

DATELINE:DOWNTOWN

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UHD Fandom has humble
start, big aspirations.....pg 6

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From the editor's desk

by Quintin Coleman

Why is it suddenly wrong to have a different mindset or opinion from the majority?

For example, conservatism (or even moderately conservative thought) has become something of a scarlet letter in society, where expressing thoughts that run counter to a more liberal or progressive mindset are quickly derided by those who have a liberal or progressive mindset, typically through the use of ad hominem attacks involving one (or more) of the dreaded “-ist” words (racist, sexist, misogynist, take your pick). While those “-ist” words are generally overused and not exactly applied accurately (or fairly), those terms still carry weight and can still damage someone’s reputation to a large degree if the pulpit is big enough, the speaker is loud enough and the target is prominent enough in a given population, regardless of the level of truth in those claims.

Corporations, never one to let an opportunity to trend on social media go by, are also starting to follow this same mindset. The men’s shaving company Gillette demonstrated that earlier this year with an ad campaign that painted a majority of men negatively for being “typical” men and that men “could be better” by using vignettes showing men doing things like stopping someone from being hassled or harassed.

Even the American Psychological Association is, at least implicitly (if not explicitly), endorsing research that found the exhibition of traditional masculine traits “psychologically harmful” and “that traditional masculinity – marked by stoicism, competitiveness, dominance and aggression – is on the whole, harmful” through new (legally

non-binding but may inform the practice) guidelines, according to an article written by Stephanie Pappas on the APA website. Said article even closes out with this gem: “if we can change men, we can change the world.”

I don’t want to bury the point I’m trying to make with endless examples. This isn’t about conservatives being perceived in a certain way, traditional masculinity being under attack, or any hot-button social issue of the day; those things are beyond the scope of what I can properly analyze (or, honestly, care to analyze) from my vantage point. The main question I’m opining on is: why do things like these even matter to people?

At UHD (and I’m sure at a countless number of other institutions of higher learning), people of many ethnicities, faiths, and political leanings all come together and, barring a few exceptions here and there, largely coexist to varying degrees of success. More importantly, college is a place where people can discover who they are and be who they want to be.

That is, of course, unless you’re not the “right” type of person or have the “right” type of thoughts. Then it’s a problem.

It strikes me as odd that, as a society that is increasingly becoming more open to just about anything and everything under the sun and being an individual, people get up in arms when someone thinks or acts in a way that skews more traditional or conservative (in mannerisms and mindset, not necessarily political thought). Worse yet, the same people who do get up in arms over these things don’t adopt a “live and let live” philosophy, but rather, they want people to change according to who and what they want them to be. Yes, history

is littered with many examples of that happening, but the underlying message of being accepted only if you fit into a specific box is still a disheartening one.

As long as your self (whoever or whatever that may be) isn’t harming anyone physically, I don’t really care about what people want to do or be; it’s not my job to police that. Society (whether that’s real society or social media society) shouldn’t be playing a role in getting people to change, nor should that change be forced upon anyone. If someone feels compelled to change for what they perceive is the better, they should go for broke. However, that drive to change should ONLY be intrinsic. If a poorly done ad campaign or being brow-beaten for having contrary views convinces someone to change their mind, then it probably isn’t a change worth making.

Quintin Coleman is a graduate student at UHD in the Master’s of Rhetoric and Composition (MARC) program. His ultimate goal is to teach writing at the college level. When he’s not tutoring at a community college part-time or doing homework, he’s either deciding on whether or not to go to the gym on a given day, reading obscure comic books, or looking up recipes and drink ideas on Pinterest.

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City sanctions annual MLK parade for first time

By Joshua Williams

On a chilly day in front of Houston City Hall, thousands of Houston residents stood across the street from each other divided by marching bands, large shopping H-E-B carts, and a long standing rivalry between two MLK parades.

Yes, on Jan. 21, Houston was home to two competing Martin Luther King Jr. parades, both occurring at the same time just a few blocks from each other. The 41st annual original Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade invited thousands to come at the heart of downtown Houston to celebrate the life of the man who fought for a nation where unity and hope would reign over hatred and division. Supported by the Black Heritage Society, the parade had its share of well-known attendees, including the likes of esteemed civil rights leader John Lewis and Astros outfielder George Springer.

Beginning on the streets of Smith and Lamar, the parade showcased marching bands from different colleges across Texas, decorated floats, dance teams, military and ROTC groups, first responders, city and county officials, and last but certainly not least a gigantic H-E-B shopping cart. 2019 is the first year that the original MLK parade was sanctioned by the City of Houston. It was a bold move by Mayor Sylvester Turner, who earlier advocated for a single united parade during the Greater Houston Frontiers Club 31st annual breakfast honoring the prolific civil rights leader.

But while thousands cheered and clapped for the floats and bands on Smith St., others did the same in Midtown, as the 25th annual MLK Grande Parade attracted nearly as many residents to show their support of Dr. King. The grand marshals of the MLK Grande Parade were prospective mayoral candidates Bill King and Tony Buzbee. Founder of the MLK Grande Parade Charles Stamps held the philosophy of showcasing the diversity of Houston through having multiple events to celebrate Dr. King rather than just one. “There’s never



Photo credit Joshua Williams

going to be just one MLK event,” said Stamp, who founded the MLK Grande Parade back in the mid-1990s.

The dueling events were a testament to how unbreakable the political rivalry between Stamp and Mayor Turner has become. Organizers of both parades have clashed over permits, sponsorships, and attendees since the first MLK Grande Parade originated 25 years ago. Stamp, who insisted Turner consider Tony Buzbee and Bill King’s “contributions to humanity” over their political ambitions, was said to be irritated over Turner’s decision to make the Black Heritage Society’s original MLK parade an official

city event, saying Turner “was using the parade as his official coming out party for mayor.”

Turner, however, seemed certain that the official backing would not only end the rivalry, but bring Houston residents back to downtown to celebrate Dr. King’s birthday. Back in July, Turner stated how the feud resulted in fewer people attending both parades last year. At a press conference a couple of weeks before MLK day, Turner commented on making the original parade an official city event, stating, “the people will honor the decision and will come together... as an community, as a city of all back-

grounds, all faiths, all ethnicities, and that we will come together and stand as one.”

Although the dueling parades seem to be a by-product of some political aspirations and feuds, there’s no denying how celebratory the day was with nearly 40,000 residents heading downtown to commemorate the event together. One spectator told KRPC2 News that she was using the parade and holiday to teach her kids about the history and to “enjoy themselves.” And joy seems to be the word to describe everything that happened as people old and young, of all races, stood together as an united front to say thank you to Dr. King. Somewhere on the sidewalk was one black child being held up by his mother as he watched the demonstration of unity that Dr. King had hoped for all along.

