

DATELINE:



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DOWNTOWN

Be the Light



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Letter from the Editor

An Attack on Paris, An Attack on Freedom

by Darci McFerran



People rally for Freedom in the Paris streets—image courtesy of abcnews.go.com

“One’s life has value so long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, indignation and compassion.” So goes a quote from the writings of Simone de Beauvoir, French philosopher, political activist, and social theorist. Those words were most likely written in Paris, many years before ISIS targeted the “City of Lights,” and written by a woman who had seen her beloved home endure the relentless assault of evil in much the same way by the Nazi occupation. On Friday, November 13th, 2015, many Parisians were enjoying their evening with friends or family as the weekend began, just celebrating freedom: not worried about potential dangers lurking in the

shadows, at their heels, waiting to change their lives forever. Around 9:20pm, a series of terrorist attacks struck near the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, followed by mass shootings at five locations, including the Bataclan Theatre.

In total, 160 lives were lost, and 395 others were injured—staggering statistics that reminded many Americans of the terrorist attacks that struck our own country not long ago, on September 11th, 2001. The Paris attacks were not the only recent atrocities committed by ISIS—just the most high profile. Daesh, as ISIS is also known, has attacked Lebanon, Beirut, Russia, Bangladesh and, of course, Syria. ISIS is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria; they are a Wahhabi/Salafi jihadist militant group. They pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2004 following the American invasion of Iraq and aimed to claim control over Muslims worldwide. In fact, they have executed ground attacks against the government and rebel forces in Syria, exploiting the turmoil caused by the Syrian Civil War. The power vacuum created by US troop withdrawal from the region coupled with efficient use of social media for recruitment has allowed the group to grow stronger over time.

Prior to the attacks in Paris, many countries worldwide were organized to help relieve those displaced by the ongoing war in Syria. They were individually agreeing to take in thousands, if not tens of thousands, of Syrian refugees. However, since the discovery that one of the individuals responsible for the carnage in Paris gained entry with a Syrian passport, many countries have begun to back-pedal because of fear of the terrorist organization. Worried that by taking in refugees they would be vulnerable to similar attacks, several EU nations have retracted their promise to assist millions of people fleeing to the region. Meanwhile the heart-wrenching images of the displaced continue to haunt the news and Internet.

Perhaps the detachment comes from seeing these horrors only on a screen that allows people to distance themselves from the reality, but these are human beings that are dying. Many arguments have surfaced against allowing the victims entry into stable countries that can offer assistance; nothing can change the reality that we are talking about real people. America, for instance, has a rigorous immigration process even for refugees, but this does little to calm the fears of its citizens. Are we at risk? Absolutely! Every day we wake up is another opportunity for terrorists to destroy our freedom and way of life. It has little to do with whether we decide to assist the Syrian refugees, though.

There isn’t one group among us, apart from Native Americans, that can say they do not have roots firmly planted in immigration. While the reasons vary from person to person, they all have one common binding factor. They needed a better opportunity than the one they had at home. America was founded on the idea that anyone could build a better life here, regardless of background. In fact, it is carved into one of the most visible symbols of our freedom, the Statue of Liberty. “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door,” the Statue of Liberty proclaims from Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.

Isn’t this the America that our ancestors dreamed of? Shouldn’t it be our primary goal to maintain that ideal with integrity? It takes a powerful reason to motivate someone to board their small child onto an inflatable raft and brave the dangers of the open ocean on a prayer that they will make it alive to someplace that will welcome them. If we allow our fear to guide our decisions, then we allow the terrorists to win. This is our opportunity to show the world that America is still the great country we claim it to be. Let us lift our lamps to those in need, show the terrorists that we are not afraid and fight back in the name of freedom.



People rally for Freedom in the Paris streets—image courtesy of abcnews.go.com

Out for Education Gala and Scholarship

by Kara Moore

Out for Education is a Houston local LGBT scholarship organization that annually hosts events, and awards thousands of dollars to LGBT college students in the Houston area. This year it hosted a “Moulin Rouge” themed gala at the Audi Central building. The gala is the organization’s biggest fundraising party of the year, where the proceeds from the tickets and the silent auction go towards funding the education of LGBT students.

The gala, which happened on November 6th, was a fun and fancy affair among the gorgeous cars of the Audi showroom. Mostly, party-goers were appropriately dressed in corsets and top hats, fitting the ritzy “Moulin Rouge” theme. The open bar kept people drinking, laughing, and bidding away at special cigars. Members of the Out for Education committee, local supporters, and scholarship winners/hopefuls attended the night for the purpose of networking and just plain enjoyment.

Of course, it was a night tinged with a slight sadness; the event happened shortly after the vote on HERO, which did not pass. People seemed to be avoiding the subject of the recent loss and just trying to enjoy the night despite the disappointment in the city they call home. When it was discussed, a feeling of somberness was felt by everyone. In the city with a lesbian mayor and one of the most successful LGBT scholarships in America, it

is hard to believe that a protection for LGBT citizens could be stopped by the resistance and fear mongering of the religious opposition. Still, people were focused on enjoying the night and raising money for the students that were the future of the city, a future that is going to hopefully be brighter than the present.

Out for Education gives “endowed” scholarships to the students of Houston. The idea of an “endowed” scholarship is that if the foundation has \$100,000, then they can award \$4,000 in scholarships every year. It’s a type of scholarship meant to last, to continue funding student education for a long time. The “John Danielson Endowed Scholarship” is the scholarship listed on their website.

To apply for the Out for Education scholarship, you must be at least 17 (but no older than 25) and attending, or planning on attending, a Houston-area college. You must have a 2.75 GPA and identify with the LGBT community. Your award will be given to you based on your accomplishments and financial need. It does require an essay or an official transcript. Then, if you are chosen, you will receive a personal interview with the people on the scholarship board to hear your personal story and why you need the scholarship to further your education. The deadline for the scholarship is currently February 29th, 2016, so start applying soon!



*images
by
Ignacio
Hernandez*

*~Attendees
at the
Out for
Education
Gala Event*

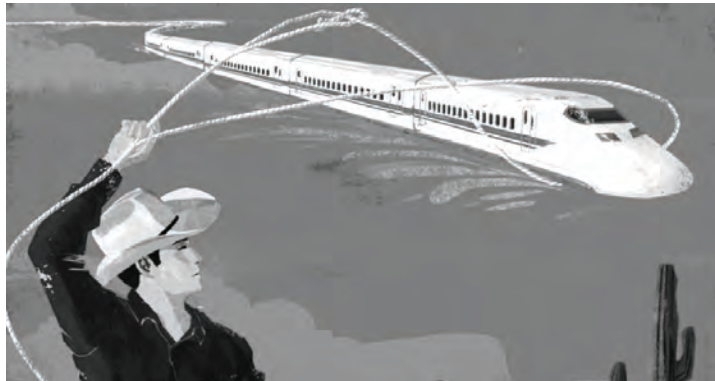
High-Speed Train's Downtown-to-Downtown Connection Spiked

by Jason J. Rivas

A few issues ago, Dateline Downtown provided an expansive account of the projected bullet train that would connect Houston to Dallas. After years of fundraising, environmental studies, and public support/resistance, the contentious rail line seemed like it was set for smooth sailing across the waves of the Texas plains. But a new federal study has temporarily curtailed plans to connect the hearts of both cities together; all the while, investors and support grow.

