

DATELINE: DOWNTOWN



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THE CENTERFOLD



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Opinion: The 2018 Government Shutdown

by Kara Moore

We live in a society where the unspoken rule is to avoid politics in social situations. American politics are in fact so inflammatory that to speak of them at all, to have any stance, is often to offend. People who think they are unaffected by what happens in D.C. tend to be the ones most likely to turn a blind eye and have a closed mouth regarding our governments issues. What these people forget is the human toll that politics has had and will always have. This is even more true under the Trump administration, which actively weighs the lives of thousands of people daily to achieve “big wins” against the opposing party, even when the wins achieve very small-minded goals.

This is exactly what the government shutdown was, an alleged “huge” win against Democrats at the cost of the thousands of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, children who had health insurance under Children’s Health Insurance Program, (CHIP) and adults who received health insurance under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). None of these issues have permanent solutions even now, with the government kind of back up and running, with employees being paid though technically still in shut-down. To explain it simply but thoroughly, Democrats refused to pass a budget without a permanent solution for DACA recipients and funding for CHIP and the ACA. Trump was willing to allow DACA to be extended, but only with border wall funding allocated in the budget. Democrats started a filibuster, which is essentially a debate to stop a vote, to prevent the budget from passing without these issues being addressed. On the weekend that the government shut down, people in all government positions from civilian to military went unpaid. When the government shutdown began, Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill proposed a bill to ensure military pay and death benefits would continue during this shutdown. This measure, which passed during the 2013 government shut down, was denied by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, citing a desire to ensure funding for the whole government. Ultimately, Democrats agreed to end the filibuster pending a debate of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM). Trump called this a big win against Democrats, stating that they “caved in”. This characterization of politics as simplified win or lose is not unusual for the President. Considering his recent promises to compromise with Democrats on immigration if they agree to funding for the border wall, it seems like he might be willing to reach an agreement, but in truth “The Wall” was his biggest campaign promise and any funding for it would be the biggest win in his eyes. The border wall, while large in scale, is a small-minded solution to a complicated problem. Considering many undocumented immigrants arrive legally and over-stay their visas, a border wall does not necessarily prevent people from arriving into the United States. Considering as well that millions of undocumented immigrants

do not come from Central America, the wall is not a win for those opposed to illegal immigration. It is a roughly a \$20 billion Band-Aid. And it ignores the very human aspect of what these policies mean.

Sacrificing CHIP and the Affordable Care Act is one thing. CHIP provides healthcare to low-income children whose parents either are not offered insurance at work or cannot afford insurance in general. The Affordable Care Act was also a Band-Aid, but it was impactful in that millions of people had access to health insurance that they did not have before. Many were already eligible under Medicaid and CHIP, but the ACA still allowed an estimated 6 million more to gain that access, according to Politifact. Without these programs, millions of people will not have access to affordable healthcare. When you couple that with the fact that according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 43 million Americans have outstanding medical debt averaged \$1,766, it seems insane that low-income Americans will only go on to accrue more without these policies. Many people would risk death rather than pay the high costs of healthcare, as evidenced by the reduced usage of ambulances when ride-sharing applications reach big cities.

Then, you must consider that undocumented immigrants are people who have lived in America for a long time. According to the Migration Policy Institute, over 60% of the undocumented population has lived in the U.S. for more than 10 years and very few of the millions of undocumented immigrants have committed felonies or serious misdemeanors. They often own property, their children are U.S. citizens by birth, and according to CNN are twice as likely to start businesses when compared to those born in the U.S. It is too easy to say that they are the perpetrators of violence, the expanders of drugs, just because the countries they often seek asylum from are riddled with those problems. They are people, and they make up a valuable part of the work-force not only in agriculture, as they are stereotyped, but in all various parts of the economy. Trump’s own brands hire immigrants onto their staff.

On the anniversary of his Presidency, the government shut down because our nation does not talk anymore. Our politicians do not talk to the people outside their parties. Whether it is something Americans want to address, policies and politics are impactful. They are important. They are inflammatory, sure, but that does not mean they are not worth talking about. Without discussion, there can be no resolution. There can be no circulating of new ideas and new solutions. Nothing will ever get done.

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**Editors
Desk**

Focusing on the Bright Spots: A Look Backwards at 2017 and Forwards in 2018

by Helen Martinez

Happy 2018, UHD Community! I hope you had a wonderful and restful break and are ready to start a new semester. As it is the beginning of the New Year, it is typically a time of reviewing the past year and resolving on how to make this year even better. Looking back, I believe we can all agree 2017 was a roller-coaster ride no one consented to. There is no doubt there were some truly dark and terrible days, and this is in no way trying to belittle or erase the suffering that so much of our community endured. However, I will argue that the last year had some positive moments for our UHD community, not the least of which was watching everyone wear their bright orange Astros merch with pride. While we are in this transitory period, I suggest we reflect on a couple of the brighter moments of 2017 before we turn towards a few very promising things to come this year for the UHD community.

It would be a shame to not mention one of the greatest changes that happened at UHD in 2017. We finally found a permanent president for our university! We wanted someone who truly cares about our school and is willing to put in the effort to communicate and work with its diverse population and interests. Dr. Juan Sánchez Muñoz certainly fits the bill. As soon as he arrived, he met with students in their classroom setting and repeatedly stops to speak with students and staff in the hallway. He listens to our concerns and works to solve them, such as collaborating with dedicated staff contractors to ensure the safety of our students in the wake of the Harvey disaster as well as showing his support for our DACA students during the uncertainty of its termination last September.