Joshua Williams is a current UHD senior expecting to graduate in the fall of 2019. His passions include playing video games and spending time with his family. He’s also a huge fan of online movie talk shows on YouTube.

Remembering Parkland shooting one year later

ByAansa Usmani

Nearly a year ago, Nikolas Cruz arrived at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, armed with an AR-15 and with a motive to kill. The events that later transpired were never forgotten by the brave students (now alumni) of Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Seventeen lives were lost that very day, prompting a student-led movement titled “March for Our Lives.” Across the nation, these students led school walkouts, protesting and demanding that their representatives (federal or state-level) legislate stricter gun restrictions. The conversation of gun restrictions arose alongside having a ban on bump stocks and assault rifles similar to what was used in the school shooting.

The students also rallied against the National Rifle Association (NRA), pointing out the hypocrisy of comparing mental health toward gun violence. When asked to comment about the tragedy, NRA spokeswoman Dana Loesch said,

“I don’t believe that this insane monster should ever have been able to obtain a firearm, ever...I do not think that he should have gotten his hands on any kind of weapons, that’s number one. This individual was nuts, and I nor the millions of people that I represent as a part of this organization that I’m here speaking for, none of us support people who are crazy... people, people who are murderers . . . mentally insane individuals.”

The comments made by the NRA sparked student-led movements in boycotting the gun rights organization and a protest against the people who support it (i.e. politicians). The actions taken by these brave students have mobilized teenagers and young people to support those who have their best interests at heart (i.e. vote for those who support stricter gun laws etc.). If it hadn’t been for their actions, the issue of gun restrictions would not be as prominent as it is today.

Aansa Usmani is a first-year college student attending the University of Houston-Downtown. She is a Political Science major with plans to run for political office. She identifies herself as a social justice warrior, advocating for women, LGBT, immigration, and other liberal causes. Alongside politics, her passions include photography, writing, and debate. Although relatively young, she has demonstrated literate competency, writing about topics ranging from mental health to current events

Women March On fight the power peacefully



All photo credits Aansa Usmani

On January 19, 2019, Houston Women March On (formerly known as the Houston Women's March) held their annual protest. From the mid-morning till noon, "nasty" women, men, and children congregated outside city hall, peacefully protesting Trumpian policies and the President himself. An array of signs was displayed, ranging from impeachment to veganism policies. Our Dateline Reporter, Aansa Usmani was there to do her civic duty and participate in the march itself. When asked to comment, she felt that the march, "was a unifying force in a divided country. It felt like we were all together for one purpose: to demonstrate how democracy functions in a dysfunctional country."



SGA springs into action

By Naomi Cardwell

The Student Government Association held their first meeting of the semester on January, 23, 2019 in the Commerce St. Building. Many things were discussed and put in a plan of action in this meeting. The meeting started off by the new Chief of Staff, Jason Lillie, being sworn in.

Then the Book Exchange was brought up by Mario Torres and Ryan Hashem. It was considered a success for both officers as it allowed students to exchange old textbooks for new ones. According to Senator Hashem, SGA's hope for the book exchange is to make it a UHD tradition in order to help students get the textbooks they need.

The second item on the agenda was the Know Your Status event that was brought to attention and discussed by Speaker Shanedra Tatum. This event is an opportunity for every student to be tested for STIs on campus in room A300.

This event will take place before spring break on March, 6, 2019; SGA is looking for several volunteers for this event. The Know Your Status event will coincide with the upcoming Health Fair that will be taking place on campus.

Next on the agenda, Senator Gravlee spoke about the Walk to Vote happening this semester in order to get students registered to vote. On February, 28, 2019, SGA will be meeting with the mayor to discuss concerns they have for the student body of UHD and look at how the city can support UHD students.

Opportunities for leadership were emphasized in this meeting. During the meeting, there were yellow slips passed around with volunteer opportunities and leadership positions available. The volunteer opportunities were Tabling, Office Assistant, Admin Assistant, Volunteer Coordinator, Event Coordinator, Marketing Assistant, Outreach Coordinator, Project Manager, and SGA Committee Representative. These

volunteer opportunities have no required amount of time needed in order to volunteer.

The Leadership positions available on the executive board are Community Outreach, External Affairs, Assistant to President, Marketing, Student Engagement, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Leadership positions available on the judicial board are Attorney General, Student Defender, and Associate Justice. The available positions for the legislative board (Senators) are College of Business, College Science & Technology, University College, College of Public Service, College of Humanities & Social Science, and Senators at large.

Another topic of discussion brought up from Senator Gravlee was Greek Yard. It was said during the meeting that most students do not recognize that UHD has an active Greek Community. This is something that brings aware-

ness to the students that UHD does in fact have an active Greek community. One of the popular events that SGA is known for is the annual Bayou Bash, which was held last spring on March, 21, 2018, and is a friend and family event. This event is usually held on the South Deck. Students will receive a free pound of crawfish and there will be a fee for guests.

Among the four proposed spring plans and the discussion of the upcoming events, there was several more that sparked and excited the SGA members such as the Spring Safety walk, the pursuit of more push buttons for disability services, the pilot program in order to celebrate those on the Dean's list, an art walk, propositions for the mayor, and the Houston new vote. The meeting ended with a clear, focused and fresh start into the spring semester.

Modest UHD of past led to growing UHD of today

By Sara Ali

UHD is a four-year institution and one of the four distinct institutions of the University of Houston districts which was founded in 1974. This university spans 40 acres in Downtown Houston. It is the second largest university in Houston and it has more than 14,000 students. Annually this university awards more than 2,400 degrees and the alumni base exceeds 40,000. UHD offers 52 bachelor's degrees and seven master's degrees. This university also contains one of the most diverse student population. It is also a Hispanic-serving institution and a minority-serving institution.

UHD was opened on August 6, 1974 when the UH Board of Regents acquired these assets from South Texas

Junior College and was opened as University of Houston-Downtown College (UH/DC), which was an institution separate from the University of Houston system. The first degree to be offered at the college was a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and the resident students paid \$4 per credit hour. The school opened its first dormitory in 1981, which was formerly located at Harley Hotel located at 101 Main Street and was known as the University Center. This remained in UHD's possession until 1991, until it was demolished in order to be renovated.

The word "college" was removed from the institution's name and it became known as the University of Houston-Downtown on April 26, 1983. In the Fall of 1988, more than 8,350 students were enrolled on campus. In 1992,

Max Castillo came from the San Antonio College and became the president of UHD. During this time, UHD focused on becoming a metropolitan university and began appealing to traditional students, as well as working professionals. Through this time, UHD also began partnerships with local community colleges, which resulted in a teacher certification program for the College of Urban Education, the opening of a new academic building, and the Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center. In the 1990s, the university became the third fastest growing university.