The Federal Railroad Administration had previously conducted environmental studies that allowed for the \$10 billion venture to circumvent Montgomery County, keep most of the rail lines suspended above ground (to provide ample space for locals who graze and farm), and maintain the estimated time between Houston and Dallas at 90 minutes. However, on November 6th, the FRA issued a new study that stated the environmental impact and costs were too great to warrant a station-to-station stop within downtown Houston. There were only two possible routes for the lines to reach the financial district. Each involved a cross through either the Heights Boulevard Esplanade, the neighborhood of Cotton Grove, or four city parks. Each site proved to be too problematic and costly for the FRA to green-light a rail line through it. The Texas Central Railway, the private firm steering the project, expressed disappointment over the report but was not shocked by the ruling. While there are various

supporters who hold out hope for a downtown station, there are also plans to find a site along the northwest part of town to serve as the main Houston hub.



Before this setback, though, funding for the project had been progressing. As first reported, the TCR received a \$75 million private investment to complete necessary studies for the first sector of the rail line. In October, TCR reached a \$130 million agreement with Archer Western Construction and Ferrovia Agroman U.S. Corporation to design about 30% of the railways. Working together as "Dallas to Houston Contractors," the firm hopes to secure future business deals with TCR by successfully completing their tasks at hand. Success could also lead to the firm earning additional contracts to construct the entire 240-mile rail network.

Moreover, Vice President Joe Biden recently threw his support behind the rail lines. As senator of Delaware, Biden logged millions of miles and thousands of hours riding trains to and from Washington D.C., over his four decades in office. Appearing in Houston and Dallas this month alongside each city's mayor, the Vice President stressed the importance of revamping the nation's ailing infrastructure, and threw his support for TCR's endeavors. Biden was followed by the Japanese firm, Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport and Urban Development (JOIN), who made a \$40 million investment into the endeavor. It's also worth noting that an anonymous source told the Nikkei Asian Review that an additional \$4 billion would be raised for the Texas project in Japan, although TCR has stated they do not know where the Review attained their source or information.

It remains to be seen where the Dallas-Houston railway will station their hubs, but that factor seems not to have affected private investment or political support for the endeavor. The project hopes to begin construction soon and be opened to the public in 2021.

image courtesy of On Earth Magazine

Internet Archives: Man Sexually Harassed on Video Goes Viral

by Christopher Joseph

A viral video has made its way across various social media sites. The video in question is surveillance footage from a corner store in Washington D.C., where two females were at the register and a man was behind them, on the phone. Suddenly one of the women began "twerking" on the man behind her, and the second woman started to grab the man near his crotch while trying to get him off of his phone. He was clearly backing away from the two women, but one of them continued rubbing on him while he was waiting in line. Warrants have been issued for their arrests, and charges of third-degree sexual abuse filed, on the two perpetrators. "I believe these girls are in the wrong. However, I do not feel like the police should necessarily be searching for

them," said University of Houston-Downtown student Mark Knight.

The video has sparked a huge debate that has some people split down the middle. Some claim that the man was not sexually assaulted, believing that, as a man, he would have enjoyed the sexual advances from the pair; others feel differently. University of Houston student Andrea Rubio said, "The girls were in the wrong. It doesn't matter that it's a girl doing it to a guy; it's still harassment, and it's wrong."

There are dozens of videos similar to this one, where a woman is assaulted by men on the streets or even catcalled by strange men as they walk. However, there are versions of those same videos which show sexual harassment, but with a male being harassed instead. The outcome of those

videos shows that no one, or very few people, come to the man's aid. Some will simply question the man's sexuality and why he is disproving of being groped by a woman.

"Men are told they need to be tough and not emotional, and they're taught that women can't harm them because they're weaker, when in reality, that's not always the case. And while it's common knowledge that women get sexually harassed often, men don't tend to step forward and admit that it's happened to them as often as women," said Rubio. So far only one of the women in the video has been arrested and is facing jail time for her actions. "It's not OK. No one should be forced into doing anything with anyone without some form of consent," said Knight.

Dallas Protects LGBTQ Employees

by Kara Moore

After the defeat of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO), the entire country condemned the city for its perceived anti-LGBT beliefs. Major politicians, along with SNL and several other nighttime talk shows, acknowledged the failing of HERO and ridiculed the anti-HERO campaign, making a true mockery of Houston on a national level. Also following the defeat, the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) said it will review host cities based on their LGBT non-discrimination laws. Now, Dallas has put language directly into its city charter that protects LGBTQ+ employees from discrimination, even though the language already existed in their equal opportunity employment policies.

The extension of protections to the Dallas City Charter won with an overwhelming vote to include the language, unlike Houston, where HERO failed by a 61% majority. It not only added LGBTQ+ protections to the charter, but also included “color, age, marital status, genetic characteristics, national origin, disability and military or veteran status,” similar to what HERO would have done for Houston. Of course, this vote comes with its own controversy: amidst this LGBTQ+ win, Dallas is experiencing a rise in hate crimes within known gay communities.

The city’s “gayborhood,” Oak Lawn, has seen 12 anti-gay hate crimes in the past three months. Most of them have been violent and most of these gay men were robbed in the assault; all of them were walking alone at night. Rally for Change, a local organization in Dallas, stated that the victims were often beaten with weapons like bats and box-cutters, while homophobic language was used during the assaults. Only after the most recent victim, Geoffrey Hubbard, had his skull bashed-in, did the police add around a half-a-dozen more officers to patrol the area. There are still no leads on suspects for any of the dozen assaults.

Despite the obvious acceptance of LGBTQ+ people within the Dallas community and the extension of protections into the city charter, Dallas still faces the fear and hatred some of its citizens feel towards the LGBTQ+ community. Dallas may be working towards a solution. Still, even in the most accepting cities in Texas, homophobia can always be found.



Red Flags Stop Republican Debate at UH Main

by Miguel Nunez

After the third Republican presidential debate on CNBC, which aired Wednesday October 28th, GOP contenders have decided that, after what they felt were horrible questions asked by the moderators, they are canceling the debates that were to be held at the University of Houston.

Originally there was to be a Republican debate at UH on February 26th, but after what happened in the third debate, things have changed. According to the Republican presidential candidates, the questions asked by the moderators, were “gotcha” questions. Reince Priebus, the current chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC) had this to say about the third debate, “while debates are meant to include tough questions and contrast candidates’ visions and policies for the future of America, CNBC’s moderators engaged in a series of ‘gotcha’ questions, petty and mean-spirited in tone, and designed to embarrass our candidates.”

The agreement to bring the Republican debate here to UH was between the RNC and NBC and also in partnership with Telemundo. Fortunately, the RNC is still having a debate on that day, but unfortunately for NBC and

Telemundo, they will no longer be a part of it. Priebus sent a letter to Andrew Lack—the chairman of NBC—stating that, “The CNBC network is one of your media properties and its handling of the debate was conducted in bad faith. We understand that NBC does not exercise full editorial control over CNBC’s journalistic approach. However, the network is an arm of your organization, and we need to ensure there is not a repeat performance.”