On a smaller and more intimate scale, in April 2017, the Student Counseling Services opened its doors to allow walk ins during certain hours for the first time. It is a way for students who have sudden episodes or are unfamiliar with their services to try it and then decide if they want to go through with future appointments. It is an excellent tool for students in case of an emergency, and I commend the decision.

On a lighter note, the College of Public Service uploaded a few recordings of their Vital Voices Series to the school website, which invites speakers “speak [and] share, from the heart, their professional experiences, their knowledge, and how the work they do impacts society as a whole,” adding that they “like to feature people whose work is interdisciplinary and touches upon the fields social work, criminal justice and urban education.” Although the series began in 2015, it was not until last semester that recordings of the talks were done. This allows everyone to be involved and spreads awareness about this insightful service. Their agenda also states the dates for this semester as well, so if you watch one of the videos and find you are interested, I recommend you attend.

Before I discuss other events to look forward to this semester, I would like to also make note of the Food Scholarship Program which began last semester and the Food Scholarship Market which now has its own place in the One Main building on the second floor, S292. Both were created to help ordinary college students get by in terms of groceries with healthy options to choose from and should not go unnoticed. Neither should the

incredibly valuable Gator Relief fund which helps those in our UHD Community who were affected by the Harvey disaster get back on their feet. These are the bright spots in the darkness we should recall when looking back. On the subject of looking back, I believe it is just as important if not more so to also remember to continue looking forward. I will admit we did not start off on our best foot forward due to the weather and delayed first day of school. However, UHD students know how to bounce back, and there are plenty of exciting changes and events to look forward to in 2018.

For one, the Center for Critical Race Studies of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences will be hosting events for their scholar in residence. Dr. Bettina Love is an inspiring author and public speaker, as well as “a sought-after public speaker on a range of topics including: Hip Hop education, Black girlhood, queer youth, Hip Hop feminism, art-based education to foster youth civic engagement, and issues of diversity.” Her first event will be January 30 in the Milam/Travis room from 10:30 am-12:00 pm, and there is a full list of her events throughout January and February under the CHSS Events on the school website.

In other news, UHD is upgrading! This semester UHD’s newly renovated Student Lounge has reopened for all students. I passed through the area earlier this month, and I saw plenty of open spaces and comfy spots to relax or meet with friends. Better still, as a welcome touch in addition to the spiffy Student Lounge, there are now free charging stations for students to power their Apple and Android products. If the Student Lounge is not an option, there are also free charging stations across the campus from Commerce to the Shea Building, which was recently renamed The Marilyn Davies College of Business after its very generous sponsor who donated 10 million last year.

According to an article by Mike Emery on the event, this makes it “the first college of business in the state to be named for a woman and only the fourth nationally to hold this distinction.” UHD made history!

In addition, the Student Life Center has reopened and according to a recent email from the Department of Sports & Fitness, there is a new floor to explore! No details yet, but it is exciting to hear about so many additions to our school. There is even more still to come such as the new College of Science and Technology Building. While its ceremony was delayed last August due to Harvey, we can be certain to see further developments on it this year. In summary, it can be difficult to move forward after such a long year, but the important thing is that we survived. We survived a year of horrific circumstances, and it is crucial that while we manage to look back on the bright spots, we also look forward to the future. We have so much to look forward to, Gators. Let us make this year better than the last.



Photo by Kara Moore



Photo by Kara Moore

The Art of Speech and Debate

by Unisha Curry

There are many social and political issues which face our world today and many of these issues have divided the nation. It has long been recognized how both groups and individuals have used speech and debate to address the world's problems thus, notable changes have resulted from this meaningful dialogue.

The University of Houston Downtown's speech and debate club was established in fall 2017. Alejandro Robles, President of the Speech and Debate Club created the organization with the goal of helping students to face their fear of speaking in front of crowds. Research reveals that 1-7% of Americans fear public speaking. One of the group's prospective goals is to explore



Left to Right: Alejandro Robles, President; Professor Michael Wilson, Advisor; Ramiro Ojeda, Vice-President
Photo by Unisha Curry

opportunities beyond the walls of the university. The group aspires to host a debate competition between the University of Houston Main Campus and UHD.

Ramiro Ojeda, Vice President of the Speech and Debate Club stressed that there are many aspects to speech and debate. However, he shared that one of the misconceptions about debate is characterized by "The zero sum gain theory", that is, one person's gain is equivalent to another's loss. He stated that each debate is

unique in its format and there are various styles of debate, but ultimately a judge will determine which candidate wins. Ojeda revealed that although winning and losing are a part of debate there is so much more to learn and gain. The ability to be open to new ideas and criticism is essential. He is convinced that when both parties are able

to freely share ideas then learning can occur, that is, both parties can learn from one another.

Moreover, word selection and compromise are also essential to speech and debate. Ojeda shared that Professor Michael Wilson, Advisor over the Speech and Debate Club has taught him the importance of word selection and compromise. He mentioned that Professor Wilson once shared that one should avoid shutting out his/her opponent,

but instead should strive to attract his/her opponent by acknowledging the opponent's perspective.

Ojeda expressed that overall he is thankful for (1) Alejandro Robles inviting him to be a part of his endeavor, (2) The support that the organization has received from both Dr. Creshema Murray and Professor Michael Wilson, and (3) The Speech and Debate Club being an organization that welcomes students within all majors to join.

