

# DATELINE:



Volume 56  
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# DOWNTOWN

# LOVE ME



# LOVE ME NOT

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**EDITORIAL DIRECTOR**

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Terrance Turner

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Jason J. Rivas

Elisa Gonzalez

Miguel Nunez

Karen Reyes

Christina Movaghar

Christopher Joseph

**COPY EDITOR**

Lydia Jackson

**ADVISOR**

Dr. Anthony Chiaviello

[datelinedowntownhtx@gmail.com](mailto:datelinedowntownhtx@gmail.com)

713.221.8569

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## The Issue of Consent

by Kara Moore

There is not a holiday better associated with the month of February than Valentine's Day, the day to express love and appreciation for your romantic partner—but it's not all pink hearts and teddy bears. Expressing love for someone new, someone you've dated a few months, or someone you've loved for years can create varying degrees of intimacy. And, with one of the hot topics of the past year being sexual assault on college campuses, UHD students are preparing by discussing an area often appearing to be gray—consent. Last semester, Dateline Downtown writer Jason Rivas was on Facebook when, Dasha Ivanova posted about a campaign she had started at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX, called "Define Your Line." The campaign aims to discuss the issue of consent on college campuses by utilizing flyers. Jason was intrigued and reached out to her, hoping to take some of their flyers and spread them around UHD. Dasha agreed, as long as the organization's logo remained on all flyers.

At the beginning of this semester, Jason teamed up with UHD's chapter of the Texas Freedom Network and UHD Feminists, to work not only on doing a basic flyer campaign but possibly a consent panel. Working closely with these organizations, they first redesigned the current flyer to make it more inclusive.

"Aracely Garcia (UHD alumni) helped to redesign the flyers to make them all-inclusive for all types of sexual relations," said Jason. "It's an expanded flyer, and we're working now with Michelle Gutierrez-Valdez, Sahra Harvin, and Magge Nunez (current leaders/members of TFN and UHD Feminists). We are planning to print out two different flyers for a flyer-bomb campaign throughout the school," he continued.

According to a nationwide study done by the Association of American Universities, 23% of female college students reported unwanted sexual contact. The issue of campus assault and Title IX violations was so bad that the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights is now investigating 106 colleges and universities. The Huffington Post reported that the investigation was due to concerns about whether the schools violated Title IX in their handling of sexual violence cases. If there was ever such a thing as the best time to talk about consent, it would be this year and around a day celebrating love. That's the plan for this campaign: to inform people of how to enjoy Valentine's Day without encroaching on the boundaries of someone else.

In the future, Sahra Harvin is planning to do another campaign to discuss consent outside of a sexual encounter, attempting to "Define the Line" when it comes to even hugging someone or holding their hand. Looking at studies on consent across America, and specifically on college campuses, she hopes to create a decent set of guidelines people can follow in regards to receiving permission before engaging in friendly contact with another person. The real goal for Jason is to set up a consent panel for the end of the semester, which will establish the flow of discussion in a more direct manner, straight from students to professionals and back again.

Jason proposed a resolution to the SGA Senate to back the "Draw Your Line" campaign, aiming to get as many organizations involved as possible. The resolution passed, providing much-needed SGA resources while, at the same time, allowing the students who began the campaign, to maintain control. Check around campus this Valentine's Day for "Draw Your Line" flyers. You may just learn a thing or two about the importance of explicit consent!

**The absence of "no" is not consent.**

**Good Sex**  
Starts With Good Communication

**Sex is Great**

**CONSENT**  
is the presence of a yes,  
not the absence of a no.

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# 4 Words by Women

Imagine ordering a plain coffee at your favorite café and being asked whether you'd like a men's or a women's coffee. In shock, you ask why, and the cashier explains that they're priced differently. "Are they the same?" you ask. "In every way," the cashier replies. You opt for the cheaper of the two, and the cashier hands you the same cup you're used to, only now the sleeve says Men.

Whether you're a woman or a man, a smart person would take the men's coffee every time. This is what some women do to avoid paying more for discriminately priced products like razors and shaving cream. As awareness of the inequity dubbed "the pink tax" grows, corporations, and even state legislatures are being urged to correct this imbalance.

While gender-specific coffee isn't a real thing, it's a good way to demonstrate the absurdity of completely identical items being priced according to their packaging or their target demographic. From a marketing standpoint it makes perfect sense, and it's a well-known practice: if a different name or color of packaging sells more of the same item and at a higher price, why not do it? This is why there exist things like Brosé (Rosé wine for men), Mangria (Sangria for men), and many food variations of the Bronut (a donut for men). None of these products are regularly used or essential—like shampoos, razors, or lotion are (Upworthy.com cites these as the worst offenders.) So gender pricing and charging more for them may be a gimmicky ploy to increase profit, but it's not technically price discrimination.

Uncovering evidence of real price discrimination, the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (NYDCA) recently released a study that found female products from health care, clothing, accessories and even toys were priced between 4%–13% higher than male versions of the same products.

## PINK TAX

by Elisa Gonzalez

Among the 397 products surveyed, women paid more 42% of the time, while men paid more only 18% of the time.

NYDCA also points to a 1994 study, conducted by the State of California which concluded that because of the pink tax, a woman could expect to pay about \$1,351 more a year than a man purchasing the same items or services. Inflation brings that to \$2,160 today.

On Twitter and Tumblr, the increasingly popular hashtag #genderpricing is full of examples of children's toys, clothing, and hygiene products that prove women—and even the parents of young girls—are paying more for a lot of things, specifically pink things, which is where the term "pink tax" comes from. Some women are recommending purchasing the male versions as often as possible to avoid falling victim to the pink tax, but does that really encourage a change in prices?

What'll happen to women's and men's products if more women choose to buy the men's versions? It's possible that decreased demand for women's products could nudge manufacturers toward fairer pricing. It's also reasonable to suggest that the decreased demand won't be impactful enough—it's difficult for people to switch to new products, especially items they use routinely. Manufacturers will, as usual, find some clever new way to market something old in a way that makes women feel like paying more is ok, because they're buying a "superior product." Schick Hydro razor refills, for example, cost nearly four more dollars for women than men, but women are getting "curve sensing blades," so maybe the price is justified—sentient razor blades can't be cheap to produce.

Although state governments are receiving new pressure to outlaw gender pricing, it's tough to prove,

especially when cunning corporate marketers only have to prove that products aren't identical in order to charge more—sometimes that difference is as small as an extra tab of plastic on a razor. However, with NYDCA and #genderpricing shedding new light on genuine instances of unfair pricing, on social media companies are being publicly held accountable for gender discrimination. As those being called out start to respond, there's a chance we'll start to see less of this insulting practice.

**THE FEMALE TAX**  
The social & economic price of menstruation

**Periods are still a social taboo**

Historically, all religions (except Sikhism) placed restrictions on menstruating women, who were considered unclean and impure. This is the origin of a social taboo that still exists all around the world.

Artist: Taji Kaur posted a shot of herself taking a nap in period-stained pants. Instagram deleted the photo... twice.

**If men had periods...**

"Menstruation would become an enviable, masculine event. Men would brag about how long and how much. Boys would mark the onset of menarche, that longed-for proof of manhood, with religious ritual and stag parties."

Gloria Steinem

**Being female is (unjustly) expensive**

\$120/year + \$20/year × 40 years  
on pads & tampons on meds for period side effects between puberty and menopause

= \$5,600 spent by a woman on her period in her entire lifetime.

Did you know? The UK enforces a 5% tax on sanitary pads and tampons, considered as luxury items. Meanwhile, most disposable razors are not taxed.

**Menstruating girls in the developing world pay a high social and sanitary price**

In the developing world, low access to pads, tampons, and other feminine hygiene products have a direct impact on girls' and women's health, education and prospects.

- 14% of girls in Africa skip school during their period and eventually drop out as a consequence (Unesco).
- 48% of girls in Iran believe their period to be a disease.
- 20% of girls in Afghanistan skip school during their periods.
- 3% of the world has no improved sanitation at home, 50% of schools in developing countries have no toilets. In Nigeria, there's a fear among school students. This can lead girls on their period to decide to skip school.
- Even when periods can't be linked to a drop in attendance rates, such as in Nepal, menstruation may still cause girls to drop out as it may be seen as a sign of sexual maturity or preparedness for marriage.
- In Kenya, half of the girls living in slums have sex with older men in exchange for pads, which puts them at risk for HIV and other STDs.
- In India, only 12% of women used pads in 2010. 70% could not afford them. 88% used old cloth, dried grass, ash, sand or newspapers instead, a practice potentially linked to higher rates of cervical cancer.