UHD is primarily an undergraduate university which offers 44 bachelor's degrees and eight master's degrees. The bachelor's degrees are offered in the following colleges: College of Human-

ities and Social Sciences, Davies College of Business, College of Sciences and Technology, College of Public Service and University College. Since its humble beginnings, UHD has become the second largest and one of the most diverse universities in Houston.

Sara Ali is majoring in Technical Communications with a minor in Creative Writing. Her interests include Social Sciences, Creative Writing, Poetry English and Spanish Literature. She is also an activist and wants to advocate for clean water in third-world countries. She loves to read and some her favorite genres include: science fiction, young adult, fantasy and comic books.

Gator gains with UHD's personal trainers

By Lissette Perez

UHD Sports & Fitness is home to a handful of nationally certified, energetic and client-driven personal trainers. Each trainer is committed to working with their clients to give them the necessary workout tips and techniques to achieve their goals no matter what part of their fitness journey they are on. Each personal trainer takes pride in their work and is always eager to motivate their clients while offering a one of a kind personable experience. All trainers are beginner-friendly and judgement-free, creating a welcoming environment to those who have not yet developed their fitness strategies, but would like to explore the different options of maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle.

UHD's very own personal trainers are hard-working individuals that are entirely devoted to promoting the integration of physical activity in their own lives as well as the lives of their respective clients. In order to get a glimpse into what it is like being a personal trainer and understand the hard work that goes into becoming a personal trainer, each of the following three trainers: Kiara Andrade, Leboriah Chávez, and Robert Gonzales, have been asked a series of questions regarding their experience as personal trainers.

Andrade graduated with a bachelor's degree in Biology and is an aspiring occupational therapy practitioner. She will have been a personal trainer for a year this upcoming August. She became a personal trainer "to help people gain confidence and guide them in their journey to a healthier lifestyle." Furthermore, she said, "being a personal trainer allows me to share the knowledge I have learned while motivating clients to push themselves. In turn, they motivate me to be a better version of myself." When

asked what steps were taken to become a trainer, Andrade responded by saying that she received her certification through the Athletics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA) with UHD Sports & Fitness providing a useful three-day workshop to prepare for the certification exam.

When talking about what she focuses on when training a client, Andrade said that she initially centers on "proper form, coordination, agility, stretching and having clients perform functional movements as it is pivotal to get that down first to prevent injuries." Once that stage is complete, she incorporates "heavier weights and advanced movements" based on the client's needs and goals. "I focus on building a good relationship with my clients. I can only provide useful suggestions and create an effective workout plan with the feedback they give me. This involves asking questions and them feeling comfortable enough to express how they're feeling."



Photo credit Lissette Perez

Andrade said.

Andrade believes in establishing a rapport between her and her clients, as that will be beneficial helping her clients achieve their desired results. She motivates her clients not only by "acknowledging their hard work and offering encouraging words" but also showing them their progress by compare their muscle mass and body fat percentage to when they first started.

Personal training has impacted Andrade's life by motivating her to have a balanced lifestyle, mentally and physically. Her advice to prospective personal trainers is to keep in mind that "personality goes a long way." She stated that being a personal trainer requires the proper knowledge of the field as well as the application of interpersonal skills and believes that "it's important to actively listen and give constructive feedback when necessary." Andrade adds that "it is important to expand your knowledge and stay up to date with the latest research. Fortunately, at Sports & Fitness, our Fitness Coordinator holds weekly meetings where we discuss different topics of interest." Andrade concludes by reassuring that Sports & Fitness is always keeping trainers updated on everything fitness related.

Chávez is a junior majoring in Accounting with a minor in Spanish Medical Translation. She has been a personal trainer for about two years and endearingly describes her experience as a "beautiful journey of helping others achieve their desired physique." Chávez always envisioned herself as a personal trainer but decided to solidify her dreams when she experienced the contagious enthusiasm that UHD personal trainers displayed at a Sports & Fitness Welcome Week event.

Chávez prepared to become a personal trainer by training for the position during her winter break as a freshman. Her preparation consisted of

two weeks composed of daily studying for the certification exam and in-person training where fellow trainers would practice with each other on "how to talk to future clients, how to properly show modifications for future workout routines," and she also learned how to create her own routines, and when she finished the prep-classes she took the official certification test required by the AFAA. After satisfactory completion of the certification, she was brought onboard to work as a UHD Sports & Fitness personal trainer.

When asked about her focus as a trainer, Chávez stated, "I've been focusing a lot on weight loss. Most of my clients want to get summer bodies, wedding bodies, post-holidays... However, I also focus on other things like bodybuilding style workouts, glute isolation workouts for my ladies, and I also focus on how to increase stamina



Photo credit Lissette Perez

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UHD Fandom has humble start, big aspirations

By Jenifer Mendez

Fandom is a popular student organization of people who share different ideas and interests that began in the fall of 2014 with a casual conversation between three friends who shared the same English class.

Cruz Villafuerte Cardoso, Juan Parra, and Fredy Penilla were all friends that enjoyed sharing their interests and ideas with one another. Cardoso was into anything with an obscure theme that not many people knew of, Parra was interested in anime, and Penilla liked fantasy and sci-fi. Cardoso overheard Parra and Penilla talking about a lack of a campus organization for their interests and told them that there was a school organization called the M.A.G. club, which stood for Manga, Anime, and Gaming. Cardoso was a part of that organization, but he said that the group was pretty “dead”, as he phrased it. The three then decided to create their own organization.

“We try to share different ideas and different things we like,” explained Cardoso, who is currently Fandom’s vice president. He also mentioned that when coming up with their name, they wanted to choose one that wouldn’t discourage anybody to join. They wanted to create a platform where people with any and every kind of interest could join and share their ideas and interests. And thus, “Fandom UHD” was born.

Cardoso became the president by default since he had the highest GPA at the time, Parra became the treasurer, and Penilla the vice president. They asked their English professor, Dr. Leif Behmer, to become their advisor, who eagerly agreed to the job, and Penilla asked one of his friends to take the job of secretary.

Although they had formed in the fall of 2014, Fandom didn’t have their first event until the next semester on

April 30, 2015. While they had around 30 members join initially, only a handful of them were active members. Even the group’s secretary wasn’t available for most of the time, so they struggled to get by with such a limited amount of hands to help them. However, they never gave up, and as time progressed, so did they.

It was a slow start, but Fandom began making a name for themselves by organizing events on campus. For their first event in the spring of 2015, they showcased a movie and sold food at the event. Later events included a Halloween event in the auditorium where they showcased horror films, selling popcorn and hot dogs in the process and an event called Themed Tuesday, where they would pick a theme and watch shows and anime related to that theme on Tuesdays in a booked study room so that they could share different interests and hook someone who originally didn’t like or know about a certain series and/or genre.

