

# DATELINE

The University of Houston-Downtown

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August 19, 2022

**SPORTS & GAMING**

## Student Life Center invites Gators to healthy recreation

BY ASTI PHEA

The Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center provides students with the opportunity to participate in a variety of competitive sports, recreational club activities, fitness programs, and health workshops.

“We do believe that sports and fitness create a bond for our students,” said Rhonda Scherer, Associate Director of the Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center.

**STUDENT LIFE CENTER** continued on pg. 5

**CAMPUS GUIDE**

## UHD and METRO pay for monthly fare costs

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

METRO riders may receive a reloadable subsidy to help pay for 25% of monthly fare costs.

The RideSponsor Program, which was first launched in the fall of 2017, offers eligible students, faculty, and staff a subsidy card to provide means for alternative transportation.

Once enrolled, UHD and METRO commit to paying 25% of estimated monthly fare costs based on the zone of residency.

The subsidy card automatically reloads the same designated amount once a

month when the card reaches a \$5 balance.

Paola Robles enrolled in the program in July ahead of her first semester at UHD.

“Riding METRO as a student is very helpful,” Robles said. “In a situation as mine where the student doesn’t have a car, it’s a convenient way and a very great opportunity to travel to school especially since the program helps pay my fare.”

The subsidy amount per zone is: \$22 zone 1, \$35.75 zone 2, \$41.25 zone 3, and \$49.50 zone 4.

**METRO CARD** continued on page 2



RideSponsor Program grants UHD faculty, staff, and students a subsidy card. Credit: Indira Zaldivar

**LOCAL NEWS**

## Houston-based company prepares young professionals for successful career with proven training platform



Allie Danziger, CEO of Ampersand. Courtesy: Ampersand

BY BETTY CRUZ

Ampersand founder and CEO

Allie Danziger and her team revamped Ampersand’s program in the spring

to better equip young professionals to succeed in the workplace through extensive coaching and training.

In our video interview, Danziger explained how the inspiration for Ampersand came to her. As CEO of a Houston-based marketing agency for 12 years, she focused on acquiring new talent for her business by hiring recent graduates and interns.

During this time,

she could not help but notice that young professionals lacked the necessary skills to succeed in their roles from day one.

“I always saw this massive gap between what those professionals would come in knowing and what I needed them to know how to do,” said Danziger.

**AMPERSAND** continued on page 3

**EDITORIAL**

## Beloved monarch butterfly needs collaborative locals, ecosystems

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

Plummeting monarch population numbers between 22% to 77% have warranted the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to declare the species endangered. But Gators can do several things to help our state’s beautiful butterfly.

In the fall, these migratory insects travel through the state on their way to Mexico for the winter.

**MONARCH BUTTERFLIES** continued on page 8



Credit: Giselle Oviedo



NASA Telescope

Credit: S.K.



Movie Reviews

Credit: S.K.



OverShoot Day

Credit: S.K.

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FIND US ONLINE!

# Center on campus rewards Gators for going green



From left: UHD students Diana Ambrosio, Rhode Villareal, Hadidja Talamumba, and Juan Martinez, sustainability coordinator with the CUAS (center) get ready to plant in the UHD Sustainability Garden on Nov. 3, 2021. Credit: Indira Zaldivar

## BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

Paid opportunities for UHD students to learn how to be eco-friendly and sustainable are open at the Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability.

The mission of the CUAS is to create and support sustainable neighborhoods throughout Houston by engaging UHD and the external community in teaching, research, and professional development and promoting best practices in business, technology, science, and engagement. The center's mission also aligns with "Goal 5: Sustainable Operations" of UHD's

new Strategic Plan for 2022-2027.

Sustainability Coordinator Juan Martinez with the CUAS said the programs prepare students for the reality of climate change as a symptom of global warming.

"We here at the CUAS want to prepare UHD students of any major to be capable of conversing about sustainability and how it affects us all," Martinez said. "The focus of our center is to bring this knowledge and conversation to the Greater Houston Metro via the knowledge that our students gain. We teach them, they spread the word and make change happen."

An example, Martinez explained, can be a business student learning alternate sustainable transportation for a company whose stakeholders and consumers request that change.

Currently, the CUAS is accepting applications for the Eco-Reps, UHD Garden Project, and Recycling efforts at UHD. All three applications are due at the end of August and will award students a \$500 stipend.

The Eco-Reps internship is offered to all UHD students from any major every semester to teach students how to live more sustainably and raise awareness of green

initiatives and environmental justice issues. Associate Professor Lisa Morano, director of CUAS, and Martinez meet virtually with the Eco-Reps for a semester.