**Solutions?**

**Eradicating the taboo**  
Better sex education for young men and women can help reduce the stigma surrounding menstruation.

**Ending the female tax**  
Options such as menstrual cups or washable underwear are still largely unknown by the public or regarded as unpractical, but are more budget- and environmentally-friendly, and thus an interesting solution in both developed and developing countries.

Author: Marie Baloe. © Neri Magazine, September 2015.  
Sources: The Guardian, Voice of America, Helpnet, Groundwell, Jezebel, World Economic Forum, Neri Magazine, SCO Children's Village.

## Alley Theatre Renovations Complete

by Karen Reyes

With the first major \$46.5 million renovation completed since the opening in 1968, the Alley Theater is now reopened with the start of its 2015-16 season. And is now back on air!

The theater now includes many new special renovations by Houston-based W.S Bellows Construction Corp. which also built the original Alley Theater. The renovations included additional spaces for patrons, more restrooms, an addition of a four-story fly loft allowing on-stage scene changes, a tracked flooring that allows an orchestra or actors to appear and disappear from stage, new interiors and exteriors lighting, updated lobbies, and handicapped-accessible seating.

Currently the theater is preparing for their first annual Alley All New Festival. This festival is a combination of readings and workshop performances of six new plays that focuses on the creative process instead of the final product. The workshop performances allow writers to develop their plays over the course of four weeks.

The festival will also consist of readings, a key part for the development of new plays. After a brief rehearsal, actors will perform stands for the audience to hear the dialogue and imagine the production through spoken stage directions.

For those who wish to participate on the All New Festival visit website for instructions. All presentations are free and open to the public. Take this chance to participate and be part of the All New Festival and to also experience in person these beautiful renovations of the Alley Theater just for Houstonians.

It could easily be said that the renovations will establish the theater as a world-class stage for the people of Houston to perform and to enjoy any kind of performance.



photo courtesy of alleytheatre.org showing the Alley's 1st owned space

# Planned Parenthood: Surprising Verdict

by Darci McFerran

Planned Parenthood is once again making headlines, but this time they are not under attack. Last summer a video emerged that purported to show the organization selling fetal tissue obtained from abortions in order to make a profit. It implicated Planned Parenthood in nefarious and criminal activity related to their most controversial service: abortions. In response, the Republican Party latched onto the “evidence” with both hands, even building a case for de-funding the clinics on a federal level. This alone launched a furious public and political debate, one that still rages on today.

The topic of abortion generates extreme positions. People are usually on one side or the other of a deeply emotional, personal, and often religious topic. The emotional aspects of the issue are seldom removed in the political arena, and when anyone attempts to create national legislation regarding abortion, those emotions influence the outcome.

In a surprising turn of events, a Texas grand jury flipped this case on its ear by indicting the activists who released the video. The Center for Medical Progress’s founder David Daleiden and employee Sandra Merritt both received felony charges for tampering with a government record. When the video was released, they insinuated wrongdoing on part of Planned Parenthood and Representative Deborah Nucatola, who appeared to sell fetal tissue for a profit. What struck most people, both Republican and Democrat, was the cavalier attitude that Nucatola appeared to have when discussing the purchasing of aborted fetuses.

From the beginning, Nucatola and Planned Parenthood claimed that the video was edited to give the appearance that the law was broken, when in fact it was not. The unedited video shows Nucatola saying, “No one’s going to see this as a money making thing.” At another point she says, “Our goal, like I said, is to give patients the option without impacting our bottom line. The message is that this should not be seen as a new revenue stream, because that’s not what it is.”

These previously omitted statements seem to validate Planned Parenthood’s claims of innocence. While the courts are not yet releasing a statement as to what motivated the indictments, the evidence suggests that the organization was not breaking the law.

So it would seem that Planned Parenthood has now been vindicated. But was the damage already done? The release of this video definitely brought focus to the least popular service offered by the institution: abortion, which is ultimately the reason for such vehement pushback. What people will remember the most is that Planned Parenthood is “selling” fetal tissue to researchers, taking the focus away from the fact that they offer many services to women that would not otherwise have access to this type of healthcare. According to their website, Planned Parenthood provides nearly 400,000 Pap tests and nearly 500,000 breast exams each year, both of which are critical services in detecting cancer. It also provides millions of tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections, including 700,000 HIV tests. Abortions are, at most, a secondary offering. “Three percent of all Planned Parenthood health services are abortion services,” the site says.

It is also important to remember that the women must agree to have their tissue donated for this purpose; the organization does not legally have the right to take it. Just as with donating organs, these women have a choice. Ultimately, that is what Planned Parenthood stands for: giving women a choice over their sexual and reproductive health. As the institution explicitly states, “Planned Parenthood provides sexual and reproductive health care, education, information, and outreach to more than five million women, men, and adolescents worldwide each year.”



**5**  
**Words**  
**by**  
**Women**

## Broadway Across America Comes to Houston

by Karen Reyes

To all fans of musical theater, Broadway Across America is currently showing musicals all the way from New York to our very own “Space City”. Broadway Across America is a network of presenting partners, touring Broadway shows, family productions, and live performances in over 40 North American venues.

The musical, Bridges of Madison County, a classic love story based on the best-selling novel by Robert James is currently showing through January 31st at The Hobby Center for The Performing Arts. For those of you who can not make it to the current showing, there are plenty of more Broadway shows you can catch! Or see them all! Below is a list of the musicals that will be presented at the Hobby Center, along with their dates.

For more information or ticket information visit their official website.

**BroadwayAcrossAmerica.com**

### UPCOMING SHOWS

The Sound of Music  
Feb 16 – Feb 21

Cabaret  
Mar 22 – Mar 27

Beauty & The Beast  
Apr 27 – May 1

A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder  
May 4 – May 15

Beautiful – The Carole King Musical  
May 31 – Jun 15

Wicked  
Jul 6 – Aug 14

# 6 Black History Month

## Black History Month: The Study of the Negro in History

by Joshua Burgman

February is Black History Month. During this time, people will celebrate the accomplishments of black men and women whose actions and dedication to human rights changed the world. In churches and schools, children will put on plays and recite speeches to pay homage to these heroes of historical salience. They learn about the fearless actions of such leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Harriet Tubman. Notwithstanding their heroism, King's, Parks', and Tubman's journeys only scratch the surface of a history that is so rich; its origin has been deemed the birthplace of mankind.

According to Bio.com, what is now known as Black History Month began in Feb. 1926 and was originally called Negro History Week. Contrary to a well-known myth in the black community, February was not chosen because it is the shortest month of the year. It is the month we celebrate black history because both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass have birthdays in February. The plan, envisioned by famed Afro-American historian, Carter G. Woodson, was to study "the Negro in history." Today, the question is often asked whether or not Black History Month is still relevant. Does it promote black supremacy, or segregation? Is it outdated? Is black history so well documented that it is no longer reasonable to set aside an entire month in recognition of it?

