

English teacher Ms. Austin stated that she preferred her students to use Eduflow. She likes it because “[it] provides resources beyond what Unified Classroom allows. For example: With Eduflow, students submit their writing assignments and, at a specified time, the platform distributes the essays to other students in that class. The students then edit each other's work anonymously. To my knowledge, the option for anonymous and random peer review isn't available on Unified Classroom.”

Ms. Hamm, who co-teaches the AP Computer Science and Principles course and teaches the AP Computer Science A course, has been using many different platforms to run her classes smoothly way before the pandemic. She uses, “Edhesive and the AP Classroom in both AP Computer Science A and AP Computer Science Principles. In AP CSP, we use Snap! (a visual programming application) and also the Beauty and Joy of Computing Curriculum (more of a website than a platform).” The reason why she asks students to use these platforms is because “[they] need other platforms because of the coding-specific tools they offer. Unified Classroom is fine for recording grades and submitting work, but it doesn't have development environments and custom multiple-choice questions and lessons for our content area.”

Some cons that Ben finds are that, “[for Google Classroom] the submission system of how the turn in and upload are separated.” which can lead to students thinking they have turned in their work when they haven’t. He also says that when the school keeps pushing unified classroom when none of the teachers are using it then “that's an issue. Essentially what I'm saying is that I'm fine with most platforms as long as the administration, teachers, and students are on the same page.”

Mr. Hotchkiss said that some cons with Google Classroom is that, “The extra step of "submitting" an assignment is, I think, annoying to students. Instead of just clicking "share," it's another 3 steps you have to take. I don't like that it feels like a burden to them.” Also that he worries for the students “that it might be confusing with having two platforms they could check. Some may feel they need to look at both. Or they may misread or confuse directions consulting two sites. I work hard to make sure that the instructions and assignments are *exactly the same* on both platforms so there's no confusion.”

Ms. Hamm doesn’t see many cons because, “custom content and tools offered” outweighs most of the cons. However she does recognize that, “it can lead to a lot of tabs being open between Zoom, Unified Classroom, and Edhesive or Snap!, plus a Google Drive tab or something. [Furthermore,] Edhesive can be a little picky in programming requirements, but I think it's good overall. Some students say Snap! is of lesser quality than Scratch. I will say that I think it runs a little slower sometimes, that's for sure.”

Overall the teachers feel like the students don’t mind that much about having to use different platforms. Ms. Austin said, “My students have been completely open to using another platform. When things go wrong, as they sometimes do, they have been extremely accommodating and understanding. I have been extremely grateful to them for their willingness to be supportive of me this school year!”

Teachers' Takes: Virtual Learning

By Evelyn Houghton and Sadie Greenhalgh, sixth graders

Teachers at Washington Latin have reflected on teaching online since March 13th. They have been using their computers to simulate a class online since DC Public Schools and charter schools have not fully reopened due to the Covid-19 pandemic. But what do they think about it? Do they dislike it? Or do they like it more than being in-person?

"This situation demands that we use this format to stay safe. Like it or not, it is what we must do," says Mr. Porcelli, Arabic and AP Human Geography teacher, as he reflected on the current situation.

Even though the new normal has been a hard struggle for everyone, there are some recognizable advantages of teaching at home.

"In terms of working with my class, it has been fun and interesting to interact with students in an environment where they feel at home," said Mr. Porcelli. "On a personal level, it has been wonderful for me to be able to be home with my newborn son for the first four months of his life."

Ms. Reed, sixth grade English teacher, says that she likes "the later start to the school day, and more time spent with my family and my dog."

"I like sleeping in the most," says Ms. Dobler, sixth grade science teacher. "I also think the chat gives students the opportunity to participate in class."

Even though there are elements teachers enjoy more, they acknowledge the aspects they miss as well.

"I miss the antics of the hallways, the energy of the school building and the little side comments that happen in the classroom," added Mr. Porcelli.

"I miss recess, mini pizza Friday, and advisory lunch," stated Ms. Reed. "It's also hard not getting to know my students in person,"

"I miss not being able to help students face to face," said Ms. Dobler. "I also miss demos, hands on models, field trips, and knowing whether people are confused or stuck. I miss interactions in the hallway and during recess."

Even though this year has been challenging, Washington Latin's adaptable teachers have been able to move on with their best foot forward.