The recycling efforts will involve four students who will collaborate with facilities to educate the UHD community about the importance of recycling plastic, where to recycle the plastic bottles, and to help sort and store the bottles until they are ready to be picked up. From there, Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages, the local Coca-Cola bottler for Texas and parts of Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arkansas, will use the plastic bottles to make new plastic bottles from 100% recycled plastic.

The Garden Project seeks students to maintain the two gardens on campus, which grow food crops and pollinator plants. Students

also have access to the food the garden produces as a reward for their labor.

No matter your background or major, the CUAS invites students to build critical thinking skills and gain marketable knowledge on tackling real-world issues such as rapid human population growth and a changing climate.

"Learning about sustainability definitely improved my college experience by opening my eyes to so many problems we are facing that I would normally not pay attention or was not aware of," said fine arts student Yesenia Rincon about her 2020 Eco-Reps experience with the CUAS.

"Such as the connection of housing segregation and sustainability, to big companies spreading misinformation about climate change just for their profit benefits."

## Apply now!

Email [cuas@uhd.edu](mailto:cuas@uhd.edu) to receive your application by the end of August. Include in the subject line of your email the name of the program you are applying for.

Programs accepting applications:

- Eco-Reps
- Garden Project
- Recycling Efforts

**Students receive \$500 stipend upon completion of the project**

Credit: Indira Zaldivar

## METRO SUBSIDY CARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Students qualify for a second Q fare card that discounts an additional 50%. This card helps pay any remaining monthly fare costs not covered by the subsidy card.

Hadidja Talamumba is another appreciative student of the program. She enrolled during her first semester following the soft-opening in the fall 2021 semester. "I need the trail just to keep riding to and from the sc-

hool," Talamumba said.

To qualify for the RideSponsor program, participants must not own or request a UHD parking permit while in the program.

Four parking validations per semester will be granted "to allow for those occasions when a participant needs to come to campus in a personal vehicle," according to Parking & Transportation Services.

To register, applicants must visit Parking & Transportation Services located in

One Main Building in room N117 and fill out the RideSponsor Registration form with their route number, home address, and student ID or employee number.

Applicants must visit the office a second time to pick up their METRO subsidy card within a few business days.

Parking & Transportation Services is open Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Appointments are not required.



UHD engineering student Hadidja Talamumba onboard METRO Rail on Sept. 28, 2021. Credit: Indira Zaldivar

# AMPERSAND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

They recruited 10 young professionals and coached them through their internships. This venture succeeded, with seven out of 10 young professionals turning their internships into full-time jobs.

With these results, Danziger and her team showed that young adults could kick-start their careers with the proper guidance and support. Thus, Ampersand was born.

Danziger's personal experience, the feedback of businesses, and the National Association of Colleges and Employer's core competencies of communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and technology shaped Ampersand's curriculum.

Over the years, the curriculum evolved to reflect the organization's findings.

Ampersand used to offer unpaid internships with local businesses but decided to eliminate them last year.

Their internal data revealed that students who did paid internships performed better and were more motivated than those who did unpaid work; they also made this change because the team believed it was right to compensate students for their labor.

In an interview with InnovationMap, Danziger said that the company stopped connecting students with paid internships in 2022 after realizing that companies did not need their matching platform. Instead, Ampersand now trains and coaches entry-level

hires, a service many employers are delighted with since it upskills young people.

New hires have access to over eight hours of content that focuses on how to communicate with managers, build a personal brand, resolve workplace conflicts, and more, helping them to become true professionals.

The startup is just beginning to bridge the gap from education to employment for underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income young professionals. They're getting the word out, building a reputable brand, and creating partnerships with universities in Texas and across the country.

Ampersand could soon come to the University of Houston-Downtown campus.

"We would love to offer the program to all students at UHD," said Danziger

Internships remain a popular way to gain valuable work experience, and many Gators will be starting one soon. For these future interns, Danziger advises them to "understand that each internship is a building block," and that they are beneficial to explore career paths and develop the skills for success.



Ampersand coaching in progress. Courtesy: Ampersand

# Police officers charged over shooting of Breonna Taylor

BY SERGIO PRESA JR

Civil rights charges have been filed by the federal government against four Louisville police officers that were involved in the drug raid that led to Breonna Taylor's death.

Taylor's home was raided by law enforcement who used a faulty warrant to search her home. Taylor, who was a Black woman, was shot by police when they knocked down her door executing the search warrant. When police entered her home, Taylor's boyfriend fired a shot and hit one of the officers, prompting them to return fire, which killed her. Officers Joshua Jaynes, Brett Hankison, Kelly Goodlett and Sgt. Kyle Meany have all been named in the charges. The Louisville police department said they

are looking to fire Meany and Goodlett.

Jaynes, Meany and Hankison had initial court appearances where Magistrate Judge Regina Edwards set their bonds at \$50,000 each. The men are facing life in prison as a maximum sentence for the charges against them. Goodlett pleaded guilty to conspiracy and is facing up to five years in prison. Members of Taylor's family rejoiced at the charges filed and were thankful to federal officials.