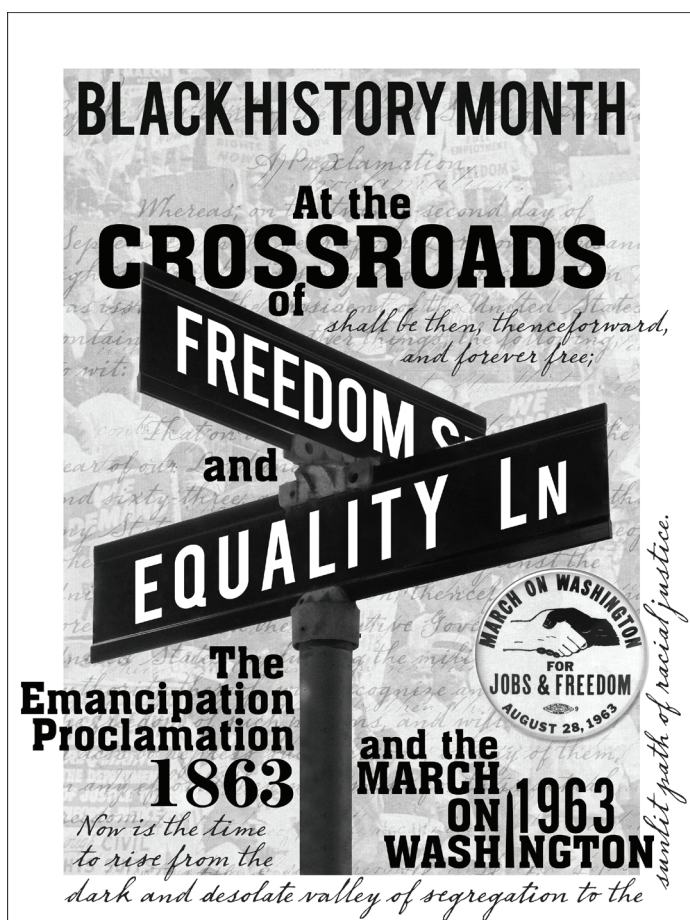
In a commentary on the topic, author Joey Merrill asks the same question. In "Is Black History Month Still Relevant?" Merrill asserts, "The one thing that is clear in the race debate is that the relevancy of traditional remedies for racial tensions needs to be reconsidered for their utility. Black History Month is one tradition that ought to be evaluated for its relevancy." Although there is validity in what Merrill suggests, it's possible that he did not consider the original intent of Black History Month (or Negro History Week), and may have mistaken the concept in which it was originally envisioned.

Firstly, in spite of its obvious connections to the race debate, it was not Woodson's intention for the week-long celebration to be used in a fashion that would seek to solve racial issues. As Merrill said in the same commentary, "According to Woodson's letters, Negro History Week was started to increase awareness of black accomplishments and also to acquire more contributions for the association." Woodson was referring to the Association for the Study of Negro Life, which he co-founded in 1915. His letters demonstrate that to suggest Black History Month is a "traditional [remedy] for racial tensions" would be misguided.

Instead, let us consider what Woodson's original intent was: to "study the Negro in history." If Black History Month were carried out in this manner, it would be practiced a lot differently than it is today. In fact, if Black History Month today was celebrated in the fashion that Woodson first envisioned, King, Parks and Tubman would hardly be spoken of as much as they are. When Woodson designed Negro History Week, he did not want it to be a week of praise, but rather a week in which the black community recognized its history, and the giants who contributed to it, by learning all of what they did.

In the words of el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz (or Malcolm X), "Our history did not begin in chains." From MLK to the great Egyptian polymath Imhotep, the great Hannibal, to the Nubians, Zulus and Hittites, black history offers an overview of world history. Sadly, throughout the ages, black history has too often been destroyed or rewritten by undeserving hands. "It made it easier for Europeans and others who were enslaving people, to say there was no past, there was no history—they are barbarians," said UH history professor and Special Assistant to the President Gene Preuss, Ph.D. "Now, of course, that's just false, but it made them feel better."

Knowing what we know now about history, it is incumbent upon the black community to continue what Woodson first started. The question of whether or not Black History Month is still relevant is an irrelevant one. As long as black history is world history, then the celebration of the month that commemorates such a majestic past will always be relevant. After all, history is still being written.



# NAACP Image Awards Hometown Champion

by Christopher Joseph



With all the controversy surrounding the Oscars' lack of recognition of people of color, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is here to right any perceived wrong. The NAACP is even showcasing excellent work within communities all over the nation, with the Hometown Champion Contest. The contest started in December 2015 and was flooded with nominations, one of which is Houston's own Mrs. Brandi Brown.

Brandi Brown got the nomination of Hometown Champion for her work as the founder and director of Houston's Youth Program for Enrichment, or HYPE Freedom School, Inc. HYPE is a non-profit organization that has been serving children and families in the Sunnyside/South Park communities for more than 15 years. As a young adult, Brandi founded HYPE, which became the first "Freedom School" in Houston. (Freedom Schools, according to the Houston Chronicle, are a product of the national nonprofit Children's Defense Fund. The CDF is intended to teach African-American children about their history and to provide reading enrichment.)

It's common knowledge that children from lower-income families have limited access to books, both in school and at home. These children often have a more limited vocabulary, are at risk of failure in school, and are 3.5 times more likely to drop out of school. In Texas alone, more than 70% of public school fourth graders read below grade level. This is where HYPE steps in to lend a hand.

HYPE is a six-week, tuition-free, out-of-school program that focuses on providing resources for the community. This includes health drives, school supply drives, parent involvement/empowerment workshops, and literacy help for parents and children. This organization offers a lot to the children that enroll, from a breakfast and lunch service to a special read-aloud guest that sits down with the children and reads them a book. This gives children a positive, fun space in which to learn. HYPE has helped shaped the minds of many college students by training them to teach K-12th grade children in African-American history and self-confidence. This program has provided many future teachers with the tools to help young scholars gain a love for reading and to find their voice.

HYPE has only one mission: to empower people with knowledge for successful living by providing education enrichment services to families beyond school hours. That is the goal for HYPE and for Brandi Brown. She has successfully branched out into other areas; now there are 10 Freedom Schools spread across Houston and America.

Although Brown did not win the Hometown Champion contest, that does not slow her down. She is constantly working harder and harder to make sure that every child has an equal footing when it comes to education. Brandi Brown may not have won the contest, but she is the champion in the hearts of over 10,000 children. If you want to know more about Brandi Brown and HYPE Freedom School, you can go to [www.Houstonfreedomschools.com](http://www.Houstonfreedomschools.com).

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## Oscars So White

by Casey Black

Rising tension over race relations in America, police brutality, and a growing demand for equality have intersected at this moment in American history. Reaching beyond state lines or the borders of our country, the sounds of those demands have echoed in every corner of the modern world. Its most immediate benefit, being the conversation it has launched, around race and oppression, now spilling over into the entertainment industry. The hashtag #OscarsSoWhite has been spreading contagiously throughout the blogosphere, highlighting that this is the second year in a row that the nominated actors in leading or supporting roles are all white. Well-received, and popular movies starring predominately Black actors are notoriously overlooked by the Academy, such as Creed, Beasts of No Nation, Straight Outta Compton, and Concussion.

Numerous celebrities have spoken out against the award show in hopes of generating attention to the injustice that happens behind the scenes. Leading the fight, and spearheading the Oscars are April Reign (creator of the "Oscars so white" hashtag), Spike Lee, Will Smith, Michael Moore, and George Clooney, who also have called for greater representation, both in front of, and behind the camera.

A shallow pool of 14 black actors has had the honor of winning an Oscar in its 80+ years of existence; the list becomes even shorter for other minorities. A show that is meant to celebrate and recognize actors and filmmakers is becoming the punchline of a horrible joke. So what's next? Chris Rock will be the host again this year and has been put in the hot seat to boycott the event by business moguls Curtis Jackson (50 cent), and Fast and the Furious star Tyrese Gibson. Oscar producer Reginald Hudlin spoke to Entertainment Tonight, stating that Rock has chosen to rewrite his opening monologue to address the pressing issues circling the award show.

Planning on correcting, and representing the less recognized, minority figures in film, the Oscars governing board has made a unanimous decision to diversify the members of the Academy by 2020. At least a small step towards equal representation, providing a means to an end to a broken system that's been less-than-kind to anyone not white, or male.

As time sneaks by, we tend to forget what the Civil Rights Movement, Black Lives Matter, and LGBT movements represent. A never-ending battle to obtain equal rights for persons of any race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender. This year, the Oscars may be a white out, but it's not a loss, we have contributed to a better future, one that will better appreciate creative talent, no matter the background.

