

DATELINE

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Houston Olympic boxing champion welcomes UHD Gators

BY MCKENZIE BREWER

On Aug. 24, UHD kicked off “Week of Welcome” with the help of some female power. Gators had the opportunity to attend one of UHD’s main events, a meet and greet with Olympic medalist and World Boxing Council Flyweight Champion Marlen Esparza.

In addition to a photo op and meet and greet with Houston’s own boxing champion, the Marilyn Davies College of Business hosted their open house featuring tacos, popcorn, and the chance to enter a raffle to win tickets to the Major League Soccer team, The Houston Dynamo Football Club.

Not only did Esparza compete in the very first

Olympic female boxing event, but she also became the first female to qualify, for the U.S. While Esparza took photographs and signed autographs with students, one of Esparza’s publicists recounted the Olympic medalist’s early steps in the world of boxing.

It was the 2012 Olympics in London where Esparza first began her climb to the top. Contrary to what you might think, boxers in the Olympics are not professional boxers, yet.

One of the Olympic qualifications require that boxers must be amateurs and have not competed professionally in leagues such as the World Boxing Council, International Boxing Federation, or World Boxing Organization.

This means Esparza was only just beginning her boxing career when she brought home a bronze medal for the USA team.

After the meet and greet, Esparza shared about the pleasures and challenges of becoming a pro boxer. When asked how it felt to bring home a medal for the first time in 2012, Esparza was lost for words describing the feeling of becoming the first female ever to win a medal in Olympic boxing.

“It helped because I tell everybody that the medal is my favorite, but the belt was the hardest thing to ever get,” Esparza said about her 2021 WBC female flyweight title.

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Olympic medalist and World Boxing Council Flyweight Champion Marlen Esparza poses with a UHD student on Aug. 24 during fall 2021’s Week of Welcome. Credit: Mckenzie Brewer

New UHD motto honors Gator grit

BY SHAHERYAR KHAN

At the beginning of the fall 2021 academic school year, UHD steps towards a new era, as the university rebrands its slogan to three words that define the Gator community: “Determined. Dedicated. Downtown.”

Initially, the brand campaign was set to be unveiled in November 2020. It came to a halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new school motto succeeds the previous slogan, “Finish UHD Strong,” enacted in 2017. This previous brand campaign was set during the 2015-2020 UHD Strategic Plan to prove to future students that UHD is

perceived “as the school of first choice among prospective students,” according to Vice President of Advancement and University Relations Johanna Wolfe.

The three words that echo the essence of the Gator community have already made its presence known across campus, as there are banners, posters, and even t-shirts with the new motto all over UHD.

According to Executive Director of University Relations Elissa Olsen, the University’s new motto “celebrates the tenacious spirits of its students, faculty, staff and alumni.”

“The brand-new initiative

invites its audiences to meet the UHD student—confident, ambitious, fearless and ready to change the world,” Olsen said.

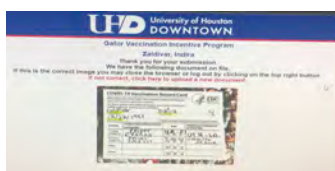
Olsen further added that “both first-time in college students and returning students have looked upon UHD as the perfect university to continue their academic journeys. Its value to future, current and former students is reflected within this campaign.”

UHD was founded in 1974 and carried out a fundamental goal to meet the needs of Houston’s ever-so-diverse community.

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Credit: Shaheryar Khan



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FIND US ONLINE!

UHD implements ‘soft opening’ to kick off first weeks of fall semester

BY CHRIS KEMP

Questions on UHD’s handling of operations at the start of the fall semester linger amid the ongoing pandemic. UHD’s “soft opening” to the start of the semester welcomed more Gators to campus but also drew disagreements.

The UHD Faculty Senate Executive Committee and UHD Staff Council Executive Committee made their concerns clear prior to the start of the semester in an open letter sent to the UHD community on Aug. 9.

One of the matters conveyed was a request that faculty be allotted more flexibility in changing their modes of instruction over the semester. Presently, some teachers are still locked into agreements made earlier in the year that prevent them from changing.

On Aug. 12, UHD President Loren Blanchard, Ph.D., endeavored to address Gators’ concerns in a message sent out to students on behalf of University

Relations. The message detailed a plan of action that was deemed a “soft opening.” During this soft opening, face-to-face and hybrid class instructors had the option of only meeting once a week for the first two weeks of this fall semester.

While the message sent from the Office of the President did not directly address the open letter sent out three days prior, Blanchard promised that he would communicate with the UHD community “as quickly as possible should UHD need to once again pivot in the face of COVID-19.”

The president’s message notified students of the availability of an on-campus testing site located next to the Student Life Center on Girard Street, open Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., and announced the Gator Vaccination Incentive Program that rolled out on Sept. 3. He encouraged Gators to consider wearing face coverings (vaccinated or not) as the Texas Department of State Health Services

and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend.

Philosophy Professor Andrew Pavelich, Ph.D., who is also UHD’s Philosophy Department chair, expressed empathy for the various approaches to responding to our novel predicament.

“I get the soft opening as a compromise... and what we’re doing is in the middle,” he said. “For a situation like this being in the middle is probably the best choice. There are very rare times where you can just say that, ‘okay there is a very clear choice, there is no downside, this is what we’re going to do.’”

However, not all teachers are as willing to address the situation so warmly. After innocent elevator banter (voices strangely muffled and somewhat comically elevated on account of masks), one member of the faculty declined to comment on UHD’s approach to this semester. Considering the open letter provided by the SGA, the individual is not alone

in feeling less than optimal about the degree to which UHD is being proactive in this very dynamic situation.

“It’s always a compromise,” as Pavelich aptly said. As a noted public institution serving one of the most diverse communities globally, Gators have expressed they expect UHD to excel at managing turmoil. From the student perspective, The Dateline’s editor Indira Zaldivar said she is happy to see a lot more people on campus.

The Week of Welcome was a “wholesome” experience “filled with many fun events that wouldn’t have been as fun without the soft opening.” “Thanks to vaccines, first and foremost, and UHD’s decision to implement a soft opening allowing a lot more students on campus, I got to reconnect with friends and meet new Gators,” Zaldivar said. “UHD has made a great effort to maintain the UHD community safe through on-campus vaccination events, the UTHealth partnership



UHD mascot Ed-U-Gator makes an appearance at Week of Welcome’ event on Aug. 24, 2021. Credit: McKenzie Brewer

that has allowed Gators since April to schedule an appointment to get vaccinated, COVID-19 testing kiosks, the new vaccination incentive, and abundant hand sanitation stations. Let’s prioritize our health overall by wearing masks and keeping a distance so that we keep getting to see each other in person and not

through a screen.”