What is Being Done About Global Warming?

by Naomi Cardwell

Parents usually count to three before their child knows that they are in trouble. However, a large amount of scientists all over the world and the people who participated in the Paris Climate Accord in 2015 are counting to two before saying the globe is in trouble. Two as the goal for the global temperature not to raise an additional 2°C. It has been observed since pre-industrial age that the globe has warmed about .8°C. The Industrial revolution brought factories, power plants, and eventually cars that burned fossil fuels, such as coal, and oil that release a huge amount of carbon monoxide and other greenhouse gases that trap heat near the earth through a process called, "The Greenhouse Effect".

It has been argued by some scientist that this Greenhouse effect has been intensified by the gasses released by human activity and that this is what is causing the globe to warm. Global Warming is a direct effect of climate change. Due to the global temperature rising we have glaciers and icebergs melting which leads to the sea levels rising forcing warmer ocean temperatures that cause more horrific and damaging hurricanes.

It has also been demonstrated that increases in sea temperatures are not consistent with the survival of coral reefs. Some scientists predict a mass extinction of certain coral reefs which will hurt the giant food chains that occurs in the sea. After speaking to Dr. Johnson, who is the Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs, and is a Professor for biology and biochemistry about climate change he stated, "as a scientist I'm trained to evaluate data and try and make logical conclusions from what the data is telling us. The data is pretty strong for the fact that the climate is changing significantly and recently unlike anything we have ever recorded before."

90-95% of scientists have come to the general consensus that this is a real phenomenon. However, there is another narrative about global warming that it

is less about pulling carbon emissions and more about creating jobs. For example, The Paris Climate Accord brought 270 countries together in unison to keep the average warming of the earth under 2° Celsius. All of the countries had individual goals that were determined by the population, how developed they were, and how much natural gas they were emitting. This agreement had no penalties or enforcement if one country did not meet that goal. It was simply a global effort to improve the world.

President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement and said that the agreement would place wildly unfair environmental standards on American businesses and workers. This devastated a large amount of climate activist and people all over the world. However, coal miners and people who work in such fields were excited about this decision. There are two very strong rhetoric when approaching the issue of global warming. Despite political opinion, we share this world with one another and some pro-active ways to advocate for the world is to conserve energy. Some people get scared at this idea or feel as if they have to take extreme measures to do so, for example never drive a car again or never turn on the lights which would be significantly improbable and unfeasible. The way to do your part in conserving energy is simple. It is the little things such as car-pooling with a friend to work/school, instead of driving every day of the week or even take the metro on occasion, unplugging your Keurig during the day (or anything that has a plug), turning a light off when you are not using it, and recycling.

Some efforts University of Houston- Downtown has taken to conserve energy in some of the classrooms we have sensors and if they do not sense movement in the room for 10-15 minutes the lights shut off. We have a Sustainability Garden located near the police station with the intention to use solar panels that will run the irrigation systems and grow local foods.

Opinion: DACA and TPS – A Political Theater

by Paula Cano

It is all now a play of politics over human rights, without an amnesty that protects the future of DACA and TPS recipients, the United States will drift away from core values. Currently, immigration topics involve the future of DACA, also known as the “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” a legislative program that shields those who were brought here by their parents at a young age from deportation. A total of about 800,000 people benefit from DACA and are deeply rooted in the community. The Trump administration committed an inhumane act by stripping off legal status from DACA recipients considering that majority of these people have no ties to their birth country and see this country as their home. The Trump Administration decided to do away with this program on September 5th and progressed to claim love for the Dreamers urging congress to pass a “Bill of love” to protect Dreamers from deportation, the irony. After this, the Trump administration yet again takes another backward approach to fix our immigration system by ending Temporary Protected Status to certain groups.

The actions enacted by Washington have never been so confusing due to its failure to address the issue of immigration by instead expanding the number of undocumented immigrants, many who most likely will remain here undocumented until Congress comes up with a legislative resolution. Thousands of immigrants who originate from countries like Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Haiti are at risk to lose their temporary status. This protective temporary status or TPS was granted to Hondurans and Nicaraguans after Hurricane Mitch struck Central America leaving 11,000 people dead. Almost a million nationals were displaced and the country subsequently faced 5 billion dollars worth in damages. According to sources, about 57,000 migrants from Honduras are bound to lose their legal status here in the U.S. while Trump’s administration argues that Honduras is fully recovered from hurricane damages and that there is no need to expand TPS protection to them. A vital factor that the Trump administration forgot was that not long ago Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras stood as the deadliest city in the world with the highest crime rate. Honduran TPS holders have a common fear that if they were to go back, they will face constant threats of robbery, and kidnapping because Honduran locals generally assume that if you come from the U.S it is a determinant that you are affluent. Economists doubt that Honduran American deportees will adjust to low skill jobs if any available in Honduras and many will not be able to provide for their family like they did working from the United States.

As if the civil unrest was not enough, Honduras is going through an episode of political instability caused by disputed election results after Juan Orlando Hernandez won over Salvador Nasralla. The rowdy political clashes left at least 20 dead, and driven investors

away from Honduras, leaving no hopeful signs of political and economic growth for Honduras. Sources claim that 40 % of Hondurans live in extreme poverty, and Honduran TPS recipients are the lifelines of the economy making up 20% of Honduras GDP per capita.