## Hardy and Nance Studios Art Show

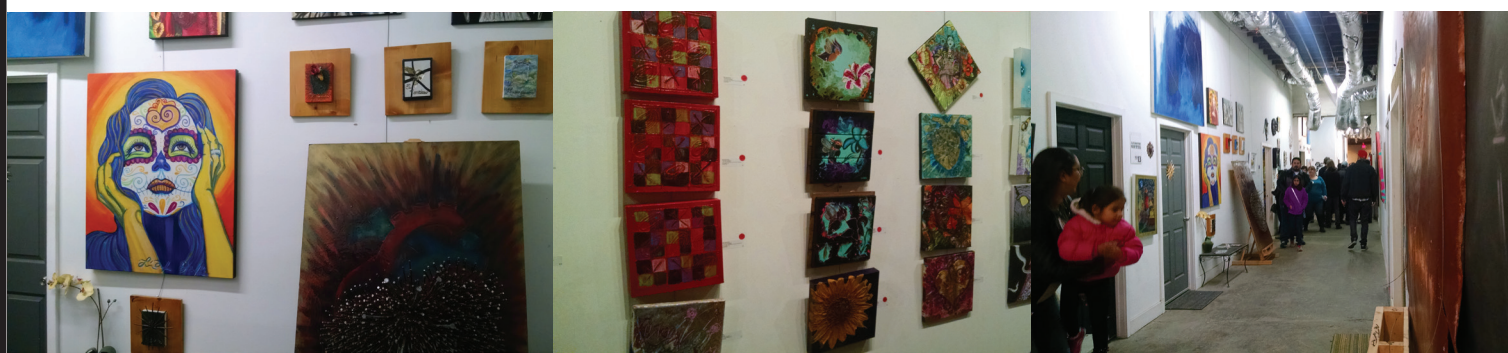
by Miguel Nunez

Hardy & Nance Studios, located at 902 Hardy St., hosted an art show on January 16. It showcased various artwork, all priced at \$100 or less. Some of the artists there included Heather Gordy, who does graphic design as well as traditional acrylic paintings — one of which I fell in love with. It was called “Sith of the Night Watch” — a 22’ x 30’ painting. It featured the well-known villain of the “Star Wars” saga, Darth Vader, holding a red lightsaber. Behind him, for some reason, was an elk, and behind that you could see the cosmos in all its starry glory. One cannot help but think that the artist first dreamed about this image after seeing the new “Star Wars” film.

There was also photography by Kenneth Hudson. Some of his photography featured the famous and historic River Oaks Theater, which is more than 70 years old. Other pictures depicted beautiful scenes of downtown Houston and some of its landmarks. Among the other wonderful artwork was a piece by Stäcy Smith; she also happened to be one of the two curators, along with Claire Richards.

One painting that stood-out was called “Blood Love,” and it was a gorgeous sight to behold. On the canvas was a young couple kissing; the woman’s face was painted in a style reminiscent of those that celebrate “Dia de Los Muertos,” or “Day of the Dead.” It was a creepy face, but the man that was kissing her was even more unsettling. The top of his head was exposed, showing the pinkness of his brain, and on his face he had a beard with smears of blood. It was as if the young man were kissing some spirit or dead person, perhaps the ghost of someone he once loved.

There was also some awesome food being served, courtesy of R.I.F.F. Food Truck—and ice cream by Chocolate Wasted Ice Cream. I have to say that even though it was about 50 degrees outside that night, I have absolutely no regrets about eating that ice cream in the frigid weather. The only thing I do regret is not buying any of that beautiful artwork.



*images by Miguel Nunez ~ Pictured artwork on display during the art show.*

## \$20 Art Show

by Kara Moore

The Houston art scene has been on fire this past year. From the mural festival, organized by local graffiti artist Gonzo247, to the two colorful and fun installations at Discovery Green, the varying forms of artistic craftsmanship have taken the city by storm. While many might associate these feats with a city like Austin, Houston’s art world has clearly been growing.

One such culmination of handiwork by Houston locals was a January 29 event, called “Cheap Date: A \$20 Art Show.” Taking place at Catacomb, a vintage store set-up in an art studio on 2315 Commerce St., it combined affordability and taste. The event hosted different types of work: from pins and pottery, to prints and paintings, to comics and clothing; with all of it at or under \$20. The modest pricing allowed for a younger and less economically secure crowd to not only enjoy a night out, but pick up decorative items for their homes.

The event was held inside a single art studio, making the area inside a little cramped. People were pressed side to side, attempting to sift through the stacks and displays to find the perfect cheap treasure. The crowd was mostly young people, and it flowed outside into the parking lot, where beer was being served and a food truck was there to fill empty bellies.

The beer was local, from the Saint Arnold Brewing Company, and it came from a (rather poorly, judging from all the foam) tapped keg. There were videos playing on a brick wall adjacent to the function. A 1990s cereal commercial was followed by scenes from music videos. The food truck, named “Yaki Snack Attack,” specialized in Asian-influenced American food, like Ramen burgers and kimchi fries. It also featured music, with “K-pop” and “J-pop” videos on a side television. The truck even had the arcade game “Samurai Sword” installed for patrons to play. It was exactly what you might expect from an art show: a little bit of weird and a whole lot of fun.



*images by Kara Moore at the \$20 Art show*



# The Jewel in UHD's New Crown: O'Kane Gallery

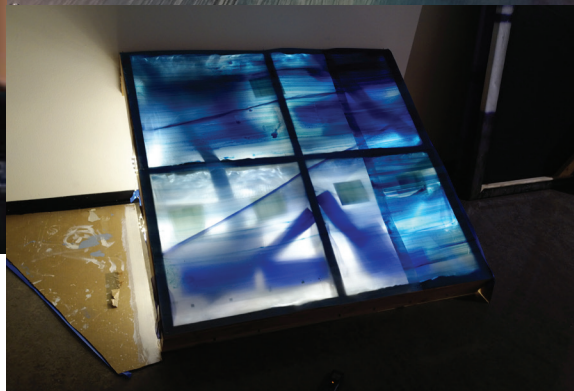
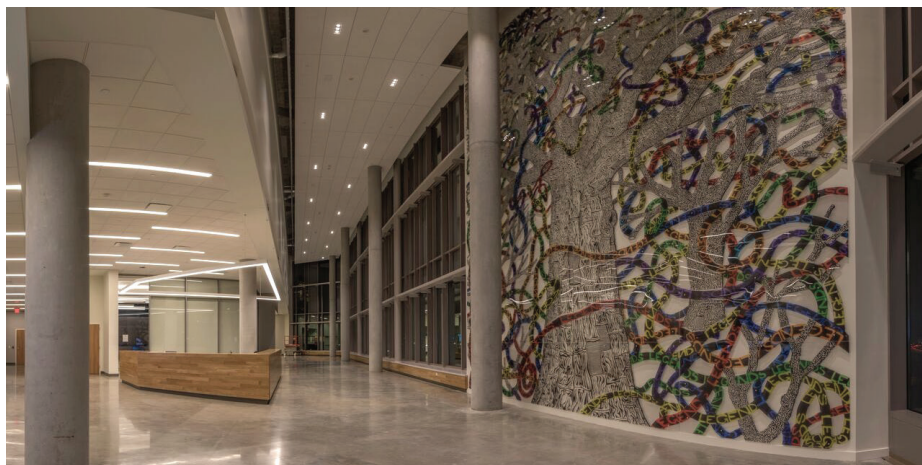
by Darci McFerran

The long-awaited Grand Opening of the newly constructed UHD Welcome Center has finally arrived. On February 4, 2016, from 6-8pm, the University will host a reception to preview the newest wing to the Main campus building. This new addition, crowned the Welcome Center, will house the reception area, Student Services and expanded space for the O'Kane Gallery, the jewel in that crown. This event will, in fact, take place in that new space, which was designed specifically for the new art gallery. In anticipation of this official opening, I sat down with Mark Cervenka, Gallery Director, to discuss all of the changes this will bring and find out what the UHD community can expect from the move.

O'Kane Gallery has made excellent use of the space that they have called home until the recent, unexpected, blessing that came with the new construction. In fact, almost a year ago, the gallery was bestowed an Exhibition Award for *The Left Bank on the Bayou: Avant-garde Art and Theater in the 1930's* by The Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art (CASETA), for the level of excellence associated with their work! The reception will offer the opportunity to see an installment, *Legends*, by artist Trenton Doyle Hancock, American artist represented by the James Cohan Gallery; his work is a permanent addition to the Welcome Center entrance. Known for a distinctive style that is often marked by a creative use of words to form the design, this 29 ft. x 36 ft. piece dominates the space and leaves a powerful impression. Doyle-Hancock works primarily in prints, drawings, and collaged-felt drawings, which are evident in the piece, now displayed on campus. He will also be speaking at the grand opening. The Contemporary Arts Museum of Houston noted, "The artist's use of vivid imagery and mythology has earned him national and international recognition and prompted a fascination with the foundation of his practice. What emerges upon further examination of those foundations is a wide-range of influences including comics, graphic novels, cartoons, music, and film," in a write up about him regarding an exhibit at their museum.