Sixth grade English teacher
Ms.Reed's workspace

Socially-Distanced Spooky Season

By Sophia Smith and Jack Pearson, eighth graders

When people think of Halloween they see jack o'lanterns, kids in costumes and people handing out candy. This year some elements have to change. People at Latin have adapted this year to celebrate Halloween in the wake of Covid-19.

Eighth grader Ella Schmidgall's family takes Halloween quite seriously with a new set of coordinated hand-made Halloween costumes every year. This year they are wearing color coordinated masks as well. And they built a candy chute to interact with trick or treaters from a safe distance.

"We bought a pipe and we attached it to our stairs and decorated it. We call it a candy chute," exclaimed Ella Schmidgall.

This year Eighth grader Summer Romney is dressing up casually and having a small Halloween dinner.

"It's not what we would usually be doing. We'd be handing out candy and going to parties, but we don't get to do that anymore," remarked Summer Romney.

While it's very important to stay safe that doesn't mean that people shouldn't celebrate Halloween. Whether you want to dress up just for fun, watch some scary movies, or put up some spooky decorations, Halloween doesn't need to be celebrated at the cost of your health.

Eighth grader Lydia Park's neighborhood is having a block party with a parade and socially distant activities.

"The people in my neighborhood are going to have a socially distant block party and the younger kids are going to do a parade with their costumes on and the older kids will watch a movie," said Lydia.

9th grader Mage Pearson is having a socially distanced hangout with some close friends. He believes that social distancing will make things harder but that doesn't mean it can't be fun.

"The basic challenges of social distancing make doing our usual routine of trick or treating very difficult so we have decided a nice socially distanced hangout will be an appropriate alternative," said Mage.

On the week of the 19th of October, eighth graders came on campus for a field day. There, people played relays, charades, and other games. Students were encouraged to wear costumes. People also decorated masks, wooden ghosts and pumpkins. Everyone tried their best to stay safe with masks, sanitizing, distancing and symptom checks.

“It’s really difficult to bring people together during the times that we are going through. So the first part of everything is to be really safe....then the second thing is that we want to be together and have some fun!” explained Mr. Kelly, the Middle School Director.



A candy chute for trick-or-treaters, designed by eighth grader Eloise Schmidgall's family



Eighth grade history teacher Mr. Byrd dressed as The Riddler for Halloween

Getting Outside!

By Mila Appelbaum, fifth grader

Since the coronavirus started, there has been a rise in people being outside. In a *New York Times* article, it was reported through use of cell phone data that people were increasingly going outside more. Hikes are crowded, on long weekends camping sites are sold out, and according to *The Washington Post*, sales of paddle sport products increased 56% in June of this year.

Washington Latin students are getting outside too, to combat the cabin fever of virtual learning.

Fifth grader Lydia Tiersky said that she had been camping lately. She also said “I would recommend camping to others because it's a good way to get outside, and it is pretty fun.”

Daphna Sokis also has been spending time outdoors. She said, “I have been taking hikes with my family. I really recommend hiking because now the weather is so nice and we are inside all day doing zoom calls, that it can be nice to get outside, clear your head, get out some energy, and watch the leaves change color.”

Fifth grader Natalia Berdichevsky, who also has been hiking with her family, said, “I have been hiking in the woods (Rock Creek Park) with my family and it's really fun, and I would recommend this to others if you like hiking and being in the woods. There are lots of animals, and lots of trails too.”

Some clubs have been trying to get kids outside, including the eighth grade Outdoors Club. This year the outdoors club was started by Ms. Barlev, the 8th grade Earth Science teacher.

Ms. Barlev said, “The purpose of the outdoors club is for some 8th graders to safely spend time together outside, away from screens. We explore different beautiful and natural spaces in our city together.”

So far they have been to the National Arboretum and Rock Creek Park. In the future, they plan to explore Kingman Island, Anacostia Park, and the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens.

“Even with such great technology and amazing tools like Zoom that help us connect, I think there is something special about still seeing each other in person,” she said. “It's just important that we do so in a way that is safe for everyone,” adds Ms. Barlev. The club takes safety precautions such as wearing masks, staying 6 feet apart, and only meeting outdoors. Students have their temperature taken when they arrive.

Eighth grader and outdoor club member Capri Romney said that before the club she was only getting outside to go to the store or to get mail and there were definitely days where she was only inside.