The letter went on to say that a new partnership had been made with Conservative media outlet National Review. This, of course, is likely something NBC does not want considering that, when the debate was going on, about 14 million people tuned in to CNBC to view it.

Some Republican candidates like Ted Cruz were so outraged at the perceived bad questions by the moderators that while on stage, after being asked about the debt ceiling deal in congress, he went off and said, “you know, let me say something at the outset. The questions that have been asked so far in this debate illustrate why the American people don’t trust the media.”

Cruz went on to say that the Democratic debate was far different, they were not, according to Cruz, asked the same kinds of questions, “The contrast with the Democratic debate, where every fawning question from the media was ‘which of you is more handsome and wise?’” Ted Cruz was just one among many Republican candidates who was frustrated with the questions they got from the CNBC moderators.

For future debates, the RNC and the Republican candidates have already set up demands that will have to be met before anymore debates can happen. Unfortunately for University of Houston, it seems they will no longer be part of those deals. That could possibly change, but the way things are occurring now, that seems unlikely.



8 Holiday Center



Winter Celebrations

by Darci McFerran

Amidst the blue screens of electronics and onslaught of advertising that rule every aspect of our lives, how do we retain the true meaning of the holidays? In America, Christmas was the predominant December celebration. However, as the “melting pot” of the world, we have accumulated an endless array of cultures that have contributed their individual celebrations to the calendar. So, to generalize, we say “Happy Holidays.” I can almost see your eyes rolling already, but is it really that bad? Although non-specific, it is a middle ground that allows everyone to connect during this festive time of year, despite differences in beliefs, traditions, and cultures.

I can't help but think that anything that allows people to connect, even if only for a moment, is a good thing. The ability to easily participate in an almost miraculous feeling of universal good will during such a tumultuous era of terrorism, war, and civil unrest is rare and should be cherished as the miracle it is. Regardless of what you celebrate, an omnipotent spirit of compassion and humanity seems to wash over the mortals of earth and allow miracles to touch us all.

Historically, much of the winter celebrations revolved around the pagan recognition of the winter solstice and the worst of winter being nearly over. As if celebrating the return of warm sunny days wasn't enough, our ancestors often had more meat, harvest, and even wine during this time, so the ingredients of

a party were more readily available. In fact, the winter festivities became so celebrated that religious officials considering banning the holiday! Can you imagine Christmas being banned? Fortunately, according to History.com, many of the more respectable traditions, such as decorating a tree, preparing for Santa Claus, and honoring religious rites, integrated into the celebration and the holiday spirit prevailed.

There are many different stories in the history of our varied winter celebrations, but they all have one thing in common: the spirit of the season. We all feel just a little bit happier and kinder. It unites us despite our differences and opens the door for everyday miracles to happen. It is almost as if magic really is in the air and anything is possible. That feeling isn't based on a party or a religion; it comes from our humanity, and instills a bond that is universal in a world that constantly divides us. Consumerism has saturated the American version so much that we have to stop and look a little closer for it, but it is still there. Present in the everyday acts of kindness that happen around us. So, yes, I will say Happy Holidays to you. Not because I don't respect Christmas, but because I respect that we all have differences. But it's also because I look forward to the opportunity to share a moment with every one of the people I meet, despite our differences.



The Legend of Gruss von Krampus

by Christopher Joseph

Christmas time has crept upon us once again; everywhere you go you will run into something festive. Everyone is gearing up for the arrival of Christmas cheer and the positive vibes that accompany it. And who else to bring the Christmas spirit other than jolly old Saint Nicolas, more commonly known as Santa Claus. Santa Claus is not only known to bring Christmas spirit, but he also brings toys to all the good little boys and girls. However, for the bad children he supposedly brings them a lump of coal in their Christmas stocking, but that is not true at all. While it is true the good children are put on the nice list and the bad children are put on the naughty list, children who are on the naughty list are not visited by Santa at all, no they are visited by Krampus.

On the eve of St. Nicolas day, those children who have been naughty will be visited by none other than the Christmas Devil himself, Krampus.

Krampus is the evil counterpart of Father Christmas, but instead of bringing joy filled with toys, Krampus brings his instruments of punishment to punish the naughty children. Krampus will whip them with switches and rusty chains before he stuffs the children in his

bag then drags them to the fiery pit below.

The origin of Krampus comes from an ancient European practice of mummification during the winter solstice. Villagers across Europe would dress up as animals, wild-men and mythic figures to parade and perform in humorous plays. This ancient guising and masking tradition is the primary source of modern Halloween with its costumes, trick-or-treat and pagan symbolism. The most common figures in the folk rituals were Old Man Winter and the Horned Goat-Man, or more commonly known today as Saint Nick/Santa Claus and Krampus/Devil.

The tale of Krampus is celebrated on Krampusnacht, which takes place before December 6th (St. Nicolas day). On this day, people partake in Krampuslauf (Krampus Run). This is where the party-goers dress as devils, witches, and all sorts of demonic creatures and run

through the streets scaring little children. Krampuslauf has been extremely popular in certain parts of Europe and has begun making its way over to parts of the U.S.

Here in the states, the fear of Krampus is not as big as it is in Europe. Not many people know who Krampus is and the holiday cartoons don't seem to make any mention of who he is, opting to go for coal in the stocking for the naughty children. However, Krampus has been featured in American media from time to time. Krampus appeared on The Colbert Report, and also made an appearance on FOX's American Dad. A horror/comedy movie has been slated to be released December 4th, about the tale of Krampus, where a dysfunctional family comes together for the holidays and a young, unruly child awakes the ancient wrath of Krampus, as he terrorizes the family. The film stars Adam Scott (Parks and Rec) and David Koechner (Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy) and is directed by Michael Dougherty.

Like John Fredrick Coots sang in his hit song, Santa Claus is Comin' to Town, “He knows when you are sleeping, he knows when you're awake, he knows when you've been bad or good so be good for goodness sake!”



Final Season of The Nutcracker at the Houston Ballet

by Christina Movaghar

December 27th, 2015, marks the end of a 29-year tradition in Houston Texas. The Houston Ballet is saying goodbye to Ben Stephenson's version of The Nutcracker, and transitioning into a completely new version of the much beloved performance. Dateline-Downtown had the opportunity to speak with Kimberly Cedeno, PR associate for the Houston Ballet, to learn more about the change.

Since 1987, the Houston Ballet has performed Stephenson's choreography for The Nutcracker, and over 1,000,000 people have attended the performances since then. Audience members adore this holiday ballet because it keeps Christmas magic alive in our city. Dancers from all around the world are featured in the production, and Ms. Cedeno shared that "the dancers [picked to perform] love dancing in The Nutcracker" because it gives them the opportunity to play a character, and connect with the audience, especially young children. It is a Christmas tradition for many, because the production is truly a testament to a child's imagination. Children at least three-years of age have always been invited to join their parents to take in the wonder of The Nutcracker. Costumes, lighting, and choreography have been a glorious success for several years in Houston, and many are sad to see Stephenson's adaptation of the classic production go. However, in 2016 the Houston Ballet will introduce a new version of The Nutcracker, and is confident that audiences, young and old, will love the new spin on the performance.