Additionally, a local artist, Lucinda Cobley will launch an installment during the event that will be on exhibit from February 4–March 20, 2016. So, if you could not make it to the opening, there is plenty of time to stop by and experience her installment, titled *Matrix*. Cobley created this installation specifically for O'Kane Gallery using inspiration she found in the symbology of nautical charts. By stretching a thin sheath of translucent plastic, across 50ft of the new gallery space, and highlighting its layers in different glazes of blue acrylic paint, backlit, and decorated with various lines and dashes, the installment will create the illusion of water. Displaying both depth and movement through its many elements and mediums, it's meant to be, according to Cervenka, "an abstracted inclusion of water."

The new gallery is an industrial space that is much larger than the previous location, with a hint of exposed brick that adds character to the otherwise modern and clean space. Many exhibits are scheduled to follow, including the annual student show. Having the art gallery located directly in the Welcome Center was a source of pride for Cervenka, and when I asked what he liked most about the new space he said, "When I took this position 16 years ago, one of the things I was charged with was to bring the arts to students in a broad way, and I think we really have done that here and will continue to in the future."



*Left Top: provided by Ignacio Hernandez-Legends installment Left Bottom: provided by houstonfineartfair.com of Artist Trenton Doyle-Hancock (provided by O'Kane Gallery) Top Right: Cobley working on matrix Right Bottom: matrix prototype*

## Super Bowl 50's Legacy: the Future is Bright for Minority Leadership

by Jason J. Rivas

By the time readers pick up this issue, Super Bowl 50 will be in the books. One team will have risen up against incredible obstacles to capture the Vince Lombardi Trophy and claim their seat amongst the NFL's heralded champions. Regardless of which team is victorious, one aspect of the event will make an enduring impact on the game: the rise of minority leadership.

The Carolina Panthers are led by Head Coach Ron Rivera. Rivera is of Puerto Rican and Mexican descent, and will be the second Hispanic to ever coach in a Super Bowl game, the first being Tom Flores of the Oakland Raiders. Rivera was brought up in a strict, army family, which influenced his future demeanor. He was drafted by the Chicago Bears in the second round of the 1984 draft and was an avid contributor to the "85 Bears," the legendary team that went 15-1 during the season, then obliterated the New England Patriots 46-10 in Super Bowl XX. He later became the defensive coordinator for the Bears in 2004, helping to renew the Bears as a dominant defensive team which culminated in a trip to Super Bowl XLI.

With Super Bowl 50 just on the horizon, Rivera has demonstrated that great leadership is not defined by race, but by perseverance through adversity and maintaining an open mind. During an interview with Fox News Latino, Rivera stated: "One of the lessons I learned as I was going through adversity, is that in order for me to deal with things, handle things and help with things, I had to be truly available to the players," he said. "I had to have an open-door policy." This form of respect has resonated with his players, particularly his on-field general, Cam Newton.

Growing up, Newton dreamed of playing in the NFL as a quarterback, a position dominated by white athletes. He became known as the brash, bravado QB that played for Auburn University, leading them to the college football championships in 2011. Newton played with audacity, confidence, and

skill. The same year, he was chosen as the number one draft pick for the Carolina Panthers. During his tenure in Charlotte, Newton has continued to play with the same sense of swagger, creating a polarizing image among NFL fans. Some consider him a cocky show-off who lacks discipline and respect. But for Newton, what others think of him does not carry any significant merit. "People are going to judge and have opinions on things I don't have control over," he told Fox News Latino. It is with this attitude that Newton continues to thrive as an elite QB with his unique style of play.

Although he will be the sixth-ever black QB to play in the Super Bowl, both Newton and Ron Rivera do not view race as an essential factor towards their efforts on the gridiron. Both have strived to be known solely as a top QB and Head Coach in the league. They both understand the significance of their roles in the social constructs of professional sports, continuing to serve as a beacon of inspiration for the countless numbers of youth minorities seeking their opportunity in leadership.



image courtesy of Monday Morning Quarterback

## A Tale of Two Daniels – and a Link to Houston

By Terrance Turner

On Dec. 31, the Houston Cougars, who stunned college football fans by going 13-1 and winning ten consecutive games, defeated the Florida State Seminoles 38-24 to win the Peach Bowl championship. Just weeks later, on Jan. 24th, the 14-4 Denver Broncos beat the New England Patriots 20-18 to win the AFC Championship. These two seemingly disparate events are connected: Cougars tight end Hayden Daniels is the younger brother of Broncos tight end Owen Daniels, who caught two touchdowns on Sunday.

22-year-old Hayden is, according to the Sports Illustrated affiliate website Campus Rush, the youngest of four children born to Jerry and Bridget Daniels. (Sister Meredith played water polo at Brown University, and middle brother Harrison works for a wealth management group in Houston.) Owen Daniels, 33, played for the Houston Texans from 2006-2013 before heading to the Baltimore Ravens and then the Broncos, where he will play in his first Super Bowl on Feb. 7th. He is one of five former Texans playing for Denver.

But the Houston connections don't end there. Broncos head coach Gary Kubiak was also the Texans head coach during the exact same time period as Daniels. According to the Houston Chronicle, Denver defensive coordinator Wade Phillips also served in that position for the Texans from 2011 to 2013. Other former Texans players on the Denver roster include defensive end Antonio Smith, offensive linemen Ryan Harris and James Ferentz and safety Shiloh Keo. The other former Texans coaches on Kubiak's staff are Rick Dennison (offensive coordinator), Greg Knapp (quarterbacks coach), Brian Pariani (tight ends), Bill Kollar (defensive line), Reggie Herring (linebackers) and Marc Lubick (assistant receivers).



# FOOL THE BURN?

by Miguel Nunez

Super Happy Fun Land recently hosted a fundraiser for Bernie Sanders and a voter registration drive. The event was able to raise almost \$700 for the Sanders campaign. It was hosted by Lara Haase and Hannah Marie Shikh-Salim. I was able to briefly talk with Shikh-Salim, and she told me that the event cost \$500 to set up, so the real amount of money going to the Sanders campaign may be less than \$200. But Sanders supporters should not be discouraged; nor should anyone think that the fundraiser will have little financial impact on the campaign. Bernie Sanders has made it clear to the American people that his campaign is running on small grassroots donations, not the corporations and billionaires that he says run the country.

According to Sanders' own website, most of the funds they have been able to raise over the past three months of his campaign have been from small donations averaging less than \$30. What is even more astonishing is the fact that Senator Sanders is the only candidate that has no affiliated super PAC (political action committee). The only other presidential candidate that can say that is Donald Trump. But according to Politifact, Mr. Trump is quite close to the PAC "Make America Great Again," which has contributed to the Trump campaign.

It should be noted that there is a difference between an affiliated Super PAC and an unaffiliated Super PAC. The affiliated PAC is in clear support of

one candidate and is closely tied to his/her particular campaign. On the other hand, the unaffiliated super PAC is not connected with any particular campaign officially (anyone can start a super PAC, and it's free). They may donate to a specific candidate, but there is no official connection.

With all this being said, the one thing that is clear and without question is that the Sanders campaign is running on the fire of everyday people. At the Sanders event, there was plenty of fire, quite literally as a fire breather's talents were part of the attractions. William Ryno Henderson gave the people quite a show when he started to breathe fire right in front of the stage as a band called Kalijah was playing. It was an energetic show, to say the least.

The Hustletown Hoopers gave the crowd an amazing dance show with their LED Hoops. Multiple other bands also took the stage, such as Big Coat — who came all the way from Austin to play at the fundraiser. People were also registering to vote; by the end of the night, the event was able to register about 50 people.



"Vote" image by Ignacio Hernandez

Bernie images by Kara Moore  
~Pictured at the Burning for Bernie fundraiser were attendees, performers, and supporters!

## HCC Students Struggle to get their Aid

by Kara Moore

It isn't easy being a college student in 2016. In the past, our parents paid for their higher education by working summer jobs. Today, the current generation of students tends to work part-time while going to school full-time. According to a survey of high school and college students done by Citigroup and Seventeen magazine, 4 out of 5 respondents worked an average of 19 hours a week, despite the recommendation by most colleges that students work a maximum of 10 to 15 hours. Still, working while attending a university doesn't cover the steady rise of tuition rates. This forces many students to utilize grants, scholarships and loans to help cover costs.

