

CAMPUS NEWS

President Blanchard delivers 2nd State of the University Address

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

UHD President Loren Blanchard delivered his second State of the University Address in the Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Auditorium on Sept. 28

The ceremonial speech included performances from UHD alumna and award-winning soul blues singer Annika Chambers, UHD Mariachi "Los Caimanes," remarks by ABC13 news anchor Mayra Moreno, and speeches from shared governance officials.

The seventh UHD president called every UHD member to take full part in the university's new paradigm, which encompasses the strategic plan and institutional compass.

These, according to the president, provide a path forward to grow as an anchor institution, strengthen justice, success and equity, and advance institutional excellence and investiture.

"This is a moment that calls all of us to come together to take this university far," he said. "Writing the future of this university will require every ounce of our talents and abilities."

The president recognized that retention rate is a key area to improve upon.

Despite a steady increase in graduation rates since 2018, two-thirds of each cohort transfer or "stop out".

To address the persistent issue of student retention rates, the university changed

some organizational structures over the last eight months.

A major one included reimagining Student Affairs as the new Student Success and Student Life Division.

This division creates a "seamless and comprehensive" experience for prospective students that follows them through graduation. Led by interim Vice President Lynette Cook-Francis this division incorporates various offices and centers on campus and community partnerships.

In addition, academic advising is developing a case-management approach.

PRESIDENT continued on page 2



UHD's seventh president Loren J. Blanchard delivers his second State of the University Address in the Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Auditorium on Sept. 28. Credit: Indira Zaldivar



Presented by the HYVC Student Organizing Team, Campus Vote Project, and University of Houston - Downtown

CAMPUS NEWS

UHD hosts Houston Youth Voter Conference

Students from Houston-area schools and universities gather in the Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Auditorium on Oct. 1, 2022 for voter conference. Credit: Diana Ambrosio

BY DIANA AMBROSIO

The Campus Vote Project held the fifth annual Houston Youth Voters Conference at UHD on Oct. 1.

The conference is a student-led, non-partisan, collaboration between Hous-

ton-area schools meant to create change in our communities by increasing youth voter registration, education, and turnout.

The event kicked off with a tabling event where students talked to organizations involved in voter education.

There were 12 organizations present including stand-outs Campus Vote Project and Texas Rising.

Keynote speaker, Edgar Saldivar, is the senior American Civil Liberties Union staff attorney.

VOTE continued on page 3

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Gator establishes 1st fraternity inclusive of LGBTQ+, Latinx students

BY ALLISON NOLASCO

Alpha Psi Lambda is a new social fraternity at UHD and the first coed Latinx fraternity.

In 1985, Alpha Psi Lambda was established at Ohio State University. Over the years, the fraternity expanded, and a chapter started at UHD. David Ramirez, a senior at UHD, decided to charter a chapter because he did not feel welcome in other Greek life on campus.

"I decided to charter a chapter here because through my own experience when I wanted to join Greek life here, I did not see an organization that made me feel

welcomed with all my intersectionality," Ramirez said.

"I also felt, if I feel this way, other students did as well, so it was important for me to find an organization that was accepting of people, regardless of sexual identity or expression."

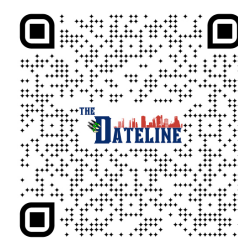
Although Greek life at UHD is inclusive, students who identify as LGBTQ+ may feel out of place since Greek life has always been representative of heterosexual individuals.

There has not been an adequate representation of the LGBTQ+ community in these organizations.

APL continued on page 4

INSIDE THIS EDITION

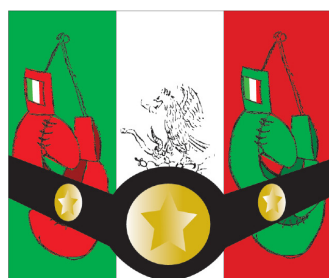
Campus News.....2 Local News.....7 A&E.....9 Opinions.....11



FIND US ONLINE!



Credit: G.O.



Credit: S.R

PRESIDENT

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

In a series of monthly lunches with students, student feedback reinforced Blanchard's belief that every student should have a consistent relationship with their advisor.

As a result, every advisor will be charged with supporting a group of students for the full duration of their programs. Students will have many points of contact with their advisors, and they will be introduced to career enhancement opportunities such as internships and service learning.

"Moving our students through their educational journey matters...morally, fiscally and civically," he said before listing supporting statistics.

Students with a college degree, on average, earn about 52% more than those with a high school diploma and are almost three times more likely than students with some college degree to pay off college loan debt. Every 100th additional degree-seeking

student that UHD retains, generates roughly \$720,000 in additional tuition and fees revenue annually. One hundred bachelor students who stay enrolled through graduation rather than stopping out in the first year will generate \$2.2 million in additional tuition and fee revenues.

Individuals who earn college degrees will earn \$900,000 more over the course of their careers when compared to individuals with just a high school diploma. One hundred additional UHD graduates will contribute \$90 million more to the state, communities, and businesses over their lifetimes.

"We are preparing students with the mindset that their degree and the knowledge and experience it represents will propel them to both great socioeconomic heights as well as position them to be civic leaders who are creating a more just and sustainable future for our communities."

Some proud achievements were spotlighted as well. For

example, UHD ranked in the top 50 institutions in the nation for providing a pathway for economic mobility for low to moderate income graduates. The ranking is based on how well a school enables low to moderate income students to advance in their lives as a result of earning a college degree, as researched and evaluated by public policy organization Third Way.

UHD's affordability factors in its ranking among regional universities in the west for social mobility, according to U.S. News and World Report. UHD had the lowest percentage of graduates, 14% specifically, with debt than any of the 25 colleges and universities cited in a Houston Chronicle article. No UHD graduates had any private loan debt.

"Today we are defining what it means to be a student-centered university and an anchor institution that is serving its community, generating real-world learning, and helping students and families move up the socio-economic ladder by earning

INSTITUTIONAL COMPASS

Strengthening justice

Strengthening student success and equity

Supporting Institutional Excellence and Infrastructure

Growing as an Anchor Institution

Credit: Indira Zaldivar

degrees in reasonable timeframes and with little debt as possible."

To achieve these milestones, the president credited public and private funds. In total, UHD is on track to receive \$14 million in grants this year.

"We project that with continued support, [UHD] will take its rightful place among the top 2% of universities in the nation in terms of socioeconomic mobility for our students," he said. "It is clear that by increasing the level of support both financially and in efficacy that UHD is boldly stepping into a rightful place as a vibrant anchor institution for our city and our

2022-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

ENHANCING STUDENT SUCCESS

Optimize lifelong student success and engagement

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Cultivate a diverse portfolio of institutional partnerships

DYNAMIC ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Cultivate a dynamic academic environment

ENGAGED FACULTY AND STAFF

Be the employer of choice

SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

Maximize our operational portfolio

ELEVATED VISIBILITY & RECOGNITION

Enhance the reputation and visibility of UHD

IMPACTFUL KNOWLEDGE CREATION

Promote knowledge creation and dissemination

Credit: Indira Zaldivar

state."

Strategic partnerships also expand UHD's impact on the region. Recently a partnership with Amazon will allow some of the 300,000 Amazon employees in the Career Choice program to advance their education at UHD. Associate Vice President of Planning and Curriculum Michelle Moosally made

this partnership a reality.

The visionary president hopes that this moment is recognized in the next fifty years as the moment that changed the direction of the university.

"Welcome to our new academic year," Blanchard said nearing the end of his speech. "We have a most important journey before us."

O'Kane Galley displays renowned photographer Kathy Vargas' work entitled 'About Memory' in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month

BY DIANA & CRISTINA

AMBROSIO

The O'Kane Gallery debuted international photographer, Kathy Vargas' "Este Recuerdo/About Memory" on Sept. 8. Vargas visited the gallery on Sept. 28 to give a talk and tour of her artworks.