The new version of The Nutcracker will be choreographed by Stanton Welch, the acclaimed Australian choreographer who became Artistic Director

of The Houston Ballet in 2003. "Everything is going to be new," says Ms. Cedeno, the performance will have "brand new sets, costumes and lighting" that will engage the audience, and create a rejuvenated love for the esteemed ballet. "The tradition [of The Nutcracker] must keep going," Cedeno says, and it is time for "something fresh and new."

Until then, those who are interested in seeing the ballet for the first or millionth time, are welcome to purchase tickets for the final 34 performances of the Ben-Stephenson-choreographed version of The Nutcracker.

Don't miss out on the ballet that has become a tradition in our beloved city. It is always sad to see something much-adored end, but the memory of Stephenson's production will continue to dance in our hearts for many years to come. Performances begin on November 27th and the final dance is December 27th 2015. For more information please visit their website at, Houstonballet.org/TheNutcracker.



9 Holiday Center



Magical Winter Lights

by Karen Reyes

Discovery Green has the honor of exhibiting the 4,500 colorful radiant frosted glass spheres art installation, Field of Light, by the English artist Bruce Munro.

Munro is best known for large-scale art installations, such as the Field of Light, which was first created in 2004 at the field behind his family home in Wiltshire, England. Munro's inspiration was drawn from a journey through the Red Desert in Central Australia. It was first exhibited in the V&A Museum in 2004 and has now been exhibited in various places around the world.

The 4,500 frosted glass spheres are connected by 18 miles of colorful fiber optics. The Field of Lights waits until the hours of darkness to bloom into movements of bright colors across the field as the night passes. Visitors to the installation have the opportunity to take pictures with their families with this beautiful and spectacular art.

Discovery Green welcomes visitors to experience Field of Light while enjoying free performances by Houston artists. The lists of performances from Nov. 27th to March 18th are available on their website. The free art installation is now on display until Feb. 21st, 2016, and it is illuminated from 3-11p.m along the Brown Promenade path. The perfect time to view the art is at dusk. Take this opportunity to visit this international and admirable art work.



X-mas Light Events Around Hoston

Are you thinking of what to do while waiting for Christmas day to come? The City of Houston welcomes you to be a part of its many Christmas events. One of the main features our city presents to the public is the adornment of Christmas lights, but not just ordinary lights—artistic creations and beautiful scenes that light the city's streets throughout the holidays. Here are some events you must visit.

Houston Zoo Lights

The Zoo Lights features more than two million lights in the shapes of monkeys, birds, elephants, giraffes, gorillas, etc.; the Zoo comes alive in a brilliant display of imagination and creativity. Children are encouraged to display their artistic skills as they decorate gingerbread cookies. Children are also welcome to ride the Wildlife Carousel, which has been ornamented for this special holiday. The Zoo will offer a variety of holiday sweets, such as funnel cakes, kettle corn, hot chocolate and much more! The Zoo lights will be on display from Nov. 20th to Jan. 9th.

Sam Houston Race Park's Magical Winter Lights

Named the largest holiday light festival in the nation, the Sam Houston Race Park presents Magical Winter Lights. From Nov. 20th to Jan. 10th, the grounds of the race park will be divided into seven light themes: Magical, Europe, Asia, Australia, Dinosaur Land, Americas, and Houston. The holiday lights attraction also includes replicas of global architectural landmarks such as, the Taj Mahal, the Temple of Heaven, Saint Basil's Cathedral, Egyptian pyramids and the Sydney Opera House. There are also established food vendors specializing in international cuisine. Wait, there is more! The festival will also include cultural performances and artistry from around the world.

Moody Gardens' Festival of Lights

Our friendly coast invites you to be part of the 14th annual Moody Gardens' Festival of Lights from Nov. 14th to Jan. 10th. The holiday tradition includes more than 1 million lights with 100 sound-enhanced animated light displays and live entertainment. The festival will also feature an outdoor skating rink, an ice slide, train ride, holiday films, holiday buffet, and Santa will be present to take pictures with children throughout the night.



European Train Writing: an Exhibition in Houston

by Miguel Nunez

Art never dies here in Houston. No matter where you go or what day of the week it is, there always seems to be some kind of art event going on around the city. What a wonderful city!

On November 13th and 14th, at 912 St. Charles Street there was free admission to an event where European artists were showcasing their artwork for all of Houston to see. The artwork consisted of creative and wonderful images on trains. Which some would call “vandalism,” of course, but to the artists themselves, their work is more than just vandalism. It is a representation of their creativity, their courage, and their skill of not being caught. They call themselves “writers,” but do not think they write stories on trains, or great poems. What they do is what any artist would do: they create visual images that stir the heart, the imagination, and the soul.

If you have ever been driving down a long highway and had to stop at a rail track, you might have seen as the train came passing through, pictures painted on the sides of the boxcars. If you have seen such a thing, then you have had the privilege of seeing what train writing is. Artists all around the world go into areas that they are not typically allowed to go into, they find their train—their canvas—and begin to create a masterpiece. Sometimes they may even bring one or two friends to serve as a lookout. After all, often times what they are doing is illegal, which, according

to some of the artists, is a necessary component of what they do. By its very nature, the artwork they create is temporary since what they do is often not requested. So, when all’s said and done, they then take a photograph of what they did as a way to prove to other artists and the rest of the world what has been created on their canvases.

There were at least 25 artists, all from Europe, exhibiting their artwork, which totaled to about 200 photographs. They were also showing films about the culture and the hidden methods of these artists. Some of the pictures of the artworks came from places like Amsterdam, Barcelona, Budapest and Bucharest. It was a strange thing to see pictures of some of these artists while in the act of drawing on the boxcars. It was like I was seeing something I should not have been seeing. It made the experience all the more vivid when I had the opportunity to talk to one of the artists there at the event.

His name is Zoltán Kárpáti and he had some of his artwork on display. They were paintings lying right on the floor. He said he wanted

them on the floor because he wanted the walls to be free from any hanging object. It was part of the artwork he implied. The pieces consisted of what he said was abstract art. He painted images on plastic, saying of the material that when painted on he could no longer easily change what was on it. This, he said added an element that he wanted. There was no going back he had said and the idea of working on plastic material was something that he was attracted to considering the fact that all around us we are surrounded by plastic. It was part of his plastic era series. This was just some artwork from one of the artists. There was far more to look at.

Leaving the Train writing event would leave anyone, as it did with me, with a better understanding of the motivation, the danger and the skill it takes to use boxcars as canvasses for art. All over Europe this is still happening, and from what I learned at the exhibit, such endeavors for creating amazing art will continue to keep occurring, and I, for one, am beyond glad about that.



Pet - a- Pet to Reduce Finals Stress

by Kara Moore

Finals season is upon us; it’s the time for cram sessions, all-nighters and intense projects or essays. Everything that must be done for the semester is crammed into the last few weeks, filling your brain with a million different facts to memorize, and a million and one different things to study. It’s a tough couple of weeks, but if you can get through it, then you will be rewarded—not just with good grades, but with kittens.