Gators are encouraged to take care of themselves and each other by partaking in COVID-19 safety precautions available on campus such as COVID-19 testing kiosks and hand sanitation stations; and following the CDC and DSHS guidelines.



UHD Campus Activities Board’s Edwin Daniel Mendez Alvarado tables at Week of Welcome on Aug. 24 to show Gators what CAB is about. Credit: Indira Zaldivar



Gators gather UHD spirit merch from UHD Marketing’s table on Aug. 24 during Week of Welcome. Credit: Indira Zaldivar

UHD launches vaccine incentive program

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

On Sept. 3, the voluntary Gator Vaccine Incentive Program launched and will be available through Sept. 30. UHD's first vaccine incentive program against COVID-19, promises to reward registered participants with \$30 in GatorCash and a chance to win other generous monetary prizes.

This program is open to UHD students, faculty and staff. Anyone who has been vaccinated or will get vaccinated, qualifies to register.

Besides the \$30 in GatorCash, the limited prizes to students include one year of free tuition and fees, one semester of free parking, one semester of free parking, \$100 Amazon gift card. Faculty and staff should visit the page to view the limited prizes.

To register, participants must upload a photo of their vaccination card on the vaccination incentive program's portal between Sept. 3 and Sept. 30.

UHD senior, Karina Rodarte, got her first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine through UHD and HEB's on-campus vaccination event on Aug. 26. Rodarte, a chemistry major, is scheduled to receive her second dose on Sept. 17. "The rewards are extremely generous," Rodarte said. "I didn't expect a year of free tuition and a semester of free parking to be options. It just shows how much UHD is prioritizing student safety!"

Seeing her close family members get sick with the first COVID-19 wave back in mid 2020 encouraged her to get vaccinated.

"My parents encouraged all of their kids to get vaccinated since the new variant is much more contagious, painful, and difficult to treat," Rodarte added.

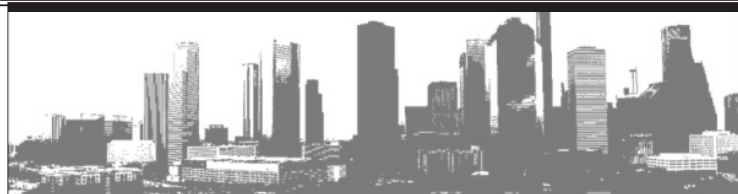
She said the vaccination incentive program is "very reassuring" that UHD is "willing to encourage students to keep themselves and their family safe."

Everyone who participated in UHD's most recent on-campus vaccination event is also eligible to participate

in the Harris County's vaccination incentive program. Harris County launched its own incentive program in August and extended it to Sept. 13. The county rewards residents who get vaccinated at any vaccination hub in Harris County with a \$100

gift card. Nearly 60% of eligible county residents are now fully vaccinated and 71% have gotten their first shot, according to Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo.

Rodarte will enter both the county and university's incentive programs.



THE DATELINE

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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 UHD 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 UHD, 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 UHD. All paid writers must also complete vendor registration with the University of Houston System prior to contributing.

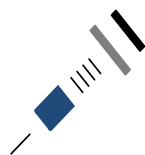
Press releases, story ideas, news tips and suggestions are always welcomed. We encourage all students to contribute. Any student interested in joining The Dateline staff may request more detailed information sending an email to the editor Indira Zaldivar at editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com.

Follow us on Social Media!



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ARE YOU VACCINATED?



Follow these steps to enter UHD's Gator Vaccination Incentive Program (VIP) to win \$30 in GatorCash and a chance to win more rewards.

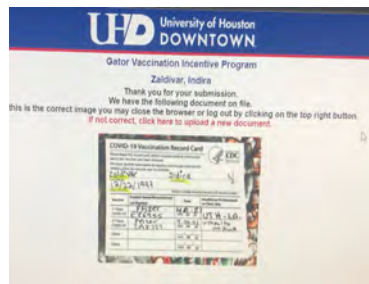
1 TAKE A PHOTO OF YOUR VACCINATION CARD



2 SCAN THE QR CODE TO LOGIN TO THE VIP PORTAL



3 UPLOAD THE PHOTO OF YOUR VACCINATION CARD ON THE VIP PORTAL



Some participants could win the following prizes

Students

- Student Debt Waiver (Up to \$3,500)
- 1 year of Free Tuition & Fees
- 1 Semester of Free Tuition & Fees
- 1 year of free parking
- 1 semester of free parking
- \$100 Amazon Gift Card

Faculty & Staff

- 1 year of free parking
- 1 semester of free parking
- \$100 Restaurant Gift Card
- \$100 Amazon Gift Card



Credit: Indira Zaldivar

Boxing champ at UHD

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In June 2021, Esparza competed in her toughest competition, making her Olympic event in 2012 just the start of hard work and dedication to succeed at the highest level of professional boxing.

Esparza explained that her 2021 belt was one of four belts a boxer can win as a pro.

And, she went for the toughest one first. Esparza challenged Ibeth Zamora Silva, a Mexican professional boxer who defended the title five times. The newly pro boxer knew she was up against a stiff competitor but was ready to take on the challenge.

Esparza speaks out about the mental challenges she encountered along the road to

victory.

“It wasn’t like a Rocky movie where it was like ‘oh every day I wake up and I’m so ready!’”

In fact, Esparza admitted she had faced multiple struggles as she prepared to “overcome the battle before the battle happened” There were tears, and there was a lot of building that Esparza had to do to win before winning the big title. Like anyone who pursues their dreams, Esparza

had to convince herself first that she was capable of winning.

Even the most accomplished professionals struggle with believing in themselves and finding the strength to overcome even the hardest of competitions.

While recounting how she overcame hardships even when people didn’t believe she could beat a tough competitor such as Zamora Silva, Esparza encouraged Gators who are going through the

“thick of it” to “just keep breathing.”

“You have to really believe in yourself,” Esparza said. “If you believe in what you’re doing, everything is going to work. It just becomes sticking to it and really just making the worst of it, a process. Because it’s going to be bad, it’s always difficult, it’s always hard to overcome things and try to conquer things in life.”