"Breonna Taylor should be alive today," said Attorney General Merriek Garland when he announced the charges were being filed.

In addition to charges being filed against the officers, the Justice Department is conducting a non-criminal investigation into the Louisville

Police Department to determine whether the department has a pattern of using excessive force and conducting unreasonable searches and seizures.

The search warrant for Taylor's residence claimed that she was receiving packages for a former boyfriend who was a suspected drug dealer. Jaynes signed the warrant and Meany approved it. Jaynes said that he confirmed with the postal service that packages from Taylor's former boyfriend were going to her apartment. Later, investigators learned that Jaynes had not confirmed that with the postal inspector. Taylor's case sparked a review of the city's no-knock warrant policy, which resulted in them later being banned in the city of Louisville.

# 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.

Always hiring!

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No experience required



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# James Webb Telescope delivers spectacular images and data that may challenge previous beliefs about cosmology

BY SERGIO PRESA JR

NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland released stunning, new images of space that may possibly challenge previous scientific theories, on July 12.

NASA's James Webb Telescope launched in December 2021, and it has been delivering images that could help astronomers better understand how things in space work. Some of the first images

that NASA received from the telescope could indicate that luminous galaxies formed within the first 250 million years after the big bang. If that is true, it would challenge current cosmological ideas.

Richard Ellis, a cosmologist at University College London, emphasizes how the new discovery surpasses the expectations of many astronomers.

"It feels like opening a box of toys



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

for the first time," Ellis tells Sky and Telescope Magazine. "It's just

fabulous."

After NASA published Webb's first set of data,

an astronomical preprint server arXiv received papers alleging that some of the galaxies the telescope discovered were so far away that their light took 13.5 billion years to reach us. Many of those newly discovered galaxies seem to be bigger in size than the current cosmological model that describes the composition and evolution of the universe.

"It's a great piece of science that not only

has lots of utility for mapping our celestial neighborhood but also serves to generate public interest and boosts science outreach," said UHD student Shawn Awagu.

Authors of the research papers that have been posted since the first bits of data from the James Webb Telescope were released say that if their results are confirmed, it may challenge the standard cosmology model.

## Houston schools facing widespread teacher shortages, due to poor work conditions

BY SERGIO PRESA JR

Schools across the Houston area are in danger of having to navigate a shortage of teachers.

Teachers in Houston are feeling unheard, and many say their working conditions are poor. A lack of autonomy is also a complaint among educators in the public school system. At Houston ISD's Navarro Middle School, teacher Daniel Santos said, other teachers are telling him they are overwhelmed. Santos went on to say that "if the vacancies are not filled by new teachers, combining classes or long-term substitute teachers may be needed to alleviate pressure on schools without enough teachers."

Santos said, "Some campuses like mine, for a

decade, have not had a library." Said Santos about his school's poor facilities. He, as well as other teachers, are pushing for better resources.

Santos also pointed out that schools in underserved communities often have the largest teacher shortages. He is not the only teacher weighing in on the teacher shortage, Houston area teacher Alex Mendoza had some comments on the teacher shortage as well.

Mendoza is not surprised by the shortages, and they point to part of the problem being that school curriculum is only focusing on the STARR test. Mendoza says that the education system is not providing students with a quality education.

He also mentioned that the Texas Education

Agency buries teachers in so much paperwork that they do not have a chance to decompress and focus on their personal lives, leading to teachers being constantly burnt out and overloaded.

"I stay because I want to make a difference in a child's life in spite of the system," said Mendoza about how he handles the stressful situation for teachers.

Houston ISD says that to keep their current teachers, their talent acquisition team has implemented strategies such as better compensation, improved district culture, and more teacher development. The district has seen 900 teacher vacancies so far. There are a total of 3,400 teacher vacancies across the Houston area.

## Houston gun buyback event removes 845 guns from streets in third wave

BY SONIA SANCHEZ

The City of Houston collected a total of 845 guns in exchange for almost \$100,000 in gift cards, July 30 during a gun buyback event held at Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church. Harris County Precinct One Commissioner Rodney Ellis said the event was, "one of the most successful gun buyback events in the nation."

Due to the overwhelming response, the event, which began at 8 a.m. and was scheduled to end at noon, did not end until almost 7 p.m. Earlier in the day, dozens of vehicles were turned away due to high demand

"We used best practices to plan and hold today's event. I did not know what to expect, and the turnout was overwhelming," said Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner.

According to the mayor's office, the gun buyback was voluntary, and ran in a no questions asked fashion. The model and working condition



Credit: Shaheryar Khan

of the weapon determined the monetary amount received. The Houston Police Department will check each gun collected to decide if it was stolen or used in a crime. HPD will also destroy all guns that cannot be returned to their rightful owners or are not considered evidence in a crime.