The 72-year-old Hispanic artist started her life as a rock and roll photographer. She uses traditional photography because she felt that it conveys her feelings more accurately. Plus, she enjoys developing her photos

in the dark room.

The artworks were photographs about different points in Vargas' life and events that impacted her. Her artwork was donated to the gallery as a tribute for Hispanic Heritage Month.

The tour started off with Vargas talking about her time as a budding photographer in the middle of the Chicano art movement. She began by taking photos of herself, family, friends, students, and surroundings.

The event that impacted her the most was the death of her mother. To commemorate her



A portion of the art galley on display at O'Kane Gallery. Credit: Indira Zaldivar

mother, she took photos during the time of her illness and surrounded her with roses. She took individual photos of her head, feet, X-ray scans of her spine, hand and torso. With the roses, she included thorns

in the photos because these symbolized the pains her mother faced due to her illness. She took these photos, not to victimize her mother but to capture the memory of her.

When speaking



Kathy Vargas introducing her art work. Credit: Diana Ambrosio

about her ancestry, Vargas mentions that much of the history taught in the United States does not properly depict the view of the opposing side.

"History is known

to be whitewashed and lacks the historical significance that people of color played in the creation of the nation," a UHD staff member said.

VOTE

continued from front page

Saldivar spoke about voter suppression within the system with special emphasis in Texas.

“Since 2015, 72% of the prosecutions by the attorney general’s office targeted Black and brown Texans,” Salvidar said. “We are currently fighting against Senate Bill 1, a voter suppression law that takes particular aim at people with disabilities and people of color; especially people with limited English proficiency.”

“Civics is about making sense of how we are all involved in America. Understanding civics is about learning to have a say,” Saldivar said in his closing remarks.

Greg Norwood, engagement manager of the Young Invincibles, came to the stage to talk about the program and taught the audience to use the power of togetherness to combat voter suppression. The Young Invincibles’ purpose is to amplify the voices of young adults and develop the ability to make change

within oneself and others.

“Unite with each other and create an equitable and inclusive society that allows everybody to vote is the goal,” Norwood said. “Even if someone does not have the ability to vote, whatever the circumstances, they still have the power to educate and encourage others to vote.”

The CVP allowed the audience to plan out events that would help educate others about the voting process. The organization demonstrated that the audience could empower the people around them and reduce the barriers surrounding voting.

“The drive that young people in Houston have to help others overcome systemic barriers is so meaningful,” UHD CVP Democracy Fellow Indira Zaldivar said following the demonstration. “Personally, meeting other students who are not able to vote and still participate and equip themselves with knowledge inspires me to push those who can vote understand the value of their voice and point them to resources that would equip them to participate in this important democratic process.”



Students discuss issues of Senate Bill 1 on Oct. 1. Credit: Diana Ambrosio

The conference ended with a panel discussion that was made up of five civic leaders. The panelists spoke about their involvement in the civic system and gave advice to the audience about how to grow their civic leadership skills.

Following the conference, students participated in group discussions over election law and voting rights.

“Having the Houston Youth Voter’s Conference at UHD gave me a sense of Gator pride because our university is getting recognition for all the faculty, staff and students who work to mobilize voters and increase civic engagement,” Zaldivar said about the meaning of having the event at UHD.

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!
Scan QR code to apply on our website.

No experience required



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POLLING LOCATION ON CAMPUS



Girard Street
Building Room
307 (Milam &
Travis Rooms)

Early voting: Oct. 24 - Nov. 4

Election Day: Tuesday, Nov. 8

7 AM-7 PM

*except Sunday, Oct. 30 from 12pm to 7pm

Thursday, Nov. 3 from 7 am to 10 pm

Credit: Indira Zaldivar

Omicron Gamma President Taiya M. Youngs explains what it's like to be a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

BY ISIAH ARCHIE

Being in a Greek organization can be fun, but at the same time, there is a lot of work to be done in these organizations.

That is something Taiya Myrenee Youngs makes clear. Youngs is a psychology major with a double minor in communication and critical race studies at UHD.

She is also a proud member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated – Omicron Gamma chapter. Youngs has held many titles in her organization, such as a 2022 Leadership Fellow and Second International Vice-President Candidate.

She is currently President of the Omicron Gamma chapter and is the Southeast Texas Undergraduate Cluster Coordinator of the South-Central Region.

Alpha Kappa Alpha is the first black Greek letter sorority with many 'first' titles among its members.

They have chapters in 12 different countries that all strive to cultivate and encourage high scholastic and ethical standards, to promote unity and friendship among

college women, to study and help alleviate problems concerning girls and women to improve their social stature, to maintain a progressive interest in college life, and to be of "Service to All Mankind."

Not only is Youngs the President of her chapter, but she is also the Southeast Texas Undergraduate Cluster Coordinator. UG Cluster Coordinator is the highest regional position an undergraduate can hold in the sorority.

She was honorably appointed after her candidacy run for Second International Vice-President, the third most important position in the sorority and the highest position an undergraduate can hold entirely.

Youngs loves to serve and use her skills to the best of her ability. Her position within the sorority does just that and gives her such fulfillment once she sees the results.

"My favorite part about Greek Life is the networking and connections you make. When I was accepted into the Leadership Fellows Program, I participated in a week-long

all-expenses paid development training in Atlanta, Georgia, focused on leadership training, career development, personal growth, and directorate certification." Youngs said.

"I built bonds with 59 sisters from all over the country and even the Bahamas! After completing a business proposal project, the other Leadership Fellows and I were offered a full-ride scholarship to Temple University should we get accepted into a Business-Related Program."

Although she expressed that the Greek life experience is fun, Youngs said,

"Trust, this is no easy feat. Sorority life is more than being a pretty girl, wearing pink and green, and strolling. We are about service, and so much work is put in behind the scenes," Young said.

"I wholeheartedly underestimated the workload and struggled in the beginning due to my many involvements in other things on campus as well as always holding multiple jobs. Not to mention, I am also a full-time honors student with stan-



Taiya M. Youngs, President of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Credit: Isiah Archie

dards to maintain to keep my scholarships. Time management is something I am actively working on, and I must always plan. The hardest part is calming my overachiever motivators, so I do not wear myself thin."

For the women on the UHD campus that are interested in Greek life, Youngs kept it simple and advised that you do your research about Greek life. Understand that although they have a

social component, they are about service first and always.

If the "pretty girl" life is what you want, be ready to put in the work. She also encourages ladies at UHD to follow them on Instagram @OmicronGammaAKA to stay up to date on events and their whereabouts. If anyone has any questions or concerns, please email them at AKA.UHD@gmail.com.

LGBTQ+

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Alpha Psi Lambda is a new social fraternity at UHD and the first coed Latinx fraternity.

In 1985, Alpha Psi Lambda was established at Ohio State University. Over the years, the fraternity expanded, and a chapter started at UHD. David Ramirez, a senior at UHD, decided to charter a chapter because he did not feel welcome in other Greek life on campus.

"I decided to charter a chapter here because through my own experience when I wanted to join Greek life here, I did not see an organization that made me feel welcomed with all my

intersectionality," Ramirez said. "I also felt, if I feel this way, other students did as well, so it was important for me to find an organization that was accepting of people, regardless of sexual identity or expression."

Although Greek life at UHD is inclusive, students who identify as LGBTQ+ may feel out of place since Greek life has always been representative of heterosexual individuals. There has not been an adequate representation of the LGBTQ+ community in these organizations.

A study by the Lambda 10 Projects indicates that 5% to 6% of fraternity members and 3% to 4% of sorority members identify

as LGBTQ+ across the U.S. The study also found that 70% of respondents had experienced homophobic encounters within their chapter.

The fraternity does not exclude students who are not Latinx and identify as LGBTQ+. It welcomes students who want to make friends and help their community.

"We are not Latino, Latina, or Latinx exclusive," Ramirez said. "Although it is a social fraternity, the organization focuses a lot on social justice not only within the Latinx community, but communities that need to be supported."