Following Hurricane Mitch, Nicaraguans were also granted TPS. An estimate of 5,300 Nicaraguan born people are the brink of losing legal status deterring their chances to work and provide for their families back home. Nicaraguans are infuriated with the lack of action from President Ortega and claim they were an easy target because they are one of the smallest groups enrolled under TPS.

An earthquake struck El Salvador and Haiti; both countries took on a massive death toll, close to 1,000 of Salvadorans died and 60,000 people were displaced in 2001. However, the Haiti Earthquake almost 300,000

people perished and displaced hundreds of thousands in 2010. Close to 50,000 Haitians who have lived here after the 2010 earthquake faces the change of losing their temporary protective status if they have not found any other means to transition into a different status by July 22, 2019. The Administration claims that 97% of displaced Haitians have recovered and that the country stability is ready to receive TPS



Photo by Kara Moore

holders back into their economy. Haitians based on the U.S disagree with the readiness of Haiti to receive them, claiming that this nation is not in the best conditions. The administration’s twisted approach to fix immigration system does not take in consideration that Haitians with TPS are the parents of 27,000 American citizens enlarging the number of families who are under threat to be separated. The ending of the program contradicts the Department of Homeland Security’s consensus for a TPS renewal concluding that Haitians merit TPS since they also suffered two hurricanes and a diphtheria infestation after the 2010 earthquake. Salvadorans have a larger population enrolled for TPS, a total of 195,000 Salvadorans are subjected to either auto-deportation or to remain undocumented. What the administration fails to realize is the large dependency of El Salvador’s economy on remittances from TPS Salvadorans. NPR reports that the money sent to El Salvador from TPS Salvadorans represents for nearly a fifth of their GDP. If those statistics were not alarming enough, sources claim that 1 in every 20 families in El Salvador depends on the remittances sent to them monthly. The administration’s think-tank does not realize that by removing TPS, they are taking a strike against the Honduran, Salvadoran, Nicaraguan, and Haitian economies. It also separates families with a mixed legal status, and make the undocumented population numbers increase.

Who Run the World? Women!

by Magge Nuñez

On January 20th, several women from all over the nation gathered together to march in a protest against the current sexist presidential administration. Major cities like Los Angeles, New York City, and our very own Houston were filled of thousands of women, fueled to implement change and have their voices to be heard. Originally, the Women's March of 2016 was a direct response against Trump's presidency once elected and has become a yearly event. Women from various ages, ethnicities, social economic status, and a variety of other backgrounds marched alongside each other to display their outrage against all the injustices women face.

The march started very early around 10 A.M., and was centered near Houston's City Hall. Attendees were chanting "Love Trumps Hate," "Hey Ho, Hey Ho, Donald Trump Has Got To Go", and even "Resist the tiny fist!" Signs were visible everywhere, making references to Spongebob, Star Wars, and even Kermit the Frog elaborating on the several issues women face on a day by day basis. The march consisted of a variety of guest speakers, starting off with the famous Rose Ascencio-Escobar. Escobar spoke about her husband's deportation story, how policies implemented by

our current administration have separated her family from her husband, and how she is able to continue fighting for his return. Her emotional speech made several attendees to burst into tears in the audience. Along with Escobar,



Photo by Magge Nuñez

former mayor Annise Parker shared the stage, claiming that she attended the previous march because she feared "only twenty-six people would show up". Her speech elevated many by focusing on inclusivity and making sure attendees get involved. Parker stated, "A march that does not become a movement is just a really nice walk", encouraging women to be active and implement change in their community. Other guest speakers included Police Chief Art Acevedo, Mayor Sylvester Turner, Judge Fry and representatives of Mothers Demand Actions. Although the speakers came from different backgrounds, they all focused on the need to continue wanting change and the need to include women at the table in an intersectional manner. The Women's March represented unity, resilience, and courage. With a shocking number breaching over 7,000 attendees, the Houston's

Women march was a success making the world know that women will be heard, and women will run this town.

Times Up

by Angel Lopez

In October of 2017, women in Hollywood broke silence about their sexual harassers and their stories of men also in Hollywood who used their power against them. Harvey Weinstein was the first to suffer the consequences of his actions against actresses such as Ashley Judd, Rose McGowan and many others. Together these women furthered the powerful 'Me Too' movement, started by activist Tarana Burke, with more of them continuing to share their stories and expose their assailants. #MeToo gave every single woman silenced by their trauma the chance to speak their truth and come together to allow even more women, not just in Hollywood, to start calling out their abusers. There is a world of women supporting each other unconditionally along with support from men who have also experienced significant amounts of sexual harassment. Because of the #MeToo movement and the growing number of women coming out, during this year's Golden Globes, many actresses chose to wear all black to stand united and against sexual assault. With many of the women wearing black, many men also participating in this decision. This new movement goes beyond simply allowing women to speak out and recount horrifying stories of when they were sexually oppressed. It no longer paints women as the victims instead they have become a beacon to all genders and the symbol of resistance against the deeply rooted notion that women are the only victims of sexual assault and the inaction taken to sort out the problem.