Increasingly, more and more students are choosing to take a cheaper route to higher education: attending a two-year community college before transferring to a more expensive four-year institution. That's the kind of option Houston Community College provides to Houston locals. The cost of tuition for a single 15-hour semester is \$1,015. For students with financial troubles, that kind of affordability is a necessity when pursuing higher education. The only problem that can be found with HCC's plan is their policy on distribution of student refunds.

Speaking to Mariah Mireles, a full-time student at HCC's West Loop Center location, she revealed a level of frustration with how long it takes to receive the refund from her loan and Pell grant. She claimed that it takes three to four weeks after classes start before that money is put onto her school card. After speaking with HCC's financial aid office, it was confirmed that it is the system wide policy not to distribute refunds into student accounts until after the drop date, which is listed as Feb 3 and 8. According to their financial aid webpage, grant refunds come in four weeks after the start of the term, and loans are deposited 30 days after being officially enrolled in at least six credit hours. During this time, the school gives students a line of credit at HCC bookstores so they can

buy any necessary materials they may need for classes.

What's the problem with this? Well, aside from the fact that refund money belongs to the students, they are forced to buy all of their textbooks from the school, if they want to avoid falling behind in their classes. This can be more expensive than one might expect.

The difference in cost between books from the school bookstore and those from other sources are staggering. One book called "American Promise, Value ED" was listed at \$30.95 to rent from the school. From Amazon Rental? \$15.12 for the exact same book in the same edition. Another textbook, titled "Culture Counts," cost \$37.05 to rent from HCC and only \$16.49 from Amazon. For any class requiring these books, students were forced to pay nearly double because they weren't allowed control over their money until classes were already a month into the syllabus. The process seems so unfair that you have to wonder: why is this happening?

It appears that fraudulent scams might be the cause. According to a 2013 article by USA Today, "The American Association of Community Colleges reports financial aid abuse such as organized fraud rings [.] and individuals intending to commit financial aid fraud have concentrated on community college programs due to their low tuition...Investigators recently shut down a fraud ring in Sacramento, Calif., that illegally filtered more than \$80,000 in financial aid from the U.S. Department of Education." The system HCC put in place would work against this by assuring students are attending class before giving them their refund money.

Though good intentions might be the drive behind current policies, it is undeniable that these students are paying much more for books because their options are not diversified. While ultimately helping the school and probably decreasing issues with fraud, the policy does seem to put an unnecessary strain on the already-stretched resources of HCC scholars.

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## Combatting Cancer

by Casey Black

With the deaths of musicians Ian Fraser Kilmister and David Bowie, and actor Alan Rickman, the world is drowning in a pool of melancholy, with one culprit to blame: cancer. A relentless juggernaut, cancer is an intrusive disease that develops through an uncontrolled division of abnormal cells, resulting in the growth of tumors. In 2015 the American Cancer Society estimated that over half a million Americans were expected to die from the disease, the equivalent of 1,600 a day, with another estimated 1.6 million new cases.

Research has shown that there are risk factors that aid the development of cancer. In order to defend yourself against these anomalies, preventive measures must be taken. Cigarettes and cancer have been synonymous for decades. 9 out of 10 lung cancer patients developed the disease as a direct result from cigarette smoking. Poisons in tobacco can alter cells in the DNA and weaken the immune system, allowing cancer to grow and run rampant. Quitting cigarettes after a 10 or 15 year addiction can be challenging, but offers plenty of immediate benefits. For instance, 20 minutes after someone stops smoking, their blood pressure and heart rate normalize.

Skin cancer, another variant of the disease that affects the basal and squamous cells within the skin, are a result of overexposure to the sun. Common practice is to arm yourself with sunscreen, which serves as a line of defense against harmful UV rays, and has been proven to decrease the development of skin cancer amongst users.

Thankfully, cancer deaths have plummeted since the early 1990's. In March 2015, the Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer published that the death rate among cancer patients has been on a decline from 2002 to 2011. Trends reveal that progress has been made against the disease, but there is still much work to do.



# Why You Should Run For SGA President!

By Heather Strange

As you may or may not know, depending on your involvement at UHD, there is a little office on the 2nd floor called SGA. This stands for Student Government Association. SGA is supposed to represent the student body in all proceedings, and make sure that the changes students want to be put forward are, in fact, put forward. It is run by a president and an executive board whose sole responsibility is to propose new ideas that will help students, and enhance their learning experience while attending UHD. Why do they listen to the students? Because as students, you pay their salaries. The money they have allocated to make these changes or to pay the executive board members are pulled from the funds you pay to go to school here. Simply put, you are their boss.

Now, you may ask; "Heather, how does this affect me? Why do I care? I just go to school here and then go home. I work two jobs and have kids/pets to feed and I rarely stay on campus." Or you might say, "I am a freshman, I just got here and am more worried about getting a good grade in all my classes this semester. Why should I care about SGA?" Well, here is the answer: **Why you should run for President (or at least consider it):**

First, how often do you get to school after work or before it and find that the area you would like to study in is too loud? How often are you late to class because parking is a nightmare? How often do you find that you have no money because your tuition has increased and your job only pays so much? How often do you wish you had on-campus residences or could be close to on-campus facilities so that your commute wasn't so bad? How often do you wish you had hot coffee available past Starbucks business hours?

Next, to the freshmen: How often do you find yourself not liking the food options available to you in the cafeteria? How often do you get lost going to class and find that the maps of the campus don't help much? How often do you have to rent textbooks from other sources because the prices are too high?

I bet that at least one of you has come up with one or more issues that I did not state in this article. Did you know that the SGA President gets paid \$4000 per year, and has reserved parking? Now if you can find the issues, find solutions to those issues, and then get them fixed, you are president material!

All you need to run is:

- 1) **A 2.5 GPA**
- 2) **A Vice President (or running mate)**
- 3) **To be a UHD Student (registered for classes and a #900)**
- 4) **To have been a student here for at least a year** (2 consecutive semesters)  
*(Note to freshmen: You can still be on the E-Board after 1 semester of attending the school, so now's the time to seek out these people who might run and let them know you're on board. All E-Board positions are PAID!)*
- 5) **Ambition**  
*(I mean, it is a powerful position and there is lots to do, so being ambitious helps).*

For any further questions, please email me at [Strange324@gmail.com](mailto:Strange324@gmail.com) or contact SGA.

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## Ugly Under the Big Top

by Christopher Joseph, Kara Moore, Darci McFerran

Growing up, the circus has been seen as a main staple of entertainment in American culture. There is something magical that happens when you enter the colorful tents. The circus can be a wonderful experience with amazingly talented performers, dazzling death defying acts, magic, and even clowns. Behind the smoke and mirrors, though, is a very dark secret that the circus tries desperately to hide from the public; the abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of their biggest attraction, animals.

Animals have been a major part of the circus, from the very beginning. Lions and tigers and bears, oh my! Domestic animals, such as dogs and cats, have also been cast in this family-friendly spectacle. The primary purpose of including animal acts was to bring the exotic and mysterious from every corner of the world right to your doorstep. Still, this was not enough, and in 1833, the circus changed again, forever. Isaac A. Van Amburgh, circus animal trainer, was the first ever to enter the cage of a lion. Popularizing such acts as putting his head in a lion's mouth and his bare arm inside the jaws of a wild beast, Van Amburgh earned the title of "The Lion King" and the world's first "Lion Tamer" was born. His unique method of entertaining circus audiences gained him immense popularity, but he also faced some criticism. However, despite those criticisms, Isaac started a trend that would last for centuries: the use and abuse of innocent creatures for the purpose of entertainment.

In recent years, countless videos and reports have surfaced that show the reality behind the façade of laughter and applause. An article by PETA called "7 Videos the Circus Doesn't Want You to See" shows how brutal these "animal trainers" really are. Leveling accusations of animal cruelty and neglect for such things as taking baby elephants away from

their mothers, to the horrific practice of shocking and whipping them in order to train them to perform. The world would finally learn that abuse is rampant in the circus world.