Currently, fall applications for Alpha Psi Lambda are closed.

The chapter is still in the process of being established. They will be accepting new members next semester.

For the majority of the semester, the fraternity will work on their intake process which takes six to eight weeks for the founding members. Once established, they can focus on their goals.

"When the chapter is established, we will focus on community service and social justice in the UHD community and assist in promoting already existing movements to



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

empower the student body," Ramirez said.

"We really are looking forward to partnering with other UHD organizations on campus."

Ramirez will gradu-

ate this semester, so his time with Alpha Psi Lambda will be short. But he will leave behind an organization where students make friends and feel accepted for who they are.

MBA student advocates for mental health awareness



"The expressions that we allow our face to show aren't necessarily the truth."

Brian Thorne

UHD MBA student & sales leader

MENTAL HEALTH

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

Changing career pathways was a difficult but necessary decision for now UHD MBA student Brian Thorne. Now a compassionate sales leader, leaving veterinary school for the sake of his own mental health has allowed Thorne to become a mental health advocate for others.

Inspired by his grandfather, a pharmacist, Thorne aspired to a career in veterinary medicine because of his love of animals.

"By becoming a doctor, I could gain this expert knowledge, show humanity through the practice of veter-

inary medicine, and run the type of business that I saw my grandfather building," Thorne said.

Performing surgeries, treating furry patients, and bonding with classmates, are some of the positive experiences Thorne remembers from the first two years of veterinary school. However, there was a lot of unspoken suffering too.

Thorne was not alone. Veterinarians are at an increased risk of suicide, according to a 2018 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"It's hard to have a bad day when you're playing with puppies and kitties, but

I still felt so deeply unhappy with my life," Thorne said.

One of his veterinary classmates, a young man from a family of veterinarians, took his own life during their second year of classes. Death and grief were spoken about by school counselors, but the rigors of veterinary medicine demanded that Thorne and his classmates continue with their studies.

The unresolved pain drove Thorne to leave school the following semester. He moved back home to Houston with his fiancée and took a sales job to try to pay the bills. However, the "unhealthy headspace" of veterinary medicine quickly returned.

"I ended up in sales where a lot of the conversations are about overcoming obstacles and dealing with rejections frequently," Thorne said. "There was no genuine expression of emotion, no personal connection with colleagues or with customers. It was all about closing the deal, no matter what."

Like his experience in veterinary medicine, sales was "not counseling you through difficult times, it was telling you to ignore them."

Serendipitously, Thorne joined LinkedIn that year just before May which is Mental Health Awareness Month. He saw people discussing mental

health topics for the first time. These included messages from Not One More Vet, a nonprofit organization which provides mental health education and suicide prevention support to veterinary professionals and students.

"The expressions that we allow our face to show aren't necessarily the truth," Thorne said. "I got thoughts and feelings that don't necessarily transfer to anyone."

Although not part of the medical community anymore, Thorne finally started to process the suppressed emotions which tore him away from veterinary school. But it wasn't until seeing the words of sales leaders, his new community, that he decided it was time to speak for himself.

The photo, taken by his wife, shows Thorne wearing a hoodie that spells "Boys Get Sad Too" in block letters. A message to his former colleagues, his current sales community, and to his young child, Thorne spoke publicly for the first time about his mental health struggles.

"Men are often thought of by the function they are performing," Thorne said. "This neglects their emotions. We need to celebrate men's humanity as opposed to their status."

As a mental health advocate, he is committed

to engaging people in mental health conversations because he wants to leave a better experience for his child. Professionally, Thorne now aspires to a role in sales leadership so he can enable these necessary conversations in the workplace.

"I would be a middle manager that doesn't suck," he said jokingly. "I think that could change the world. Or at least the lives of everyone on my team, and everyone in their lives too."

Thorne expects to graduate from UHD next summer with an MBA and a concentration in business development and sales management. He credits his sales professor Richard Conde, and the corporate fellows in his concentration courses, for the vision to think of himself "not as just a talented salesperson, but as an impactful future sales leader."

Reflecting on his original career path, Thorne says his role may have changed but the path is still the same.

"I always wanted to set up my own little corner of the world in my community, to be a good guy, to give back to others and those around me, and to make a difference."

"You don't call me Dr. Brian. But, Brian Thorne, MBA, that guy can still achieve the goals that I set out as a kid."

Counselor discusses language surrounding substance abuse disorders

BY DIANA AMBROSIO

UHD Student Health Services held a Sept. 27 event about substance use and mental health awareness.

Diana Briseno, an addiction counselor, was the guest speaker at the event. Briseno has dedicated her life to assisting people and their families who have been impacted by addiction and mental health.

Briseno spoke about the stigma surrounding addiction and mental health. People with an addiction are less likely to seek and stay en-

gaged in treatment when feeling stigmatized.

"Substance abuse is the most stigmatized health condition in the world," Briseno said. "People are dying so we should ask what happened to you that led you to develop an addiction. Most of the time, substance usage stems from trauma or having an untreated mental health diagnosis."

There is an effort to change the language in the chemical dependency field. When people hear the word "abuse," they tend to have nega-

tive opinions.

Therefore, changing the wording can help reduce stigma.

The word abuse "implies a person has a choice in the matter," Briseno said when referring to using appropriate language when speaking on this topic.

"In studies conducted, when using the word 'abuse,' people tend to want to punish the person, when using [the term] substance use disorder then there is more of a want to help the person because it means that they are go-

ing through something."

Briseno then cited statistics of college students with substance abuse disorder and those struggling with mental illness. It has been found that universities with recovery support have students with greater GPA, retention, and graduation rates than average.

"At least 12.52% of current college students meet the criteria for a significant substance abuse disorder, yet, less than 5% of universities offer collegiate recovery programs or



From left: Dr. Andrea Yatsco, Diana Briseno, Meritza Tamez, Haydee Garcia, Branston Harris attend the Student Health Services Event on Sept. 27. Credit: Diana Ambrosio

other recovery support," Briseno said.

The UHD website's Student Health Resources page has informa-

tion about substance abuse disorders and mental health organizations.

Mariachi band member devoted to continuing tradition

BY JA'MEA THOMAS

One of the new members of Los Caimanes is quickly making her mark and displaying her talent by appearing at the UHD's State of the University on Sept. 28.

Emily Villarreal Isalas performed the song "Tu Solo Tu" by Selena Quintanilla, accompanied by Los Caimanes.

Villarreal Isalas is a junior majoring in bilingual education. Having just started her first semester at UHD, she has only been a Mariachi band member for one month. As a part of the Mariachi band, she sings and is learning to play the guitar.

She is devoted to being a Mariachi band member. In addition,

meeting the team was like an instant connection, and she had a good feeling.

Villareal Isalas expressed her love for the team as she considers them like family: they were "warm and welcoming from the beginning with open arms."

Villarreal Isalas is no stranger to playing in a Mariachi band, as she is a former member of Heights High School's varsity mariachi band. She also has a connection with Mariachi through her family history, as her grandfather, Emilio Islas, was a well-known requinto player in the Houston area and has been in several mariachi groups throughout his life.

"Unfortunately, Mariachi in my generation



Los Caimanes member, Edward A. Porrás, Emily Villarreal Islas, Kevin Armenta poses for the camera. Credit: Ja'Mea Thomas

is dying out," Villarreal Isalas stated her concerns for the future Mariachi.

She is concerned with how Mariachi is not seen as often compared to many years ago when mariachi groups could be seen on every corner.

Villarreal Isalas states that Mariachi is a small community which

has motivated her to continue the tradition because she can keep it alive. She also states that she cannot deny Mariachi because it is a part of her heritage.

Villarreal Isalas and her family sing Mariachi, but she strives to take her talents to the next level in honor of her grandfather.

As a mariachi band



Los Caimanes member, Emily Villarreal Isalas poses for the camera. Credit: Ja'Mea Thomas

member herself, Emily is continuing her grandfather's legacy. It is essential that she is known as Emilio Islas' granddaughter, continuing the tradition of Mariachi.