You might not be preparing to compete

for three more pro belts like the powerful Marlen Esparza in just 18 months, but college can definitely feel like a series of competitive events.

Even when college starts to feel overwhelming as the due dates keep coming and finals creep up ever-so quietly and deadly, keep in mind the wise words of Esparza, “keep on breathing and you’re alright.”



Installation entitled “Female Power” by award-winning Houston artist Betirri Bengtson features current World Boxing Council Flyweight World Title Belt Holder Marlen Esparza, and fellow local Olympian Emily Chen. Credit: Mckenzie Brewer



World champion Marlen Esparza poses with Director of Student Life Eugene Bernard, Dean of Student Affairs Meritza Tamez, Dean of Marilyn Davies College of Business Charles Engler, and UHD mascot. Courtesy: UHD website.

New UHD motto

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



The Dateline’s editor Indira Zaldivar poses with her Week of Welcome t-shirt featuring the new UHD motto on Sept. 8. Credit: Shaheryar Khan.

Many students who walk the halls of UHD are first-generation students, and just as many are working individuals that break the traditional norms of what an average college student is supposed to be. All these hardworking individuals have chosen UHD as their stepping-stone for success, right in the heart of one of the largest cities in the United States—Houston, Texas.

Professor of Communication Studies and Director of UHD Center for Public Deliberation, Windy Y. Lawrence, Ph.D., has been a professor at UHD for almost 20 years. This is what she has to say about the new brand

campaign.

“UHD students are innovative pioneers and leaders. In order to be this, you have to be determined, dedicated, and of course, downtown!”

Dean of Students Meritza Tamez, Ph.D., says the new brand campaign embodies the students’ grit at UHD.

“Our students come from different walks of life, many facing challenges and hardships along the way, but are determined to reach their academic goals in dedication to their personal success,” Tamez said.

Tamez graduated as a “first-generation student from a single parent household,” and she

feels a close connection to the challenges many Gators face.

“Fear of failure, feeling confused, making endless sacrifices to stay in school just to name a few,” the Dean of Students continued. “Yet like our students, I was determined to earn my degree because I knew it was the key to change not only my life, but my family’s life and the lives of others like me.”

“Determined. Dedicated. Downtown” best suit a UHD Gator. The new brand campaign ensures that it will continue to promote excellence that has aspired throughout the University’s rich history.

UHD Center for Diversity and Inclusion honors Hispanic Heritage Month

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

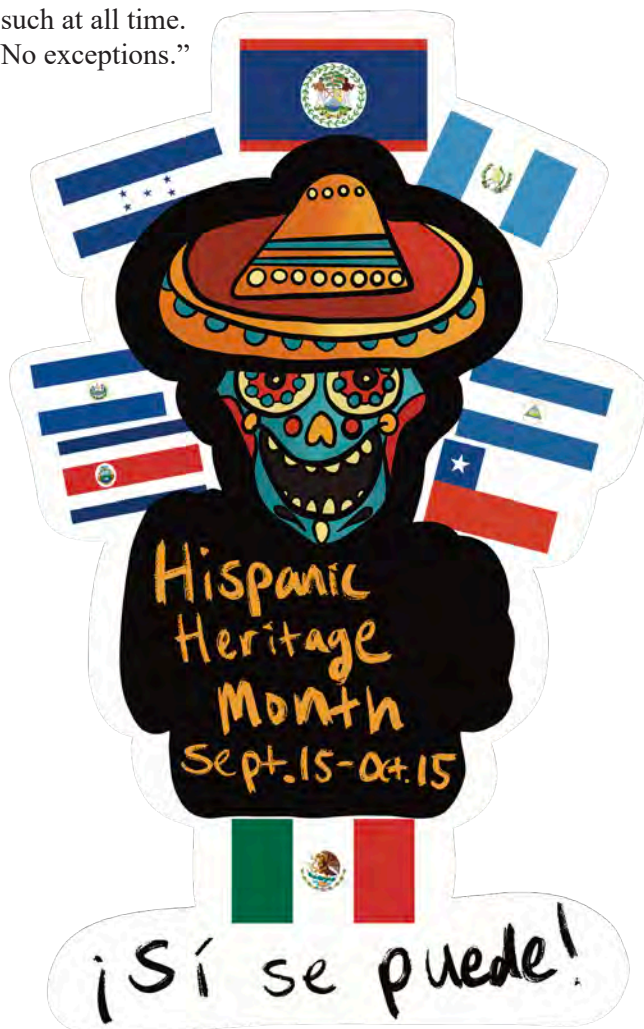
As part of National Hispanic Heritage Month, the Center for Diversity and Inclusion will once again host DreamZone Ally raining workshops on Sept. 10 and 29.

According to CDI Director John Hudson, Ph.D., These trainings provide support, advocacy, resource connections, and empathetic listeners for DACA students, students from immigrant families, as well as students who experience discrimination and harassment because they are perceived to be immigrants.

“The goal of these workshops are to create opportunities to educate the campus community about DACA and the many challenges faced by our students who are immigrants, perceived immigrants, or who

come from immigrant families,” Hudson said. “Our overall message will be that ALL are part of the Gator family and deserve to be treated as such at all time. No exceptions.”

Credit: Gean Garcia



Incident on campus starts mental health discussions

BY AANSA USMANI

On Sept. 1, the Houston Fire Department, UHD Campus Police, and other emergency authorities responded to a distressed call regarding an individual that jumped from the Main Street Bridge.

The individual is not affiliated or associated with the University. Further details will be released via UHD Media Relations.

Representative of UHD’s Psychology

Club, Ada Clerigo, responded to the incident stating,

“This is a reminder to us to be kind and compassionate to one another...If [you] need someone to talk to, my DM’s [direct messages] are always welcome and open.”

Clerigo also added, “[UHD’s] Counseling services are very welcoming, and your first five semesterly sessions are free of charge.”

In light of Suicide Prevention Month, the Psychology Club plans

to host discussions regarding suicide and preventative methods to reduce further harm to oneself.

If you are interested in attending these discussions, email Ada Clerigo at clerigoa1@gator.uhd.edu.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the victim and their family at this time.

Contact Assistant Editor Aansa Usmani at usmania6@gator.uhd.edu if you have developing details. Anonymity can be requested.