For these men who chose to use their power in the show business to coerce women into doing what they wanted them to do, their time is up and it is now time to treat sexual assault and sexual harassment as a real issue; this time sexual assault is being prioritized as an issue. Before the movement, stories of sexual assault would surface time and time again giving the victims a minute or two in the limelight, but their brief moment of being recognized and validated would quickly fade as other news frequently overshadowed their

stories. During the Golden Globes the actors and actresses made sure to speak on the men in Hollywood who sexually harassed these women and gave their support to the movement, not by simply wearing the 'Time's Up' pins, but by choosing to speak directly to the victims as well as the people fighting alongside these victims. As powerful as each speech was, and as impactful as they were, one woman's speech touched everyone's hearts like no other: Oprah Winfrey. Upon winning and accepting the Cecil B. DeMille Award, Winfrey graced the stage and began her powerful speech telling everyone that this time women are not victims and they are no longer recounting stories of when they were silenced by fear. This time they are fighting their silencers. "Each of us in this room are celebrated because of the stories that we tell, and this year we became the story" Winfrey, reminding everyone that this is the year change begins to happen. Winfrey summarizes the Time's Up movement in one single phrase, "For too long women have not been heard or believed if they dare speak the truth to the power of those men. But their time is up. Their time is up".

Although this movement's intentions are to be inclusive of supportive men and focus on the unification of women's voices, there has been some controversy. Not long after the Golden Globes made its stance clear, actor James Franco was accused of sexually harassing five female actresses. The problem with this is that he also wore black as well as the 'Time's Up' pin to show his support, therefore, bringing into question whether or not the Time's Up movement is effective in its efforts to actually make this change happen. Despite the news, this movement is just as revolutionary as the #MeToo movement due to its impactful and powerful message. This year's Golden Globes put into fruition the Time's Up movement. Women told their stories with #MeToo but now time is up and women will no longer have to pay the price of being silenced for being brave.



Marijuana and Gateway Advertising

by Archie Gayle

Mary Jane, ganja, chronic, hash, weed, bud, skunk, cannabis. Marijuana has been in the public eye for the last 70 years. It has been the target of misrepresentation through decades of anti-drug campaigns, a tool for experimentation among young adults, and more recently a prescription to medical patients as the solution to a wide array of health issues. The 21st Century was a turning point in how the public views marijuana. Since the early 2000s, ideas about the substance have shifted in pop culture, politics, and medicine; the 2010s have seen the most liberal view of marijuana in the United States, and as more politicians advocate for a change in the federal government's policy, the public's view of marijuana continues to grow in a positive direction. But as more people warm up to the idea of recreational use, a new problem has risen. In states where cannabis is legalized, marijuana advertising is accruing more traction; the advertising entices the viewers to their local dispensary without warning them of its side effects. This raises the question: does the growing reputation for the drug shield its negative effects to youth and young adults?

Before getting into the issue of marijuana regulation, it is important to acknowledge how far society has come from its closed minded, propaganda-poisoned roots.

There was once a time when television consisted of countless anti-cannabis commercials that blew the drug's effects out of proportion—including one that consisted of a doctor in the operating room smoking a joint with the narrator saying, "what if the joint were in somebody else's hands? Like your surgeon, your lawyer, or your local policeman? Would you still say marijuana is harmless?" The public's negative view on marijuana was increased by the political realm. In the 2000 presidential election, both Al Gore and George W. Bush opposed the legalization of marijuana and vowed to crack down on drugs in the United States, which is a common political tool used in prior elections. Medicinal use, however, spread during the Bush administration thanks to more positive depictions in movies and TV, as well as public figures endorsing its legalization, the public's view of marijuana steadily changed at the end of the 2000s. In 2012, Colorado became the first state in the United States to legalize the recreational use of marijuana; in 2013 the story of a five year old's struggle with daily seizures—which was subsequently controlled thanks to cannabis oil—strengthened the argument of the medicinal marijuana. For the first time in US History, a firm majority of states supported the idea of medicinal marijuana use, and 50% of Americans

supported total marijuana legalization. Studies have proven that marijuana is less dangerous than alcohol, and states continue to legalize the plant, with politicians advocating for nationwide legalization. The positives of marijuana legalization are clear. It is an effective, diverse type of medicine with minimal side effects; and the legalization would cut down on the amount of nonviolent offenders in prison. (According to the FBI Unified Crime Statistics, approximately 1.5 million people were arrested for drug-related offenses in 2016.) The U.S. is evolving, and as more dispensaries and retail stores open, the marijuana market is transforming into more of a business.

In 2016, a study was done in Oregon after the start of retail marijuana sales to assess the exposure of marijuana advertising. Past studies

have shown that alcohol and tobacco advertising can be associated with a lower risk perception among the youth, and there is speculation that marijuana advertising may have the same effects. "This is of particular concern because the declining risk perceptions of marijuana: the percentage of US 12th graders who said it was a great risk to smoke marijuana regularly decreased substantially—from 78.6% in 1991 to 31.1% in 2016" (AJPH Research,



Photo by Archie Gayle

p. 120). As the risk perception continues to drop, advertisements are more likely to affect youth and young adults; the effects of excessive marijuana use are not properly explained in advertisements, and its users are at considerable risk of dependency among other negative effects. Joe Castaldo writes in his article, "The Teenage Brain on Weed," that this is a worry among doctors. "Those who smoke regularly double their risk of reporting psychotic symptoms or being diagnosed with schizophrenia in adulthood, especially when there is a personal or family history. Long term use is also associated with problems in attention, memory, impulse control, problem solving and emotional regulation."

As marijuana becomes more accessible to the public, steps need to be taken to properly explain to its users—both young and old—the negative effects that come with excessive use. It seems, right now at least, that a middle ground is difficult to reach. In past generations, propaganda and political persuasion scared the masses into thinking that marijuana was in the same category as meth or heroin; now, its effects are not being properly explained to the masses. Marijuana is neither an angel drug nor a demon drug. It is a substance that should be treated and used like everything else in the world—with moderation and caution.