For Villarreal Isalas, being a part of a Mariachi band symbolizes Hispanic Heritage Month for herself and

her culture because she is part of a tradition her ancestors started.

It is an honor for her to wear the Mariachi uniform and be a part of the band dedicated to expressing the origin of her culture and how far they have come. The love for her culture's music will never end.

Gators beat Rice Owls, opens season with two victories

BY ISIAH ARCHIE

By a final score of 44-40, the UHD men's basketball team earned a win on the road against the Rice Owls on Oct. 7.

The Gators were in a tough fight as they went into halftime tied at 21-21.

"The game was too close. We knew we should have been up by a lot more, but we were not playing great at all. We knew we had to turn up the intensity the second half of the game if we wanted to pull out the win," said Deen LeBlanc.

During halftime, one of the teammates stated that the team looked tired out there and they needed to wake up. This must have resonated with the rest of the team because they took it to heart and changed that in the



UHD student Timi Olawuwo (left) and Rice Owls player, Alem Huseinovic (right) in the middle of Friday's big game. Credit: Isiah Archie

second half of the game.

Even with that, the Gators were still in a defensive battle, but still were able to come out with the victory. They remain undefeated and off to a great season start at 2-0.

After the game, small forward Josh

Walker shared his thoughts on the team's great start.

"The team looks fresh and energetic, but we have a lot of things to work on if we are looking to meet our season goals," Walker said.

"Our best feature would be our discipline

UHD BASKETBALL FALL 2022 SCHEDULE

15 VS PRAIRIE VIEW A&M
OCT 4:00PM


22 LCS NORTH HARRIS
OCT 1:00PM

28 TEXAS A&M
OCT 8:00PM

4 QUARTER-FINALS
NOV 7:30/8:30PM

6 MEN'S SEMI-FINALS
NOV 10:30/11:40AM

6 CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
NOV 2:50PM

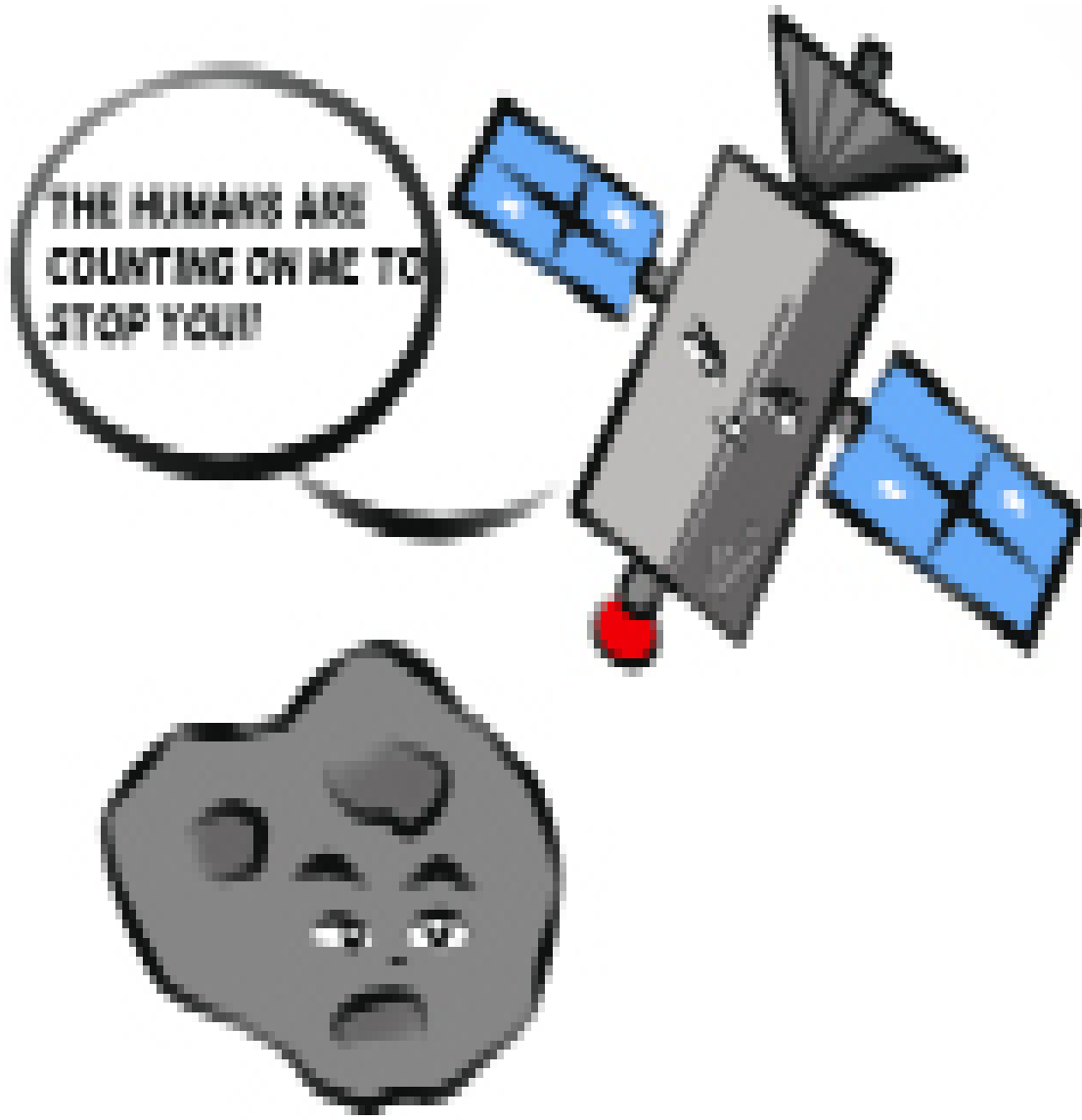
 = denotes a home game

Credit: Indira Zaldivar

and willingness to play aggressively. We are a smaller fast team, and we like to play with a ton of energy."

Next on the schedule, the Gators will have two home games during Homecoming Week. Oct. 14 at 7 p.m. against Lone Star Col-

lege- Tomball and Oct. 15 against Prairie View A&M at 4 p.m. Be sure to go out and support our Gators.



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

NASA launches planetary defense test, successfully hits asteroid with satellite

BY SERGIO PRESA JR

NASA's spacecraft collided with an asteroid while the space agency tested a strategy that may one day be used for Earth's planetary defenses.

The spacecraft was part of NASA's Double Asteroid Redirection Test.

The craft got locked into a collision course with the asteroid known as Dimorphos.

The asteroid was the last image that NASA received from the spacecraft before it crashed into Dimorphos at 14,000 mph.

Data and photos took around a minute to begin returning to NASA from the impact site seven million miles away.

Scientists launched the DART spacecraft to see if striking the asteroid would

be enough to change its path. Altering the path of asteroids could be used to protect Earth from future asteroid threats.

The spacecraft was launched in November 2021 on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

It launched from the Space Launch Complex 4 East at Vandenberg Space Force Base in California.

The full results of the strike and if it worked will take weeks to come in, but scientists hope to observe a crater in the asteroid and a change in orbit.

Dimorphos is a moonlet orbiting Didymos, another asteroid five times the size of Dimorphos.

Neither asteroid is expected to pose a danger to Earth in the imminent future.

According to Dr. Carolyn Ernst, a planetary sci-

entist at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, researchers have been eyeing the two asteroids for years before the mission established a baseline.

"You're measuring the time of those eclipses and that's what tells how shortened the orbits got," Ernst said as she explained how NASA judged the spacecraft's impact on the asteroid.

The mission cost \$313 million and an additional \$69 million to launch the DART spacecraft on a Falcon 9 rocket.

There are not any known asteroids that are expected to threaten Earth in the next 100 years.

Altering an asteroid's course is preferable to blowing it up so that chunks of asteroid shrapnel do not rain down on Earth.

Skepticism surrounds Houston to Dallas bullet train following delays

BY SERGIO PRESA JR

Texas Central's bullet train project was once thought to be months away from construction, but there is more paperwork than planning going on.