Turner's spokesperson, Mary Benton, confirmed via Twitter that some of the guns dropped off by community members in exchange for gift cards were privately manufactured firearms, or "ghost guns." These types of guns cannot be traced to a manufacturer and possibly were produced for less

cost than the buyback participant received in gift cards. According to Benton's tweet, Turner said those kinds of guns will not be accepted at future buyback events.

Saturday's event was the first gun buyback the city has held since 2009. The buyback is part of the One Safe Houston program, which uses about \$53 million in federal relief funds to reduce violent crime.

More than 150 people were given priority vouchers for a place in line at the next gun buyback. Mayor Turner and the Houston Police Department will announce a date soon for a second event.



Credit: Shaheryar Khan

# STUDENT LIFE CENTER

FROM PAGE 1

It allows our students to meet other students from different backgrounds, and cultures that share a common interest, whether it is wrestling, powerlifting, soccer, or basketball”, said Dr. Rhonda Scherer, Associate Director of the Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center.

“It doesn’t matter what your GPA is, it doesn’t matter where you came from. It is so exciting to see students come together to play sports. I see sports as something that we share. Students can share that commonality”, Scherer emphasized.

Interest meetings for each sport are held early in the semester.

Competitive sports have specific times and dates to practice prior to the tryout date.

Recreational sports, such as the K-Pop Club, are more focused on social activities and do not require tryouts. Intra-mural sports and virtual sports include one-time event tournaments.

Students can also take group fitness classes including Zumba,

Yoga, and other aerobics classes which emphasize strength training. There is a variety of exercise equipment on the second floor of the Student Life Center including a weight room with cardio machines and free weights and personal trainers available for \$15/hour.

Several health workshops are offered throughout the semester which cover topics ranging from stress management to

nutrition. There is also a self-defense course taught by an instructor from the UHD Police Department.

Any students who wish to participate in sports and fitness activities must be enrolled at UHD and maintain a UHD cumulative minimum GPA requirement.

Students attending their first semester at UHD are exempt from the GPA requirement.

Interest meetings are held in ACAD-431

and via Zoom. Students must register online prior to all interest meetings to receive the Zoom link.

Students are encouraged to visit the fitness center to learn more about participating in club sports, equipment, facilities, and group fitness classes available.

For more information, please contact sports&fitness@uhd.edu or call 713-221-8225.

## European stars ready to invade US soccer scene this season

BY SHAHERYAR KHAN

The 2022 Major League Soccer regular season kicked off on Feb. 26, welcoming several star-studded veterans to the United States during the first and second transfer window.

Unlike the transfer windows in the European leagues, the MLS has two. This season’s primary window was from Feb. 10 to May 4, and the secondary window from July 7 to Aug. 4.

With this latest European invasion in the MLS, soccer fans worldwide should expect an action-packed season, with nothing less than goals galore. Here are some highly decorated European stars who are already household names.

Spanish central midfielder Riqui Puig, 22, has transferred to LA Galaxy from Spanish giants FC Barcelona. The transfer shocked many fans since he is often compared to World Cup winner Andres Iniesta, yet Puig was a free transfer. The young Spaniard agreed to a 3 ½ year deal with LA Galaxy.

Another international star joining Puig at LA Galaxy is Brazilian winger Douglas Costa, 31, from the Italian club Juventus. Like his new teammate, Cos-

ta was brought to Los Angeles on a free transfer, signing a one-and-a-half-year contract. Costa was a prominent addition to the Bayern Munich squad forming a solid partnership with Arjen Robben back in 2015.

Local rivals of LA Galaxy, Los Angeles FC, have obtained two European giants on free transfers. The first is Giorgio Chiellini, 37, from Juventus, who has won the recent Euros with the Italian national team and capped 425 appearances with his previous club.

The second transfer is five-time Champions League winner, Welsh international Gareth Bale, 32, who has had a rocky final few seasons with his previous club, Real Madrid. With four appearances so far, Bale has already bagged two goals. Both new arrivals have proven to be impactful, as LAFC is in first place in the Western Conference.

Columbus Crew has secured the signing of Colombian international Cucho Hernandez, 23, from Watford. He only spent five years in England to debut last year and scored to help Watford beat Aston Villa 3-2. With six appearances for Columbus Crew, Hernandez has five goals this season with his new club.

Houston Dynamo has been struggling for the past few seasons, usually coming in last in their conference. They hope to turn their luck around as they sign the captain of the Mexican international team Hector Herrera, 32, from Atletico Madrid. Herrera has made a name for himself in Europe, as he was a key factor in Atletico Madrid’s 2020-21 La Liga championship victory. On his debut for Houston Dynamo, he assisted a goal against rivals FC Dallas in a 2-2 draw.