The UHD Animal Rescue Club is still a relatively new club that has been taking the campus by storm. It’s a volunteer-based organization that works closely with shelters in Houston to help with Houston’s high homeless animal population. For the past month, they have set up drop boxes around campus, requesting towels, food, newspapers and anything else that can be donated to help out your local shelters. After finals, on December 14th between 10am and 3pm, they will be bringing adorable, adoptable kittens to campus so people can unwind and de-stress from the long grueling week. These angels will be from local shelters and foster homes, which will hopefully encourage people to take one of the kittens home after they spend some time with them. The idea is to encourage adoption through interaction and to give students the break they deserve after working so hard to get through the last bit of the semester.

Be on the lookout for this event, Gators, because it promises to be the purr-fect solution for your finals stress.

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THE SECRET
Cats create purr vibrations within a range **20-140Hz**, known to be medically therapeutic for many illnesses.

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Houston 2015

by Miguel Nunez

For the past 23 years, Houston's downtown has been home to an annual Art Crawl event, where groups of artists open up their studios and let the people go inside and see how the magic happens. It is here that people can see the artwork, meet the artists and even listen to some live music. This year, over 150 artists participated and opened their studios. The studios themselves were located close to each other so the people who wanted to see the artwork would, for the most part, not have to drive around Houston. Having an event like this where art from so many varying artists is located so close to one another, is a dream come true for any art fan.

Some of the places involved with this year's Art Crawl included UHD (with its newly renovated O'Kane Gallery), Houston Studios, and Mother Dog Studios; each located across from one another on Walnut St., not too far from UHD. Some of the artists that had their artwork displayed at Mother Dog Studios were artists such as Kelly Alison, whose artwork has been shown in the Shanghai Art Museum. Artists such as Yousef Balat, who describes himself as an "imagist," and who stated on his website that he is "exploring the historical gamut of visual storytelling, from the nuances of portraiture to the grandiose epic of history and mythology painting."

Solomon Kane was another artist that had his, rather nightmarish, artwork displayed,

which contained more than a healthy amount of skulls and mannequins painted with vibrant colors. I had the pleasure of having a conversation with him about his artwork and it was quite interesting. I asked him what his art was all about. He was quick to respond with a smile and a slight flicker of his eyes from behind his glasses, stating that it was about the fear of death, and how he wanted people to realize that death should never be viewed as a negative, depressing thing. He was excited to ask me why I thought death was a bad thing for myself. The conversation went on from there. I noticed, as we spoke, that throughout his artwork, there were a few lines and quotes from people throughout history and from philosophical and religious texts.

One line that stood out for me, and is a good representation of what the other quotes were trying to get to, was: "Rendering help to others is the function of all human beings." This is a Jainism teaching and a founding principle in the religion that originates from India.

I would say the conversation ended well. It left me with more questions than answers, but questioning artists about their artwork was not the only thing to do at Art-Crawl-Houston 2015.

There were many other things to do. Such as taking a break from all the walking that you would have undoubtedly done throughout the day. One such place where you could have sat down, relaxed, and talked among

your friends was Last Concert Cafe on Nance Street. Here at this wonderful Mexican restaurant there was music, food, drinks, and a few vendors selling jewelry.

There was a girl sitting out in the cold behind a colorful hippy painted bus with an old school typewriter, a Webster I believe, not only selling poems that she would type on the spot with her typewriter, but also letting you name the price for each poem. Name your price, name your topic for your poem, and bang! You would hear her click-clacking away with her typewriter. In less than three minutes she would hand you a small piece of notebook paper and you could read her on-the-spot poem about any topic you decided on.

Overall the yearly art crawl event was everything you would expect from Houston's great art scene. There was music, people, drinks, art, people writing poetry for you, and more art. There were even some people doing body painting, and others selling healthy alternatives for energy drinks.

If you missed out on Art Crawl Houston this year, do not worry. This event has been going on for the past 23 years. It is not going anywhere. So relax and get excited about next year's art crawl event right here in downtown Houston.

Saturday, November 21, 2015 10 am - 9 pm

UHD
University of Houston
DOWNTOWN
donated
Free Parking
for artcrawl guests
gates close @ 10 pm

BIKE SCRAMBLE
register on the web
1 pm - 3:30 pm

map not to scale

1 University of Houston Downtown One Main	2 Houston Studios 802 Walnut Street	3 Mother Dog Studios 720 Walnut	4 Fifth Ward Hotel 1206 Nance	5 The Docks 1109 East Freeway	6 Eric City Iron Works 1310 Nance / 1311 Sterrett	7 Atelier Jacquinet 913 McKee
8 MANL Warehouse 805 Hardy Street	9 Hardy & Nance Studios 902 Hardy Street	10 David Adickes Sculpture Studio 2401 Nance	11 Houston Foundry 1712 Burnett	12 Elder Street Artist Lofts 1101 Elder Street	13 Western Electric Warehouse 100 Jackson Street	14 City View Lofts 15 North Chenevert
15 2020 Commerce 2020 Commerce	16 Art Square Studios 2315 / 2327 Commerce	17 Shape of Things 46 Coby Street	18 Super Happy Fun Land 3801 Polk Street	19 The Silo 4601 Clinton Drive		

<http://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/SchedulesBusRail.aspx>

For ArtCrawl Information call MotherDog Studios 713-229-9760 www.artcrawlhouston.com

65 Years Later, We Still Love “Peanuts”

by Christopher Joseph

It has been 65 years since Charles M. Schulz created Charlie Brown and the rest of the Peanuts gang. It seems like at this point in time, Charlie Brown and Snoopy are more recognizable than ever. Ever since I was a kid growing up in the '90s, there was always something that had to do with Charlie Brown. I remember when my teachers would roll out that black TV and pop in a Peanuts movie to correlate with a certain lesson or to teach about a certain holiday. Charlie Brown was widely popular around my elementary school—it seemed like everyone had a yellow shirt with a black stripe on it. Charlie Brown has maintained his popularity for so long that one of his biggest specials, A Charlie Brown Christmas, has been shown every year for the past five decades.

Charles M. Schulz was born on November 26th, 1922, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After Charles was born, his uncle gave him the nickname “Sparky,” after the horse “Spark Plug” from the Barney Google comic strip. During his youth, Charles’ love for comic strips grew when he would spend every Sunday morning with his father reading the “funnies.” Charles was fascinated with strips like Skippy, Mickey Mouse, and Popeye. From that point on, he knew what he wanted to do: be a cartoonist. In 1937, he showed artistic talent when he drew his family dog, Spike. Schulz then sent the picture of Spike to the nationally syndicated newspaper Ripley’s Believe it or Not. That was a profound moment in his life because later, as a senior in high school, he completed a correspondence cartoon course with the Federal School of Applied Cartooning (now Art Instruction School).

In 1943, Schulz was drafted into the US Army. After he returned from the war in 1945, he was determined to fulfill his dream and become a cartoonist. His big break as a cartoonist came in 1947, when he had a job working for the local town’s newspaper, the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

It housed his first published comic strip, Lil’ Folks. Many of the Peanuts characters come from this strip, such as a dog named Rover (who became Snoopy) and a character named Charlie Brown. After three years of publication, the St. Paul Pioneer Press dropped the Schulz comic strip, but that didn’t stop him.