Texas Central said that they are securing financing, however its CEO left in June and the project has not seen any significant progress since.

In a July 8 statement, the company said that the Texas Supreme Court ruled that they could use eminent domain to obtain land for the route.

Texas Central appears to have pared down operations, as they have only paid the property taxes they owed in eight of the 11 counties where the company owns land.

Attorney Patrick McShan, who sent a letter to the company to get to the bottom of things, reported that Japan is no longer investing in the project, which is something deemed as necessary for the

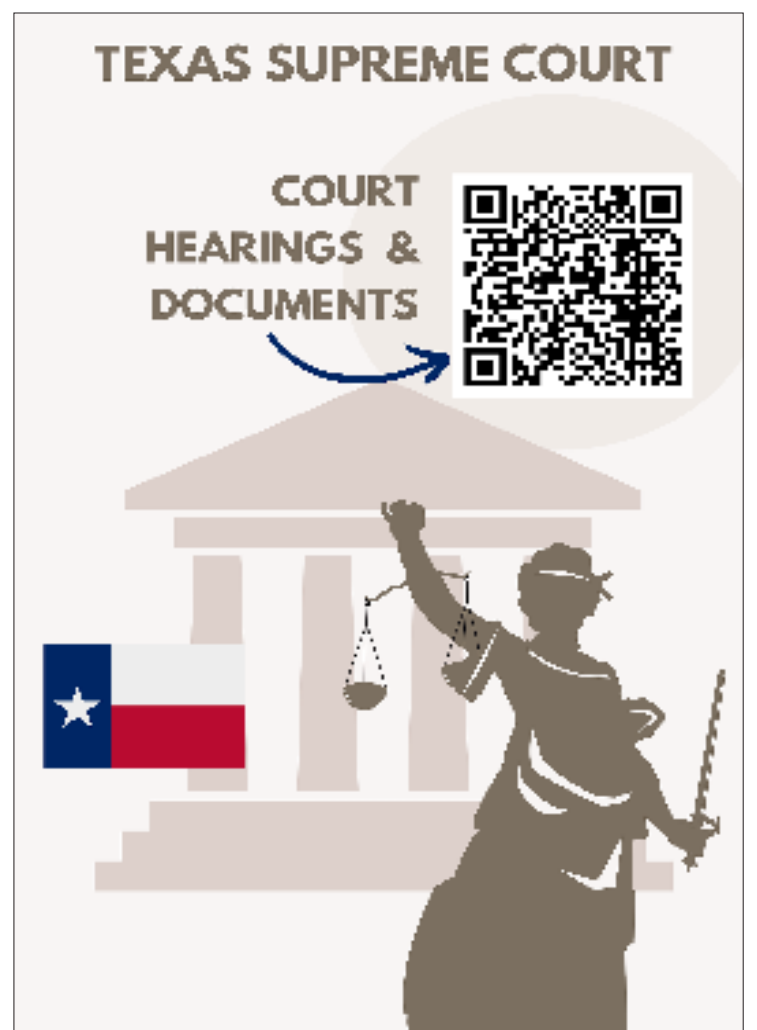
bullet train's success.

"We believe Texas Central has not filed, nor will it ever file, an application for a construction permit for two reasons, one, Texas Central does not want to make these required financial disclosures; and two, it knows that if it did make these disclosures its application would be summarily denied," McShan wrote.

The company also has address discrepancies. It lists a suite at 1400 Botham Jean Blvd. as its address, but that is the address of the Dallas Police Department headquarters. Dallas Police spokesman Cpl. Brian Martinez said that no space in the building is for lease and that no other offices are at that address.

McShan said that if Texas Central does not come clean about the project, lawyers could consider a Rule 202 petition.

Rule 202 would ask for a court ordered deposition and would force the company to say whether it can make the project happen.



Credit: Indira Zaldivar

Inprint welcomes writers again to free writing space

BY BETTY CRUZ

Inprint, a literary arts nonprofit organization located in Houston's Montrose neighborhood, reopened its writing cafe on Sept. 30 to offer local writers a free weekly place to write with minimal distractions.

"We are excited about re-launching the Inprint Writing Cafe," Inprint's Communication Manager Ellie Mix said a few days before the opening.

The staff planned to reopen it during the summer, but public health concerns delayed it to the fall.

"We are ready [to welcome people again]," Inprint's Executive Director Rich Levy stated.

Glenn Cambor, Karl Kilian, and Gay Block founded Inprint in 1983 to support the University of Houston Creative Writing Program. The organization provides fellowships to emerging writers and offers writing workshops in the community.



Interior (left) and exterior (right) of Inprint. Courtesy: Krupa Parikh

It also organizes the Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series, which features the works of talented writers and lets them discuss their books at in-person readings in Houston.

Over five years ago, UH Main students asked the employees at Inprint to allow them to stay at the Inprint house after hours to work on their writing. Realizing that



the organization could offer the general public a quiet place to write, they opened a writing cafe on Friday mornings that welcomed anyone who wanted to get some writing done, establish a writing routine, or join a writing community.

They started spreading the word, and people began to show up.

Due to the pandemic, the

writing space closed down, and the nonprofit switched to online programming and workshops for everyone's safety.

Now that vaccines and treatments help people manage and live with COVID-19, it seemed like a good time to revive the writing cafe.

Writers can sit anywhere they want, even on the outdoor patio. The Inprint staff encourages visitors to unplug and focus only on writing.

Levy wants them to feel and embrace the "creativity in the air" as they work on their craft.

For the time being, masks are optional, and social distancing is recommended. The staff plans to monitor COVID-19 to ensure that writers feel comfortable and safe.

People can come and go as they please. If they feel thirsty, they can make a cup of coffee or tea or grab a soda or water from the house's

kitchen for free.

Writers can donate 50 cents during their stay to help keep the inventory full.

Whatever people decide to jot down, from poetry to a memoir, during the three hours, the staff wants visitors to be considerate of other writers, do creative work, and feel validated and supported.

After noon, writers can mingle, get to know each other, exchange book recommendations, learn about Houston's vibrant literacy scene, or share their writings.

The staff is on-site to answer any questions.

As visitors leave, they can take a book from the free library outside the house located at 1520 West Main St and return it when they come back for another productive writing session from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. every Friday.

If you would like to know more, follow them on Instagram and Twitter at @inprinthouston.

LOCAL ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT

Environmental organization advocates for clean waterways

BY CARLIS A. HENRY

Bayou City Waterkeeper is a local organization that uses science-based applications and laws to enforce the protection of our waterways and help protect communities' resiliency against flooding.

A small and impactful organization dedicated to public awareness about waterways and the preservation of clean water.

The BCW is staffed with a community science manager, water justice specialist, legal director/waterkeeper, and executive director.

Together the team enforces the Clean Water Act and other laws to fight for clean water, wetlands, and flood protection in the greater Houston area.

"Our primary purpose is to protect communities, clean water wetlands, and climate transitions in resilient communities," Ayanna Jolivet McCloud, executive director of BCW said.

The Clean Water Act is the primary federal law in

the United States governing water pollution.

The CWA is applied to ensure that water is safe and clean for drinking, fishing, swimming, wildlife, habitat, and other uses.

"Our waterways are part of the public trust, not private property," McCloud said.

According to a 2017 data analysis, wastewater in Houston revealed millions of gallons of untreated sewage going back into the water streams, a significant concern that presented a call for action.

The city's wastewater treatment violations led to a draft consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency in 2021 that required significant upgrades to the City of Houston's sanitary sewer system over the next 15 years.

Bayou City Waterkeeper's monthly poo reports are monitoring this mandate to ensure that Houston follows the consent decree.

Monthly poo reports help communities see the progress that the city is (or is

not) making across Houston and closely monitor the city's compliance with the consent decree.

"We are a small nonprofit organization, but we are nimble and can flex our 'muscles,'" McCloud said.

"We must use bold actions and enforcements to hold those responsible for pollutants that are being dumped in our watersheds.

