

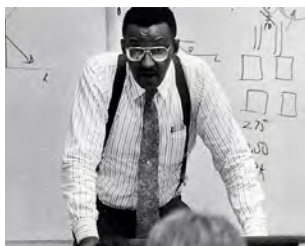
In This Issue.....

Gator Life.....2

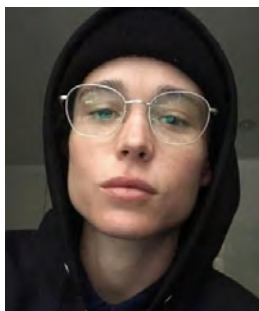
News.....5

Arts and Entertainment.....6

Opinions.....7



Walter E. Williams
passes at 84
see News, Page 5



Elliot Page comes
out as transgender
see A&E, Page 6



Capitol insurgency
and democracy
see Opinions, Page 7



“Kapitolbelagerung”
Siege of the Capitol
see Opinions, Page 8

UHD graduate volunteers in Peace Corps

By Sheryl Sellers

Mario Levia completed his bachelor’s degree in finance at UHD in 2008. At that time, the Peace Corps was not on his radar. However, after reading the book “Confessions of an Economic Hitman” by John Perkins, who mentioned his tenure in the Peace Corps, Levia’s wheels started turn-

ing. Shortly thereafter, he attended an information session and was instantly hooked on the opportunity offered by the Peace Corps.

“I needed a change to the daily routine in the States. And I wanted to give back in some way and form, and extract myself from the environment of

that moment,” he told The Dateline.

Being single, available and open to traveling the timing seemed just right.

He admitted that the onboarding process was daunting which included complete medical records and physical, along with more than one

interview to determine his commitment and availability. He was committed to the process and though it was determined that some dental work was needed, he followed through with that and a small percentage of the cost was offset by a stipend from the Peace Corps.

Continued on Gator Life, Page 3

Gator publishes short story in literary magazine, shares tips

By Indira Zaldivar

Laura Dunn, a senior at UHD majoring in creative writing, published an original short story titled “Closure” in Adelaide Literary Magazine on Oct. 20, 2020.

Her story narrates Marnie’s, the main character, visit to her alcoholic father at the hospital after his near-death experience. Dunn said Marnie has practiced what people in Al-Anon (a support group for people with alcoholic or substance-abusing loved ones) refer to as “middle-finger detachment” and has spent many years ignoring him consequently. When she realizes her only living parent changed ways, she forgives him “at the sake of her own peace and therefore receives the closure she truly wanted.”

“I’m grateful to the wonderful editing team that took the time to read ‘Closure’ and believed in it enough to publish it,” Dunn said. “It’s tough to

put your creative work out there, but to hear that someone read your work and actually enjoyed it, is beyond words.”

The publication of “Closure” marked the third time Adelaide Literary Magazine has published her works. Her latest published poem “Creative Minds” made her a finalist for the Adelaide Literary Award 2019 Contest. As a prize, Dunn’s work was published in the Adelaide Literary Award Anthology Magazine which released on Feb. 22, 2020 as e-book and paperback formats. Her first poem in Adelaide Literary Magazine titled “Detached” can be found online in the September 2019 issue.

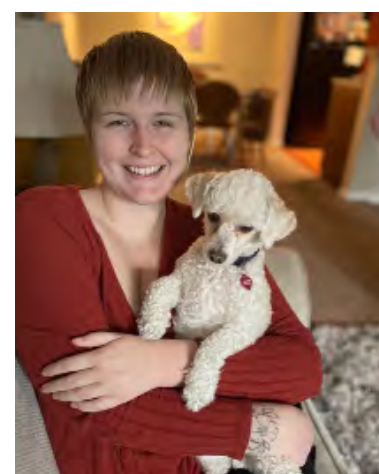
Over the years, Dunn has showcased her ability to write in different genres through her published works in Lone Star College’s Inkling Magazine and writing and publishing programs at UHD.

Dunn has worked with The Bayou Review and was a section editor and writer for The Dateline in 2020. Dunn said that both The Bayou Review and The Dateline have each taught her valuable lessons that strengthened her writing skills which she “loves and could spend forever doing.” She recommended any student in the literary community at UHD to join organizations such as The Bayou Review and The Dateline.

“If anything, they get you writing and thinking critically about other’s writing and perspectives.” She advises to anyone that wants to get their literary work published, to look for publishers that feature works that resemble in theme and style. She said publishers can be found by a simple internet search. For example, Poets & Writers Magazine is one resource recommended by Dunn that lists classifieds

and calls for “all types of things, from poetry to full-on manuscripts.”

“Just start sending it out! You will get rejections, but don’t let it discourage you,” Dunn said. “Never cease to read many great poems, short stories and books. It helps your writing in the long run.” Dunn aspires to keep writing and learning until she “physically cannot.” She hopes to use her degree, which she anticipates completing in May, to go into editing or a similar field.



Laura Dunn with her dog, Wren. Image courtesy of Laura Dunn.



THE DATELINE

University of Houston-Downtown
1 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002
Office: S-260 Phone: 713.221.8275
editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com

Fall 2020 Staff

Editor.....Jaida Doll
Assistant Editor.....Indira Zaldivar
Social Media Manager.....Varah Thornton
Business Manager.....Sheryl Sellers
News Section Editor.....Aansa Usmani
A&E Section Editor.....Varah Thornton
Opinions Section Editor.....Briana Garcia
Faculty Advisor.....Joe Sample, Ph.D.