In the late 1950s, Schulz approached The United Feature Syndicate Newspaper Enterprise Association. The Association accepted Lil’ Folks, but changes had to be made. Schulz’s comic strip name was a little too close to that of other syndicated strips, so the Association decided to rename Schulz’s comic strip to Peanuts. On October 2nd, 1950, the very first Peanuts strip was published. Two years later, soon after Peanuts started gaining popularity, Schulz got his first licensed book, titled “Peanuts.” The constant popularity from Schulz’s comic strip landed him a bunch of brand deals with the likes of Kodak and Hallmark. In 1964, the National Cartoonist Society named Schulz “Outstanding Cartoonist of the Year.” Schulz had already received the award in 1955, making him the first cartoonist ever to get that award twice.

In 1965, Peanuts made its mark on television history: the Emmy-winning “Charlie Brown Christmas Special” was first aired and watched in over fifteen million households. The success of the Christmas Special led to a theatrical feature entitled, “A Boy Named Charlie Brown.” The overwhelming success of the Peanuts didn’t stop there, as Charlie Brown and the gang landed on Broadway with their own musical: “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown.” Charlie Brown returned to television in the 1980s with the hit television show “The Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show.” Peanuts became overwhelmingly

popular overseas as well, to the point that fashion designers were making outfits for both a plush Snoopy doll and Snoopy’s French sister, Belle.

On December 14th, 1999, Charles Schulz officially retired from writing Peanuts, after writing 17,897 strips. In 2000, Schulz passed away just one day before his final strip was released. He left behind a massive legacy, inspiring a new generation of cartoonists like the creator of the popular Calvin n’ Hobbes strip, Bill Watterson. “In countless ways, Schulz blazed the wild trail that most every cartoonist since has followed,” said Watterson. In 2002, the Charles Schulz Museum and Research Center opened, housing many of the original Peanuts strips and tributes to Schulz from other artists.

On this 65th anniversary year, we celebrate one of the greatest cartoonists of all time. One way that we can show our thanks is by seeing the new Peanuts movie that celebrates the wonderful work of Schulz. The 50th anniversary broadcast of “Charlie Brown Christmas” will air on November 30th and again on Christmas Eve. It will be broadcast as a two-hour block that will be padded with a new special, “It’s your 50th Christmas, Charlie Brown.” The special will be hosted by Kristen



Why Journalism Matters

by Terrence Turner

On Nov. 18th, the Center for Public Service and the UHD Social Work Program co-sponsored an event in its “Speaker Series,” featuring remarks by Houston Chronicle columnist Lisa Falkenberg. The speech came just seven months after a major coup by the writer. On April 20th, she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize (the literary equivalent of an Oscar) for her column on the abuses in Texas’ “pick-a-pal” grand jury system. It is the first time the Chronicle has been recognized for such a prize.

In a wide-ranging address, Falkenberg reflected on the rich personal history that has brought her to this point in her career. She spoke of growing up in a small town of Seguin, TX, armed with little in the way of information resources. “I love to write. All my life, I loved to write, but there weren’t many books. What we did have was a set of 1968 World Book encyclopedias,” she told the crowd. When there was a question her father couldn’t answer, he would consult the encyclopedias, and the process of looking for answers inspired the young Falkenberg: “It made me think that maybe there is an answer out there for everything, and it validated my curiosity and inspired me, I guess, to go look for those answers.”

She explored those answers further at the University of Texas, where she majored in journalism. Falkenberg described her mother’s reaction when she informed her of the plans to attend college: “She looked at me and she said, ‘Why? You’re so smart.’ In her defense, I had already had a few things published in the local paper. There was a time when journalists didn’t have to have college degrees, and I could just avoid this whole school debt

thing, which I’m sure many of you are familiar with,” Falkenberg said to the audience. “And in hindsight, maybe she was right, because I had to win the Pulitzer to pay off my college debt—at the age of 36!”

The story that won her the prize came after she landed a job with the Associated Press’ Dallas bureau in 2001 and the Chronicle’s Austin bureau in 2005. In 2007, an editor talked her into moving to Houston for a columnist position. There, she uncovered the story of Alfred Dewayne Brown, convicted and placed on death row in 2005 for the 2003 murder of police officer Charles R. Clark. According to Falkenberg’s column, no physical evidence tied Brown to the crime, and he claimed he had been with his girlfriend at her apartment. There was evidence supporting this alibi—a phone record documenting a call he made to his girlfriend Ericka Dockery’s workplace—but the evidence was never introduced at trial. At least not until a detective, cleaning out his garage in 2012, found the phone record and handed it over.

In late 2014, “an appellate court threw out Brown’s conviction,” Falkenberg wrote in her column, “because the DA’s office withheld key evidence at trial that supports Brown’s contention that he was home the night of the robbery. No physical evidence ever tied Brown to the crime. Nearly every witness who [identified] him has recanted.” (continued on page 13)

Battleground: Mizzou; and its Impact on UHD

by Jason J. Rivas

13

**Gator
Eye**

The events at Mizzou (the University of Missouri) were set-off by a ticking time-bomb that was set long before its explosion. The first public acknowledgement of discourse was when Student Government President Payton Head took to Facebook to address the prevalent racial, sexual, and gender-motivated actions taken by close-minded individuals against minorities. On September 12th, a group riding in the back of a pickup truck yelled racial slurs at Head. “For those of you who wonder why I’m always talking about the importance of inclusion and respect, it’s because I’ve experienced moments like this multiple times at THIS University, making me not feel included here,” he wrote online. Five days later, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin issued a statement condemning the ignorant action. However, the university seemed to not take any sort of action to address the situation, sparking a round of protests by students.

October 1st saw a new round of protests, dubbed the “Racism Lives Here” rally. Three days later, a drunken white student disrupted a black student group, during their Homecoming preparations. The individual used racial slurs and created a hostile environment towards the group, which Loftin later condemned, before acknowledging that racism was persistent at Mizzou. On October 8th, Loftin ordered sensitivity and racial diversity training for all students and faculty, beginning in 2016. However, some students pointed out that Loftin failed to acknowledge that preexisting programs were in place by black student groups, and seemed dismissive of the growing racial tensions on campus.

October 10th was the date in which the straw broke the camel’s back. Protesters attempted to block Mizzou President Tim Wolfe’s car to voice their concerns, at Homecoming. Wolfe ignored them and was accused of laughing at the protesters. His driver then nudged a protester with the vehicle while the police cleared the scene. Wolfe later admitted that it was wrong of him to ignore the protesters, but irrevocable damage had been done. Ten days later, a list of demands was issued by student group, Concern Student 1950, which included: Wolfe apologizing, resigning, and that the school must take steps to establish a racial sensitivity program.

Wolfe refused, leading to a student boycott which began on November 4th. Two days later Wolfe’s apologies then infuriated a crowd in

Kansas City, MO, when he inadvertently said systematic oppression was the fault of the minorities, not the system in place. On November 6th, the Mizzou football team announced their intent to not practice or play until Wolfe was removed. In a display of almost complete unity, most of the black and white players, as well as the coaching staff united in the protest. Perhaps it was because of the necessity to admit to their inaction—or perhaps it was the threat of losing tens of thousands of dollars in football-related revenues—regardless, it was over for Wolfe. The next day, he and Loftin announced their resignations.