The Bears of Russia

by Jesse Uppal

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Massive. Hairy. Majestic. The bear is a well-known mammal native to nearly every continent in the world. One nation in particular has taken the bear upon themselves as a symbol for their national strength and endurance, Russia.

Bears to the US National Security unfortunately 'bare' another meaning, a duo group of hackers that have targeted multiple sections of the US government throughout the last 15 years. Cozy bear and Fancy Bear hacker teams use a variety of different methods to either steal or leak information from US departments both in the public and private sectors. In general, the teams will leave behind massive, hard to detect, and relatively weak malwares so that they can have a gateway into a system. They will then utilize significantly more powerful devices to retrieve information and send it to a server for redistribution.

Fancy Bear is considered to be the predecessor to Cozy bear as they are believed to have been operating since 2003. They focused much of their early energy towards news agencies and elections in European mega states such as Germany and France, specifically leaking information about candidates and journalists to hurt their reputations. Following the barring of Russian Athletes after the Doping Agency finding evidence that they had been drugging their contestants, the World Doping Agency was targeted by the hacker group and information about other athletes who were exempt from doping was released to the public via their webpage.

Fancy Bear really hit the radar during the 2016 Presidential Election when they managed to infiltrate the Democratic National Committee and release over 50,000 emails from the servers. The leak served to diminish the already extinguishing campaign run by Hilary Clinton against Donald Trump and reinforced the ideas of the far right, allowing them to take valuable votes from the middle away from the left. The other outfit, Cozy Bear, had been in the same servers at the time and had been focused on long term assaults. Fancy Bear had been in the systems only during the election and were focused on this one specific assault. Cozy Bear has only been active since around 2010 and are more capable at remaining undetected while filtering out certain information from the agencies they manage to hide themselves within. They created a software that can lay dormant in company servers and steadily pour information out over a long period of time, as they evidenced against Twitter and GitHub.

FANCY BEARS' Hack Team

#OpOlympics

About us
2016-09-13

Greetings citizens of the world. Allow us to introduce ourselves... We are Fancy Bears' international hack team. We stand for fair play and clean sport.

We announce the start of #OpOlympics. We are going to tell you how Olympic medals are won. We hacked World Anti-Doping Agency databases and we were shocked with what we saw.

We will start with the U.S. team which has disgraced its name by tainted victories. We will also disclose exclusive information about other national Olympic teams later. Wait for sensational proof of famous athletes taking doping substances any time soon.

We are Anonymous.
We are Legion.
We do not forgive.
We do not forget.
Expect us.

The pair are serious players in the hacker world especially by US standards, who have both private and government sectors on a vigilant lookout for either group to leave behind an identifying marker. But why are these groups so important to the US? Both groups are believed to be working for the Russian Intelligence. Upon the fall of Communism in the Soviet Union, the

KGB (Committee for State Security) that had been the CIA's (Central Intelligence Agency) biggest rival for nearly 50 years fell apart and regrouped into two different agencies, the FSB (Federal Security Service) and the SVR (Foreign Intelligence Service). The FSB functions much like the FBI does in the US, focusing primarily on counter-terrorism and serious crimes within the borders of the Russian Federation. The SVR functions more along the lines of US intelligence services. Cozy Bear is widely thought to be working under the direction of the SVR, as their primary focus is to drain information over an extended period of time while Fancy Bear is believed to be alongside the FSB as they like to use hit fast and run tactics. Cyber security is becoming a major concern worldwide as technology is becoming an intricate and massive field considering the amount of information that is stored digitally these days. Many cyber security engineers believe that all data will become digital by 2025, reducing the amount of paper consumption and leading to a greener planet in the long term. With many of the governmental and state agencies already switching to digital information, the need for their security becomes drastically higher. UHD, for example, underwent its own hack last semester, compromising the cafeteria's systems with a ransomware and targeting certain employee computers as well. While the school employs many security measures and is constantly upgrading to more secure systems, its systems can still fall victim to malware and phishing assaults on its technology throughout the campus. All users, whether students, staff, or faculty, should consistently and constantly make sure their work and personal technological devices are up to date against all forms of hacks and viruses lest they fall victim to the constantly evolving form of crime that is cybercrime.

Walmart Wage Increase and Store Closures

by Taylor Scott

On January 11, 2018, Walmart announced that they plan to increase their minimum wage from \$9/hour to \$11/hour, along with plans to “expand maternity and parental leave benefits and provide a one-time cash bonus for eligible associates of up to \$1,000.” They also claim to be creating a new benefit to help employees with adoption expenses. Then later that same day, Walmart made another announcement stating that 63 of their Sam’s Club stores will be closed and at least 12 of the impacted stores will become eCommerce fulfillment centers. As a result, approximately 11,000 people are being let go.

These announcements come after President Trump signed the GOP Tax bill into law on Friday, December 22, 2017. This tax bill will provide trillions in tax cuts to both corporations and individuals, with an expiration date on the individual cuts set in 2025. For the most part, these cuts will be offset by “revenue-raising measures.” However, these revenues will not cover all the cuts, causing an expected increase of \$1.46 trillion to the U.S. deficit over the next decade. If Congress does not let the individual cuts expire, the increase to the deficit is expected to be much higher. For big businesses like Walmart, the top tax rate received a 15% cut, with the current rate at 35% and the new rate at 20%.

