

# UHD **DATELINE**

Student Run Since  
Volume One

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Photo by Indira Zaldivar

## SGA stresses attendance, welcomes members

By Jema Pantoja

The Student Government Association's second general assembly concluded quickly due to the lack of attendance. Many of its members expressed concern that attendance has become an issue.

Vice President Jason Lillie said, "If you are a part of SGA, you have to come. We need to get the important things passed for the over 14,000 students that are part of the University of Houston-Downtown community."

SGA apologized to students that attended the second general assembly.

The members that did attend the second general assembly spoke briefly of upcoming plans, which included hosting "Break-

fast of Champions" alongside other college's student government associations. The breakfast will take place March 25th in room A300.

At their third general assembly, thanks to having enough senators, SGA inducted two new members, followed by the reinstating of two old members. Amir Merchant, a freshman finance major, was nominated and voted as senator-at-large. Zizi Kanybire, an international business major, was also nominated and voted as senator-at-large.

The reinstated members were Emerson Romero and Gerri Valle. Romero, who represents the College of Business,



SGA officers present at the second general assembly held on campus on February 3rd  
From left to right: Kassandra Aparicio, Chalsey Nelson, Jason Lillie, Mario Torres, Shay Tatum, Ameena Rasheed, Xiomara Herrera, and Camila Sandoval.

Photo by Indira Zaldivar

and is majoring in Marketing, was promoted from the position of Senior Senator to Chief Justice. Valle,

who is a graduate student, was promoted from Executive Secretary to Director of Community Outreach.

## UHD Bike Club hosts pizza social

By Indira Zaldivar

On Jan. 29, UHD's Bike Club President Vanessa Requena and alumnus "Lex" Perez led Gators in a ten mile bike ride through parts of Downtown and Midtown.

This was UHD Bike Club's first social-bike ride of the Spring 2020 semester, and the first for many of its new members.

Quentin Madunezim, a biology student, enjoyed his first social ride with UHD Bike Club, "When I rode, I just liked the feeling. It's just a calming feeling to clear

your head. Once you get to a destination, you can have a lot of fun and good food."

Before heading out, the bike club's officers shared instructions and expectations of the ride in front of the UHD Cycling Sign located next to the Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center. Houston Bike Share Marketing and Outreach Manager Abby Fernandez was present in support of UHD Bike Club to make BCycle bikes available for free to those who did not bring their own bike.



Bicyclists admire the mural at Houston Graffiti Building in Midtown Houston

Photo by Indira Zaldivar

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## THE DATELINE

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The Dateline has been the official student newspaper of the University of Houston-Downtown since 1982, and it has been "Student Run since Volume One". We strive to meet the needs of a growing university as well as the growing metropolitan city that surrounds us.

The newspaper is published bi-weekly, every other Monday, as well as over the Summer break.

Print circulation is 1,000 copies per issue and distributed to all college buildings throughout the University, as well as satellite campuses at UHD-Northwest.

Deadlines for contributions are one week before publication date. Contact the Editor for more information.

### Submission Policy

The Dateline staff consists of students from the University of Houston-Downtown who complete all tasks required to produce the newspaper, which serves the main UHD campus, and satellite campuses at UHD-Northwest. We want all students, regardless of major, to contribute. However, we must comply with our submission policy to operate under our limitations of time, energy, and staff.

The opinions and commentaries expressed within reflect the views of the contributing writers. No opinions expressed in The Dateline reflect the viewpoints of the University of Houston-Downtown, its administration, or students.

The Dateline reserves the right to edit or modify submissions for the sake of clarity, content, grammar, or space limitations. All submissions become property of The Dateline and may not be returned.

All staff and contributing writers must be currently enrolled students at the University of Houston-Downtown. The Dateline interacts with contributing writers via messaging, phone and/or email.

Press releases, story ideas, news tips and suggestions are always welcomed.

Any student interested in joining The Dateline staff may request more detailed information sending an email to the editors at:

editordateline@downtown@gmail.com.

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# From Iowa to South Carolina, chaos defines the race to the presidential candidacy in 2020

By Sheryl Sellers

The Democratic Party preliminaries got off to a rocky start during these first weeks of February 2020. The initial three preliminaries were characterized by chaos, eager young voters, and delayed reporting results.

The race to candidacy began on Feb. 3 in Iowa, historically the first state to hold a preliminary vote. The results from Iowa's 90 counties set a benchmark for the candidates moving forward.

Traditionally, results are reported before the end of the evening, followed by speeches from the front runners. Unfortunately, this year ensued chaos, as the results of the Iowa caucus were not forthcoming.

The reason for this snafu was hotly debated and theorized, running the gamut from Republican intervention, to cyber interference and finally to what may be the real answer - a newly devised reporting app and insufficient telephone lines available to the precinct chairs.

Due to complaints from the 2016 caucus, a new measure was added to determine the final delegate winner from each precinct. This additional measure led Iowa to use an app developed by the private firm, Shadow, rather than the pen to paper to phone call system previously implemented.

