Some participants were handing out hóngbāo, which is a little red bag filled with money, as a means of wishing the receivers good luck, prosperity and wellbeing for the year. Onlookers stood in awe underneath their umbrellas, with laughter and cheers as the parade passed by. The participants in the parade would shoot off confetti cannons, raining glittering confetti at every moment on every bystander they could. Some stood fast, as the rain was on and off, more took shelter under any roof they could find climbing on ledges of buildings, clinging to the wall avoiding to get soaked. Others watched from their apartments, windows adorned with Chinese talismans. Despite the rain, women dressed in glittering garments of yellow and red danced through the puddle-lined streets. The men were dressed in costumes of dragons with bright yellow manes, gold, green and silver scales and as the most predominant color, red. Dragons were common sights, as they are symbols of good luck and protection in traditional Chinese culture. Large red dogs made of plastic were also being carried by celebrants to welcome in the New Year of The Dog.

Bangladesh native Subarna Dey, who came out to see the event, said: “I was more interested in the dragon dress dance, and that was very fast, and I loved it, and it is very colorful, and very similar to our culture.” Throughout the parade many onlookers had gotten confetti cannons, whether they had been thrown to them by paraders or purchased from the local shops for a few dollars. As adults and children alike gathered in the square to fire them, the air was filled with the sparkle of white, blue and green confetti in a display that was fun for all ages.

Onlooker Mark Wergan described all the music, motion and color as “fantastical.” Good luck charms known as mystic knots hung from street lights as another reminder to welcome the new year with good fortune. With the new year rolling in, it isn’t hard to see why there are so many good luck charms in a few blocks. But in addition to all the festivities, an undercurrent of politics was evident, clear support for Chinatown, with one speaker calling out to participants, “We know you are under attack in Washington, but we have your back!”

Many parade goers were waving the Chinese flag alongside the American one to show solidarity with Chinese immigrants in America. Chinese-Americans are the second largest immigrant population in the States, according to the 2010 United States Census. It is becoming an increasingly common sight to see a Chinatown in multiple cities across the States, like in New York City, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Chinese New Year celebration showed cultural solidarity in challenging times.
But in addition to all the festivities, an undercurrent of politics was evident. There was clear support for immigrants in Chinatown, with one speaker calling out to participants, “We know you are under attack in Washington, but we have your back!”

Many people in the streets were waving the Chinese flag alongside the American one to show solidarity with Chinese immigrants in America. According to an article written by Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova on the Migration Policy Institute website, Chinese immigrants are the third-largest foreign-born group in America. The United States is the top choice for Chinese immigrants, making up 22 percent of the almost eleven-million Chinese nationals living outside of China.

Chinese-Americans are the second largest immigrant population in the States, according to the 2010 United States Census. It is becoming a commonly sighted group in multiple States, like in New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. The new political regime in Washington and the President’s antagonistic rhetoric toward China is having an impact. For example, as Lishan Wu, a Mercer student and Chinese immigrant said, “We used to think American government policy is nice to Chinese to immigrant, we don’t feel comfortable, and in this case, if I am in China and I haven’t immigrated to America, I won’t consider.”

Hate crimes against Asian-Americans do not get a lot of coverage by the media even in places where the numbers are high. A report from the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations found that crimes targeting Asian-Americans tripled in that county between 2014 and 2015. An NPR report by Jenny J. Chen published on February 17 noted that many Chinese immigrant women don’t speak up when they are victims of a hate crime, due to the sensitivity of the hate crimes, making them more vulnerable targets. So statistics on these crimes are likely under inflated.

At this year’s parade political sentiment was evident in things like the presence of a Chinese American LGBTQ group, with a long rainbow-colored fabric showing their support and signs in both English and Chinese saying, “We honor our families.”

The Asian-Americans Advancing Justice non-profit organization created a new website to document the cases of hate against this population. The website standagainstthatred.org encourages them to tell their stories in order to create more awareness and make them feel comfortable.

A major development in China in the last week is the removal of term limits for the country’s president Xi Jinping which has been met with alarm by activist groups who fear a power grab that will propel the country back toward the era of Mao. But despite all this as the backdrop the Chinese community still banded together to celebrate the culture and traditions of their heritage using this unity as one way to face political crises in the Year of The Dog.