Suicide Prevention Month

Brought to you by The Dotline

Suicide was the 10th leading cause of death in 2019

The International Journal of Medicine has stated:

- To reduce suicides during the COVID-19 crisis it is imperative to decrease stress, anxiety, fears, and loneliness in the general population "
- People need to be encouraged to stay connected and maintain relationships by telephone or video, get enough sleep, eat healthy food, and exercise "

In Harris County, males are more likely to commit suicide.

Females 33%

Males 67%

White 37%

Asian / Pacific Islander 24.2%

White men are at greatest risk for suicide both in Harris County and nationwide .

Hispanic / Latino 18.3%

Black/African American 20.5%

* The numbers represents the percentages of deaths per 100,000 people *

5 ways to help someone out from emotional pain

1. Ask
2. Keep them safe
3. Be there
4. Help them connect
5. Stay connected

Source: The National Institute of Mental Health

UHD Counseling Services

Scan the code below to schedule an appointment

Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

15-minute phone sessions: first-served calls Monday - Friday 10 - 11a.m. & 2 - 3p.m.

Same-day counseling appointment (713) 500-3852

UHDcounseling@uhd.edu

Credit: Giselle Oviedo



Credit: Sarah Ramirez

Chase Giddings becomes Spring ISD's first Black band director

BY SASHA SMITH

The first Black band director at Andy Dekaney High School, Chase Giddings, is the sheer embodiment of a student becoming a teacher. As a native Houstonian who grew up in the Aldine area, Giddings says that music embodied a big part of his life.

He turned this passion into a drive as he went into the band in the fifth grade, pursuing a bachelor's degree in music education, a master's degree in music conducting at Sam Houston University, and finally returning to the place, Andy Dekaney High School, where he fell in love with the sound.

Giddings prides himself on the education of students and creation of an appreciation of music in their lives. He talks about what music and bands can contribute to one's life.

Although Giddings credited former band

directors for being a motivation and inspiration, he opened up about two individuals, his parents, whom he normally doesn't mention or credit too often. Despite their passing, he shows gratitude for the discipline and intent of working through things they were able to instill within him.

"For a child, the best thing in the world is to make their parents happy and proud," Giddings said.

"They motivate me in their death to continue to just be a good representation of them."

Giddings also credited his babysitter Dorthy Rae for helping raise him. Rae helped Giddings develop his outgoing personality and his ability to stand in front of people, allowing his interpersonal relationships with principals and other school administrators to blossom.

"I'm a guy of history," Giddings proclaimed, reiterating the fact we are all built up

of stories and different people who have shaped us, although these specific people have held the longest impression.

Giddings elaborated on the fact that from an early age, he was always surrounded by the older generation and subsequently drawn to them because of their greater knowledge.

Speaking on his achievement, Giddings addressed his feelings about being the face of the first African-American High School Band Director in Spring ISD. "To be honest with you, it hasn't hit me, and it was not as big of a deal to me as it was to other people," he said. "To me, it was just a culmination of doing the job and doing the work and just being rewarded for it."

"The school district and the school is majority-minority, so I think it's great and it's always a plus when those students can see themselves in positions of leadership . . . when

you have a kid who maybe wants to be a band director or a music educator or an educator period and they see an African American leader, they say, 'well, maybe I can do that.'"

Seeing not only how passionate Chase Giddings is about being an inspiration to these children, but also how another steppingstone in such an influential school district that has become a known trend-setter.

"When you're the first guy, you don't want to mess up. You don't want to set the wrong precedent," Giddings said.

Giddings also mentioned a core belief in his faith.

"If I get too high, just knock me down a bit, but if I get too down, just pick me up."

He continues to see the opportunity of this role and the path he is setting for those behind him as humbling, never wanting to take it for granted.

However, he also



Dekaney High School Band Director Chase Giddings. Courtesy: Spring ISD's website.

mentions he never doubted the availability of this position to him or a route where this is something he would not be able to do.

The Dekaney band director continues to utilize this platform and encourages not only himself in the multiple

roles he plays as director, leader, and father, but also as a mentor to these children that he teaches.

"If it has to do with music and it has to do with kids, I want to be a part of it," Giddings remarked.

A BOWLFUL OF COLLEGE



Credit: Jeremy Jones

Texas strict abortion bill in effect

BY GEAN GARCIA

On Sept. 1, the Texas state government approved Senate Bill 8 the most restrictive abortion law in the U.S., to restrict Texas women's right to receive an abortion.

SB8 bans all abortions after six weeks, the beginning of a woman's first trimester. However, despite being a law passed by the State of Texas, the bill will not be enforced by the state government.

Instead, it seeks to deputize private citizens, even those outside of Texas, to sue agencies that perform or help a woman get an abortion by giving the reporter as much as

\$10,000.

Agencies such as abortion clinics are not the only ones on the chopping block; Lyft drivers may be penalized as well.

The last time any state had a law banning abortions goes back to 1973, when in Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court ruled that every American woman has a right to receive an abortion up to 24 weeks, well into her second trimester

In Texas, SB8 reduces this period by eighteen weeks.

"By the time a pregnant woman misses her period, she is four weeks pregnant," reports The New York Times.

Furthermore, "Abortion providers in Texas estimate that 85% of women who are seeking an abortion are at least six weeks pregnant and would be denied care under the new state law."

In response to this draconian law, abortion clinics in Texas shuttered by canceling their upcoming appointments. Meanwhile, the ride-sharing app Lyft, enraged at the recent accusations, shared a statement via email on Sept. 4.

"This law is incompatible with people's basic rights to privacy, our community guidelines, the spirit of rideshare, and our values as a company.



Demonstrators protest anti-abortion bill, Senate Bill 8, in front of the Governor's Mansion in Austin. Courtesy of Evan L'Roy via The Texas Tribune.

Therefore, we have created a Driver Legal Defense Fund to cover 100% of legal fees for drivers sued under SB8 while driving on our platform. Riders and Drivers: Nothing about how you drive, ride, or

interact with each other should change."

Weighing in, the Supreme Court ruled that the Texas law may remain in effect for now, but it is unclear whether it will remain for good. The only

thing that is clear is that for a Texas woman to receive an abortion after six weeks, she will have to flee to another state.

Supreme Court blocks Biden administration eviction moratorium

BY SERGIO PRESA

The U.S. Supreme Court has struck down the CDC's eviction moratorium, a federal program that protects renters from eviction due to economic difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The court ruled that Congress must decide on whether to extend the moratorium.

However, this is not the first time an eviction moratorium has been addressed to the nation's highest court. "If a federal eviction moratorium is to continue, Congress must specifically authorize it," the Supreme Court majority wrote.