In 2008, the Ministry of Agriculture in the Netherlands launched an investigation into the welfare of circus animals. The results showed that 71% of the observed animals had medical problems, lions spend on average 98% of their time indoors, elephants are shackled in chains for 17 days on average, tigers are terrified of fires but are still forced to jump through rings of fire, and many other atrocities. Based on this information, researchers began the fight for more severe regulation regarding the welfare and care of circus animals. In 2012, the Dutch government announced a ban on the use of wild animals in circus acts, and that trend is growing.

Earlier this year, The Ringling Brothers had announced that after 145 years, they will retire and relocate all of their elephants to a conservation center down in Florida by May 2016, a year sooner than had been previously announced. The animal activist group PETA, stated, "sending the animals to the Ringling's conservation center is far from a satisfactory outcome...elephants will no doubt still be chained on a daily basis, forced to breed, be deprived of opportunities to interact and socialize normally, and continue to live in fear of being hit with bull-hooks." The organization urged for the Ringling Brothers to put the gentle giants in a top-notch sanctuary with a standard similar to the conditions found in the wild.

The Ringling Brothers said that they plan on continuing to use other animals in their acts, such as tigers, lions, horses and camels. Hopefully, the movements that have thrust the treatment of elephants into the spotlight will continue, and we will see an end to the use of animals as commodities.

## At Last, Answers to Troubling Questions

by Terrence Turner

On Jan. 5, UHD students received disturbing news via Gatormail. Administration and Finance's Vice President David Bradley relayed the unsettling message to the UHD community. "Over the weekend of December 19th-20th, after the fall semester had concluded, the UHD campus experienced an act of vandalism/criminal mischief. Specifically, numerous bullets were fired at the new Welcome Center and the One Main Building. Six bullets struck the upper level of glass on the west wall of the Welcome Center, one struck a window located on the northwest corner of the 7th floor of the One Main Building, and another a window on the north side of the 9th floor of the One Main Building. While the investigation is still ongoing, there is a high likelihood that the shots were fired from a passing vehicle. The damage in the Welcome Center was discovered by UHD police the evening of Sunday, December 20th."

If anyone is concerned about future incidents, Bradley cautioned, "there is nothing to indicate that this was more than a random act of vandalism. There was no warning/advance notice given by the perpetrator(s) nor was there any after-incident contact from whoever carried out this act." He added that since the incident involved weapons, it was being taken seriously. But how serious was the threat to UHD's student body, faculty and staff? And perhaps more importantly, who was the culprit?

In a Jan. 26th interview, Police Sergeant Dustin Yates had little to offer in the way of answers: "We don't have any leads. We don't have any evidence." He did mention that a pane of glass in the Welcome Center was being examined for embedded glass. In an interview conducted the next day, Mr. Bradley theorized that the shots came from someone coming down a ramp, perhaps a car on I-45 heading to I-10 East.

Citing a recent police department survey of faculty, staff and students (560 respondents in total) he said, by a margin of 3-1, people indicated agreement with the statement "I feel safe, here at UHD." Bradley seemed to agree, too: "What drives me crazy is all this anecdotal stuff," he said. "People say stuff like, 'Nobody feels safe here at UHD.' Where's the data to back this stuff up?"

Bradley spoke of an intention to beef up a police presence that he called "minimally staffed", but said that it's difficult to fill police positions. There's a thoughtful and judicious process of hiring, "You don't just give a gun and a badge to anyone," he went on to say. (There are three vacant police positions at this time.)

Regarding the incident itself, he stated that it was less dramatic than one might expect. "It's not like the glass was hit and came crashing down," he said. In fact, the damage first became evident when small fragments of glass were found on the floor of the Welcome Center; the progress of the center was not affected, since it had already been completed.

## Tuition Town Hall

by Terrence Turner

On Jan. 28, before an audience of five, a town hall was held to discuss tuition increases at UHD. Vice President of Administration and Finance, David Bradley, used a PowerPoint presentation to demonstrate the various changes in tuition and fees for the upcoming fiscal year. He revealed a rather startling statistic: state funding for UHD has dropped by 39 percent over the past three decades. In 1984, state support accounted for 64 percent of UHD's operating budget. By 2014, it provided only 25 percent of funding. Student accountability for the budget, meanwhile, has gone from 10 percent to 42 percent over the same time period.

For fiscal year 2016, the general designated tuition per hour (for a 15-hour schedule) is \$2,145. That will increase by \$112.50 over the next fiscal year, to \$2,257.50. When statutory tuition and differential designed tuition are added, the total tuition moves from \$3,492 to \$3,628. However, this is only for a variable rate. In case of a fixed rate from fiscal years 2016-17, the change is \$136.20, taking the total from \$3,589 to \$3,725.

For the last fiscal year (FY 2015), UHD was the fifth-cheapest of the 38 public Texas institutions listed on the PowerPoint. It was outdone only by the University of Texas (-Pan American and Brownsville campuses), Texas A&M University-Central Texas, and Sul Ross University: Rio Grande. Assuming that the average tuition stays as projected — rising about \$300 to \$6,938 for the current fiscal year — UHD will be the tenth most affordable of the 38 public Texas universities listed in FY 2016.

The tuition increases have six anticipated uses. They include larger scholarships, initiatives to improve retention/graduation, implementation of the Campus Carry bill and initiatives to improve campus safety/security. Strengthening IT security is also a priority. Even with the increases, prices remain relatively low.



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# Turkey and America at a Crossroads

by Jason J. Rivas

Dateline Downtown has previously covered a variety of issues pertaining to the conflicts in the Middle East; from terrorist insurrections, to the escalating quagmire involving refugees. However, polarizing rhetoric about Muslims continues to plague the headlines of the American press. While American politicians, pundits, and sensational press continue to skew the public's perceptions about Muslims, we will continue to focus our efforts on reporting the facts. As such, one headline in need of publication is "33 families." That is the amount, at the very least, of families whose lives were forever altered by the most recent terrorist assaults in Istanbul, Turkey this month. These attacks continue to mount, and the refugee crisis lingers.

On Tuesday, January 12, a suicide bomber detonated explosives attached to their chest. The attack left 10 dead, mostly foreigners from Germany who were visiting a tourist center. Turkish officials claimed ISIS was responsible for the attack. This was followed by another incident that occurred on January 26. Two synagogues were attacked while their congregations were enjoying their day of Sabbath. At least 23 people were killed; most of them Muslim, and hundreds more were injured. Later that day, Muslim Turks visited the area to show solidarity with their Jewish brethren against hatred. Jewish and German diplomats have already stated their support for those afflicted, as well as for the Turkish state. They plan to collaborate in the search and prosecution of the terrorist networks believed to be involved.

On January 28, 26 migrants drowned off the Samos Islands, a Greek-controlled region near the coast of Turkey. The previous day, seven died near Kos, another Greek island near Turkey. Both incidents occurred because migrant boats were unable to complete the voyage across the treacherous Mediterranean Sea. The events unfolded as Dutch officials proposed a new initiative to Turkey and the EU, in which captured migrant ships would be sent back to Turkey. The Turkish state currently serves as the safety net for expatriates fleeing from the chaos and confusion of the Middle East. In return, the EU member states would agree to accept 250,000 evacuees from Turkey, yearly. It is important to note that EU officials have not acknowledged the existence of the proposal. Regardless, an estimated 46,000 people have already made their way across the sea to Greek islands, this year. EU and Turkish officials are now racing to find a viable solution that will appease all affected parties, particularly the home fronts within the EU.

*photo courtesy of philosophersforchange.org*

These incidents showcased the continuing escalation Turkey is experiencing within its borders. Terrorist groups from afar are carrying out atrocities against hundreds of thousands of innocent lives, forcing them to flee, once more, from their persecutors. In doing so, many are risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea in search of sanctuary. The influx of refugees continues to weigh down on the social welfare programs of many European nations which are still struggling to provide adequate services for their own inhabitants, let alone the influx of new arrivals.

These events are of particular interest to American voters because they are the culmination of recent U.S. foreign policies in the Middle East. The U.S.-led wars, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq, have destroyed the political, economic and sociological infrastructures of the regions. They also influenced a number of fundamentalist groups, most notably ISIS, to rise up and garner power. ISIS, in fact, was previously funded and trained because of American diplomatic policies that allowed for the search of guerilla organizations to overthrow previous regimes.