Some individuals predicted problems early on. For instance, the app had not been vetted for cybersecurity; it had not been tested appropriately or shown to analysts prior to its use, nor had the app

been evaluated by the Department of Homeland Security. Adding to the debacle, precinct chairs were not trained specifically on the app, and some were unable to download or log into it.

"When you have an app that you're sending out to 1,700 people, and many of them might be newer to apps and that kind of stuff, it might have been worth doing a couple months' worth of testing to make sure it is working correctly," said Sean Bagniewski, Iowa's Polk County chairman. Mayhem mounted with jammed phone lines, 90-minute hold times to call in results, and incoming phone calls to precincts requesting results that had already been reported.

The week following the caucus was fraught with frustration, heated conversations and backlashes from the candidates. However, it appears that an Iowa frontrunner has been established although the possibility of additional corrections remains.

The four frontrunners from the Iowa caucus were Pete Buttigieg, former Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, and former Vice President Joe Biden.

The next step in the primary race was New Hampshire which held its Democratic primary on Feb. 11.

Contender, Senator Bernie Sanders, won the New Hampshire primary. Sanders, who won the popular vote in Iowa had

a significant New Hampshire victory among young voters.

The fact that Sanders hails from a neighboring state did play a small part in his win inasmuch that the counties of New Hampshire that neighbor Vermont voted heavily for Sanders. However, the same parallel did not hold for Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, another neighboring state of New Hampshire.

Sanders' huge win among young voters can be likely credited to New Hampshire college students who began soliciting young voters as far back as 2016.

A student at the University of New Hampshire was one organizer of the youth movement to register young people to vote. They created a group known as the New Hampshire Youth Movement (NHYM).

The goal of the campaign was to boost young voter turnout by six percent, a benchmark they believed would put a progressive in the White House.

NHYM registered 12,000 new student voters. In January, NHYM, and Sunrise, another youth-led political organization, endorsed Sanders.

Quoted in Democracy Now following his win in the New Hampshire primary, Sanders stated, "And the reason I believe we are going to win is that we have an unprecedented grassroots movement from coast to coast of millions of people."

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The reason that we are going to win is that we are putting

together an unprecedented multigenerational, multiracial political movement. And this is a movement from coast to coast which is demanding that we finally have an economy and a

Biden, prophesized his own loss when he made a blatant blunder by going into the New Hampshire primary, stating, "You know, I took a hit in Iowa, and I'm probably going to take a hit here."

Rather than waiting for the New Hampshire results, Biden quickly departed for South Carolina, home of the next primary following the Nevada caucus on Feb. 22.

dent for The Nation, spoke with Democracy Now. Speaking about Sanders, Nichols stated, "He has to deliver a message that you can vote for the person you agree with and also beat Trump." Following the New Hampshire primary, the race moved to the Nevada caucus. Although the results were slow in reporting, it became clear that Bernie Sanders easily won in Nevada.

Like Iowa, Nevadans vote via a caucus rather than a secret ballot primary. Following the fracas in Iowa, Nevada negated using the Shadow app and returned to the original procedure of pen to paper counting. When Nevada chairpersons received busy signals while phoning in results, additional phone lines were created.

Whereas in Iowa, 80 phone lines were made available for results reporting, Nevada was prepared with 200 phone operators at its convention center.

Sanders' range of supporters is broad. In Nevada, he earned the support of casino workers, an important demographic, and he also had the support of Latinos and black voters. According to a poll displayed on Meet the Press on Sunday morning, there is now a small margin between Biden and Sanders in winning the black vote.

Going into the Nevada caucus, 43 percent of voters named health care as the most critical issue, and 62% supported

a single government plan.

The Culinary Workers Union, which represents 60,000 housekeepers, porters and bartenders in the Nevada hospitality arena, disputed a single government healthcare plan. They protested this idea stating that it would, in fact, end culinary health care." A reason for this was not offered.

A caucus is a private, local event run by the political parties themselves where voters meet and then vote for a candidate. Other states hold primaries which are run by the state and local governments, and individuals vote by secret ballot.

The last stop before Super Tuesday was South Carolina.

Its primary was held on Feb. 29. As expected, Biden won South Carolina with nearly half of voter support. Sanders came in behind him with 20%. Buttigieg who came in with only 8% of the vote (falling behind even Tom Steyer) quickly dropped out of the race after the South Carolina results were announced.

Super Tuesday, the date when voters in 14 states will vote in the primaries, will take place on Mar. 3. This is a significant day for the Democratic presidential candidates, as more delegates can be won on this day than any other single day during the process.



**Bernie Sanders**  
Major Campaign Points:  
Federally subsidized health care  
Investing in conservation and renewable energy  
Addressing federal student debt and easing tuition  
Reforming immigration and expanding DACA.

**Top Contributors: Univ. of California**  
Campaign Funds :: \$132,564,706

**Large Donors: 35%** // Individuals: 55%

**Total Delegates: 58**  
IA: 12 | NH: 0 | NV: 24 | SC: 19

# The Democratic Primary

by Shayla Hebert

**Joe Biden**  
Major Campaign Points:  
Significant investment to rebuild and strengthen the middle class  
Rebuilding America's international reputation through reform  
Reforming the election system, financial, and voting.