In Walmart’s announcement of the minimum wage increase, Doug McMillon, Walmart President and

CEO, stated that they “are early in the stages of assessing the opportunities tax reform creates for us to invest in our customers and associates and to further strengthen our business, all of which should benefit our shareholders.” The wage increases will cost Walmart an additional \$300 million next fiscal year and the bonuses will cost about \$400 million. McMillon also claims that the tax reform presents “the opportunity to be more competitive globally and to accelerate plans for the U.S.” An estimate given by Making a Change at Walmart, a campaign run by the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, predicts that the tax cut will save Walmart \$2 billion per year. Randy Parraz, the director of Making a Change at Walmart, says that Walmart’s recent investment in its employees is not permanent. Parraz believes that this is only “another public relations stunt from Walmart to distract from the reality that they are laying off thousands of workers and the ones who remain will continue to receive low wages,” compared to their competitors. There is much speculation that this wage increase had to happen in order to attract and retain employees and citing the tax plan as the reason is just a way for the company to stay in good graces with our current political administration. Since the announcement, several members of the administration have sung Walmart’s praises.

What’s Going on with Youtube?

by Chris Joseph

Originally home to your standard cat videos and fail compilations, YouTube has become home to child abuse and Logan Paul. YouTube has a problem, and the creators are just one part of the problem.

Back in March of 2017, big corporations such as AT&T, McDonalds, Verizon, pulled their ads from YouTube after realizing that their ads were being played on questionable videos. In an effort to bring advertisers back, YouTube responded by cracking down on content uploaded to the site by deleting videos and cutting off ad revenue to any video that went against their guidelines.

In a 2017 blog post, Susan Wajcicki, the CEO of YouTube, said, “We will be implementing broader demonization policies around videos that are perceived to be hateful or inflammatory.”

Although YouTube has been keeping a very watchful eye on what content gets uploaded and pushed to their trending page, they have been turning a blind eye when it comes to content that is produced by popular channels.

In just the first three days of the New Year, YouTuber Logan Paul, one of YouTube’s top content creator, stirred up controversy when uploaded a video called, “We found a dead body in the Japanese suicide forest.” When Paul visited Aokigahara, infamously dubbed as the “Suicide Forest”, Paul and friends found a dead body hanging in the trees deep in the forest. Instead of turning off the camera, Paul filmed the body – The man’s face was blurred out – zooming in on the hands and making jokes about the body.

Even with a dead body present in the thumbnail, the video reached YouTube’s trending page, amassed more than 6 million views, and had 600,000 likes before anyone spoke up.

Once the outcry from the YouTube community and celebrities such as Aaron Paul from Breaking Bad and Sophie Turner from Game of Thrones, Logan Paul officially took down the video and issues an apology to anyone he offended. Even after Logan Paul broke community guidelines, YouTube did not take down the video.

Many creators on the site expressed frustration

at how YouTube has done nothing to reprimand Logan Paul, but has taken down, age-restricted, and demonetized videos that creators posted to help those dealing with eating disorders, mental health, and suicide prevention. The lack of action that YouTube has showed caused many creators to cite that YouTube is playing “favorites” with super popular channels.

A week after Logan Paul removed the video, YouTube finally responded on their twitter by saying that “they have been listing” and that they are taking steps to ensure “that videos like this never happen again.” YouTube has since reprimanded Logan Paul by removing him from their YouTube Red series Foursome and putting a hold on Paul’s YouTube exclusive movie, The Thinning 2.

This isn’t the first time that YouTube sat idly by whilst a popular channel did had problematic videos that racked up millions of views. In 2017, a family “prank” channel came under fire when it was discovered by YouTuber Philip Defranco that the parents of this channel were verbally and physically abusing their children, all for the sake of it being a prank.

Without the YouTube community intervention and bringing in Child Protective Services, who knows how much further it could have gone regarding those children. Those videos where the children are being abused were removed, not by YouTube, but the parents behind the channel.

To YouTube’s defense, there is a massive amount of videos on the site, so there are some videos that do not get reviewed and taken down by YouTube. However, it seems that YouTube does favor the bigger channels over the smaller ones as YouTube is now phasing out creators who do not meet a certain viewing standard, which is mostly smaller channels, making smaller channels unable to get paid and ultimately discouraging smaller channels.

YouTube is clipping the wings of fresh new creators before they are even able to leave the nest, all in favor for those who can make the site more money.

Chef Harden Returns to the Kitchen

by Michael Case

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Just days after the entire city froze and cars around town did their best Tonya Harding impression, the Rockets looked to cool off the red-hot Golden State Warriors. Without using Trevor Ariza and Gerald Green because of suspension, the task looked to be too much. But then James Harden and Chris Paul showed why they are top players in the league. James Harden looked a little slow and shaky in his first game back against the Timberwolves, however that did not last long.