Part of Fandom’s growth can be attributed to their willingness to experiment and try new ideas.

“We really stepped out of our comfort zone last semester by collaborating with Mike Emory for GatorCon. That was a first, even though we’ve done events like GatorCon, but that was a first in having an official backing of the university. So we really broke the mold last semester with GatorCon, but we also did Video Game Day,” said Alicia Ipina, the current president of Fandom. They held GatorCon and Video Game Day, two large events, in the same month, so



Photo courtesy of Fandom

it was a heavier load that they had to pull through.

“It was a good time frame last year. We actually pushed even more experimental things,” Cardoso said, “We did more expansive things with Anime Fest. It started out with a nice little table, showing some films in the auditorium. Now, we had a room in A300 with people being able to play carnival games and watch anime films. Plus, I was able to sell my ramen. We were able to give some authentic Japanese food. Last time, we were just selling hot dogs and popcorn. We were able to learn from it and trying to find a good balance between events and the contribution of members. We learned a lot from it and will continue to do different unique things. We will expand and add on to our past events.”

Fandom is already making preparations for this semester’s upcoming big events. They plan on having a Women’s History Month event on the March 5 in A300 at 11:05 a.m., where they will celebrate women in different fandoms. Additionally, they will be holding their annual Anime Fest on April 15 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. They are currently looking for any cosplayers who would be willing to cosplay that day. Fandom has their events open to everyone because they hope to help students like themselves.

“The university doesn’t offer events like the ones we do,” said Ipina. “They don’t really do anything surrounding things like gaming or anime, so I think we really target the audiences that are usually to themselves. And bringing these events to campus helps those people who are just to themselves, not really outgoing, to come out of their box, come out of their shell and have some fun on

campus.”

“We don’t alienate other people,” said Cardoso. “We want to not be exclusionary to any specific fandoms.” “I think it just promotes being inclusive to all the cultures and lifestyles,” said Amaris Sanchez, Fandom’s current event coordinator, “because pop culture is a whole culture in itself, and there’s a bunch of subcultures. It really gives people an outlet to really enjoy themselves I guess, because with it [UHD] being a commuter college and everything, most people have this mentality where it’s just like you go to school and go home because there are no dorms, no downtime per se, so it gives them something to do. It gives them a chance to have a chance to have that university experience. It’s really good for people to be exposed to different areas of pop culture, whether it’s like movies, anime, just anything. It’s fun.”

Because Fandom has begun to grow larger, they’ve been thinking even bigger. One of their future proposals is to take Fandom to different universities and bringing the events that they hold at UHD to those campuses. They are even thinking of making Fandom a type of business that spreads their idea of making a platform for people who feel discouraged about expressing their interests even further beyond just UHD. However, only time will tell what surprises Fandom has in store for UHD and beyond.

Jenifer Mendez is a student in her second semester of her freshman year. Her original plan was to major in Biology and become a veterinarian, but she felt that it wasn’t something she was motivated enough to pursue. Sure, she loves animals and likes cuddling with them, but she wasn’t passionate on the idea of learning of medicines and becoming a doctor. So, she is currently trying out different things and in search of her passion



Photo courtesy of Fandom

UHD basketball a showcase of talent and respect

By Joshua Williams

UHD looks to showcase its diverse group of students through its basketball team.

The UHD men's club basketball team competes against other collegiate teams in both the Lone Star Sport Club Conference and Houston Club Sports Basketball Conference. Last year they defeated Prairie View A&M University, scoring 63 points out of a 123 point game with a 2-0 record. Before that, they started out the season defeating Lone Star Cy-Fair on their home turf, scoring a impressive 47 points out of a 85 point game. This wouldn't been possible if weren't for Coach Eric Taylor leading the charge all the way through.

"It's a passion of mine, and a platform for me to create healthy relationships," said Taylor, who has been coaching for 20 years. Taylor has been the head coach of UHD's basketball team since Jan. 2017, and he carries a lot of experience with him. Serving as an coach for many cities across Texas, Taylor has encouraged students to use basketball as a means for finding their purpose in life. Taylor gave his views on the importance of basketball by saying, "with basketball you also learn about life, teamwork, and other things in that nature."

Teamwork is just one of the many qualities of a great team. A team is a brotherhood built from the love and respect of a diverse group of people who all came together with a similar interest. Long gone are the days of major owners from basketball leagues being accused of filling their benches with only white players. Thanks to the efforts of men like John McLendon, who pioneered the defensive style of the full-court press, the sport has now gone on to give people of color a chance to showcase their talent in front of a wide audience. Legends of the sport such as Shaquille O'Neal, who in his junior year faced racist remarks just for him being part of a small high school team in Texas, is now considered one of the greatest of all time due to his immense talent and personality he showed on and off the court.

Today, basketball showcases players not based on skin color but on talent, and UHD's basketball club is following suit. Students from all over the



Photo credit Joshua Williams

world, including the Dominican Republic, Libya, and more, are joining the club to find their purpose. And what makes Coach Taylor proud is the opportunity this creates for an healthy understanding of each other's culture. When talking about that opportunity, Taylor said,

"what it does is give students a chance to learn other student's culture and their way of life."

Indeed, diversity can be the spark to create new ideas. John McLendon's use of basketball to break down racial barriers in the 1950s is a testament to how current established inventions were built upon diverse ways of thinking. McLendon was recognized as the first African American basketball coach at an predominantly white university. However, due to segregation, his teams were often left to compete against other African American teams. McLendon's style went unnoticed for years until it was later adopted by white coaches.

But while it took years for McLendon's ideas to become accepted by whites in the 1950s, UHD prides itself on allowing students from all walks of life to come together and generate new ideas every day. Students arrive looking to showcase whatever talent they possess in the hopes others will discover them. Whether it's in radio, journalism, community service, or in the sport of basketball, UHD students are wanting to be seen as equal to their peers. The key, however, is to be at the right place in front of the right person at the right time. While explaining what it would take for someone to get started in basketball, Coach Taylor said the following, "sometimes you have to be seen as an talent. If you're waiting kind of late, then you're going to be behind the eight ball, and then you got a lot of catching up to do."

Lucky for Coach Taylor, UHD students aren't known for waiting too long.

Joshua Williams is a current UHD senior expecting to graduate in the fall of 2019. His passions include playing video games and spending time with his family. He's also a huge fan of online movie talk shows on YouTube.

Personal trainer con't from page 5

and running," with well over a year of experience, Chávez has learned how to cater to a variety of needs, making her an adaptable trainer that enjoys focusing on more than one area while training.