The Dateline is the official student newspaper of the University of Houston-Downtown. Since its first issue in 1982, The Dateline is proud to be “Student Run since Volume One.” We strive to meet the needs of a growing university as well as the growing metropolitan city that surrounds us.

Submission Policy

The Dateline staff consists of students from the University of Houston-Downtown who complete all tasks required to produce the newspaper, which serves all UHD campuses. The opinions and commentaries expressed within reflect the views of the contributing writers. No opinions expressed in The Dateline reflect the viewpoints of the University of Houston-Downtown, its administration, or students.

The Dateline reserves the right to edit or modify submissions for the sake of clarity, content, grammar, or space limitations. All submissions become property of The Dateline and may not be returned.

All paid writers must be currently enrolled students at the University of Houston-Downtown.

Press releases, story ideas, news tips and suggestions are always welcomed. We encourage all students to contribute.

Any student interested in joining The Dateline staff may request more detailed information sending an email to the editors at editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com.

Follow us on Social Media!



@the_dateline

Congratulations to Fall 2020 The Dateline graduates

By Jaida Doll

Keven Balderas

Though Balderas’ time with The Dateline was short, it was certainly impactful. Balderas began as a writer and cartoonist, but he quickly worked his way to a section editor position. In his time as Gator Life section editor, Balderas not only continued writing and creating comics for every issue, but he be remembered in Dateline history as the founder and the first writer of the “Local Business Spotlight” Column (Issue 65.5). Balderas’ column is now printed in every issue of The Dateline and is one of our most popular columns amongst both readers and writers. Balderas’ articles and cartoons can be found in every issue of Volume 65.

Anthony Raul Ramirez

Ramirez has been one of our most consistent and dependable staff writers. Since his start with the team, Ramirez has published articles in nearly every issue of The Dateline, often contributing multiple articles in each issue. Ramirez even continued to write articles throughout the semester breaks to prepare for the upcoming semester. Ramirez wrote on a variety of topics, but he often gravitated to those concerning UHD Sports and Fitness, reviews of video game and

adult cartoons, and WWE events. Ramirez also wrote abounding News articles, all of which can be viewed throughout Volumes 64 and 65.

Deniece Joseph

Though Joseph was only involved in The Dateline for the past two semesters, they were a productive two semesters. Our team could always count on Joseph to claim core articles like her report on Breonna Taylor (Issue 65.3), celebrity social media and the youth vote (65.4) and sinophobic pandemic fears (64.4). Though Joseph always delivered clear and strong and clear pieces, her strongest piece (and one of the strongest, most impactful pieces in Volume 65), was her op-ed which boldly and passionately criticizes the backwards controversy facing Cardi B’s then-newest single “W.A.P.” Joseph’s piece “‘W.A.P.’ controversy illuminates misogynist culture” can be read in Volume 65 Issue 2 of The Dateline; Joseph’s other pieces are published throughout Volumes 64 and 65 of The Dateline.

Alex Riley

Alex Riley began working only with The Dateline in his last semester at UHD. As a Dateline Intern with ENGL/TCOM 4360, he produced articles for nearly every issue of

that semester. Riley always contributed strongly written and fully informative articles. His feature articles (65.6 “Texas policing uses controversial hypnosis tactics to put suspects on death row” and 65.7 “Trump appeals to Hollywood to garner support”) boldly illuminated societal corruption in hopes of keeping our students aware and our leaders accountable. Though Riley’s News articles were clearly written and exceptionally impactful, Riley’s one opinion piece (65.5) stands out amongst all others. Written only two days before the upcoming deadline, Riley put together his most impactful piece where he shared his experiences as a Black veteran, passionately calling out those citizens who refused to vote in the then-upcoming presidential election. Riley’s other articles include a touching tribute to Chadwick Boseman (65.2), and various news articles which can be read throughout Volume 65 of The Dateline.

Congratulations to all of our Dateline graduates. It has been a pleasure to work with you. The team thanks you for all of your hard work and your many contributions. The Dateline wishes you well in your next endeavors.



The Dateline is now hiring for the spring semester!

Student-run since volume one, The Dateline students with an opportunity to get involved on campus, gain valuable experience, and build professional skills. Students can also earn course credit with TCOM/ENGL 4360 and can even make a little extra cash.

Students are encouraged to submit as many pieces as desired for each issue, however no commitment or experience is necessary.

We welcome students of all majors, and we are excited to see what you can bring to the team. We are currently hiring for positions including journalists, photographers, illustrators, cartoonists, and graphic designers.

To submit pieces or for inquiries about joining The Dateline, email the editor, Jaida Doll: dollj1@gator.uhd.edu

Did you know...?

Peace Corps offers students career opportunities, life-long benefits By Sheryl Sellers

Following graduation, volunteering with the Peace Corps can offer unforgettable professional and personal growth while serving others in a foreign country. This growth is just one of the benefits available to volunteers, offered Vanessa Villa, M.A., Senior Diversity Recruiter with the Peace Corps.