Houston is not just a city of people diversity, but one of ecological diversity.

The CWA act protects our communities and restore the integrity of our bayous, rivers, streams, and bays through advocacy, education, and action.



Buffalo Bayou in Houston, Texas on Oct. 12, 2022. Credit: Carlis A. Henry

HOUSTON CONSENT DECREE



City government allocated \$2 billion to upgrade Houston's aging wastewater system and keep up with Houston's rapidly growing population.

SCAN TO VIEW
MONTHLY REPORTS
OF HOUSTON
CONSENT DECREE



'Don't Worry Darling' still shines despite offscreen controversies

BY MADIHA HUSSAIN

Director Olivia Wilde's controversial sophomore film, "Don't Worry Darling," was released theatrically on Sept. 23 to lukewarm reviews. The film has been marred by its alleged infighting between costars. Still, most of the star-studded cast delivers spectacular performances in this psychological thriller.

The film follows Alice (Florence Pugh) and Jack Chambers (Harry Styles) as they live their lives in Victory, California, a seemingly utopic community in the 1950s. As Jack and the other men in the community all head off to work at the mysterious Victory Headquarters, the women assume their domestic responsibilities at home. The women are expected not to ask questions about their husbands' work and to never venture out into the desert. We soon realize that Victory is not as idyllic as it seems.

The film contains

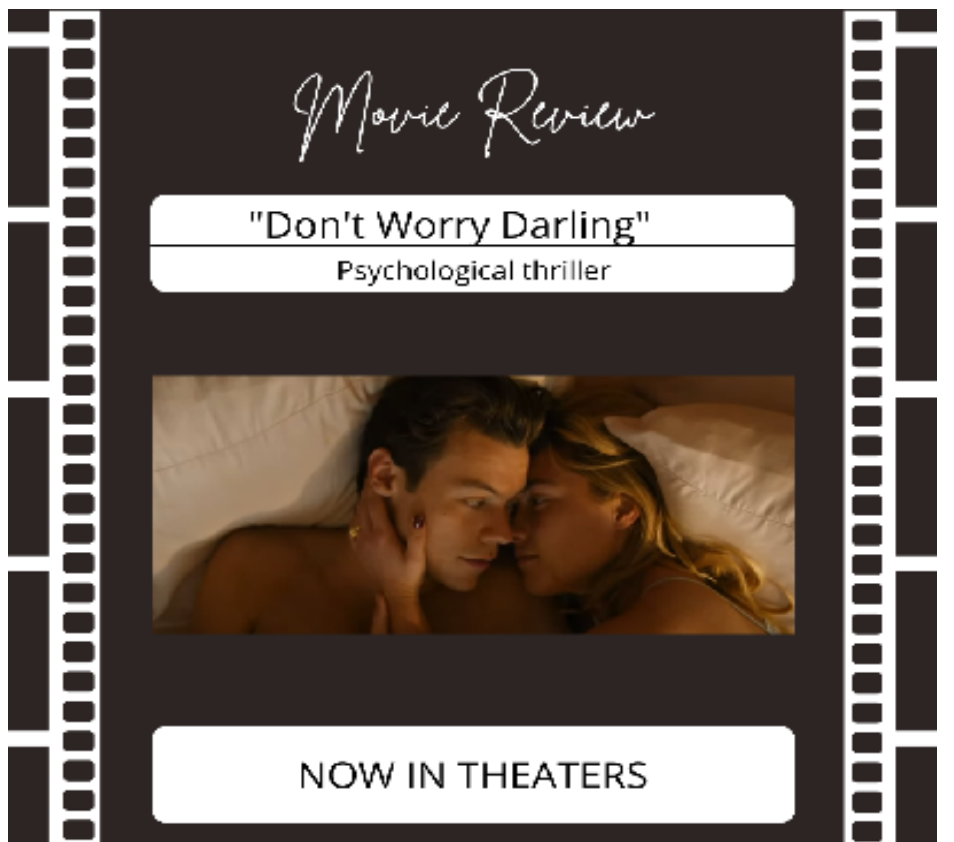
jarring cut scenes that are typical for films of this genre. However, the cut scenes at the movie's beginning do not deliver a suspenseful effect. Instead, they seem out of place and unnecessary. The transition scenes improve as the film continues. Still, the movie's first five minutes should have been cut down to two to three lengthier scenes instead to create a cohesive storyline.

While some transition scenes are awkward, they are saved by the cinematography. The motif in the film is sameness and control. The cinematography captures this motif beautifully through choreographed dances that are so out of place yet necessary for building suspense. The filming locations, props, makeup, hair, and outfits are effortlessly nostalgic for the 1950s, which makes the plot twist even more surprising.

Frank (Chris Pine), the founder of the Victory Project, perfectly portrays cult-like

leadership and behavior. Frank's control over the community is akin to what we see in real-life cult leaders like Jim Jones and Charles Manson. In fact, Pine delivers such an impressive performance that he should have been in the movie more. Gemma Chan plays Frank's wife, Shelley, and while her acting was fine, her role in the movie was insignificant. Her character should have been cut out entirely in favor of more screen time with Pine.

The movie builds up suspense successfully as we start to peel back the layers of Victory; however, just when suspense is at its highest and the plot twist is revealed, it abruptly ends. The film would have benefited if it were just 15-20 minutes longer to flesh out the ending. The film built Victory into a utopia but did not allow enough time for the audience to experience its downfall. Due to its quick ending, some questions about the plot are left unan-



Credit: Indira Zaldivar

swered in a dissatisfying way. With another rewrite, the plotline could have been dramatically improved.

Special acknowledgments should be made for the casting. It is rare to have a movie with exceptional performances from both the primary and supporting cast. Pugh shines as the main character, which is to be expected.

Wilde's performance as Bunny is even more impressive, considering she was simultaneously acting and directing.

Kiki Layne plays her character Margaret so well that it is quite a shame to find out some of her scenes were cut out of the film's final version. While Styles' acting was decent, he failed to bring a particular nuance that his

character so desperately needed.

I recommend people to watch "Don't Worry Darling" if they can separate the drama surrounding it from the film. The performances were terrific, and the plot was mostly enjoyable. The grandiose attires and settings brought the movie together. I rate the film a 3 out of 5 stars.

Rockwell, Ronan complement each other well in 'See How They Run'

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

"See How They Run" revolves around Agatha Christie's famous classic play "The Mousetrap."

Based on a true story, the film involves the mystery of the murder of a famous, unlikeable film director Leo Kopernick, played by Adrian Brody. The play is still famous and always in production.

The director Kopernick, who was killed, wanted to make a film adaptation of "The Mousetrap," and anyone in the theater is a suspect. Inspector Stoppard (Sam Rockwell) and Constable Stalker (Saoirse Ronan)

are paired to investigate the murder mystery.

Stalker and Stoppard could not be more different. Stalker is ambitious and intelligent; she writes everything involving the case down in her helpful notebook. Stoppard, on the other hand, is depressed and weary.

He has a severe drinking problem that he does poorly attempting to conceal. His character exudes a constant sadness which he eventually explains to Stalker.

In a funny scene, while the pair are on a stake-out, Stoppard tries to nap but is constantly awoken by Stalker's incessant chattering. He



Credit: Indira Zaldivar

continually tries to send her off on an errand so he can either get a drink or take a nap.

1953 makes for an

exciting period for the film. World War 2 is in the rearview, and Europe is still in the process of rebuilding.

Stoppard was a British soldier, and Stalker explains she was a WW2 nurse before going into law enforcement.

"The Mousetrap" is based on the true story of a real-life murder.

"See How They Run" is simultaneously hilarious, dramatic, and mysterious. A mystery film where the killer is difficult to figure out.

The pairing of Rockwell and Ronan is a winning combination. Sam Rockwell conveys his character's emotional pain through his fantastic acting, and Ronan is the sunshine on Rockwell's rainy day.