The eight-page opinion peace stated that Congress "was on notice that a further extension would almost surely require new legislation, yet it failed to act in the several weeks leading up to the moratorium's expiration."

The moratorium had been rolled out by

the CDC on Aug. 3, days after the old one expired.

In June, Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote an occurrence and joined four other justices in upholding the moratorium. At the time he did it since the program was set to expire on July 31.

As of now, landlords' groups are accusing Biden's administration of "gamesmanship" for reviving the moratorium. Several administration officials said that they did not believe the Supreme Court would uphold an extension of the eviction moratorium due to Kavanaugh's occurrence.

The CDC had relied on an old statute to justify the moratorium, but the Supreme Court dissents, stating that the CDC is pointing towards a decree that "strains credulity to believe that this statute grants the CDC the sweeping authority that

it asserts."

The court's three liberal justices, Steven Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor, and Elena Kagan dissented on the decision to invalidate the moratorium. Justice Stephen Breyer compared the injury of the landlords to the injury of the tenants in his dissension. The White House has also expressed disappointment in the Supreme Court's ruling.

The action taken by the Supreme Court on the moratorium shows that more of Biden administration's policies could face legal challenges.

Earlier this year, the court also ordered a revival of the Trump administration's Mexico policy when Biden attempted to end it.

Deadly earthquake hits Haiti

HAITI'S HIGH MAGNITUDE QUAKES
2010 VS 2021 Earthquakes

2010 Earthquake	2021 Earthquake
Magnitude: 7.0	Magnitude: 7.2
Date: January 12, 2010	Date: August 14, 2021
Location: 25 kilometers (15 miles) southwest of the capital Port-au-Prince	Location: 125 Kilometers (78 miles) west of the capital Port-au-Prince
Affected: 300,000+ were killed and more than thousands of survived	Affected: 2,000+ injured or dead
Obstacles for recovery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aftershocks of 5.5 and 5.9 magnitudes Scattered Storms hindered reconstructions Many cases of the disease Cholera 	Obstacles for recovery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tropical Storm Grace hindered the affected area The Assassination of President Jovenel Moïse The Covid-19 pandemic

Photo Courtesy of Samadzeville via Getty Images

Photo Courtesy of Delton Jean via AP News

Credit: Giselle Oviedo

President Biden orders airstrike in Nangahar Province, Afghanistan

BY GEAN GARCIA

On Aug. 28, the ISIS member responsible for coordinating the Kabul Airport bombings that killed 169 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members was killed, per President Joe Biden's orders.

Two days prior, the terrorists bombed the Abbey Gate and the Baron Hotel of the

Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan's capital.

The two airport bombings, carried out by ISIS-K suicide bombers, were designed by the Islamic State to terrorize the remaining Americans fleeing Afghanistan, CNN reported.

"To those who carried out this attack, as well as anyone who

wishes America harm, know this: We will not forgive. We will not forget. We will hunt you down and make you pay," Biden vowed on Aug. 26.

In retaliation to the terrorist attacks, the U.S. quickly killed a member of ISIS-K, the Islamic State Khorasan Province, on Aug. 28.

ISIS-K is the official affiliate of

the Islamic State movement operating in Afghanistan, as recognized by the core leadership in Iraq and Syria," reported U.S. journalists Amira Jason and Andrew Mines.

ISIS and the Taliban are separate entities; in fact, they are rival groups.

They envision different implementations of Sharia law across

the Middle East.

Additionally, the Taliban carry a white flag, whereas ISIS has a black one.

Many western countries, such as the United Kingdom and Canada, are already ending their evacuation efforts and leaving Afghanistan for good.

At the same time, the U.S., having already evacuated

100,000 people, stuck to its Aug. 31 withdrawal deadline.

FDA announces voluntary COVID-19 third dose, booster shot

BY AANSA USMANI

On Aug. 12, the Food and Drug Administration announced the voluntary administration of third doses of Pfizer and Moderna's vaccines in light of growing COVID-19 cases and variants.

The FDA also suggested that healthy individuals were administered a COVID-19 booster shot nearly eight months after the administration of their second dose. Despite over half of the American population being fully vaccinated, data suggests that in people with compromised immune systems, the vaccine's full protection wanes down over time, especially as new variants continue to rise.

Research on the COVID-19 vaccine's immunity overtime in healthy individuals is still ongoing to see if the immunity to COVID-19 wanes overtime.

Additionally, the delta variant infects vaccinated individuals, further spreading the disease to others, regardless of vaccination status.

Immunocompromised patients are a priority and eligible to receive the third dose of COVID-19 vaccine sooner than majority of healthy Americans, nearly 28

days after the second dose.