Villa explained that there are two programs available to those eager to serve and learn about a different culture in a foreign land. One of the programs, known as the high impact program, involves a three-to-twelve-month commitment and is targeted at specialists in one of six sectors: Education, Health, Environment, Agriculture, Youth

Development, and Community Economic Development (think of this as “business”).

This program could include areas such as aerospace in Mexico, information technology assistance in Costa Rica, or even tourism in a foreign country.

Another program available is a 27-month program wherein the initial three months are spent learning the required new language and the culture of the country where one will be serving. The following 24 months are spent serving there.

The Peace Corps works in 51 different countries and within the six sectors noted above. A host country invites

the Peace Corps, and the country determines what is needed from the volunteers. The Peace Corps is the catalyst that provides the requested services.

Considered a non-government organization, the Peace Corps is a non-profit organization that serves and collaborates with the host country.

About 95% of the volunteers have a bachelor’s degree or five years prior professional experience. Others have an associate degree and three years’ professional experience. The Peace Corps encourages an individual to complete their bachelor’s degree prior to volunteering. Some countries expect this as they find these

volunteers are more mature and dependable.

While serving with the Peace Corps, the volunteer’s expenses are fully funded. This includes all transportation, a living stipend, two vacation days per month, and medical and dental care.

There are also many benefits available to volunteers once they have completed the program. Following two years of service, volunteers receive more than \$10,000 pre-tax and have noncompetitive eligibility hiring status to get their foot in the door faster in government career positions. The NCE status allows one to apply for government positions as a government employee rather

than as a private citizen. Some student loan debt may also be forgiven. Ms. Villa found that 30% of her Perkins student loan was cancelled following her participation as a volunteer. Over 90 universities and colleges participate in the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows program that offers grants, reduced tuition, assistantships, and stipends for graduate studies.

With a double major in psychology and government from the University of Texas at Austin, Ms. Villa worked in the mental health field prior to joining the Peace Corps.

Looking back, she says she wished she had learned about the Peace Corps prior to her senior year at UT since it takes

about a year to go through all the components of applying. Having studied briefly in Spain while at UT, she realized that her “potential was only as great as the box she or others put me in.” She realized that there was more to life. In her words, “What are two years of my life to serve others, put my degree to use while growing and serving others. How can that not be a benefit.”

Vanessa Villa, M.A., Senior Diversity Recruiter at the Peace Corps will hold a virtual information event on Feb. 17 from 4 - 5 p.m. To register, scan the QR code below. Or contact Villa directly: vvilla@peacecorp.gov or 469-992-1199.

UHD graduate volunteers with Peace Corp, finds personal growth (continued)

Levia committed two years to the Peace Corps, asking for a position in Latin America. Told that he needed to be available to go anywhere, he ultimately was placed in Paraguay. In June 2009, he left the States accompanied by 21 similar volunteers.

There was no time to relax; they were immediately immersed into the culture. Upon landing in Paraguay, they were driven to the home of a host family who were given a

stipend to feed and house a volunteer for their three-month training period. Monday through Saturday the volunteers were entrenched in training on the two languages of Paraguay, Spanish and the native Guaraní, and lessons on the country’s culture. Following those initial three months, the volunteers were whisked off to their respective assignments. Levia found himself in a rural area focusing on economic development. Levia’s initial task was to map out

the community for his Peace Corps coordinator. This included meeting community leaders to determine what they determined to be most needed, and the areas that the volunteers should initially concentrate.

Following college graduation, the majority of graduates from that rural area leave for the larger cities. Levia and the Peace Corps team there created the first university career center expo so that the graduates could see what they could

do in their community. They also worked with non-governmental organizations to find money to construct a building and the tools needed for the Paraguayans to process and sell their sugar cane crops.

The ultimate goal of the Peace Corps is to create sustainability.

Levia received many unforeseen benefits from his two years volunteering with the Peace Corps in Paraguay. He has stayed in contact with the many friends he met there, and the

other volunteers.

Returning to the United States, Levia acquired his MBA with a concentration in leadership from UHD. For several years he was employed by Halliburton and now works for a technical company creating and updating technical applications.

An unexpected benefit from his time in Paraguay was meeting his wife. They return to Paraguay to visit family and friends – and bring back native

food for their Peace Corps friends now living in the States.

What advice would Levia give to current UHD students?

“At least try [the Peace Corps]. Just do it. Get yourself into an uncomfortable place. Being alone is crucial for oneself. Find what you are capable of doing and take advantage of everything out there, every opportunity.”



Local Business Spotlight

TriSMART Solar

By Indira Zaldivar

Eight years ago, three long life friends moved to Houston and started a clean-energy company called TriSMART Solar. Headquartered in Houston, TriSMART Solar specializes in solar energy services for home and business owners.

Owners Mark Bench, Zack Hall, and Jon Morris made a great choice to start in Houston. In 2017, Google named Houston the top city in the U.S. for most solar energy potential with an average 18,940 gigawatt hours (GWh), based on Project Sunroof data. Despite being under a decade old, TriSMART has expanded services to eight more cities in Texas and also opened markets in cities in Colorado, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona.

Maria Carreon, full-time recruiter and solar consultant with TriSMART Solar said the pandemic benefited this sector as more people stayed inside. Carreon even created the page, Texan Solar, on Instagram and Facebook to avoid losing touch with the community during the “apex of a huge environmental, energy and sustainable movement.” She shed light on how solar panels work and how it might not be too early for Gators to start thinking about

money-saving energy equipment.