"If you're going to play a drunk, go to a

bar and drink coffee or coke-a-cola and watch drunks, you don't get drunk on the set." Rockwell mentioned in an interview on "Jimmy Kimmel Live."

Rockwell admitted he uses the "sloth" technique, which utilizes various relaxation exercises. Being relaxed helps maintain a drunken appearance.

"See How They Run" was a clever, humorous, and enjoyable film. The main characters were well-matched, and a sequel would be very welcome. A terrific whodunit, "See How They Run," is now playing in cinemas.

Renovated exhibit spotlights Indigenous people of America

BY RYAN PRICE

The Houston Museum of Natural Science opened up the renovated John P. McGovern Hall of The Americas to the public on Sep. 24 following two and a half years of closure.

The Hall of the Americas is a permanent exhibition that highlights the history, language and culture of the indigenous peoples of North America. While the exhibit covers the ancient history of the peoples involved, it also emphasizes the fact that these groups are not gone but still among us today.

To this end, the museum has taken great care to involve as many of the cultures incorporated in the exhibit with the construction of said

exhibition. All along the walls are videos and personal stories by members of the tribes explaining why these artifacts are important to them.

“A greater emphasis on the voices of the folks from the First Nation and a greater participation of those folks, was a definite important addition to the hall,” said Colin Diggins, a paleontology lab technician and degreed archaeologist for the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

The museum hosted the Alabama-Coushatta tribe of Texas as well as held a “First Dance” ceremony for one of the pieces crafted by Lily Hope of the Tlingit tribe of the Pacific Northwest, alongside multiple other dances and

ceremonies..

The exhibit includes artifacts from dozens of tribes from all over North America. At the center of the hall, a traditional Inuit inuksuk has been erected.

This traditional monument not only acts as a guiding point for visitors to the hall, but also as a monument to signify the importance of this location to the people. From here, visitors can explore the culture of native Inuit tribes, featherwork of the Great Plains peoples, and the monumental stonework of the Aztec and Maya civilizations.

Two visitors to the museum, Steven and Kelly Chickee, were fascinated by the Inuit artifacts in particular and loved seeing the

variety of cultures on display.

“It brings back their identity,” Chickee said about the information in the hall. “They were the original inhabitants of the area.”

Alongside the artifacts are brand new Culture Connect interactive platforms that allow visitors to interact with augmented reality simulations. The goal of this is to inspire greater engagement and understanding of the cultures represented in the hall.

“The technology here is amazing,” HMNS visitor Andrea Ritzkowsky said about her favorite part of the hall. “It makes it appealing if you’re looking to find something that’s more stimulating.”

The technological

aspect of the hall was further emphasized by UHD student Kyra Bennett, who shared that she appreciated the additional perspective that the videos and interactive exhibits gave to the hall and the people that it discusses.

The Hall of the Americas is a fantastic example and showcase of the native people of North America. Its successful use of not

only artifacts, but also technology, to convey its message appears to be well-received. Mitch Jeffrey, a dedicated volunteer of the museum for many years, encourages people to visit the “phenomenal” Hall of the Americas.

“It’s an explosion of history and facts,” Jeffrey said. “I recommend it because it’s beautiful... and educational and informative.”



“Hall of the Americas” returned with renovations to its exhibition on Indigenous people of America. Credit: Ryan Price.

Canelo remains undisputed super middleweight champion

BY SONIA SANCHEZ

Canelo Alvarez remains the undisputed super middleweight champion after his victory against his rival, Genadiy Golovkin, on Saturday, Sept. 17, in a trilogy fight in Las Vegas.

Over Mexican Independence Day weekend, two judges scored Alvarez 115-113, and the third judge scored him 116-112. After the fight ended, Alvarez and Golovkin shared a long embrace, ending their five-year rivalry.

“GGG held back, and Canelo dominated.” Zain Mansoor, a Houston fighting enthusiast, said.

The fight was close, but Alvarez left no doubts about his victory in the fighting capital of the world. Over the first half of the fight, Alvarez came on strong with his well-known power shots and aimed to knock out Golovkin during the first round.

However, Golovkin threw only jabs at Alvarez during the first half of the fight and limited the throwing of the power shots he is also well-

known for.

Alvarez continued to get more explosive into the second half of the fight, and Golovkin started gaining more momentum and landed more punches.

“He had a glimpse of glory, but he lost it.” Mansoor said.

Alvarez stood firm towards the end of the match and won by a unanimous decision, even with a TFCC tear in his left wrist. After the fight ended, Alvarez said that his rivalry with Golovkin was over. He also announced that he would take a break from fighting to focus on healing his hand injury and prepare for surgery.

At 40 years old, Golovkin is nearing the end of his career but insists that he will continue to fight. However, he has not said precisely what he will do next.

Even though this was a highly anticipated fight, it surprisingly did not do well on Pay-per-view. According to DAZN, they sold between 550 and 570 million PPVs in the US and 1.06 million worldwide.

Pasadena Livestock Show and Rodeo returns

BY DALILA JUAREZ

The City of Pasadena hosted its annual Livestock Show and Rodeo event at the Pasadena Convention Center. It was open to the public on the weekends from Sept. 23 to Oct. 1.

“I didn’t know Pasadena had a rodeo!” UHD student Shay Khan stated.

The Livestock and Rodeo is open for the first time since the pandemic. Contests such as the Cook-Off show and auctions were still held, but the public could not attend.

The event consisted of theme rides, carnival food, local vendors, and contests, including animal, floral, and mechanics (furniture building).

The Livestock show included bull riding tournaments and horse-riding activities for people with disabilities.

There was also a petting zoo with cows, camels, goats, and sheep for visitors to pet.

The rodeo hosted farm animals contests for the best rabbit, goat, lamb, pig, chicken, heifer (cow), and steer (horse). Judges look for quality features such as

weight, appearance, talent, and no signs of animal cruelty. Before judging took place, contestants had access to washing stations and access to industrial fans to comfort the animals.

Students from school districts in Pasadena, Deer Park, and La Porte participated in the contest event as a part of their National Future Farmers of America program. Throughout the school year, students are taught the importance of managing farm animals as a form of career. Participants have the opportunity to win scholarships for

their desired college.

“The FFA teaches me the beauty of raising farm animals,” J. Frank Dobie, senior high school student and FFA member, Ashley Martinez, stated.

“It pushes me to have a farm of my own when I have my first house after graduating.”

The Pasadena Livestock and Rodeo is expected to return in 2023.

Locals are welcome to join their membership program and attend the upcoming General Membership Meeting on Nov. 14.



Pasadena Livestock show offers opportunity to get a close experience with cattle. Credit: Dalila Juarez

Daughters of the Confederacy leave regrettable mark on campus

BY CRISTINA AMBROSIO

In 1965 a plaque, which is next to the Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center was erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy as a tactic to challenge the Civil Rights movements that once occurred in Texas.

The plaque states that from 1861 through 1865, this was the site of a warehouse once used for the Buffalo Shipping Company and later as a prison compound during the Civil War that housed 350 Union soldiers captured by the Confederate army.

I am amazed by how bold the UDC was in funding the plaque and the state for allowing the plaque to be built in favor of the Confederacy.

The plaque was built in 1965, which is significant because this was when movements by people of color increased, which the Confederacy was against.

This leads me to believe the plaque is a calling sign for uniting people who supported Confederate ideals.

The plaque was added for many reasons, one being the desegregation of schools.

In 1965, Black

students at Wheatley High School decided to boycott Houston Independent School District headquarters.

The high school students decided not to attend school; instead, they headed to HISD headquarters to fasten the pace of desegregation for schools in the district.