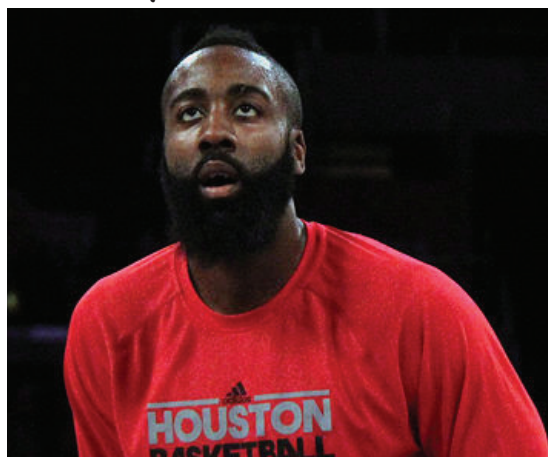


Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia Commons

The Rockets have beaten the Warriors twice this year, during a season where people say the Warriors have no equal, James Harden and the Rockets disagree. The Houston Rockets soared to the best record in the NBA early in the season, putting together a 14-game win streak with quality wins against the defending champions the Golden State Warriors, the LeBron-led Cleveland Cavaliers, and the intra-state rivals San Antonio Spurs. The Rockets looked to use the sports momentum the World Series Champions The Houston Astros provided to the city. Early in the season came a 14-game win streak, Harden and the team looked great, spirits were high. However, it was followed by a 5-game losing streak, taking all the momentum away.

The city and team would not panic though, we have James Harden, a perennial all-star and MVP candidate, and added Chris Paul, another multiple all-star team

selection and great basketball mind. Then on New Year's Eve, Harden got injured. The whole Houston sports community held their breath as he left the court for the locker room. Aggravating a hamstring, Harden was projected to be out for 2-6 weeks, it ended up being 2 and a half. In his absence, the team had gone 4-3. The identity of the team had to change.

Before the injury Harden was averaging 32.3 points, 9.1 assists, and 5.0 rebounds per game, leading the league in scoring, it looked

to finally be the year Harden would win his MVP award. Yet only one player in NBA history has won an MVP award after missing more than 10 games, Bill Walton in 1978. Harden has missed 7 games so far this season, a few more games missed and LeBron James or Kevin Durant could surpass him in the MVP race, since they do not trail him by much in the statistics department.

The Rockets had a 26-9 record with Harden pre-injury, keeping pace with the Warriors and looking to compete for the championship. Without Harden, the Rockets looked to just keep their head above water, waiting for his return. Coach Mike D'antoni is known to produce great regular seasons, but falter in the post-season. Can this be the year the Rockets, Harden, D'antoni, and Paul put it together? There is still plenty of season left to go. The answer lies with James Harden, where he goes, the team goes.

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Advice from Your Typical Student

“Hi, I am a sophomore. I feel very overwhelmed already (especially due to the two-day late start). I just feel like I’m going to get behind in my studies very quickly. Do you have any tips for being proactive when it comes to a new semester because I feel like a worrywart?”

Well, first I’d like to say welcome back, welcome back, welcome backkkkk! I heard that good things come in threes, so I hope that I just sent some positivity your way. It can be very easy to feel overwhelmed, especially when you come back from a break only to be hit with 8 chapters to read, a 5-page paper to write, and a quiz that was due on New Years that you could not have possibly known about. The key to being proactive is anticipating the work. Print out your syllabus and highlight all of your due dates as soon as it becomes available. Don’t be afraid to get a little bit ahead in a class. The syllabus might say that you are only covering chapter two in class. Go ahead and read the next chapter that will be discussed so that you are one class period ahead instead of one class period behind and struggling to catch up. I personally took the two-day late start to get two weeks ahead in statistics. Mastering the concepts of time management and productive anticipation will save you a lot of worrying as you continue your college journey because if you approach something with the mindset of being able to expect that there will be some form of work at the very beginning of the semester and then you schedule in time to complete it, then you will be well prepared to handle those bigger assignments that you had advance knowledge of.

“I am working on my fitness. How can I stay in shape, physically and mentally, while being a full-time student?”

Whenever I think about fitness and working out I think about that one Fergie song that’s like “I be up, in the gym, just working on my fitness/He’s my witness (ooh wee)”. I find that lyric inspiring. Picture it, there Fergie is. Just working on her fitness. Not paying anyone any

mind, but others are noticing her. She even has a witness that can testify to her workout regime. That speaks volumes when I put it into the perspective of a full-time student who is working hard and trying to excel in various areas of life (including physical and mental fitness).

I don’t know if you are aware, but you are constantly working out from the time that you wake up to the time that you decide to go to sleep (unless you are pulling an all-nighter). It takes motivation to conquer the hill when walking from One Main Building to Commerce or the Business Building. And that textbook you just lifted? That is the equivalent of a 2-pound weight. Don’t forget about the occasional long lines that are in the cafeteria as you shift from leg to leg juggling your lunch. Those long lines build endurance in your legs. Embrace it. Let UHD be your witness.

The biggest piece of advice that I can give you is to start small and be consistent. Do not overexert yourself, whether it is physically or mentally. You want to eventually run a mile? Start by walking a certain distance and increasing the distance every few days. You want to be an officer in an organization? Start by becoming more active in that organization.

Take breaks as often as necessary. It can be strenuous when you are trying to achieve a goal. Maybe you envisioned yourself running a mile a month from now, but it’s just not happening. It’s okay. Be kind to yourself. That is where the mental fitness steps in.

Also, grab a buddy and hit the UHD gym! Your membership is covered by your tuition fees and they have some pretty cool specialty classes that are \$10 for 10 weeks of class (essentially \$1 a class). Classes range from Yoga to Self-Defense and they start Jan. 24th.

Questions? Comments? Are you also in the gym working on your fitness with a witness? Let me know at typicalstudentadvice@gmail.com.

Signing Off,

Just Your Typical Student



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