“It is important for students to look into solar for many reasons,” Carreon said. “Short term, there are huge savings for those who own homes and pay electricity; the government even helps out with the Federal Tax Credit.”

For example, since 2005, the U.S. government has subsidized the cost of purchasing solar panels. During this income-tax season, taxpayers will see a tax break of 26% off the cost of a residential solar installation as part of the tax package signed on Dec. 27, 2020.

Carreon described that the Alpha-rec panels produce all the electricity throughout the day. Any excess electricity not consumed is accredited monthly. Companies like Green Mountain Energy buy excess energy produced from residential solar panels. At the end of the contract, they send a check to solar-panel owners for the excess produced. Those checks can be bigger by an estimated 3% annually since the price per kilowatt has increased.

“During the night time, you pull from that excess you sold, so basically it zeros out,” Carreon said. “No more light bill.”

TriSMART Solar does not ask for a downpayment to get started. Carreon explained that customers pay monthly for solar equipment and replace the electric bill that nonrenewable energy consumers pay for renting electricity. Carreon added that the solar payment is around the same average and can even be lower than “what you traditionally would have paid for electricity.”

“We are simply helping you reallocate your money towards ownership of electricity,” Carreon added.

In the long-run, property values go up with solar panels installed; the initial cost stays fixed, “never goes up and it does have an end date.” On the other hand, With Centerpoint, nonrenewable energy company, delivery charges and electricity rates alone have historically gone up at a minimum 3% annually.

“With solar, people save thousands of dollars; literally looking at the long term of how electrical prices will go up, we are able to lock you in for cheap electricity,” Carreon said. “Solar will be here to stay, it won't fizzle out the oil and gas industry, but it will keep future prices of energy more affordable. This is our future, and it will affect our daily lives.”



A birdseye view of solar panels installed on the roof of a residence in Houston, Texas. Image courtesy of TriSMART Solar.



**READY TO MAKE THE MOST
OF YOUR WORLD?**

Connect with a Recruiter to Learn More



**Peace
Corps**

PEACECORPS.GOV/WORK

Walter E. Williams, Ph.D., passes at 84

By Salvador Hernandez

On Dec. 2, 2020, the world lost the intellectual heavyweight, Walter E. Williams, Ph.D., at the age of 84. He passed away suddenly in his car on the campus of George Mason University in Virginia, where he taught for 40 years. Williams was a world-renowned economist and political commentator who touched the lives of his students as well as those who cared to listen to his views on liberty, economic principals, and other means by which the fellow man could improve their quality of life.

In his lifetime, Williams was a prolific writer and scholar authoring a total of 13 books, a

multitude of scholarly journals and syndicated columns published by 130 news outlets. He famously ended up in the reader list of rapper Killer Mike and has inspired individuals such as political commentator, Larry Elder and fellow economist, Donald Boudreaux.

Williams is the only Black person to serve as the chair of the Department of Economics at a historically non-Black university or college.

Williams took a radical free-market approach towards the economy criticizing government interference. Williams was critical of then-President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society which he saw

as the welfare state's attempt to ruin the Black nuclear family.

However, he did not always hold these views. In his youth, he championed Malcolm X, believing Martin Luther King's stance was not enough to make the Black community heard. After receiving his BA in economics at California State College in 1965 he went on to receive his doctorates at the University of California, Los Angeles. At UCLA, his views started to change spurred on by mentors, Armen Alchian and Larry Kimball, and influenced by the works of Milton Friedman and James M. Buchanan.

In a Free

Choice Media documentary "Suffer No Fools," Williams expressed his feeling on his shift from radical leftist to a radical free market individual.

"That was my switch from one kind of radical to another. I often tell people I was very fortunate to receive my education before ... they were ... practicing Affirmative Action ... they did not give a damn about my self-esteem."

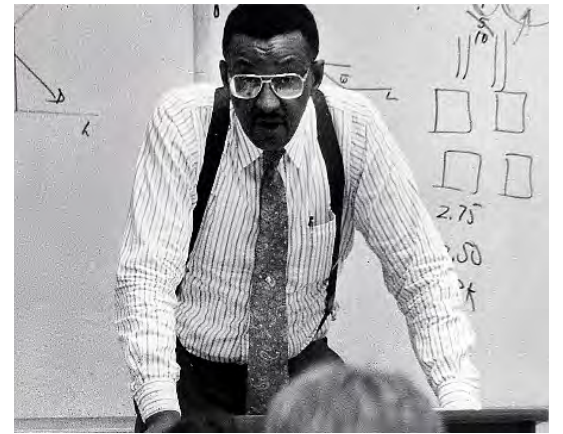
Williams' longtime friend, fellow economist and intellectual, Thomas Sowell, Ph.D., described Williams as a teacher and economist.

"Unlike too many other teachers today, [Williams]

made it a point never to impose his opinions on his students. Those who read his... newspaper columns know... he expressed his opinions... unequivocally there. But not in the classroom." Sowell continued, "As an economist, Walter Williams never got the credit he deserved. His book 'Race and Economics' is a must-read introduction to the

subject. Amazon has it ranked fifth in sales among civil rights books, 9 years after it was published."