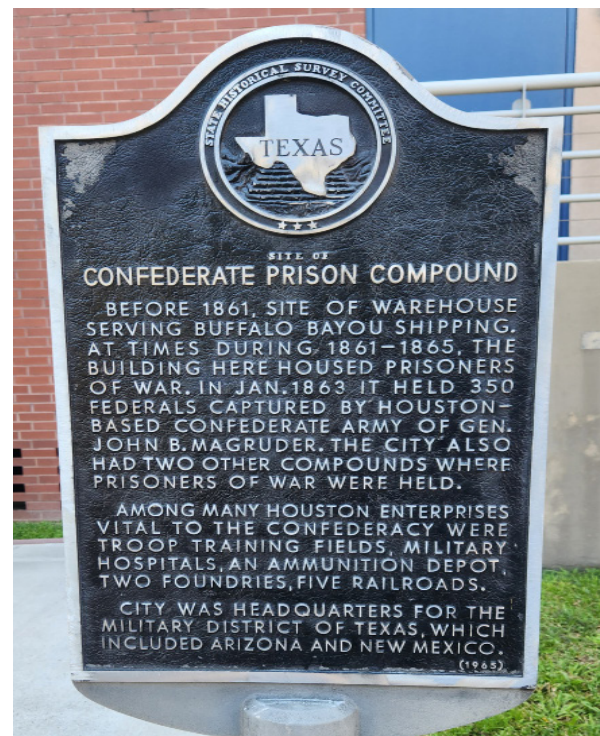
“What really fascinated me about this marker was that it didn’t say anything about the site PRIOR to the Civil War,” Katherine Jager, a UHD English professor, said.

“It was as if the site mattered to the Confederacy and then the war

ended and now there is a student parking lot—there was a lot of time and history that seemed to be elided.”

“The historical marker seemed to be part of this larger project of positively remembering the Civil War and the Confederacy,” Jager said.

“Erected in the early 1960s—when the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing, the markers and monuments pretend like African Americans didn’t even exist, and that the Civil War was fought over “States’ Rights” and not slavery.”



Plaque outside the west side of the Student Life Center embodies regrettable event in history. Credit: Cristina Ambrosio

Don't let COVID creep up on you

BY DALILA JUAREZ

It has been over two years since the COVID-19 outbreak.

The health of locals improved once people started wearing masks and getting vaccinated.

However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that the risk of the virus had declined thanks to the COVID-19 regulations, and people were welcome to return to regular lifestyles with caution.

Our habits during the pandemic may have changed, but the virus spreads when you least expect it.

People should not let their guard down.

I was first exposed to COVID-19 in August 2021. I lost my sense of

smell and went on a hot liquid diet.

I learned my lesson and continued to wear a mask after I recovered from my symptoms.

A year later, on Sept. 17, I went to San Antonio to see the German-Metal band Rammstein perform without thoughts about the disease.

There was a total of 40,000 fans who attended the event. Once the concert concluded, fans, including myself, exited the Alamodome. I realized I was in a group of thousands of people surrounding me and not wearing a mask. A few days later, I tested positive for COVID-19.

The virus’s importance has not been broadcast enough to where people assume

we defeated it.

The only times I’ve heard about COVID-19 were when the most notable people, such as President Joe Biden or Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth, had confirmed cases.

People should continue to spread awareness about COVID-19 and practice the CDC’s regulations.

Get tested immediately if you feel that you may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Those vaccinated should continue getting booster shots or wearing masks to reduce exposure. UHD partnered with Curative to offer free testing (with proof of insurance) at their Kiosk located next to the Student Life Center.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19

- Wear a mask during gatherings of 10 or more people.
- Continue to wash hands and use hand sanitizers.
- Maintain a 6-foot social distance in public places.
- Test for COVID-19 if you feel you have been exposed or begin to experience symptoms.

LEARN MORE:

www.cdc.gov



Credit: Dalila Juarez

COVID-19 TESTING INCENTIVE

Students, faculty, and staff receive \$5 in GatorCash through Dec. 31 at Curative Testing Kiosk to the west side of the Student Life Center (ID & proof of insurance needed)

Schedule an appointment



Credit: Indira Zaldivar

Mask and hand sanitation stations on campus



Credit: Cristina Ambrosio

Hated mosquito plays irreplaceable ecological role, species extinction could cause global environmental disaster

BY RYAN PRICE

Despite being the world's most dangerous insect, the mosquito plays an essential and irreplaceable role in Earth's global ecosystem.

The mosquito and I have something in common, we both share the same special day. Aug. 20 is not only my birthday but also World Mosquito Day.

The major difference is that while one is a day celebrating my entrance into the world, the other celebrates the day that Dr. Ronald Ross discovered that mosquitoes were the primary infection vector for malaria.

Consequently, that Aug. 20 day, humanity painted a target on the back of every mosquito. Their day is dedicated not to their appreciation as a species but to the day that we began their genocide.

This is not to say that mosquitoes do not deserve the majority of the treatment that they receive. Mosquitoes are the most dangerous insect on the planet.

Their bad reputation mainly derives from being disease vectors to several diseases including zika, yellow fever, dengue fever, and several varieties of malaria.

The Michigan Mosquito Control Organization in 2013, surmised that fatalities attributed to mosquitoes might be at least 700,000 a year

with the majority of deaths occurring in Africa and South America.

But mosquitos do far more than cause disease. In fact, due to their unique mode of life, the majority of the 3,500 species of mosquito do not bite humans at all, and only 6% of known species are known to predate us.

A greater caveat is that only the older female mosquitos prey upon human blood and only do this to provide protein for the eggs.

Most of their time is spent feeding on plant nectar and fruit juices. Male mosquitos never feed on blood at all.

Because of their numbers, mosquitoes act as an essential pollinator in our ecosystems, in some cases even more important than our beloved honey bees.

They pollinate not only food sources but also members of the rose and sunflower families.

If mosquitoes were eliminated entirely, the effects on global botanical biodiversity might be devastating. The effect on local wildlife may be equally so.

Mosquitos are an important food source for birds and bats, while their young, as larvae, are consumed by fish and frogs, according to Phil Lounibos, an entomologist for the University of Florida.

Total eradication "could



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

have an effect further up the food chain," Lounibos added.

The extinction of the mosquito could cause a global environmental disaster.

Because humans lead this extermination, the ethics of eradication also comes into question. Despite their negative perception, the question

has to be asked if the goal of the purposeful extinction is morally within our collective jurisdiction.

Do we, as a species, have the right to decide whether a 100 million-year-old animal should be wiped from the planet? I think not.

Despite the danger that mosquitoes can present, a

more ethical solution can be found in local population control through nets and strategic sterilization, and access to medical care in areas prone to mosquito-borne illness.

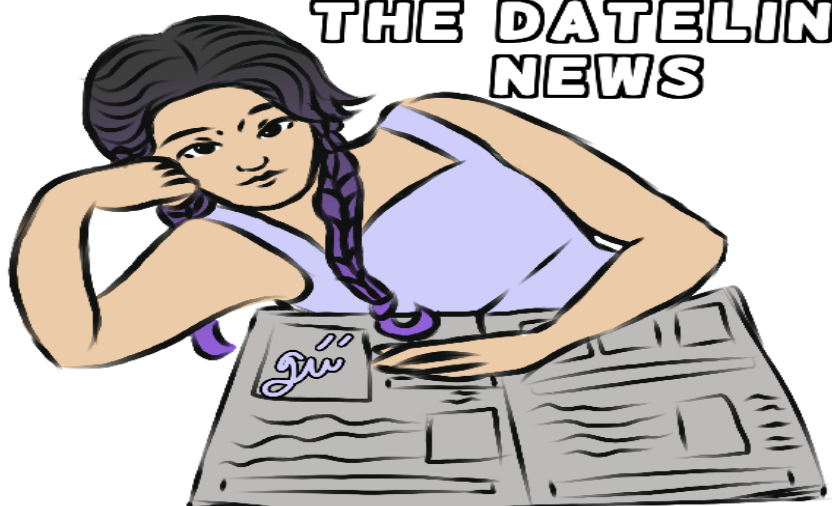
Mosquitoes are bad for humanity, but they are still crucial to the global ecosystem and the future of our planet.

**Next issue hits
the stands on
Friday, Oct. 28**

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Apply
online!**



**READ
THE DATELINE
NEWS**



Credit: Giselle Oviedo