To play the "what-if" card and envision a post-9/11 American policy, in which, a peaceful and more diplomatic consensus was taken is superfluous. The fact of the matter is, the United States has influenced, more or less, the current chaotic climate of the Asia Minor and Middle East. As such, this November, Americans have a vested interest in electing a candidate who can see the long-term ramifications of foreign policy. Looking for someone who can adequately steer the country towards more peaceful accords with the Middle East or Turkey, our beloved NATO ally, will continue to field the brunt of American push-back.



## Terror Denied

by Joshua Burgman

Last month, the city of Houston nearly experienced an act of terror which, if it hadn't been stopped, would have ended in a substantial loss of life. On Jan. 7, the US Department of Homeland Security arrested Iraqi-born Houstonian Omar Faraj Saeed Al Hardan, for his close ties with the terror group ISIL. After his arrest, authorities disclosed his intentions to plant explosives in several Houston-area malls.

According to the Houston Chronicle, Al Hardan is being charged on three counts: providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization, providing false information to obtain citizenship, and making false statements to U.S. officials. If convicted, he could serve sentences for each count which are 20, 25, and 8 years, respectively.

During his arraignment in federal court on Jan 8, U.S. Magistrate Judge Mary Milloy, ordered Al Hardan be remanded to a federal detention center to await his trial, which is scheduled to take place in March. After fleeing Iraq in 2009, Al Hardan entered the United States as a refugee. In 2011, he was granted legal permanent resident status.

In an indictment, released by the U.S. Justice Department, Al Hardan is accused of "unlawfully and knowingly attempt[ing] to provide material support and resources...training, expert advice and assistance, to a foreign terrorist organization, namely the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant...knowing that the organization is a designated foreign terrorist organization and knowing that ISIL engages in, and has engaged in, terrorist activity and terrorism."

While being questioned during a hearing after Al Hardan's arrest, federal investigators revealed that he had intentions of planting explosives at Sharpstown Mall and the Galleria. Attorney Ken Magidson assured the public that there was never any real threat, "It could happen in any city in the United States — anywhere in the world." Magidson told the Chronicle. "We're trying to be attentive to all the needs to ensure the public safety at all times," he said.

Even though this situation was handled with relative ease, it provided just the right platform for Republicans to speak out against refugees resettling into the US. Texas Governor Greg Abbott made good use of the situation, telling reporters "This is precisely why I called for a halt to refugees entering the U.S. from countries substantially controlled by terrorists. I once again urge the president to halt the resettlement of these refugees in the United States until there is an effective vetting process that will ensure refugees do not compromise the safety of Americans and Texans."

Regardless of party lines, Houstonians can be secure in the fact that Al Hardan is locked away, and will be for some time. Thankfully, the system worked in this instance. Had Al Hardan been successful in whatever it was he was trying to do, the loss of life to a community like Houston would have been devastating.

## Professional Society of Criminal Justice Students

MEETING

**Wednesday of Feb. 10 at 11:30 am in room C214.**

The meeting will just be introducing the officers announce semester activities and outline what PSCJS can offer you!. Towards the end of the meeting, we have an "icebreaker" discussion to get to know new members and their interests.

# 15

**War  
on  
Terror**

## Professor Profile: Dr. Mandell

by Jason J. Rivas

Mornings are always special at the Beacon: a day center for the city's less fortunate citizens who have no place to go. Meals and services are provided to clients seeking a fresh start. One of the many helping hands there is Dr. Paul Mandell. For him, it is an opportunity to provide a guiding light for his fellow brethren.

Mandell is an Assistant Professor in the Spanish Department at UHD. His astute educational background and informal teaching methods have led to a profusion of students developing their interests, confidence, and proficiency of the romance language. His lesson plans are interactive and engaging, complimented by his affable personality.

He is a man of servant-leadership, a philosophy by which he serves his community through passion and humility. "I do things I think are important and if people like to come along, that's great, and if they don't, that's okay too," he said. As such, his endeavors have inspired a plethora of UHD students and faculty to willfully join him in engaging with their community. Their actions have ignited a beacon of hope for the patrons, and garnered praise from their fellow volunteers—many of whom share Mandell's attitude towards service. It is with this dynamic that he continues to carry on in an assortment of outside ventures.

Mandell sits on a number of non-profit boards, including Out for Education (OFE). Their initiative is to raise about \$100,000 worth of scholarships for the LGBTQ students in need of assistance. Initially, he was asked to be involved by assisting a UHD student in becoming accustomed with the university. A fruitful mentorship between the two developed, as well as stronger ties between UHD and OFE. OFE has provided the opportunity for many students and their families to experience the shared triumphs of a college education for the first time.

Mandell's steadfast leadership facilitated his appointment to another board, the consortium known as Homeless Youth Networks. Their mission is to provide avenues of assistance to the precariously-housed youth of Houston. Additionally, he serves on the board of the Association for Family & Community Integrity (AFCI). Mandell described it as "an organization designed to provide... online education for families, in which a family member has come out as gay, lesbian... bisexual, or transgender and how the family can incorporate that novelty into the health of the family." For Mandell, the ability to assist someone in enriching their lives is an opportunity he welcomes. It is this mindset that he carries back into the classroom, in his development of a groundbreaking endeavor, a Study Abroad program to Cuba.

After the U.S. finally normalized its relationship with the small country, Dr. Mandell pitched the idea of UHD students visiting Cuba. During the senior year of his undergraduate career, he studied in Costa Rica and learned an abundance of knowledge about culture, geopolitical relations, and most importantly, himself.

With the Study Abroad: Cuba initiative, he hopes to open a world of new possibilities to the students enrolled. Three classes will be offered: elementary Spanish, political science, and a psychology course; to be instructed by himself, Dr. Linantud, and Dr. Henney, respectively. These hybrid courses will examine the cultural, political, and psychological aspects of Cuba. The hope is that this enterprise will cultivate a relationship between UHD and Cuba for future academic partnerships. For Mandell, the opportunity to open the door for others to grow—including himself—is an opportunity he would never pass on. It is also a wondrous prospect of highlighting a group of people's existence. This is a practice he has helped introduce at the Beacon.

An important component of the Beacon is the use of name badges by everyone. Urban life can cultivate an attitude of anonymity and cultural detachment among its residence. This may lead to groups of less-fortunate people being neglected, and thus, make them feel invisible. Through the use of name badges, clients and staff are able to engage and establish face-to-face interactions, sometimes leading to established friendships. "I'll walk out of this building and people know me by name because over the seven or eight years I've been doing this; they know me, and I know them," Mandell remarked.

It is a simple practice with powerful results, which is the style Mandell has always had. His life's successes have come from following his passions, and not necessarily from what his education may entail. He listened to the words of Dr. Peggy Bartlett, his undergraduate professor, in following his passions, which led him to Costa Rica. His life's journey has paid him a treasure chest's worth of enrichment in linguistics, knowledge, and servitude. It is this advice he now passes on to others: "Follow your bliss... follow your dream."

image by Ignacio Hernandez Pictured: Dr. Mandell



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 African American Read In 3rd Floor Mural 12-1:30pm	3 Campus Carry Info Session Auditorium 2:30-4pm	4 Gator Resume Dash 11-1pm Shea Building	5	6 Wrestling Meet UT Arlington GO GATORS!
7	8 StandOUT Bakesale, 11-3pm Outside A300 Black Lives Panel Discussion 1-2:15pm, A350	9 Two Nations of Black America Film Screening 12-2:2pm, A300	10 Poetry Reading by Jonathan Moody 5:30-7pm, A436	11 Multi-Day Elementary Genocide Screening Till February 15th A300, 11:30-2pm	12	13
14 Valentine's Day	15 Know Your Rights Forum A300, 12-2pm	16 Know Your Rights Forum A300, 12-2pm	17	18 Jim Crow to Mass Incarceration Panel 11-12:30, Auditorium	19 Financial Aid Fair 10-2pm, A300 Multiday Event	20
21	22 African Americans in the LGBTQ Community Panel A300, 12-1:30pm Spoken Word Open Mic, A300, 2-4pm	23 Selma Screening and Discussion 12-2pm Auditorium	24	25 Business Career Fair Day One 4-7pm	26	27
28	29	African American/Black Pride Celebration 3rd Floor Mural 11-3pm				