Williams brought an honest approach to his views on economics and politics clearly understood by his opponents and proprietors. He reached those around the world through his lectures and PBS documentary, "Good Intentions."



Economist Walter E. Williams of George Mason University in 2002. Image courtesy of George Mason University via Washington Post.

Harris County combats COVID-19

By Shirley Bright

Harris County and the Texas Medical Center have been resilient throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Only twice during the near year-long span of the pandemic has TMC reached Phase 2 of its Intensive Care Unit occupancy plan. The citizens of Harris County have a 99% recovery rate for those who have contracted the virus.

Harris County Public COVID-19 Data Dashboard (last updated Jan. 11) records the total number of deaths from the virus is 2,708. Harris County has a population of 4,746,600 people and this death toll would represent 0.057% of the population.

Through interventions and regulations like wearing mask, social distancing and other measures, the county held the confirmed cases throughout 2020 to a total of 266,525 cases. This 267K represents all different age groups, races and ethnicities, in inner cities, rural areas, suburbs and other municipalities. Though Harris County has seen 267K cases in 2020, the number of active cases in Harris County as of Jan. 11, is 42,350.

Like Harris County, The City of Houston has raised strong preventive efforts to combat the virus and keep the city safe. The population of the City of Houston is 2,419,240.

The total number COVID-19 cases for the year (as of Jan. 11) is 131,000 with 17,763 active cases and 1,600 deaths. By the numbers, this represents 0.54% of the city's population affected by the virus, and only 0.122% death rate for those who contracted the virus. With a population density of 3,779 per square mile, the city's and county's efforts to prevent the spread of the virus seem quite effective. The percentage of death for the City of Houston is 0.066% Survival rate is 99% across the county.

There are some disparities for the county when reviewing the numbers by race. The white

population represents 69.9% of the population but only 15% of the total annual cases. Blacks represent 20% of population; Black cases make up 9.9% of total annual cases. Hispanics constitute 43.7% of population and 18.99% of the total annual cases. Whites make up 22% of COVID-19 related deaths; Blacks 18%; Hispanic 46%.

Contrary to popular expectation, it is not the age group of 65+ with the highest rates. The highest across all race and ethnicity is the 20-29 year old. Maybe they are the ones still out socializing in close quarters.

In the recent days, there was

concern that hospital capacity rates would not be able to accommodate the large volume of COVID-19 cases.

James McDeavitt, Ph.D., Dean of Clinical Affairs for Baylor College of Medicine, said, "We're not in danger at this point."

There are still plenty of ICU beds available in the TMC. TMC has a 3 phase plan in place for the pandemic. In Phase 1 of Intensive Care, there are 1,330 beds; Phase 2, the ICU holds an additional 373, while Phase 3 houses another 504.

For the second time during the pandemic, TMC has reached the Phase 2

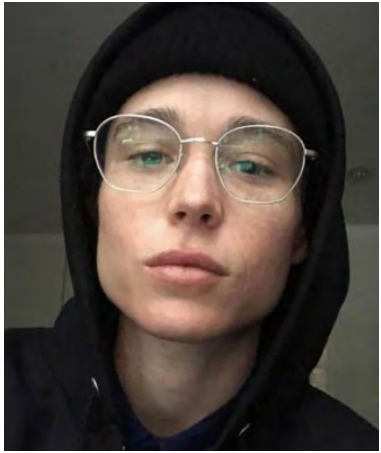
Intensive Care stage with a total of 1,379 ICU beds occupied. TMC has never had to use the 504 beds in Phase 3. Then TMC has the capabilities to create even more beds in the surgical units of the hospitals, if necessary.

Only 3- 5% of the population has been infected by the virus. Even so, Texas statistics illustrate a 99% survival of the virus once an individual is infected. As the counties and the state continues to enforce the preventive measures they have put in place, and as they establish new safety measures in a proactive manner, citizens of Harris County hope to return to normalcy as they flatten the curve of COVID-19.

Elliot Page comes out as transgender

By Aansa Usmani

In late 2020, Elliot Page, known for his roles on Netflix's "The Umbrella Academy" (2019-) and "Juno" (2007)



Elliot Page's first Instagram post after announcing he identifies as trans and uses he/they pronouns. Image courtesy of @elliottpage via Instagram.

came out as transgender via Instagram.

"Hi, friends," Page began, "I want to share with you all that I am trans, my pronouns are he/they and my name is Elliot."

Page said of his decision to publicly come out as transmasculine, "I can't begin to express how remarkable it feels to finally love who I am enough to pursue my authentic self."

His announcement unified trans people across social media and showed visibility for those undergoing their transitional journeys. Page's "deadname" was replaced on Netflix and various other sites, respecting and honoring Page's newly announced identity. Page's announcement was met with criticism, much of which arose from hateful content on conspiracy/alt-right forums that persists in legislative chambers.

In certain states, laws have been passed, allowing individuals to deny trans people healthcare, jobs, schooling, or living, based on "religious freedom." In turn, this negatively impacts their livelihood and overall mental health. Transmale and San Jacinto College student, Thomas Martinez, spoke of the significance of Page's public announcement and visible transition.

"I think it's an important step in recognizing transgen-

der men in the media. There are a few widely known transgender men, and [transmen] have very little representation," Martinez said. "[Page's] coming out, especially as an adult, is a proper demonstration that shows that anyone may realize that they... want to transition at any age.