**A cultural solidarity in challenging times**

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PROTESTS 2017
Largest nationwide protests of 2017 from Countlove.org

TWO YEARS OF PROTEST

By Derw Mumich
Senior Reporter

From the Boston Tea Party, to the Whiskey Rebellion, to the wars in Vietnam and Iraq, vocalizing disagreement has been a theme of American history. But in the Trump era we are seeing something new, protests on a scale and frequency previously unseen. The question is whether or not voter turnout? And, secondarily, to what extent is protest affecting policy?

Throughout 2017 there were an estimated 8,700 protests, according to Crowd Sourcing Consortium of protests at 11,149.

Reporters have said in an opinion article for The Guardian entitled “We are Living in a Golden Age of Protest,” “this is certainly protest even in the US. Even when you adjust for population growth, it’s probably a higher percentage than took to the streets during the heyday of the civil rights movement in the 1960s.”

Maggie Carroll, a Liberal Arts major at Mercer, told the VOICE, “I remember seeing Marches for gun laws and marches for Black Lives Matter, and when people my age went to them, it motivated me to become involved myself. Seeing so many marches, it was a really good feeling.”

Kaufman explains that “6,000 local resistance groups, known as Indivisible, the advocacy protest group founded by all of these groups, are consistently active.”

He continues, “This alone represents a broad precedent in American history. Many of these groups are formed in their areas, hoping that this wave of street action will be the March for Our Lives..”

A Pew Research Center article titled “Activism in the Social Media Age” states, “Engagement in these activities varies by age: Americans ages 18 to 29 are more likely than those ages 30 to 49 to have recently changed their profile picture to show support for a cause (28 percent vs. 13 percent), or used hashtags related to a political or social cause.”

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TWO YEARS OF POLITICAL PROTEST

Throughout 2017 there were an estimated 8,700 protests, and an estimated 5.9-9 million voter turnout. And, secondarily, to what extent is youth participation propelling the movement? At a frequency previously unseen. The question now is: will the rallies have an impact on policy or of American history. But in the Trump era we are seeing something new, protests on a scale and to the wars in Vietnam and Iraq, vocalizing disagreement with the government has been a theme From the Boston Tea Party, to the Whiskey Rebellion, to the struggle for civil rights, and opposition changing who sets the policy. And that means voting.

As Professor DeRosa, a political science professor at Mercer explains, “I just think younger people don’t consider [voting] as important as they should...They would be the key to this election, if they decided to vote.”

He went on to say “In order to make a difference you have to change policy, and you have to need to see if protests make a difference...it’s very obvious they are not enough alone.” “Yes,” Tommy Leung, a co-founder of Countlove.org tells the VOICE. “The protests help to change who sets the policy.”

This begs the question: does protesting affect politics? The Pew study does not break down or separate the millennials and the Gen Xers in terms of behavior. The vast majority of the organizing in the past two years has been lead by adults, but some degree. I think that, certainly, historically, there is some evidence to suggest that we don’t always participate...but, the media has helped organizers to spread awareness about major issues. With hashtags like #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, and #NeverAgain being used more than 30 million times on Twitter, it has become easier to spread activist messages across the nation. Social media has played an important role in spreading awareness of issues and organizing protests.

The effect the past two years of street protests will have on voting choices and turnout this coming midterm election is yet to be seen, but on Election Day, November 6, we will find out.

Fisher continues to say, “Participants were also more likely than those at recent marches to be first-time protesters. About 27 percent of participants at the March for Our Lives had never protested before. ”

Reporters should be aware that there is evidence to suggest that protests can increase voter turnout. According to a recent study by the American National Election Study, protests can have a positive effect on voter turnout. The study found that individuals who participate in protests are more likely to vote than those who do not participate in protests. The study suggests that protests can increase political engagement by raising awareness of issues and mobilizing individuals to take action. However, it is important to note that the effect of protests on voter turnout may vary depending on factors such as the issue at hand, the political climate, and the demographics of the population involved in the protests.

In conclusion, the struggle for civil rights, and opposition to the government has been a theme for something new, protests on a scale and to the wars in Vietnam and Iraq, vocalizing disagreement with the government has been a theme. From the Boston Tea Party, to the Whiskey Rebellion, to the struggle for civil rights, and opposition changing who sets the policy. And that means voting. 