“It is a great way for me to see more nature and hidden gems in DC but also to be able to see my peers,” she said. “It has been great to catch up with everyone!”



The Outdoors Club during their recent trip to the Arboretum



Editorial: Is American Individualism Hurting Us?

By Paulina Inglima, Sophomore

As cases of Covid-19 continue to rise in the US, reaching 8.85 million, and the economy slides, it brings up the question of what is the United States doing wrong? Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Health, and many other doctors, have encouraged the American people to wear masks in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This has taken form in stores, restaurants, and businesses requiring people to wear masks in doors, and many government officials calling for nationwide mask mandates.

However, many Americans have refused to wear masks, saying it is a restriction of their freedom. In other countries, where nationwide shutdowns and mask mandates were put in place, this proved to be effective in slowing the spread. So, what does this say about America? Why aren't some Americans wearing masks? In other times of crisis in the US, when a restriction on our freedom has been put in place, a required public service, such as the draft, people have generally banded together in support for it in an act of patriotism. Why isn't the individualistic American doing that now?

Sixth grade Civics teacher Mr. Staten stated, "the United States is a unique country in terms of individualism, there is a very special focus on 'the rugged individualistic American' that doesn't really exist in other countries."

According to the Oxford Dictionary, individualism is "a social theory favoring freedom of action for individuals over collective or state control."

Mr. Staten cited the French and Indian War as an example of this. The war left Great Britain deeply in debt, so they raised taxes in the colonies since the war was fought for the benefit of the American colonists.

"This was seen as such an infringement on individual rights and American liberty that it helped propel the American revolution. So even from the beginning, America has always had this idea that individual rights are way more important than the rights of the whole group."

Mr. Staten also said that throughout times of war and emergency, "American presidents have always kind of appealed to a national unity, saying we need to band together to fight a common enemy, and this president [Donald Trump] has not done that, and that is something that is unique in our American democracy. We have a president who has not made a unified call for everyone to rally around the flag in a time of crisis for the common good."

World history teacher Mr. Stiff had a similar way of thinking about it, saying “In a Confucian political thought, the authority of the leader comes from the authority of their virtue, of their moral example to others. I think that’s powerful, I think that if our leaders in the United States had more of that, people would be willing to follow them, despite our rugged individualism.”

Both teachers thought that leadership in this time is key, as President Donald Trump has notoriously been against placing restrictions on the people of the USA despite the Coronavirus pandemic, unlike other European and Asian world leaders, causing tension between Democrats and Republicans.

Mr. Stiff also believes that the politicizing of media and news sources have created this divide in our country. He said that “[i]t does seem to be a crisis of trust right now... but there is a lack of trust of sources, living in the age of ‘fake news.’ Where anything you disagree with can be rejected just because you disagree with its source, it’s difficult to come to a consensus as to what even is actually correct, that’s a problem that prevents unity.”

Many news and information sources have of late taken clear, if not explicit, sides in politics. This distrust in the news is then increased by how easily people are able to spread false information and photoshop pictures into fake articles.

Mr. Staten and Mr. Stiff also agreed that times of war in U.S. history are different from now, because of the physicality of war. “There is something clarifying about a state of war, because there is a clear cause and a clear right that you are willing to sacrifice for, so you set aside smaller differences and smaller disagreements for the sake of the bigger cause,” says Mr. Stiff.

“One of the stereotypes of the American Revolution, after 1776, after the war took off, there was this real sincere belief that the war would be over in a year and the boys would be home by Christmas, and when that doesn’t happen it becomes really hard for Americans to sustain prolonged sacrifice. When there is no clearly defined enemy it becomes even harder,” said Mr. Staten.

It is much more difficult for people to stay committed to something when there is no clear physical villain to blame. You can’t say that if you capture a few cities, the war will be over. This is made more difficult because, as Mr. Staten said, we have no clear end date and don’t know how much longer quarantine measures will be in place. People have already gotten restless about wearing masks for 6 months, who knows what will happen when winter comes?

The impact of the Coronavirus on our nation’s unity can be explained by the American spirit, leadership, the prolonged sacrifice, and many other points. The war against Covid-19 is a complex one, and one that is different from any other war in American history. But by examining the ways in which crises have happened in the past, one can better understand the crisis America is in now.