"When people think of trans, they imagine male-to-female celebrities like Caitlyn Jenner or Laverne Cox. [Page's announcement] brings the transgender

community – especially transmen, better recognition, normalcy, and visibility by everyone."

Regardless of criticism, Page and Martinez continue to advocate for trans rights and trans visibility; both hope to bring further awareness to trans issues and promote equality for all. Further educating individuals about these issues will shed light on their struggles, both as individuals and the overall community.

Review: 'Wonder Woman 1984'

By James Jurewicz

"Wonder Woman 1984" was Warner Media's last movie of the year 2020. The film started as a March release but after multiple delays, WW84 was released on Christmas Day in both movie theaters as well as the subscription streaming service HBO Max. A sequel to 2017's wildly popular and successful film Wonder Woman, WW84 was a highly anticipated release.

Gal Gadot is back as Wonder Woman/Diana Prince returning to the role which brought her worldwide recognition. Kristen Wiig and Pedro Pascal also appear as the film's villains, Cheetah/Dr. Barbra Minerva and Maxwell Lord. Wigg offers a nuanced performance as Diana's coworker who finds herself suddenly blessed with powers comparable to Wonder Woman's. Pascal's character Max-

well Lord is a sleazy television personality and investment guru. Lord is a picture-perfect representation of the typical 80's yuppie, personified by his ironed suits, slicked-back hair and detestable personality. This is in stark contrast to the quiet and honorable character Pascal portrays on the hit Disney+ streaming show "The Mandalorian".

Writer and Director Patty Jenkins has returned and delivered a product identical to an actual Wonder Woman comic. The dialogue and imagery seem as if it could be taken directly from a DC Comics graphic novel. WW84 is filled with 80's references, neon colors and big hair are prevalent throughout the movie. The film imagery was appealing and the actors were well directed but the story was not as good as the first film.

Spoilers

Ahead. This film plays out like a dream. Unusual things just seem to happen in this movie universe that would be impossible in the real world with no specific explanation. All of this is attributed to a magical Wishing Stone that fell into Diana and Dr. Minerva's possession through their jobs at the Smithsonian Museum. This stone is powerful enough to resurrect a World War I veteran who perished in the end of the previous film. Chris Evans has returned as Steve Trevor, the brave and charming WWI pilot and love interest for Diana. Evans' death was heartbreaking in the 2017 film and his return was welcome and well known through his heavily advertised appearance in the film's trailer.

When Lord discovers the power of the stone, he quickly steals it, causing

bedlam worldwide. Lord promises multiple world leaders their deepest desires, from restored cultures to massive nuclear stockpiles, acting like as an Evil Genie. Every wish made has a "Monkeys Paw" effect to them. Granting the wish to the person but "taking as much as it gives". This quickly becomes out of control and requires the daughter of a god to stop the chaos and restore hope planet-wide. Meanwhile, Barbra becomes a rival to Diana somehow obtaining her powers. This eventually leads to an appearance by famous Wonder Woman rival Cheetah, a humanoid large cat with lightning speed and super strength.

In WW84, things just happen magically with little explanation. Most of the magical occurrences could be attributed to the Wish Stone though audi-

ences deserve more clarity than is given. Steve and Diana steal a plane with relative ease leading to an appearance with Wonder Woman's invisible jet from the comics. We are given another look at Diana's home island Themyscira in the form of a flashback, though it would have been nice to see how things are on the island concurrently. In many ways this film seems like a missed opportunity to expand the lore of Wonder Woman, instead we are given a bratty yuppie and Kristen Wigg dressed as a big cat.

For a fantasy movie, WW84 was highly entertaining, though anyone expecting a superhero film will be disappointed. Not once does Diana wield her iconic Greek short sword, a disappointment for more devoted fans, and her shield is nowhere to

be seen during the confusing two-and-a-half-hour runtime. WW84 is nowhere near as good as the first film and could be compared to the let-down that rival Marvel Studios Iron Man 2 was for fans and critics.

This film is worth a watch for fans of the original but it certainly lacks the memorable emotion the first film conjured. There are memorable action scenes in the 2017 movie as well as emotional interactions between the characters that made it worth a second viewing, this sequel lacks that. The sequel needed more action. Thankfully the studio delivered the film to audiences through the app.

"Wonder Woman 1984" will be available on HBO Max for one month only then go through the normal release process.

Capitol insurgency affects democracy

By Aansa Usmani

The Capitol insurgency on Jan. 6 shows how delicate democracy is, regardless of a country's reputation of being "powerful" or "western." The rioters engaged in a failed coup d'état, undermining our country's electoral system and customs.

Since the 1800s, we have had peaceful transitions of power, starting with then-President Adams handing over the powerful position to Thomas Jefferson. Although both were fierce rivals, they created a new custom of peacefully "passing the torch" to the next of kin. Since then,

there have been many peaceful transfers of power, allowing a new administration to take root in the world's most powerful position.

The unconventionality of the Trump presidency extended to this very custom. Trump has not formally conceded to President-elect Biden and has continuously promoted conspiracy theories of fraudulent voting (ex: dead people, undocumented voters).