Chávez believes that her clients should, ideally, be ready to put in work to notice change because the first step to beginning a fitness journey is to have the necessary drive and willingness to overcome any possible obstacles. However, she also puts a great deal of effort into motivating her clients. When asked about her motivation methods, Chávez responded with, "I encourage [my clients] by telling them that anything is possible with a positive mindset. I believe that when it comes to workouts or even life, it's all mental. You can accomplish anything you set your mind to if you really want it." Chávez is certain that having a strong mind leads to a productive workout, which, in turn, leads to ideal results.

Chávez is deeply passionate about what she does and being personal trainer has shaped her to become the person she is today. When Chávez was asked about a pivotal moment in her journey as a trainer, she said, "I realized that if you truly love yourself, you should take care of the most precious gift in life which is YOUR body because it's yours and it's a form of art that represents you and makes you unique." Being a personal trainer also allows her to take better

care of her body by eating healthy and practicing self-care and self-love, which is key to maintaining a happy life.

Gonzales is a junior majoring in Biological and Physical Sciences (BPS). He has been a personal trainer for a year and became one because he "wanted to help people make a change in their life for the better" by encouraging them to work out and helping them see how beneficial exercise is to daily life. He was able to get certified as a trainer because, "at UHD we go through a workshop and we are given the material and tools to study for the exam and then we just schedule and take it and hope to pass." The university provides the essentials to successfully obtain the personal training certification, which makes it easier for those in training for the position.

Gonzales is also very flexible to his clients' needs. When asked about

his focus, he said, "as a personal trainer I wouldn't say I focus on one thing in particular because working with many different clients requires you to have a wide range of skills to meet their individual needs. Someone might want to lose weight and gain muscle or just gain muscle, cut down body fat, or maintain their physique. It all depends on the goal of the client and I'm just there to help them reach that goal." He is committed to his clients' requests and is always ready to offer them whatever it is they want.

Gonzales knows that changing one's lifestyle can be a very difficult thing to do, especially for beginners, which is why he is compassionate and understanding and motivates his clients by "reminding them why they started." He goes on to say, "everyone should have a 'why' as to what made them want to change their life around and choose to live healthy and exercise. It can be for longevity purposes or even to be there

on and off the gym and they will see the results."

Being a personal trainer and seeing how he can better people's lives allows him to reflect on how big of an impact his job has had in his own life. Robert says, "[my perspective on life] has changed a lot, life is a lot better now than I'm helping others live their better life. I always knew I wanted to help others, but I wasn't sure how I wanted to do it." Gonzales feels that personal training is very rewarding, and he truly enjoys working with people to promote a fit lifestyle.

Gonzales' advice to aspiring personal trainers is to "just do it and study hard, it may seem like it's easy but it's a lot of material to cover but once you get it you'll be set, but also the most important thing is to have passion for what you are doing," and his final piece of advice is to always be there for your clients. After all, a client would not be the person they wish to become without their personal trainer's constant support.

If you are interested in booking a personal trainer, please visit the Student Life Center or call (713) 221-8225. If you are interested in becoming a personal trainer, or getting more information on personal training/fitness, please contact S&F's Fitness Coordinator, John Tricks, at TricksJ@uhd.edu or call (713) 221-5020.



Photo courtesy of UHD Sports & Fitness

long enough to see their grandkids. But just reminding them about why they stepped foot in the gym is what I do, and I remind them to put in the work

New team at UHD shows popularity of esports

By Christina Loos

So many students showed up that the esports interest meeting that Austen Crawford and other students had to find another room. Months later, an esports center has been built and a group of students are working to create a collegiate esports team.

Austen Crawford is a student at UHD and one of the founding members of the group working to establish the UHD esports team. He described esports as a form of “competitive gaming.” “If you could, you could think of it [esports] kind of like the Super Bowl but for gaming at that point. It’s competitive league teams playing some of like the all-time classic favorite games like ‘League of Legends’ or ‘Overwatch’ or ‘Smash Bros’, things that like that,” he said.

Esports is not a niche form of gaming. A quick search for esports on YouTube brings up channels like LoL Esports and Vietnam Esports TV. These channels have over two million subscribers and their most popular videos have over a million views. Even sports networks like ESPN are paying close attention to esports. In July 2018, ESPN, Disney and ABC secured a deal to broadcast the “Overwatch” League finals. The ESPN website also has an entire section devoted to covering esports.

Crawford explained that esports requires the same level of dedication and practice as more traditional sports like basketball or football.

“Some people think it’s all like ‘Oh yeah, I can do this.’ But if you take a look at like some of the older esports



Photo credit Christina Loos

competitions, the training some of the people do, the amount of teamwork and compatibility that some of these players have with one another, it takes a lot more than just one person saying, ‘Oh I can do this. This is easy,’” Crawford said. The dedication that esports can demand from players does not seem to diminish UHD students’ interest in esports as a whole. The eSports Center is crowded with students on weekdays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. A majority of the 17 stations are occupied by students playing games like “Overwatch” and “League of Legends” within an hour of the center opening. Crawford has an explanation for esports’ popularity on campus.

“I think the idea is that we could have a little bit more team spirit and have that sense of like camaraderie and this’ll help bring some people together. People that didn’t know each other or didn’t play games together will now have dedicated times on school grounds to do

that. They’ll be able to come in here for either for casual or competitive play and be able to practice with one another,” he said.

This echoed what Jose Vazquez, UHD’s assistant director of student activities, told Houston Public Media on November 20, 2018 when the eSports Center had its grand opening. He said that the eSports Center would give students at UH-D a place where they could build friendships and a sense of community.

Crawford said that Vazquez was one of the people who proposed bringing esports to UHD. He also said that the group of students working to form a varsity esports team are currently working to set up the team.

“Because we haven’t set up a team yet to begin with, we don’t know the ins and outs of how we’re going to do this. I’m going to be talking to the other members on governance about that in

the next few weeks just to get an idea of what we can establish because it has to be fair to both the JB and the varsity and the casual players. So we want to make it so that they have practice time; they can compete and perform at their best levels but we also want to have this here just so that anybody can come in and if they contend, if they make contenders, they can challenge someone on their seats or however we’ll have the system set up so any member can potentially join in,” he explained.

Crawford added that while their plans are not very concrete due to it being so early in the semester, the esports group is going to focus on forming an Overwatch and League of Legends team at the moment. He also added that they hope to eventually broadcast matches or practice on Twitch, a popular streaming site.

“Any events I think will be posted on our Facebook and Instagram feeds at UHDesports. No dash, no hyphen, no caps,” he said.

Crawford said that the thing he wants students to know about the eSports Center was that it is open and that students are welcome to visit the center between 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays.