The MLS was established in 1996 and has seen big stars take the field over the years; names like David Beckham, Thierry Henry, Didier Drogba, the list goes on.

“These are players ahead of their prime, looking to use the league to develop, win trophies, increase their market value and maybe find some stability,” Columbus Crew president Tim Bezbatchenko told ESPN.

The regular season will conclude on Oct. 9, and the MLS Playoffs will follow subsequently, with the MLS Cup Final scheduled to be played on Nov. 5. This will be 16 days before the first match of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.



Courtesy: Tottenham Hotspur Stadium

### UHD CLUB SPORTS ONE-DAY TRYOUTS FALL 2022

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**CHEER**

Tryout Period: Aug 23 - Sept 1  
Time: 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
Tryout Practices: Tuesday and Thursday



**CHEER**

One-Day Tryout: Sept. 3  
Time: 10 a.m.

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**DANCE**

Tryout Period: Aug 23 - Sept 1  
Time: 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
Tryout Practices: Tuesday and Thursday



**DANCE**

One-Day Tryout: Sept. 3  
Time: 10 a.m.

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**ONE-DAY TRYOUT PREPARATION CLASSES**

\*Prep classes are strongly encouraged but not mandatory

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**ALL DATES AND TIMES ARE TENTATIVE**

All events are subject to change without notice.

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YOU MUST REGISTER ON THE TEAM WEBSITE AND MEET ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS BEFORE INTEREST MEETINGS AND TRYOUTS  
[WWW.UHD.EDU/SPORTSANDFITNESS](http://WWW.UHD.EDU/SPORTSANDFITNESS)

SOURCE: JESSE H. JONES STUDENT LIFE CENTER  
[HTTP://WWW.UHD.EDU/STUDENT-LIFE/SPORTS-FITNESS/CLUB-SPORTS/PAGES/DEFAULT.ASPX](http://WWW.UHD.EDU/STUDENT-LIFE/SPORTS-FITNESS/CLUB-SPORTS/PAGES/DEFAULT.ASPX)

Credit: Asti Phea

## DC takes cute, furry twist on Super-Hero films, hates cats

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

“DC League of Super-Pets” is a 2022 computer animated film featuring a clash between super-powered pet animals. Set in the DC Universe, the heroic pets must band together to save the Justice League.

After Superman and the other members of the Justice League are kidnapped, Superman’s dog Krypto (Dwayne Johnson) leads a team of Super-Pets to liberate the Heroes. The evil mastermind behind the kidnapping is a hairless guinea pig named Lulu (Kate Mckinnon) who studied under longtime

Superman nemesis Lex Luthor.

Lulu uses radiated orange kryptonite to gain superpowers, she unwittingly also powers up an entire pet store. Another dog, Ace (Kevin Hart), a super-speedy turtle Mer-ton (Natasha Lyone), an electrical squirrel Chip (Diego Luna), and a size-changing Pot-bellied Pig named P.B. (Vanessa Bayer).

Dwayne Johnson leads the film as Krypto, a friendly kryptonian canine who has accompanied Superman since birth. Krypto is shown to be in the ship comforting baby Superman

while he makes the dangerous interstellar trek to his adopted planet, Earth.

Krypto and Lulu both reflect their respective hero guardians. Krypto is outgoing and happy, a positive leading influence on his makeshift hero team. Lulu is evil, kidnapping the Justice League and intent on freeing her previous master and mentor, Lex Luthor. Like Luthor, Lulu is intelligent, narcissistic, and hairless.

Most DC movies embrace humor, always ready to make fun of their beloved heroes and villains. “DC League of

Super-Pets” is entertaining, funny, and must-see. The characters are silly, colorful, and the pets are sometimes portrayed as more competent than the villains and heroes.

“There are times when ‘DC League of Super-Pets’ is both funny and richly conceived, riding the line between mythic and ridiculous,” said Siddhant Adlakha of IGN.

Aside from that, the worst thing to mention about this film is that it is anti-feline because cats appeared only as villains. This is an injustice to the adorable animals as well as

their guardians. Warner Brothers and DC owe them all a sincere apology.

The creation and the foreseeable success of this film goes to Director Jared Stern who has extensive animated film experience and has worked for 11 years in the industry. Stern also wrote both “Lego Batman” and “Ninjago” films for Warner Bros.

Stick around after the credits for a funny post credit scene featuring an interaction with the next DC hero to get a movie, Black Adam, also voiced by Johnson. In a clever scene, the actor gets to



Courtesy: Warner Bros. Pictures

pass the symbolic torch off to himself, Krypto, who interacts with the self-proclaimed anti-hero. DC League of Super-Pets is now playing in cinemas.