Now Mizzou must face their reality: an image crisis. Many graduates and alumni are upset and embarrassed, parents of students are voicing their concerns, and state lawmakers are now looking over the situation with a magnified eye. There are also reports of attitudes of homophobia and transphobia existing on campus. The school is in full damage-control mode, hiring a lobbyist to help its public image, and sending 20,000 letters to incoming freshmen, reassuring them of the school’s safety. Mizzou though, isn’t the only school under scrutiny. Across the country, a plethora of universities, including Yale, have come under fire for racially-insensitive acts.

Other universities can look towards Mizzou as a cautionary tale of what may happen if a school and its people do not take a stand against intolerance. Unity in numbers and mindset can overcome any archaic, ethnocentric ideas. Here at UHD, the Black Student Association is taking the lessons learned from Mizzou for the betterment of our institution. One BSA member in particular, William Paul, plans on introducing legislation to the Student Government Association that would establish an all-encompassing monthly forum, in which all students and faculty are invited to discuss race relations and campus life. The hope is to bring more awareness and an open-dialogue about diversity, something UHD is well known for. Paul noted that Mizzou has a low mix of diversity while UHD is a minority-serving school with about two-thirds of the student population either Hispanic or Black. This highlights a unique advantage for UHD in combating racial conflict. The best way, he believes, for schools like UHD and Mizzou to confront racial issues is through open dialogue, “No one wants to talk anymore. They’re on their

cell phones, computers, and stuff and there’s no communication going on and I think that’s how a lot of times things (and) tensions rise, and frustration builds because you don’t know the person that’s next to you.” In particular, he spoke of individuals who try to join causes online without knowing much, if any, about the cause. He hopes that an open forum can better educate the students on why racial equality is important, and that the discussions will be open among peers.

The happenings at Mizzou were an unfortunate event that highlighted a dirty truth in America; racial intolerance is not just limited to the older generations. Only time and effort can minimize the perversion of younger generations’ minds and educate them that all men and women, regardless of race, are created and seen as equals. “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
-George Santayana



MIZZOU



image courtesy of capradio.org
Students protest on campus at Mizzou



image courtesy of pri.org
Students protest the racism on campus

Why Journalism Matters *continued from page 12*

Falkenberg told the crowd that she uncovered a grand jury transcript at a local courthouse, revealing that the grand jurors had threatened Dockery with jail time and having her kids taken away if she decided not to testify against Brown. She ended up in jail anyway for perjury due to some inconsistencies in her testimony. Once released, she was forced to wear an ankle monitor and report to a homicide detective once a week to ensure she told the prosecutors’ version of the story. Even more troubling was the county’s use of the outdated “pick-a-pal” grand jury system. According to a May 24th article on the Chronicle’s website, the system had jurors selected from a list prepared by an acquaintance of a local judge. It had been criticized by the Supreme Court, the Chronicle said, and “replaced by every other state following complaints about favoritism, manipulation and bias.” Texas was the last state in the Union, according to Falkenberg, that still had the system. The scales of justice became slightly more aligned after her column was published. Sen. John Whitmire (D-TX) sponsored a criminal reform bill, and Texas rid itself of the system. Falkenberg received her \$10,000

Pulitzer award, and she reported in her speech that Brown was most recently working on a railroad in Louisiana, “happy as a peach.” But she cautioned that one cannot take this happy ending as a sign that everything’s fine in the criminal justice department. “My argument is: We can’t just depend—trust—that every judge in Texas will do the right thing, because there’s lots of them that won’t.” She cited the case of Anthony Graves, who also ended up on death row for a crime he didn’t commit. “I was on a panel with him the other day,” she said towards the end of the speech, “and he gave journalism so much credit.” As she remembered, Graves “looked at that group—it was a big group of journalism students at UT—and he said, ‘Your profession saved my life.’” As a journalist, Falkenberg emphasized that storytelling is among the most powerful of tools. “Stories are not just for journalists,” she said. “They are for all of you.”

Jail Time for Marijuana Goes up in Smoke

by Jason J. Rivas

Marijuana goes by many different names: pot, grass, weed, chronic, cannabis; just to name a few. Along with it was also the risk of a name for those busted with it: felon. However, recent changes in both public opinion and political discourse have led to the idea of a future new name for the plant: decriminalized.

The city is still on a collective high after the potential barrier-breaking decision, this past November Harris County District Attorney Devon Anderson announced that her office will only issue citations for individuals caught with small amounts of marijuana. She previously facilitated a pilot program that offered citations and diversion programs to first-time offenders. Beginning January 1st, she plans to take her initiative county-wide, in hopes of bringing about a “huge cultural change for Harris County.” People caught green-handed, for the first time, would be given the option of choosing a diversion program, which would allow the individuals to avoid a judge, court fees, and potential jail time. This would also benefit the county by keeping many non-violent offenders away from jail cells and courtroom proceedings, which have been burning through the county’s coffers throughout the years.

There has also been talk of expanding the program to all offenders, something previously championed by Democrat Kim Ogg. Last year, Ogg ran an unsuccessful campaign against Anderson for Harris County’s top law enforcement job. Anderson is hoping her new initiatives will keep her in office, as she will be facing Ogg again this coming year, as well as new challenger Morris Overstreet. A recent Rice University study found that expansion of said program to all marijuana offenders could save the county \$3.5 million, a high amount that voters may take into account next year.

Decriminalizing marijuana is not just limited to county levels. Texans as a whole are beginning to show their indifference towards “Reefer Madness.” A poll conducted by the Texas Lyceum found that 46% of Texans support legalizing marijuana, up significantly from 33%, in 2011. That same 2015 poll showed 50% of Texans were in favor of maintaining marijuana use as a criminal offense, but that 57% of the aforementioned supported lowering the penalties attributed to marijuana to a mere citation.

It is not just recreational users who are leading the charge; veterans are also fighting for a dance with Mary Jane. This past Veterans’ Day, veterans marched down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House, and rained hundreds of prescription bottles down onto the sidewalk. Organizers hoped to raise awareness for the medical use of weed, which they say is a safer alternative to the use of prescription pills, which have proven to pose dangerous side effects, and may lead to suicide. It appears that their cries have not fallen on deaf ears. The previous day, the