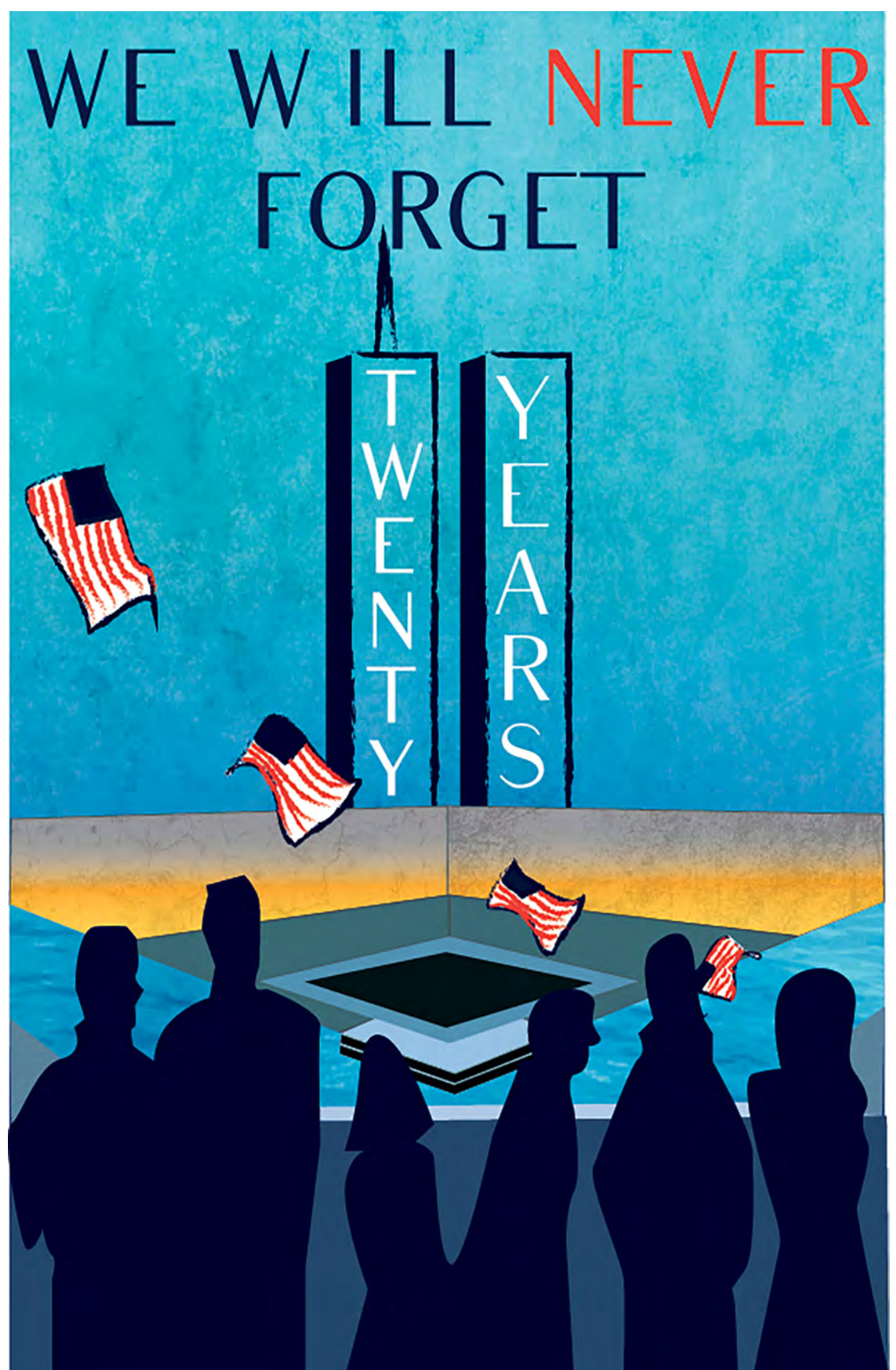
According to Smithsonian Magazine, the Biden administration aims to start administering the booster shot towards the end of September, beginning with healthcare and frontline workers and individuals aged 65 and older.

Dr. Antony Fauci, Director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, spoke to NPR, making a case for those with compromised immune systems.

"[It is] so imminent to make sure that we get them boosted so that they would be in a protected zone."

Individuals with already-compromised immune systems, hoping that many individuals whom they socialize with or pass by are either fully vaccinated or taking social-distancing precautions, rely on herd immunity.

Cases of COVID-19 are rising among the unmasked, unvaccinated individuals amid in-person schooling returning, as well as pre-pandemic life events such as concerts, venues, and other physical spaces.



Credit: Sarah Ramirez

Pronouncing people's names correctly is important

BY AANSA USMANI

Up until the pandemic, I have never been adamant about pronouncing my name correctly. But after seeing the rise of Vice President Kamala Harris, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and other prominent women of color, it made me realize the importance of name pronunciation.

Growing up, I always disliked my Pakistani name, wishing I had a simpler Eastern name like "Yasmine" or "Sara." In school, my name would be pronounced as either Ann-sa, A-nasa, or On-za, all

of which were nowhere like the pronunciation Áansá.

In the aftermath of 9/11, being Muslim-American was already challenging from enduring Islamophobia. I heard hate from right-wing pundits, to hearing anti-Muslim immigration rhetoric from political party leaders.

These issues contributed to my need for constant assimilation, believing that the more I adopted Western culture and traditions, the least likely there would be an opportunity to be discriminated against. This mentality extended to even my namesake,

accepting the mispronunciation, hoping not to stir up unnecessary drama or tensions amongst others.

At one point, it got so bad I allowed my junior-year math teacher to call me Anya for a whole semester. The only time she realized her mistake was at the bi-semester, parent-teacher conference when my biological father corrected the teacher by enunciating my name in front of her.

Even in college, I accepted my name being mispronounced, fearing that correcting them would make me "a pain to deal with,"

my fear stemmed from social anxiety when meeting newer people.

Until the pandemic, I remained content with the mispronunciations, believing that those simple errors would not impact my self-being. During the lockdown, I began researching my South Asian heritage, hoping to find a deeper connection to my Eastern Roots.

Through delving into the internet, it dawned on me how my name, despite the special enunciation, is unique. Instead of having common Pakistani or Americanized Pakistani names, I was given a name that had

significance to my family's culture.

Hearing the same meaning from different languages like Urdu, Arabic, and Persian made me appreciate my name. In the three languages, my name translates to "unmarried woman, formal term," meaning it is a title for unmarried/widowed women in formal occasions/circumstances.

Learning these aspects made me recall my previous struggle of wanting to assimilate further into Western culture, hoping that it would eradicate negative connotations associated with my ethnic background and

religion. As I write this my mother chimes in, "Pronouncing someone's name correctly is a sign of respect, regardless of whether they are around."

Now, whenever I introduce myself, I always emphasize the pronunciation and correct others whenever they mispronounce or find other ways to enunciate it. I still have the lingering thought of "being a pain" whenever I correct others, but then again it is better than being called "Anya" for a whole semester of high school.

Attention Dog Owners: FDA issues warning letter to Midwestern Pet Foods

Deadly substances Found by the FDA:

- Aflatoxin
- Salmonella
- A variety of Mycotoxins

220 injuries linked to Midwestern Pet Foods

130+ Dog Deaths

Brought to You by the Dateline

Credit: Giselle Oviedo

Wearing a mask won't hurt, but not wearing one could put someone at risk

BY NEFERTARI LANE

In the article "Your Guide to Wearing Masks," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends unvaccinated people and anyone aged two or older, should wear a mask public indoor places. The CDC also suggest people do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings, however one should be worn when in areas of reported high numbers of cases.

I am not a doctor or any type of expert. I do not even claim to be well-read. I try to exist in the world and do the right thing. The debate about wearing masks has become a polarizing discussion. Everything about the virus has become debatable and

political, even down to the existence of the virus itself.

At the beginning of the pandemic, no one knew anything. We attacked the recommended protocols with enthusiasm and vigor! But as the pandemic continues on and on, many of us are experiencing the effects of pandemic fatigue. We have become lax, complacent, defiant, and sometimes angry, trying to go on with our everyday lives.