## ‘Vengeance’ manages to mix murder mystery with comedy

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

Vengeance is a 2022 dark comedy written and directed and starring B.J. Novak. The film was released on July 29 and stars Boyd Holbrook, Dove Cameron, Ashton Kutcher, Issa Rae, and John Mayer.

Ben, a New York City Journalist and Podcaster who was in a causal relationship with Abilene Shaw (Lio Tipton) from West Texas, they were not close. Ben is contacted by her brother Ty (Boyd Holbrook) letting him know that Abilene has died of a drug overdose and, as her boyfriend, Ben is expected at the funeral in Texas.

There is a large picture of Ben and Abilene at the funeral, she also has multiple pictures of them in the Shaw household. To her family, Ben appears closer to Abilene than he was.

The title “Vengeance” refers to what the Shaw family wants for what he believes was the murder of

Abilene. They believe she was intentionally killed. Back in New York, Ben’s Podcast coworkers are invested and focused on the mystery. Ben’s boss encourages the investigation of her death.

In one scene, Ben experiences a major culture shock about his own upbringing as he reports Abilene’s mysterious death. Slowly begins to see similarities and eventually embracing Texas culture while growing closer to the Shaw family. Watching him gradually become more Texan himself is hilarious yet endearing.

Boyd Holbrook is entertaining in the role of Ty; the actor has been in heavy action films like “Logan” and “The Predator” as well as horror and thriller films like “The Cursed” and “Gone Girl.” “Vengeance” highlights the actor’s comedic skills.

Ashton Kutcher appears in the film as Quentin Sellers, a successful independent record producer from

Marfa, Texas. Sellers is smooth and charismatic, charming Ben during their brief encounter during his investigation.

The Shaw’s are a lovable and relatable Texas family evidenced by their passionate appetite for Whataburger. The iconic orange restaurant is referenced multiple times onscreen, the family dines there at least once during the film.

“Vengeance” is worth the watch; Novak crafted an intelligently dark and humorous mystery film. The movie is surprisingly embedded with deep philosophy.

“Novak is a thoughtful writer with a lot of things to say about the USA in the year 2022” said Matt Zoller Seitz of rogerebert.com.

The film works for multiple audiences and breaks many stereotypes in the process. The film was written as accessible for everyone, not exclusively New Yorkers or Texans.

## Director Jordan Peele exceeds expectations with ‘Nope’

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

“NOPE” plays like an inverted version of the film “Jaws.” Instead of a ravenous great white shark hunting in the sea below, this film features a giant UFO stalking from the clouds above.

The film stars Daniel Kaluuya, Keke Palmer, Brandon Perea, Michael Wincott, Steven Yeun, Keith David, and Director Jordan Peele’s most recent entry to the horror/sci-fi genre. The motion picture was highly anticipated and advertised.

After the sudden death of their father, a siblings set up surveillance cameras on their ranch to catch sight of a UFO stealing their horses on film. The family business and the Haywood Hollywood Horse Ranch are in financial trouble and snapping photographic evidence of an alien may help save the ranch.

The actors’ performances are fantastic. Kaluuya portrays OJ as quiet, relaxed, and no-nonsense. Converse-

ly, Palmers as Emerald is loud, energetic, and bubbly. The actors’ sibling banter is believable, and they complement each other well.

There is also a strange subplot about a grown child actor from a 90’s sitcom, Yeun who portrays Ricky Park. The sitcom ended abruptly after the titular character, a chimpanzee named “Gordy” viciously and mortally wounded most of the cast of “Gordy’s Home.”

Like Director Peele’s other original films, “Get Out” and “Us”, the plot in “NOPE” is highly unpredictable. Peele has a true gift, the ability to make his audience feel uncomfortable. Peele, the writer, director, and producer of “Nope,” describes the film as his fight for a spectacle cinema and to get people back out to the theater.

“Large scale popcorn sci-fi with razor sharp intellect,” said Clarisse Loughrey in the UK’s Independent.

Peele included multiple references to

other science fiction films in “NOPE.” Iconic science fiction Classics like “Predator”, “Signs”, “Jaws” and feature similar scenes, tropes, and rules.

One of the film’s core messages is about the reliance humanity has on electricity. A clear example, in some scenes the protagonists must instead rely on antiquated analog technology to solve their problems.

The film is visually brilliant. See “Nope” at the cinema; it is beautiful on the big screen. The broad valley where the “Haywood Ranch” exists offers a stunning view. No other film will have the audience imagining and pondering cloud formations like this one.

There is so much to unpack from an intelligent film like “NOPE,” which is the director’s most exciting feature to date. This is the best movie of the ‘22 summer so far, a creative, thrilling, and adventurous cinematic experience.