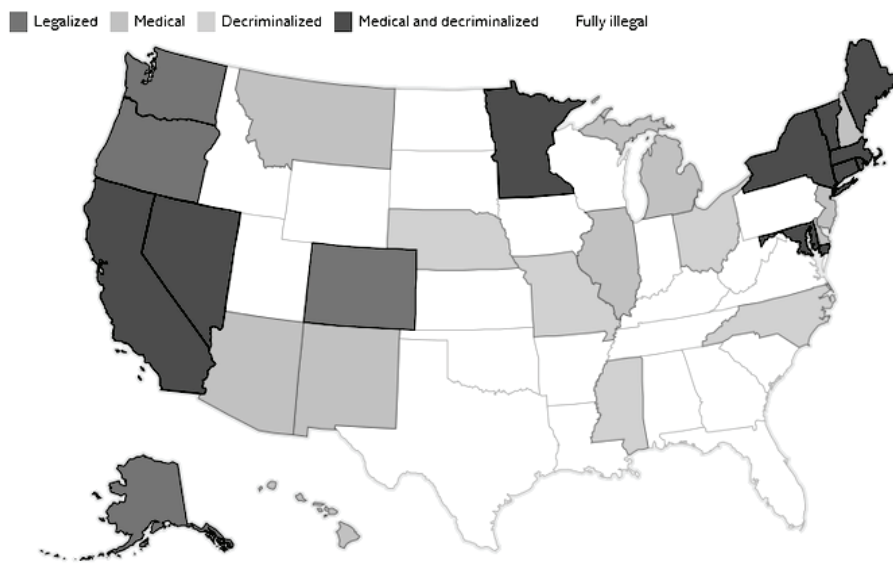
Senate passed a resolution allowing for doctors to discuss cannabis treatment in the 23 states that have legalized medicinal use. The Department of Veteran Affairs remains skeptical that medical marijuana is a better alternative to prescription pills, citing their report in 2014 that stated about 40,000 veterans showed signs of cannabis use disorder, in which veterans may become dependent on marijuana. However, organizers and supporters believe the use of cannabis can lead to a reduction of veteran suicide rates, currently at 22 per day, with many leading from overdosing on prescription pills. Notably, there has yet to be a report of someone overdosing on marijuana, ever.



While the demonstration on Capitol Hill was carried out, Texas veterans were mounting their own assault in Austin. Currently, Texas only allows cannabis use for severe cases of seizures. The pro-legalization group, Texans for Responsible Marijuana Policy, has joined forces with a group of veterans calling for an expansion of the use of medical marijuana to treat a variety of physical, emotional, and psychological cases afflicting veterans. Together, they plan to launch Operation Trapped—an initiative that would raise awareness of veterans feeling “trapped” by their dependence on painkillers and drugs—directed at Texas legislators in January 2017. They hope for a resolution or public vote to legalize medicinal use by the end of 2017. Texas is home to 1.7 million veterans, the second-highest concentration in the country.

It remains to be seen if state organizers and veterans will be successful in their endeavors, but one thing is certain, the conversation is changing, and marijuana is slowly losing its negative reputation in Texas. Texans are closely watching the 23 states who have legalized medicinal use, as well as keeping a sharp eye on Harris County’s

Status of marijuana laws in the United States



Source: NORML, Drug Policy Alliance, and the Marijuana Policy Project

endeavors in reducing punishment for first-time offenders. If these areas prove to be successful, then it may only be a matter of time before marijuana becomes an acceptable and controllable vice for the public, like tobacco and alcohol.

Got MLKMN?

Houston Recording Artist Releases New Album

by Casey Black

MLKMN, birth name Oscar Botello, is a Latin American recording artist, raised in Laredo, TX, and signed to Universal music. He's opened for Kanye West, Joey Bada\$\$, and 2 Chainz. After headlining the L Festival in Orange County, Florida, Rapper/Producer MLKMN (pronounced MILKMAN) released the breakout single R.I.P. featuring label-mate Mila J, from his forthcoming album Soy Milk. The waist-deep inspired visual film features the two robbing a local diner before fleeing into the twilight. Since the video release through Mass Appeal, it has gathered an impressive half a million views on YouTube. Dateline was recently granted an interview with MLKMN, and this is what transpired:

Q: You've recently released R.I.P. with Mila J, how did you two connect and what inspired the video?

A: "After finishing the song, my manager Angie Martinez thought it would be dope to get Mila on the hook with a bridge, I thought so too. The video was inspired by having a ride-or-die girl and being in a crazy relationship where y'all are willing to do whatever it takes for one another."

Q: How have you grown as an artist since the releases of Fresco and Mlkstape?

A: "I was more of a producer; I was more focused on making beats. I've grown lyrically and gained life experience through traveling [as opposed to] when I released Fresco. I was just young and rapping about my city, but it's crazy how it got featured on GTA, and that inspired me to create better music."

Q: What made you pursue music?

A: "I was invited to play in a friend's band, 'She's a tease' where I played the drums, but didn't like being in the back, then I moved up to playing the guitar and vocals. I was 13 or 14 when I first started doing shows in bars, and I was really intrigued by the various vibes."

Q: How has Texas and Latin culture influenced your music?

A: "The various cultures in Texas has[sic] broaden my perspectives and allowed me to communicate my ideas. Growing up, my dad listened to hip-hop and my mom listened to Banda."

Q: You're good friends with Diplo and Happy Colors; can we expect any future collaborations?

A: "It's happening. We're working on a dope track that's super Texas, called Speedy Gonzalez for Soy Milk."

Q: What advice do you have for upcoming artists looking to achieve your level of success?

A: "It's about dreaming and waking up and going out to get it. It's all a learning experience, take advantage, and keep pushing no matter what the naysayers say, keep dreaming and put in work to reach your goals. If I'm able to do this thing, it's because I've never given up."

Q: What's the title of your next album and what's the expected release date?

A: "The title of my album is Soy Milk and the expected release date is March 2016. I believe that it's going to be one of the best Hip-Hop albums next year. This album sums up my life within the past decade and a track that I really enjoy is Jose, the hook goes 'You think you're the man boy, you think you're the man.' It's about a kid whose mom moves from Mexico to give him a better life but he gets caught up with the wrong crowd."

MLKMN is a new sound for a fresh generation of eager listeners. He's been named the artist to watch out for in 2015 by Vibe magazine, Spotify, VEVO, and Latina magazine. MLKMN continues to demonstrate why he's still the artist to seek in 2016 with his unique approach, combining elements from both his Latin and Texas roots. He sticks with his guts and glory, providing quality, energetic and thoughtful records that keeps the fans in mind. A starving and competitive artist, MLKMN is on his way to securing a spot at the rap dinner table, eating with rest of the greats.



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Rock
&
The Roll

16 Campus & Local News



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From: the Staff of Dateline Downtown
To: UHD Gators

Have a Happy Holidays & Joyous New Year



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Cuban Artist Show O'Kane Gallery 6-8:30pm Clothing Drive Cafeteria 10am-5pm	2 Clothing Drive Cafeteria 10am-5pm Houston Mayoral Debate Auditorium 6-7:30pm	3 Mammogram Screenings Girard and Travis 8am-3pm	4	5 LAST OFFICIAL CLASS DAY
6 Hanukkah Begins 	7 Reading Days	8	9	10 Last Day for Model Auditions, S402	11	12
13 FINAL EXAMS	14 Hanukkah Ends	15	16	17	18 Final Grades Posted	19 Commencement Minute Maid 10:15am
20	21 Animal Rescue Club Pet a Pet 10-3pm	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 	25 Christmas Day! 	26 Kwanzaa Begins 
27	28	29	30	31		

DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER FOR THE SPRING!

Contact Kara Moore at kmmoore12@gmail.com or via [facebook.com/DatelineDowntown](https://www.facebook.com/DatelineDowntown) to get your events in the calendar!