Christina Loos is a Technical Communication major and an English minor. She is passionate about social justice, horror, writing, and learning about other cultures. In her free time, she enjoys listening to 80s goth rock and new wave, writing and reading, and watching other people play video games because she isn’t very good at them.

Long Gone the Tofu

Another summer of poverty.
Poor as dirt, wish it was not the tendency.
Dirt perpetuates a lacking ecology.

In my front yard are two garden plots.
One stands
with tall okra stalks. The other has
sweet potato tendrils overrunning blocks.

One moment in July my lover and I ate
through our dried bean supply. Our
cavernous,
cool, and EMPTY golden pantry refracted
my sighs.

So long tofu, we dined on rice and garden
kale.
but dreamt nightly of smoked red fish
rubbed in
delectable thyme with head and tail.

-Amanda Howard

Ho Chi Minh City

Walking a strangely familiar town. Humid. Hot.
After three days you dislike most of your
travel companions.
Five-star restaurants, knock-off markets
and a rooster’s crow.
The city bubbles. It rolls, as we sit in
Saigon traffic.

After three days you dislike most of your
travel companions.
Buses, bikes, belching diesel trucks and
scars of war,
The city bubbles. It rolls, as we sit in
Saigon traffic.

As a group we travel. Being loud, wearing
tennis shoes.

Buses, bikes, belching diesel trucks and
scars of war,
They smile and see Americans with
pockets deep.

As a group we travel. Being loud, wearing
tennis shoes.

But most of the locals are happy to take
our money.

They smile and see Americans with
pockets deep
Rainbow pesticides, like a makeup
compact.
But most of the locals are happy to take
our money.
Can you imagine a jungle with no leaves
on the trees?

Rainbow pesticides, like a makeup
compact.
Furrowed hills rich with life. Coffee,
green beans, cattle, rice, durian.
Can you imagine a jungle with no leaves
on the trees?
He walks on the palms of his hands
because his legs never formed.

Furrowed hills rich with life. Coffee,
green beans, cattle, rice, durian.
The man next to me has no legs, chemical
warfare is the reason.
He walks on the palms of his hands
because his legs never formed.
The weight of a generation’s fight bearing
down on me.

The man next to me has no legs, chemical
warfare is the reason.

How deep the poison our fathers dropped
seeps.
The weight of a generation’s fight bearing
down on me.
Vietnam’s war ended decades ago, but I
often forget

how deep the poison our fathers dropped
seeps.
Five-star restaurants, knock-off markets
and a rooster’s crow.
The American war ended decades ago,
but here you can’t forget.
Walking around a strangely familiar
town. Humid. Hot.

Amanda Howard is a recent graduate of UHD earning a bachelor’s degree of Natural Science with a minor in Biology. She currently teaches garden education to high school students with the Texas A&M Argilife 4H program and works in the campus student food market. Her passions include; organic food production, sustainable living and tackling food waste. When Amanda is not obsessing over perfecting her compost methods she can be found quilting, illustrating and writing either poetry, or short stories.

Dogs provide comfort through pawsitivity

By Emily Boyd

With the fast pace of life in Houston, many do not take the time to focus on positivity. Houstonians are all so focused on deadlines and expectations that they rarely take the time to stop, look around and smile. There is an infinite amount of existing and non-existing things that can light up the day, but to some there is one that category that stands out: Dogs.

Not everyone is a full-on dog lover, but everyone loves to see kindness. This is something every dog is willing to share. They live just to see people's happiness. They wag their tail just to see a smile. They do a trick just to get their human's approval. They lay with someone just to give comfort. Not everyone has to love dogs, but they will always love us back regardless of what we show them. This is what leads to the purpose of this article, to show the power of Pawsitivity. (Positivity + Paws = Pawsitivity)

It is possible to embrace oneself in the love of a furry friend without owning one or knowing one. It is as easy as downloading Instagram and following an account that stands out. One account that is full smiles goes by "HoustonDog-goPics". This account posts silly, and happy dog pictures that are local to the neighborhood. In addition, accounts on Facebook such as the Houston SPCA, BARC Animal Shelter and Harris County Animal Shelter posts different events and pages that offer ways to get involved. This way, someone can be a part of working with a dog even if they do not own one.

Volunteering also gives everyone an option to embrace themselves into this. Tahnya Gaston, lead volunteer expert at the Fort Bend Shelter, was asked why her job was so fulfilling. Her response was incredibly humbling. "I never thought I would work with dogs or cats as my profession. I always told myself I would work in a corporate setting maybe at a desk with nice attire and a designated parking spot. It took me adopting my first dog to change everything. The moment I took Benjy (Cute lab puppy) into my home, I knew my life would forever change. I would not stop supporting the shelter until every single dog had a chance to share the happiness Benjy gave to me."

Finding joy is not just about putting oneself in a place of content, it is about sharing unexpected forms of happiness. It is something that has the potential to grow and have an everlasting effect on. Dogs were born to do this. Whether a person adopts, volunteers, searches the web, or looks around, a dog will always be there. All they have to do is look.

Emily Boyd is a Senior at UHD and plans to graduate this year. She is a volunteer at the Houston local animal shelter and loves spending time with her four dogs. She spends her free time exploring the city with her mom, studying photography, and enjoys running through Buffalo Bayou Park. She hopes to use her degree as a way to move up in the business world and possibly become a Journalist.



Photo credit Emily Boyd



My name is Ifunanya Joseph Mamah, I am currently a criminal justice senior at UHD, I also have a passion for making art. I discovered drawing at a young age and have been doing it ever since. Being able to contribute to Dateline: Downtown as an illustrator has been a pleasure and inspires me to continue working with the paper and other outlets.

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Contact

Quintin Coleman

Email

editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com

Join us on Wednesdays @ 11:30 am – 12:45 pm in S-260

GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

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| + | | × | | + | |
| | × | | + | | 39 |
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| 15 | | 33 | | 33 | |

1 2 3 5 6 7 8 9 9

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

• In this time of bitter partisan rivalries, it would be well to remember the following sage observation: "Do not trust to the cheering, for those persons would cheer just as much if you and I were going to be hanged." The man who first made that observation was Lord Protector of England Oliver Cromwell, considered by some to be a hero of liberty, by others to be a regicidal dictator. He died in 1658, probably from septicemia. He was so reviled that, three years later, his body was exhumed so that he could be posthumously executed, his body thrown into a pit and his head displayed on a pole outside Westminster Hall.

• Those who study such things say that if all the gold in the world were combined in one lump, it would result in a cube that measures 20 yards on each side.

• The acids in your digestive system are so corrosive that your stomach must produce an entirely new lining every three days.