Pop-Culture, Anime culture takeover Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center



Dalila Juarez poses with a neon cat standee. Courtesy: Dalila Juarez

BY DALILA JUAREZ

Houston's annual Comicpalooza and Anime Matsuri events returned to the George R. Brown Convention Center in July. The events celebrate pop

culture and Japanese themes for locals and tourists to enjoy while experiencing the Houston lifestyle.

Comicpalooza focused on pop culture comic book franchises such as Star Wars,

Marvel, and DC. Anime Matsuri is a Japanese-centered cultural event comprising the country's lifestyles and animation.

The events had prominent guests like musician Alice Cooper, actor Terry Crews, and Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo. Anime Matsuri highlighted the Japanese girl group Not Equal Me and Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner hosted the opening ceremonies.

Comicpalooza kicked off the weekend of July 15 by showcasing a wrestling match from Texas All-Star Wrestling. They also hosted video game tournaments throughout the weekend involving Nintendo's Mario Kart and Super Smash Brothers franchises.

Not too far away at Discovery Green, Anime Matsuri opened its doors from July 28-30. The event kicked off Friday afternoon with the Tenjin Festival, hosting Karaoke for guests.

The venue was

large enough for fans to gather in cosplay of their choosing to participate in contest activities. It included Q&A panels with celebrities and discussion topics among fans.

Both events' exhibition halls featured vendors across Texas and local Houston-area artists selling pop culture or Japanese animation-themed merchandise. Anime Matsuri included an Artist Alley located on the third floor at A3 for more local artists to allow more walking space in the main halls on the first floor.

The events included free outside activities for guests to enjoy. The city closed Avenida De Las Americas between George R. Brown and Discovery Green, which allowed local food trucks to provide food and drinks.

A volunteer for Comicpalooza, Giovanni Leos, described his experience as "very welcoming."

"[The venue]

provided us lunch from Raising Canes and breakfast from Kolache Shoppe. Once my shift was over, I still had enough time to enjoy the exhibition hall."

Leos volunteered at the Celebrity Photo Ops section in Hall D, where he helped attendees

purchase guest celebrities' photographs and autographs.

Comicpalooza is expected to return during summer 2023, while Anime Matsuri is returning on August 10-13, 2023, with passes available on Eventbrite.



Dalila Juarez poses with a Warhammer cosplayer at Comic Palooza. Courtesy: Dalila Juarez

AEW and NJPW knock down the 'Forbidden Door' showcasing dream matches for fans



Courtesy: AEW x NJPW

BY DALILA JUAREZ

Pro-wrestling company All Elite Wrestling broadcasted their pay-per-view service, The Forbidden Door, partnering with New Japan Pro-Wrestling.

The event earned its name by AEW CEO Tony Khan, stating that all wrestling companies are welcome to perform with them and opening the forbidden door; a metaphor of competing businesses never working together. The event occurred at the United Center in Chicago on June 25.

The matches consisted of AEW wrestlers

competing or teaming up with members of NJPW.

Some of the show's highlights included crowning the first-ever All-Atlantic Champion with participants Miro, Malakai Black, PAC, and Collins. Another was the main event match between AEW's Jon Moxley competing against NJWP's Hiroshi Tanahashi for the Interim AEW World Championship. The winner will continue to be AEW's champion until wrestler, CM Punk, recovers from his injury to compete against them.

The most anti-ci-

pated match for fans was revealing Zack Sabre Jr.'s opponents. Sabre Jr. initially planned to compete with Bryan Danielson, but due to injury, Danielson announced a mystery replacement whom he called "a close friend of mine."

Fans were quick to assume he meant a former WWE wrestler who was recently released from the company. Some predicted Bray Wyatt or Johnny Gargano, but an agreement was reached when Claudio Castagnoli would be debuting.

A wrestling fan,

Shayan Khan, describes the pay-per-view as "Grade A PPV. It was better than all of WWE's PPV, in my opinion. All of [the matches] are over four stars."

Overall, most of the matches were executed flawlessly. There was only one female match card, Thunder Rosa vs. Toni Storm, for the AEW Women's Championship that could have been better.

AEW airs two shows weekly with Dynamite on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. CT on TBS and Rampage at 9 p.m. CT on TNT.

# Sustainable living takes collective effort, Americans need to step up



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

Humans have used up Earth's biocapacity, its ability to regenerate the spent ecological resources in a year, at an earlier date since 1970.

Unfairly, Americans are largely responsible for this tipping point dubbed as "Overshoot

Day," so we need to live more sustainably at an individual scale but more importantly, demand for a low-carbon economy.

For example, Overshoot Day fell on July 28 this year. If the whole world lived like an American, Overshoot Day would have fallen

on March 13, according to the Global Footprint Network. We would need five Earths if the American lifestyle and consumption were universal.

Finding ways to offset carbon consumption is the minimum, said Juan Martinez, Sustainability Coordinator with

the UHD Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability.