Adapting to the New Masked Reality

By Sophia Smith, eighth grader

As students start coming back to campus and interacting with each other in person, masks are becoming standard. Face coverings are crucial to slowing the spread of COVID-19. While everyone knows how important they are, that doesn't mean there aren't problems.

Socially, masks can be a big issue. "As humans we communicate a lot through our facial expressions, so it's difficult when half of your face is covered up," said Ms. Vercammen, the choir teacher who teaches in person often.

For teachers, what might already be a tough class can become even more difficult with the addition of masked teachers and peers.

"We have to stand up in front of the class and we have to talk!" said Mr. Byrd, the eighth grade history teacher. "And it's hard enough trying to just talk in general for forty five minutes straight. And sometimes they won't be able to understand what you're saying so you have to repeat yourself."

These problems definitely won't allow teachers or students to consider foregoing a mask. "I don't think it's too much to ask of people, especially when it can help stop the spread of the coronavirus," says Helena Ikenberry, a senior at Latin.

In the end, the school will focus on student health, and not on the ease or challenges of learning while masked.

"No matter what, we need to be putting the health and safety of students and staff first," explains Ms. Barlev, 8th science teacher. Along with a number of teachers, she has taught small groups in person on Wednesdays in the building. "Teaching and learning with a mask poses challenges, but we know that it helps prevent the spread of Covid-19. If we're back learning in person, masks might be something that we have to do to help keep everyone safe and healthy."





Halloween Crossword

By Nicholas Kempf, eighth grader

**Pumpkin
Vampire
Zombie**

**Scary
Party
Jack-O-Lantern**

**Candy
Mummy**

**Ghost
Costume**

**Witch
Chocolate**

C	C	C	O	C	N	V	E	T	D	G	C	V	J
M	Y	I	E	C	N	Y	R	A	C	S	I	A	A
A	U	G	H	O	S	T	M	I	S	P	E	M	C
H	T	M	R	A	S	E	M	O	M	A	M	P	K
Y	K	S	M	S	H	C	T	I	W	R	U	I	O
U	E	S	R	Y	G	C	U	P	M	T	T	R	L
A	N	E	A	U	I	O	A	E	R	Y	S	E	A
D	I	U	G	T	U	A	N	N	K	L	O	E	N
C	K	U	C	C	I	L	D	C	D	M	C	E	T
I	P	E	I	B	M	O	Z	E	S	Y	M	A	E
P	M	E	E	T	A	L	O	C	O	H	C	M	R
W	U	L	C	I	K	C	H	D	A	R	K	T	N
L	P	P	C	J	Y	U	M	J	T	T	O	M	O
A	M	M	R	A	C	A	C	I	N	P	C	R	C