Looking for information I went to the CDC's website. The CDC is a trusted source to provide solid information. I found the CDC generally recommends wearing masks for both vaccinated and unvaccinated people.

According to the

CDC, to maximize protection from the delta variant and prevent spreading the virus to others, everyone including fully vaccinated individuals should wear a mask indoors and in public areas of substantial or high transmission. Wearing a mask over the nose and mouth is required on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the U.S. This includes indoors at U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. Travelers are not required to wear a mask in outdoor conveyance areas (like on open deck areas of a ferry or the uncovered top deck of a bus).

Consideration should be given for

wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated. People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken their immune system may not be fully protected even if they are fully vaccinated. They should continue to take all precautions recommended for unvaccinated people, including wearing a well-fitted mask until advised to do otherwise by their healthcare provider.

After seeing these CDC suggestions, I cannot understand the problem with wearing a mask. Wearing masks has a two-fold purpose. The mask protects you and others. Regardless of beliefs we can error on the side of caution.

What if you just happen to carry the virus and pass it on? What if someone becomes ill or dies as a result? What if you could save a life just by wearing a mask?

True character is what you do when you think no one is looking.

Anyone can be affected. The older lady at the grocery store buying necessities.

The worker in the store who cannot afford to miss work, and the various others who are in public out of necessity.

I cannot rest with the thought that there is a chance that I could be the cause of another person's illness or to possibly put them at risk of death, when all I had to do was wear a mask.

The truth of the matter is we do not know what kind of ails our neighbors have, or their medical conditions which puts them at increased risk. But what we can do is be cautious.

If it is a hoax, what will putting on a mask hurt? Nothing but our feelings and maybe your pride. I know it is serious every time I scroll my timeline and see a RIP of someone I know. But it is not about me or my comfort.

It is about everyone around me, everyone they come into contact with, and everyone they come into contact with. Every time I put on my mask, I am a responsible citizen doing my part.



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Credit: Shaheryar Khan

Top suicide prevention awareness and mental health talks in media

BY JEMA PANTOJA

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, it is a time to raise awareness on a sensitive and often stigmatized topic. It is important to spread awareness about suicide and educate others on how we can reach out and help those in need. Throughout cinema, there have been several films produced that portray suicide and mental health. Unfortunately, many films glamorize or represent suicide as a matter of aesthetics, for example, “Heathers” (1988).

A film that raises awareness on suicide and mental illnesses is “All the Bright Places,” published by Jennifer Niven in 2015 and later adapted into a film in 2020. The film follows main characters Violet

Markey (Elle Fanning) and Theodore Finch (Justice Smith) as they develop into an intimate relationship, all the while the two struggle with emotional scars from their past.



Courtesy: Netflix

The story is about a girl who heals and learns to live from a boy who intends to die.

Finch is depressed, suicidal, anxious, and suffers from bipolar disorder. Each time he contemplates suicide he writes down something good happens, no matter how small. Due

to her sister’s death, Violet becomes depressed. Finch and Violet’s trauma brings them together and helps them bond but it also makes them blind to each other’s suffering.

The film teaches that even the smallest moments can mean something. There’s beauty and light in the most unexpected places even during dark times and you can be the bright place.

In “Dead Poet’s Society” (1989), English Teacher John Keating (Robin Williams) teaches at an all-boys school known for its archaic traditions and high standards.

Keating’s students face enormous pressures from their parents and the school. With Keating’s help, honor student Neil Perry (Robert Sean Leonard) and others learn to break

out from their parent’s high expectations and instead pursue their dreams and seize the day.

As a result of Keating’s influence, the class found the Dead Poet’s Society.



Courtesy: Touchstone Pictures

One student, in particular, Neil Perry, follows Keating’s advice to seize the day and auditions for the role Puck in Shakespeare’s “Midsummer Night’s Dream.” Thanks to the Dead Poet’s Society and the play, Neil starts to relish the freedom being carefree brings.

When Neil’s father, Mr. Perry finds out the truth, he becomes furious and threatens to send Neil to military school.

Sure that his family will never support his dreams, Neil shoots himself with his father’s revolver. The film teaches to seize the day and that you must strive to find your voice.

“13 Reasons Why” (2017-2020) is a popular book-to-series adaptation that discusses suicide and mental health. Season one revolved around the suicide of Hannah Baker (Katherine Langford). Before her death, Hannah recorded 13 tapes, in which she explains a reason why she chose to take her own life.

Each tape corresponded to a different person at her high school who had bullied

or mistreated Hannah in some way. Hannah chose to take her own life because she felt alone in her suffering.



Courtesy: Netflix

The series teaches compassion and how when people reach out for help we need to take them seriously.

Other films that discuss suicide and mental illness are “Perks of Being a Wallflower” (2012) and “Girl, Interrupted” (1999).

Earth Day murals keep adorning downtown Houston skyscrapers

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

Nestled within the towering skyscrapers in downtown Houston, 13 original artistic murals adorn the walkway of Discovery Green. The murals are a representation of Houston that the artists wish for in the future.

The murals were introduced to the public during the Green Mountain Energy Event, “Earth Day.” Environmental consid-

eration is a driving force behind the event as well as the murals.

“Bee Sweet to Honeybees” reads one sign, adorned with the familiar bear shaped honey dispenser, flowers and a gigantic bee all in a familiar Texas style.

Another mural reads in large, stylized lettering “The Earth has music for those who listen,” with a painting of the Earth floating in space looming in the

background.

This particularly potent mural with a strong message juxtaposes a peaceful life in the rainforest with the busy towers of downtown Houston.

The beautiful artwork was completed by 13 winning applicants from a grand total of 111 submitted art pieces is from both an environmental standpoint as well as a one of the communities.

The artists who contributed are Amol Saraf and Usagi Wasabi, Melissa Aytenfisu, Meenr, Betirri, Renee Martinez, Hannah Bull, Chelsea Mariah, Dual, Gelson D. Lemus (w3r3on3), Empire, Kill Joy, and Max Guarnaccia.

Each artist offered their view of how Houston will hopefully have an environmentally-friendly future.

The work of art relates and matches

the others very well. The murals are sponsored by Port Houston and Green Mountain Energy as well as the Citizens’ Environmental Coalition.

On a sunny day, the murals are worth taking a trip over to the downtown park.

The murals simultaneously blend with the surroundings of the park while also standing out at Discovery Green

Houston, a city known for industrialization, is home to many chemical and oil businesses, which contributes large parts of the city’s economy and are still important and relevant.