His response to the loss was rallying his supporters to protest and contest the election certification on Jan. 6. He contin-

uously promoted the event, both online and in his rallies. He even managed to gain congressional support, having supporters from both chambers echo this un-democratic, treasonous plot.

Supporters from all over the country arrived at the nation's capital and descended into mayhem, vandalizing the Capitol Building through smashing windows, breaking doors, and other furniture. Some protestors took it a step further and trespassed into House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office.

The actions committed by these trea-

sonous individuals degrade the basis our nation founded upon, having a representative democracy for all. It is an American tradition to concede, and throwing a massive riot to contest the results of a legitimate election carries volumes; it shows the whole world the pettiness and slyness the losing candidate would stoop to remain in power.

Furthermore, congressional officials and leaders should not fear for their lives when carrying out their required duties. The halls of Congress are the people's halls and should not be de-

meant by insurgents. One is entitled to their private opinions of the incoming administration but decrying foul and terrorizing innocent civilians is not the answer.

The next day, Trump finally acknowledged that Biden will be the next president, stating, "now [that] Congress has certified the results...a new administration will be inaugurated on Jan 20...my focus now turns to ensuring a smooth, orderly and seamless transition of power...[and] healing and reconciliation." This overly-transcripted speech was posted

hours after the Capitol insurgency, but this message would be later contradicted; the next day, Trump tried to organize another uprising, resulting in a permanent suspension of his social media platforms.

To those who continue to support the president or those treasonous coup-endorsing congressional/senatorial individuals, they are willingly and knowingly complicit in advancing an agenda synonymous with racism, xenophobia, homophobia, bigotry, misogyny, and now fascism. Everyone is entitled to their own beliefs, but promoting political violence or terrorism is abhorrent and unacceptable.

Holidays ft. COVID-19, financial instability

By Briana Garcia

The year 2020 has rapidly flown by, with months blurring together while simultaneously creeping by slowly with each audible tick of a clock. This year was nothing that anyone could have expected, yet many still hold onto the erringly loud notion that this could have been prevented or at least slowed before we had reached these amount of deaths and steadily climbing numbers of those who have fallen ill. The last thing that many of us remember was March and finding out that spring break was extending; whether it be from work or school, it was the last bit of ordinary many had, if it could be called that, to begin with.

Time continued to pass, and

the months rapidly flew by, yet it trickled slowly to those who began to have its effects come too close to home. Contact with family and friends began to diminish. Those who have experienced the brunt of it not allowed to say goodbyes to those forever lost to the virus. Fear had ultimately begun to sink in, fear of catching it, fear of spreading it, fear of seeing someone for the last time, fear for those who could not protect themselves due to unfortunate circumstances due to lack of housing. Like a mind hive, we all reacted and panicked; items began to disappear, people would hoard unknowingly or purposely, knowing that there would be none left for those in need to replenish for themselves.

A new crisis began. Work had begun to slow and come to a complete stop. The debate of essential and not came to arise. The pressure was building within those who could not choose from risking their health for income or losing their home. Tuition was lost when the closings began, many becoming homeless, many forced to leave when rent was not being met. A stimulus was given, and many hoped it would become a recurring thing while most never received it, yet all sides realized that this ounce of income was given to stretch between months and months of hardships. Nothing else to aid with bills, medical, transportation, housing, education. Just a one time amount

to cover it all when many know that it would cover one or two things in part.

Then came the celebratory dates, at least those, our nation chooses to acknowledge. Celebrations, birthdays, anniversaries, vacations, meetings, special events either missed or canceled and for some without better judgment continued regardless of the rules instated to minimize the spread of COVID-19. The pressure was now being pushed into one's skin, placed upon the shoulders of those with little choice. Income needed to be brought in to hold onto some sanity to remind many of the happy times they may have held. All of the different backgrounds rushing for income for various reasons,

and the peak holiday season that came in so quickly did not help their stress.

The experience I held as a student was filled with many obstacles, all stacked on top of another. Being a full-time student struggling to afford necessities to bills juggling three jobs and five courses were intense enough. However, ultimately losing many loved ones to the pandemic that continues to rage on throughout the world and attempting to grasp the last bit of sanity left within me and keeping oneself alive. Many like me attempted to use the holidays as a haven to temporality forget the stress and painful sorrow that came with COVID-19, yet many have it worse, and for those, I cry and wish

for a better life.

The Day of the Dead was meant to be an event to remember those lost. It shakes me to the core to witness and experience that there will be so many more images on our altars. How do we celebrate the lives of those taken too soon, when the pain weighs so heavy in our hearts? The next holiday soon after that was instantly changed as filled houses with laughter and family could no longer be. Traditional dishes exchanged for those that could be afforded—calling loved ones and from afar in hopes that they are not alone. We leave prayers for those whose voices we would never hear again—reassuring my Abuela that her children and grandchildren will visit her soon when it is safe.

Continued on next page

Holidays ft. COVID-19 (continued)

Fearful promises we all hope we can keep—searching for the glowing light in these dreary days to assure her and so many others alike. Upcoming discussion of meetings for the rosary learning that our family had held more casualties due to COVID-19 and attempting to grab some hold to their memory when seeing how funerals were not safe to be held. Hearts clenching when we realized those we loved would be laid to rest without having the opportunity to be sent

off by their family. Last goodbyes were sent through Zoom calls that strangers placed as we speak to our family that would not come home ever again—learning that financial instability led to having our deceased loved ones having their homes robbed in their final hours.