• You might be surprised to learn that the mother of Sir Winston Churchill, that quintessential icon of Britishness, was actually born an American in Brooklyn, New York. Lady Randolph Spencer-Churchill, nee Jeanette Jerome, was a socialite, and it is through her that Winston Churchill is related to his wartime ally, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The prime minister and the president were seventh cousins, once removed.

• If you're planning to travel to Washington state with nefarious plans, here's an interesting law to keep in mind: Any motorist with criminal intent is required to stop before entering a town and inform the chief of police of his or her presence.

Thought for the Day: "The difference between fiction and reality? Fiction has to make sense." —Tom Clancy

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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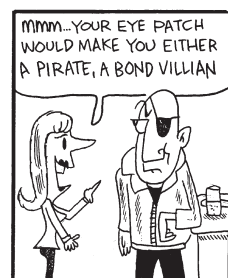
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Ref
- 4 Present
- 8 Jeans-maker Strauss
- 12 Seek damages
- 13 Dunkable treat
- 14 Mosque bigwig
- 15 Jogged untogged
- 17 Baby feeding finale
- 18 Standing
- 19 Parched
- 21 Started
- 22 Let slip
- 26 Reservation residence
- 29 Marry
- 30 Part of "to be"
- 31 Unoriginal one
- 32 Pickle container
- 33 Thick chunk
- 34 Grant opponent
- 35 Plague
- 36 Coffin
- 37 Duration
- 39 Bill's partner
- 40 Scooted
- 41 Turmoil
- 45 Gujarat garment
- 48 Vigor

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| 37 | | | 38 | | | | 39 | | | | | |
| | | | | 40 | | | | 41 | | 42 | 43 | 44 |
| 45 | 46 | 47 | | | | 48 | 49 | | | | | |
| 50 | | | | | | 51 | | | | 52 | | |
| 53 | | | | | | 54 | | | | | 55 | |

- 50 Help hoods
- 51 Unctuous
- 52 "Holy cow!"
- 53 Uppercase
- 54 Untouchable Eliot
- 55 Agent

- 8 Tripoli's land
- 9 Aussie bird
- 10 Alt. spelling
- 11 Mischievous tyke
- 16 Swiss mathematician

- 32 Lincoln successor
- 33 Rid of wool
- 35 Sch. org.
- 36 Rabbits
- 38 Southern side dish
- 39 Ringlets
- 42 Early birds?
- 43 Flight component
- 44 Yon folks
- 45 Pouch
- 46 Counselors' grp.
- 47 Agt.
- 49 Dead heat

DOWN

- 1 Cold War initials
- 2 Silent
- 3 Culprit, for short
- 4 Small beard
- 5 Annoyed
- 6 Retainer
- 7 Little kid

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MAGIC MAZE • "DOR" WORDS

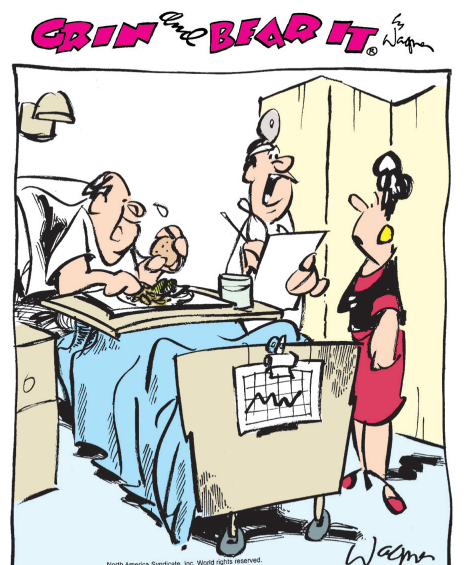
U J H E B Y V T R Q O L I G D
 B Y W T R P L R O D N A C M K
 I F D B Y W A U D S Q M R H O
 M R K I F R B D A B Z B O U R
 X R O D O W R U U S Q A D M O
 O R O D A T A M C N L S A I D
 J H N D R O D N E L P S E D I
 F E D O N A O C A Y W A R O P
 V V D T C O R R E G I D O R S
 S U Q P N L C K I H F O T E U
 T C B Z Y W V R O D I R R O C

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally

- Ambassador
- Ardor
- Candor
- Condor
- Corridor
- Cuspidor
- Ecuador
- Labrador
- Matador
- Odor
- Splendor
- Toreador
- Tudor
- Vendor

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



"This is serious! He seems to have developed an appetite for hospital food!"

Seasonal affective disorder is more than just being depressed

By Aansa Usmani

*Hello everyone! I am writing a new column titled **Insightful Awareness**. It is a column dedicated to mental health issues in depth. Each month, a mental health topic will be covered, detailing the symptoms to treatment options. As a mental health advocate, my mission is to educate others on mental disorders, helping to remove the stigma surrounding those suffering from these issues. The more we educate ourselves on these issues, the more likely we will be able to understand those suffering from them around us. **DISCLAIMER: I am not a licensed psychologist, the facts and figures are from the internet. If there are any serious concerns, please visit your local therapist.***

The column's first article will focus on Seasonal Affective Disorder (also known as SAD). According to Psychology Today, SAD affects roughly ten million individuals annually, with females being four times more likely to develop SAD compared to males. This type of depression tends to affect individuals ranging from late teens to the

early thirties. SAD often occurs during the changing of seasons, affecting one's mood; the causes of this can be determined through one's gender, history, and proximity from the equator.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, SAD is diagnosed when major depression symptoms occur during specific seasons for about two years. SAD can occur during any time of the year, yet it is more common throughout the colder months. This cyclical depression affects those around the same time annually; it begins within a certain season and the feelings tend to disappear during a seasonal change.

Although the exact cause of SAD is unknown, there are several key risk factors to consider when being evaluated. Living far from the equator (whether it be North or South) can cause symptoms of depression, leading to SAD; too much sunlight or too little sunlight can cause these symptoms to occur. Another factor to consider is whether there is a genetic predisposition; a family history of depression can lead to individuals developing SAD compared to those who do not. According to Psychology Today, many individuals with SAD

report having a relative with psychiatric disorders, with fifty-five percent reporting severe depression and thirty-four percent reporting alcohol abuse.

Symptoms of SAD include having low energy, overeating, weight gain, and social withdrawal. Other symptoms of SAD that occur during the warmer months of the year include having insomnia, agitation, anxiety, or episodes of violent behavior. Among these risk factors, there may also be some biological cues. For example, having low serotonin (a neurotransmitter that helps regulate sleep, digestion, and metabolism) could cause having symptoms of depression and/or SAD. Environmental factors can also be attributed towards SAD; when there is less sunlight, one is not as exposed to Vitamin D compared to one living in a hotter climate. This under-exposure of Vitamin D could lead to overdevelopment of melatonin—a hormone that regulates sleep—causing one to feel more lethargic and sleepier than usual.