Cartoons

By Ruby-Rae Mccants, eighth grader





Covid Halloween



Cartoon

By Anja Pratt, freshman



Games

By Ella Kramer, sophomore

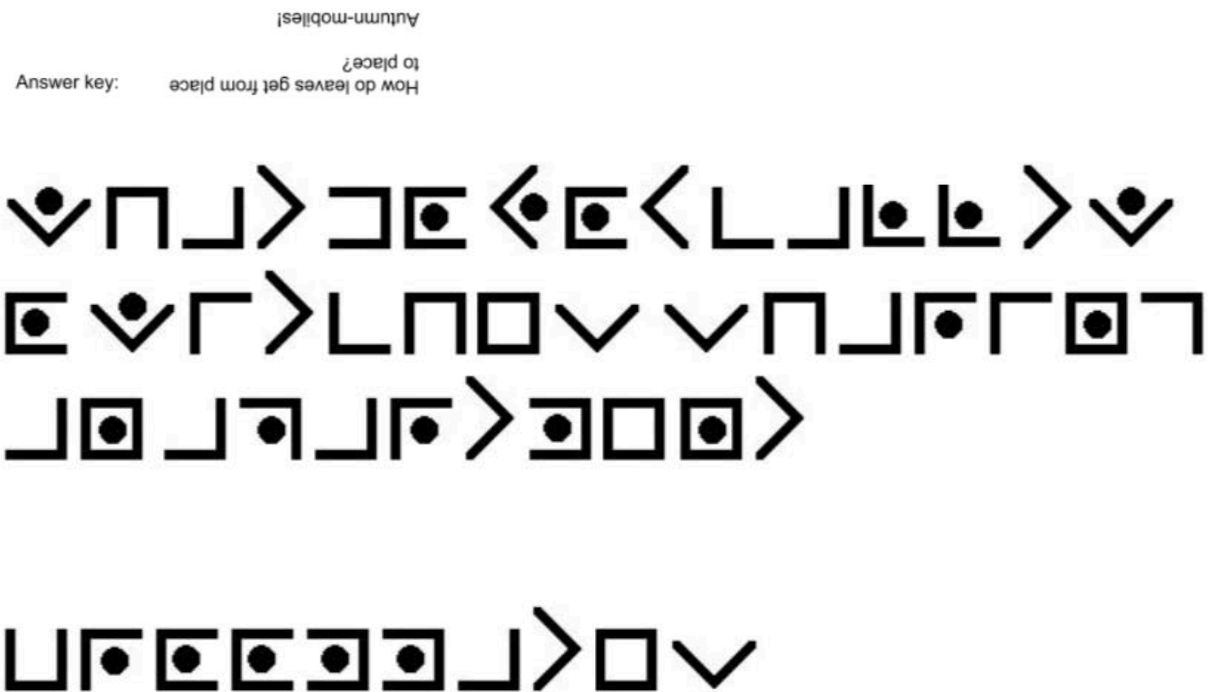
T A E R T R O K C I R T N M K Q Q G C S A K A O F A J K G K
 X Y B U A W W P W L W P O E O A W H H L Q K Q C Q W A X V O
 H O C A T M X V M N E B T B E N L O X L K N R T O W B A Q E
 R A B I T J R Z H K X L E Q O W S S L I E R X O B O M T Z G
 M O O N C E D Z Q S F T L J L L O T B H T O M B W P U Q A H
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 V A G J W L K O P V Y F K A N X N G L R F C B R P K K T D U
 N Y T I D W B S H O X J S T D I L E R A U L E P H K I L F W
 R U A C E A M M W N M G V L K Q D D U A H Y D W W W U W V O
 C V R G L S J E X Y E P N P V I U E M Y N L P E M Z U L G Z
 Z J G A D K C Z D B F I M C K S R U L J M H J Y F X H X K O
 Z B H A K U P T K I N U V E H X C M P C A N D Y X Q E K L S
 P K Q M Z L K T V H P C O S T U M E W T X D J J D M Q L B S
 Z O D G E U H H U B J W X G H R Y F N A C K J N Y C A U Q J
 R Q R T D P B H A W P O L Z M R K R X B K H N F H F E U A F
 M R X D I R U G U W O Y R O U U D V K U R P B F O T J E F P
 R U Y R V Y M M U M P D O I A H C V F S Z S E H I Y G B H Q
 F T W C L S N X F A S A X U B G R P O E W L B V R H U A J B
 L V O Y V E U Z D O C O H X B H D Z I E R D E E O M L I R A
 X L U V K N U N L F Q A T V G K B M T A C F L U U X N S Y V
 R L U H N R K S I H U U D P F A O H J R Z O L W I O V F B H
 D D B K H L U O L N G R A Y W J P W Z R E X R O G I E X W P
 Z T Q P S I D U T R X H W F K O X D L T S A N E R E I W J X
 A M X R A Y I E C Y T L N J N F D B Q M G F T R F Q M Y A J
 U R H P Q Y D G P D J R P P Q A J A W F N J D J N G Q Y Y U
 O M P K H H B Y F O J W F V E V H O H E A Q X W A Y P K W J
 Z O P T O B T A T N D R N E L D N A C S F O O G Q T M F P H
 Q Q E U N L C F K C H P V B N I P L X V L I H T W S J X I V
 W K S F C P R G S L F O G O A H G P W G B G W N R R Y L O C
 V E Z Y I F X D C G X X M O C O M N X P J H U P Q Z K T N N

BAT BOO CANDLE CANDY CHILLS COSTUME
FALL FANGS GHOST GHOUL HALLOWEEN
HAUNTEDHOUSE MONSTER MOON
MUMMY OCTOBER PUMPKIN SHADOW
SKELETON SKULL

Codes:

sld wl ovzevh tvlg uiln kozxv gl kozxv?

Zfgfnnm-nlyrovh!



Answer key: what do you call two
witches sharing an
apartment?
broommates!