Many students in similar stances placing aside emotions to focus on classes and finals as the end of the semester drew near. Stressing over unfinished assignments to

work that kept piling up. Too many in this current day are not allowing themselves to grieve as they were simultaneously reminding themselves that others had it worse, a weaseling thought yelling inside them, yet it still hurts. I was scrambling for extra income to splurge on gifts, whether it be just one, something to create a smile on the faces of those left.

They are risking one's health to areas where people take off their masks to sneeze or bring down their shields

and masks to speak as if forgetting that the purpose was to keep them on entirely. All it takes is a second, and it can hurt you and others deeply. An internal voice screams inside at the reckless acts and unjustifiable words said, and all one can merely do is weep. Bringing back recent events where phone calls brought pain as it was the remembrance of who else we have lost and those who will never fully recover—struggling to breathe as those continue to act recklessly, potentially

harming more with each passing day. I rage and search for something to aim it to; I yell as I can see dying loved ones behind closed eyes, those who placed us in this position to those who do nothing to help us blur together into this black mass of pain.

How does so much hardship come from a single man's stubbornness? Millions alike dead. Millions alike sick and will never fully recovered. Millions afraid. Millions are forced to risk themselves to support themselves and others—so many angry, so many who have it worse than I.

Nevertheless, we struggle and continue to die. The holidays gave a brief ten-second escape, but it reminded so many of all the wrongdoings that ensued this year. It continues to do so as time passes on. Silent cries, vocal screams of just unjustified treatment the people are being given. The ignorance is so high they gave it a different name; they call it unified. I will call it unending pain. These words written in memory of those lost, and many more. Each person, name, life gone to the injustice of a burning nation.

Kapitolbelagerung By Michael Kowis

Wed., Jan. 6 is a day that will be long lived in the Anals of History. On that day at around 1 p.m. EST, rioters from the Trump rally marched towards the Capitol Building complex intent on "Stopping the Steal," emboldened by statements from politician Rudy Giuliani like "Let's have trial by combat." History will long remember the day of Jan. 6, 2021 as it remembers Dec. 7, 1941 as a day which livea in infamy. On that January day, a vile mob assembled around the East Entrance to the Capitol Building with the intent to put a halt to the tallying of the Electoral College votes. Its these votes that when properly tallied and certified, make proper what we already knew, that Joe Biden would be our new president, and the rioters and looters tried to halt that. For

their part the siege worked if only but for 5 hours. After the dust had been settled and the Capitol complex cleared the Congress of the people went right back to work doing the duty of the people under the Constitution. In the early hours of Jan. 7, Congress made official what we already knew - Joe Biden and Kamala Harris would take the White House on Jan. 20.

But there lingers matter of social justice. For you see, this mob was a white supremacists attack on our Capitol. How would this have looked if this was a Black Lives Matter movement? BLM protests, if one can remember, have all been peaceful. Think Lafayette Square and how these protests were met. When you compare what happened this week to these events, one

thing stands out. We need a uniform police response to handle both of these events. It should be made clear that so long as you protest peacefully, no matter the color of your skin, you won't be met with overwhelming police contact. It should also be made clear that no matter the color of your skin, if your intent is to do harm, then you will be met with force. We cannot have white supremacy groups getting away with events like Jan. 6. While at the same time, peaceful protests cannot happen under fear of duress. General Counsel for Homeland Security, John Sandweg, was asked how the events of Jan. 6 would look if it were a BLM protest.

"You would see men in Tactical Gear, overwhelming police force and thou-

sands of uniformed police officers and elements of the National Guard," Sandweg said. "You should look no further than Lafayette Square and how that was handled to get an idea for how this would have been handled."

It is clear that what we need, in addition to proper police and event planning, is better race relations. We need some way to determine how and why to use overwhelming police force. No racial group should be subjugated to that level of force without some fair and honest reason behind it.

And yet, all of this would have been enough if it weren't for the fact that several members of Congress, the same Congress whose temple had been desecrated by rioters, some of them added fuel to the fire. After the fire had been put out, so to say, many wanted

to take credit for the cleanup when they had a helping hand in causing the mess.

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner had this to say about the glaring double standard. "For elected officials, who incited this, carried out this foolishness, then to talk about this violence, whether it be on the right or the left, you get no credit," Turner said. "If a person starts a fire, then puts water out onto the fire we don't say to them 'thank you'. You get no credit because you started the fire; we need to hold those in offices of trust accountable to the damage they helped perpetuate, that is how we as a nation begin to heal."

When we as a nation turn a blind eye to vile mob rule, while we harshly punish peaceful protests, what does that say about our national character? We must see with both eyes

and judge with a mind undimmed by personal ambition or grand vendetta. It will take us all acting in our own capacity to bring light, no matter how small, to this dark and dreary place we find ourselves in. We as a nation are better than what happened on Jan. 6. Jan. 6 was a learning opportunity and in that light, we will find salvation,

I pray that our Congress, no matter how divided, can come together, not just now, but forevermore to fight for the common good, not just the partisan good. We as a nation will grow and learn from this. May the everlasting light guide us on our own paths and bring us and our nation away from this dark place.