Primary treatments for SAD include seeking therapy from a licensed therapist, alongside medication, as it may be helpful in alleviating some of the

symptoms. Besides conventional therapy, there are boxes that emit light that can be useful for treating SAD. These light boxes create a mimicry of outdoor lights; this can boost Vitamin D levels in the body, helping to regulate melatonin. It is to be used for roughly twenty-five minutes daily as long the symptoms persist. Although it is not certified by the FDA, it is an effective treatment option for those suffering from SAD.

If you think that these symptoms sound similar to what you experience on a near daily basis, please contact your local therapist/counselor.

Aansa Usmani is a first-year college student attending the University of Houston-Downtown. She is a Political Science major with plans to run for political office. She identifies herself as a social justice warrior, advocating for women, LGBT, immigration, and other liberal causes. Alongside politics, her passions include photography, writing, and debate. Although relatively young, she has demonstrated literate competency, writing about topics ranging from mental health to current events

What are you doing here at UHD?

By Mike Duncan

Yes, it's a question. Don't say "my major is accounting" or "the tuition is affordable" or "it was easy to transfer" – bland answers you give when cornered in a malfunctioning elevator (which happens a lot, so memorize those for future use.)

I'm thinking more along the lines of "What are you trying to do with your life?" The times someone has told you that you ought to go to college are, I suspect, more numerous than the times someone told you why. Even if they did offer a reason, it would be, again, bland – "to make money" or "to get a job." Reasonable capitalistic answers, surely. But I would argue here for an ultimately more useful purpose: to learn how and why to live.

My undergraduate career was a mess. I stumbled between countless introductory courses with no plan, driven more by what courses were open than anything. I didn't know how to seek advising. I graduated with a degree I didn't want in a field I disliked, and so eager "to make money" and "to get a job" that I failed to learn what I wanted, what the world needed, and how those could match up. Instead of preparing carefully for a balanced, healthy, and productive way to spend the next 40 years, I

wallowed. Sure, I stayed out of jail (what an accomplishment!), but I didn't figure out how to really use college until I came back for graduate school.

It's simple. All the tools to construct a solid foundation for a critical and nuanced adult human are in the halls of UHD. The trick is that they're not going to seek you out. You're going to have to hunt for them.

Taking all your requisite classes for your chosen degree and getting As across the board is not enough. You will graduate, sure – as a largely empty and directionless vessel, at the mercy of whatever your employer decides they need to turn you into – just like I did. This might be the last time you have some control over who you become. So, here's two things you could be doing to maximize your time here and gain control. Note here that I'm no wisdom dispenser – just a cranky professor that wishes he knew these things back then. The smartest thing you can do when pursuing a degree is find mentors. Seek those that 1) know how the university works, 2) know how the job market works, and 3) can push you to do better than you think you can. These three things have little to do with rote knowledge and much more about maturity and social skills. They are also rarely all present in the same person, so seek mentors,

not a mentor.

Professors are the obvious choice – to a certain extent, mentoring is their job. Forget grades – that's pointless. You're looking for real value – career and life guidance that lectures and assignments and exams can only indirectly address.

Talk to them, both in class and out. Inevitably, some will brush you off. It's not personal; all are overworked and underpaid, so don't corner them after class for a half hour when they just want to pee. Be respectful. Start with their office hours. With persistence, you'll connect. Tell them your hopes, your ideas, and your interests. Emphasize you want meaning in your life other than occupying an organizational slot. Shockingly, we are not instructional robots that deactivate when you leave the classroom. We go home and cook dinner and watch Netflix and clean up poop – just like everyone else – and we respond well to authenticity and poorly to fakery.

The second thing is harder: be aware of your progress, and no, I'm not talking about classes remaining. I mean whether you are getting a glimpse of something larger about yourself and the world.

You will know this when it happens. If it hasn't by your third year, then change your courses or major to shake it

loose. It will not hurt you to experiment with the vast array of classes that UHD offers.

Inside everyone are many promising yet closed doors. You need at least one to open – the glimpse – to have a shot at fulfillment. Without one, you may graduate employable, but miserable, as I did.

The lucky know before enrollment. If so, fantastic. If not, collecting many skills through a broad exploration of subjects is not a bad strategy. As Robert Heinlein once said, specialization is for insects. The complex combination may even be what you need. You can search for that glimpse and still satisfy the demands of our occasionally capricious degree plans. Mentors will help, but you must seek them out. The question is always worth answering.

Mike Duncan is an Associate Professor in the English Department and has worked at UHD since 2009. He teaches courses in technical communication, rhetoric, research methods, and other subjects related to writing instruction.

GatorServe lets students learn by giving back



Gators in action

By Janet Salas

On January 21, in honor of Martin Luther King Day, over a hundred faculty, staff, students and alumni of the University of Houston- Downtown volunteered for the biannual GatorServe Day. GatorServe was directed by Dr. Poonam Gulati and Assistant Director Krysti Turnquest. Volunteers completed projects in the home of 14 senior citizens in the Fifth Ward neighborhood. Project tasks consisted of painting, gardening, cleaning, mowing and various house chores.

One recipient, Army Veteran Antonio Loera, said he was grateful to receive assistance from the volunteers. The tasks completed by volunteers may seem like simple everyday duties; however, they are both expensive to low income households and a burden for elderly homeowners who live alone. GatorServe was created by the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning at the university. The purpose for the GatorServe is to engage students with volunteer opportunities within the community, while allowing hands-on experience that teaches personal development.

As defined by Wikipedia, community engagement is “a dynamic relational process that facilitates communication, interaction, involvement, and exchange between an organization and a community for a range of social and organizational outcomes.” While the formal meaning emphasizes the paybacks of community engagement to the community, others view it centered around the benefits that accrue to an individual taking part in a community engagement project alongside the benefits that accrue to the community through that collaboration. The benefits for community

engagement are immense. Not only does participation in community engagement provide an opportunity to develop a wider perspective of the world, but also an opportunity to see first-hand how much impact personal work can have on the lives of other people. As seen on the day of GatorServe, projects bring together people from different backgrounds, allowing all to learn empathy and patience while developing a global perspective.

With this view, community engagement is not only about the people living in a particular community and the challenges they face. It is a collaboration between community members and outsiders coming together to address problems in a particular community. This is both important to the community members as it is to the outsiders who volunteer to take part in the community engagement projects. It benefits the community members by addressing challenges that impact on their well-being. Likewise, it benefits the volunteers taking part in the projects by allowing them to develop a wider perspective of the world.

GatorServe is held twice a year on Martin Luther King Day and September 11th. Both dates are considered to be national days of service. For more information on GatorServe or community engagement and volunteer opportunities please email ccesl@uhd.edu or visit the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) on campus.

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