It is still imperative that everyone try to maintain a green mindset to ensure the future of humanity as well as the planet we call home.

The Earth Day Murals will be on display until Oct. 31.



Mural by Houstonian Gelson D. Lemus (w3r3on3). Credit: James Jurewicz



“Bee Good to Honey Bees” mural by local Hannah Bull. Credit: James Jurewicz



Mural by local artist Chelsea Mariah. Credit: James Jurewicz



'Tuca and Bertie' explores toxic relationships

BY VARAH THORNTON

"Tuca and Bertie" Season 2 tackled the subtleties of toxic relationships and the nuance that therapy has to offer.

Originally premiered on Netflix, Tuca and Bertie found a new home at Adult Swim after some behind the scenes controversy.

Similar in tone to Bo Jack Horseman, the sweet intensity of Bertie paired with the chaotic nature of Tuca paints a vibrant friend-

ship of two women navigating everyday life in an overtly animated world.

Season one served mostly to establish the world of Bird Town and the various forms of creatures that inhabit it. Season two challenges the main characters' confidence in themselves and the meaningful relationships they keep.

From parental, romantic and inner relationship, the show dissects just what makes each type of

relationship important and why honesty, or a lack of it, plays a role in how healthy we perceive them to be.

One of the main explorations of this season is that of Tuca's love life. At the end of the previous season, Tiffany Haddish, who voices the tucan character had become sober and was determined to find a love of her own.

But Tuca has some pretty high standards that have less to do what she wants and

more to do with what she thinks is supposed to happen. The most poignant exploration of Tuca's insecurity arises in the form of Kara, voiced by Sasheer Zamata.

After two episodes, Kara turns out not to be what the audience, or Bertie for that matter, was expecting.

Speaking of Bertie, her relationship with her boyfriend Speckle, voiced by Steven Yeun, is a healthy comfort

despite the challenges we see them face. In Season 2, Bertie is committed to getting therapy after Season 1, which explored the many personal traumas she has endured across her life.

The show does a good job of contrasting the healthy and unhealthy ways in which Tuca and Bertie process their grief and troubles while doling out genuine therapeutic advice that viewers can take as they will.

Season 2 culminates in Tuca and Bertie finally confronting the elephant in the room while literally fighting to save not only their friendship, but their lives.

The voice casting is stellar, and the animation is just loose enough to make you wonder if everything you're seeing is real.

Tuca and Bertie is currently streaming on Netflix and AdultSwim.com.

Thriller 'Stillwater:' mesmerizing gem amid strained film-making

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

"Stillwater" starring Matt Damon is a crime drama from director Tom McCarthy. There is something unsettling about the film trailer for "Stillwater." The viewer is given enough information to be aware of the film's premise, but the trailer's tone is enough to cause audience concern for the main character.

The film strays far from any formula, and the unpredictability of the plot was refreshing.

Matt Damon as Bill Baker offers a talented performance of a broken man doing his best to right his past wrongs. Bill makes it clear to the audience he is ready to do anything it takes to free his daughter.

A Roughneck from Stillwater Oklahoma, Bill, an oil worker relocates to Marseille, France in order to exonerate his daughter Allison (Abigail Breslin) of murdering her roommate and lover.

His journey starts off rocky, as he does not speak or understand French.

One day during Bill's trip, he assists Maya (Lilou Siauvaud), a young girl who is locked out of her hotel room. This leads to Maya's mother Virgine (Camille Cottin) befriending Bill and offering assistance to a man far removed from his element.

As far as Bill's acclimation to his new world, he keeps close to his American roots. Best Western is his choice of hotels. He still eats at Subway instead of experiencing food from the nation who coined the term "cuisine."

Bill also does not speak French in the film, nor does it seem like he is learning. During a scene where Bill is tasked with making dinner for Maya and her mother Virgine, he sticks to the American staple of hamburgers, which Virgine regards

as unhealthy.

Bill is a man who is determined, but unfortunately, he insists on doing things his own way. When Bill is accused of sounding like an American when he relays his only concern is getting his daughter out of prison, his response is "Good, I am." The European characters are all curious if Bill owns any firearms. Much to their delight, he owns two, a shotgun and a Glock.

At one point there is a question as to who Bill is more connected to between the mother and daughter. It is almost as if his eventual romantic relationship with Virgine is only a side effect of his bond with Maya.

His fatherly attitude toward the young girl is an apparent attempt to make up for his absence in his own daughter's life.

In the film the audience learns that Bill is a recovering addict and his daughter was raised

by his mother-in-law, Sharon (Deanna Dunagan). Allison's mother was also an addict and died of a drug overdose. Bill eventually moves in with the family.

The question does linger as to whether he stays with the family to be with Virgine, or to redeem his failed fatherhood nurturing Maya.

Tom McCarthy's directing offers a film of the plight of a desperate man in unfamiliar territory. The film intersperses his tense search with tender moments in a makeshift family.

McCarthy is responsible for the animated tearjerker "UP," by Disney. His direction and writing on the 2015 film "Spotlight" won the Oscars for Best Original Screenplay and Best Picture.

McCarthy's range as a talented writer and director shows in "Stillwater," which he also produced. There are scenes in which the camera functions more

so as an observer of real people rather than a cinematic tool.

The performances coupled with truly professional production and post-production offers a film ripe with verisimilitude. Matt Damon's performance is fantastic' and possible Oscar bait.

The authenticity put into the character is the product of a consummate professional. The accent is consistent and believable and his posture and movement resemble a man who has lived a life of hard physical work.

Marseille serves as both the setting and filming location and is a character in itself. The vibrant life of the city is apparent in the scenes filmed on the beautiful French streets.

"Stillwater" gives the viewer a taste of the city culture through an "Olympique de Marseille" match, the city's local soccer club. Bill attends the soccer match with Maya,

almost as if he is finally acclimating to his new life in France.

"Stillwater" is a fantastic film and the crime/drama label verges on thriller. There is a sad and determined desperation within the father to save his daughter.

The film is long, 140 minutes (about two and a half hours) total, but the pacing is swift and mesmerizing.

The audience only spends a brief time in the titular city of Stillwater, Oklahoma. It is worth seeing for Damon's performance alone, as "Stillwater" stands out as a gem in a weak summer for movies due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent surge of the delta variant.

"Stillwater" was released on July 30 in theaters as well as online, on-demand apps for home theater.