"Every individual needs to take into account their carbon footprint...and figure out ways to reduce it," Martinez said.

At an individual level, he challenged every Gator to stop and think before making a purchase, or a decision, and find a sustainable alternative.

This may include going to the farmers' market near your neighborhood as opposed to buying from a farm across Texas or across the continent. Feeding people takes up 55% of the planet's biocapacity, according to the Global Footprint Network and the Worldwide Fund for Nature. Another alternative to reduce the carbon emissions attached to food is to buy lunch that is locally grown for

those who don't like to cook.

"Buy local, shop local, support local is a first good step," Martinez added.

If meat consumption was cut in half worldwide, we would push Overshoot Day by 17 days, according to Laetitia Mailhes of the Global Footprint Network.

Secondly, using public transportation. In the U.S., transportation accounts for the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions at 27%.

"Take the bus this time; you might get to your destination faster than driving," Martinez added.

Using the METRO to get to UHD is a great alternative that is also incentivized. METRO riders at UHD receive a monthly subsidy to help pay for their fare costs through the RideSpon-

sor Program.

Talk to your family, friends, and communities about sustainable alternatives. Personal stories move people more than facts and numbers. But more importantly, advocate for large-scale change in your government and in your community.

With incentives for clean energy, the Inflation Reduction Act signed into law by the Biden Administration is a step in the right direction. However, people and businesses need to embrace a low-carbon economy speedily and uniformly to achieve a sustainable lifestyle for the next generations.

"Fight, change, and talk," Martinez said. "Change your life and set the example. Talk to your family, friends, and communities. We can do this, but we have to do it together."

## MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

FROM PAGE 1

Texans looking to help are encouraged to provide native pollinator flowers for them to rest and feed, as well as avoid insecticides and pesticides especially outdoors, said Texas Master Naturalist and Co-Director of the Texas Butterfly Network monitoring program Irmi Willcockson.

"Butterflies are this charismatic species," Willcockson said. "They're beautiful; they don't harm anybody; they drink nectar. They're not a threat to anything."

A lover of nature, Willcockson has been monitoring butterflies since 2019 with the Texas Butterfly Network, a grant-funded citizen science projec

Data from the Texas Butterfly Network where she volunteers, is used by several grant-funded research

groups. She recalled one of her favorite memories with monarchs was when she spotted them in October in Dallas, Texas during migration season.

"We saw them migrate...groups of monarchs coming through, and that was really cool."

Beyond the beautiful sight of orange wings marked with vivid black lines and dots, the monarchs keep our ecosystems healthy.

They pollinate wildflowers and provide a food source for others insects and birds.

However, their habitat is increasingly at risk mainly from rapid urban growth, modern agricultural practices, climate change, and degradation of wintering habitat in Mexico and California, according to Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Monarch caterpillars feed on native milkweed. As adults,

they will lay their eggs only under the leaves of native milkweed plants.

"There are no longer agricultural field margins that grow a variety of flowers, including milkweed," she said. "People are using pesticides in their yards. They're using insecticides...[and] herbicides. All of that will cause problems. Some pesticides directly affect monarchs in the caterpillar and the adult stage."

Monarchs require a certain temperature and humidity range to successfully make it through the winter on what little reserves they have. Unfortunately, the forest and canopy have been reduced.

"Any cold wind can get in there and they freeze the monarchs," she added. "It also changes the humidity profile, so some of them don't survive because they dry out."

Scientists believe that there is a minimum number of monarchs that must overwinter successfully to restart the migration in the spring.

"If you have too few parents making it through the winter, you won't have enough offspring."

It is unlikely that they'll become globally extinct because they have multiple populations worldwide where some stay year-round, according to Willcockson. Texas is one of the fortunate areas to enjoy the sights of residential monarchs.

"What's endangered is the migration," Willcockson said. "The way that's been tracked is to look at the acreage that is occupied by overwintering monarchs and Mexico, and that acreage has shrunk tremendously over the years."

"The whole thousands of miles that monarchs travel, and



A monarch butterfly drinks nectar from flowering plant. Credit: Indira Zaldivar

the overwintering that they do is very much in danger."

Helping the monarch is a worldwide effort. Near campus, conservancy groups have increased wildflower planting and tree cover around the Buffalo Bayou trails.

Gators looking to lend a much needed helping hand should join conservancy groups and help maintain the prairies that provide habitat for the monarchs. Avoid pesticides or herbicides in yards.

Dedicate a small place in your yard to grow flowering plants. You can grow from seed or buy plants that are ready to be put in your garden from nurseries maintained by various conservancy groups such as the Houston Museum of Natural Science. These plant sales are open to the public, and they sell native plants that are good for wildlife.

"It becomes a community," Willcockson said, "and that links you back to taking care of the ecosystem."