**Top Contributor: Masimo Corp.**  
Campaign Funds :: \$68,281,497

**Large Donors: 84%** // Individuals: 34%

**Total Delegates: 54**  
IA: 0 | NH: 0 | NV: 9 | SC: 39

**Unbound Delegates: 21**

**Delegates: 26**  
IA: 0 | NH: 0 | NV: 24 | SC: 19

**Points**  
Ending student loan debt  
Combating the climate crisis

**Elizabeth Warren**  
TC: Emily's List: \$128K

**Amy Klobuchar**  
TC: Walt Disney Co: \$83K

**DROP OUT**

government that works for all of us, not wealthy campaign contributors."

Another hopeful contender, Joe

Warming up for the Nevada caucus John Nichols, national affairs correspon-

# Dems duel in the desert

By James Jurewicz

The Presidential Democratic nominees duelled in the desert, and when the dust settled less than a week later, it was Senator Bernie Sanders at the top. Six candidates showed up in the ninth Democratic debate on Feb. 19 in Las Vegas to answer questions about the state of our nation and planet.

Senator Sanders from Vermont, former Vice President Joe Biden, Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg, former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren rounded out the night's debate contestants.

This debate arguably could have been called downright dull for the first 45 minutes. Though, that all changed when Buttigieg and Klo-

buchar had a very memorable exchange. Around the 45-minute mark Klobuchar was reminded of the time she voted in support of making English the national language of the United States. She was also reminded of her inability to provide the name of Mexico's president by Telemundo's Vanessa Huac.

Buttigieg was quick to set off Klobuchar by reinstating her lack of knowledge of the topic, considering she is on the Foreign Relations Committee.

Attempting to keep her voice even, through anger, she shakily responded, "Are you trying to say I am dumb? Or mocking me? I am the one, not you, who won over and over." It was this explosive exchange which seemed to bring new life to the stage.

Klobuchar

blamed her lack of knowledge of the Mexican government on momentary forgetfulness and admitted her error.

The most generous moment of the night was when Warren defended Klobuchar from Buttigieg's attacks.

"We all make mistakes," Warren reminded the audience. She reminded everyone to forgive and forget and not continually badger people for their past.

The current debate on climate change was addressed multiple times throughout the evening, as well as pollution and green energy. To corner a global market, Warren believes in developmental green science.

"Let's invent green energy in the U.S.," she stated. She also insisted that we establish patents for the technology so

that they can be made only in America.

Biden was there to remind everyone of the impending apocalypse with his scientific information. The deadline which global experts have put forth is seven years. If the planet does not try to reverse and reduce the effects humanity has on the natural world, then irreparable harm will be done. Therefore, humanity will not be able to survive as a species.

Biden stated his support of going green, "Let's eliminate subsidies in oil and gas immediately."

The person who had the most seemingly solid plan for healthcare that night was Sanders. "Healthcare is a right, not a privilege," Sanders insisted.

When he was asked by Biden how they would pay for the \$35 trillion cost of

universal healthcare, Sanders reiterated his plan for the taxation of the top one percent.

Sanders did blame Big Pharma and the insurance companies' exploitation of the American people as impediments to eventual universal healthcare. Sanders said he would create a more efficient system than the broken system already in place.

It seemed unanimous between the candidates that Bloomberg was trying to buy his way into the presidency. When pressed about his nondisclosure agreements (NDAs) regarding his past sexual harassment, he was defiant. But so was Warren.

"Are the women [under the NDAs] bound by being muzzled by you? And could you release them from

that immediately?"

Bloomberg was sticking to the arrangements and would not release anyone from the non-disclosure agreements.

Though, this changed in the days following the debate. Bloomberg has now agreed to release some of those affected by nondisclosure agreements.

The Democratic candidates duelled in the desert, and Sanders was the one to claim the Nevada. His popularity has stayed consistent, though it remains to be seen if Sanders can hold the lead and remain the most popular candidate, the American people will not have to wait long for these six candidates to be narrowed down to just one. The victor is hoping to paint the White House blue once again.

# Bernie and Biden battle at the ballot

By Shayla Hebert

Senator Bernie Sanders and former Vice President Joe Biden are battling as the Democratic Primary goes into Super Tuesday. Sanders, who still holds the highest number of delegates as of Mar. 2, may end up getting blindsided as two other candidates drop out of the race.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg announced the withdrawal of his presidential bid Sunday evening, Mar. 1. Sen. Amy Klo-

buchar announced her resignation from the primary midday on Monday, Mar. 2. Together the two candidates hold 33 delegates, and still remain on the ballots for Super Tuesday. Many voters are wondering to whom these delegates will go.

Some states, like Nevada, require delegates to vote for the candidate they are assigned, regardless on if the candidate withdraws from the race. However, the

majority of states allow these delegates to become "unbound" in which they can vote however they choose at the Democratic National Convention.

So that means that there are 30 delegates that are now "unbound"... except, if the withdrawn candidate endorses another candidate that is still in the running, their delegates are strongly urged to vote for the endorsed candidate. Klobuchar endorsed Biden

when she left the presidential race, so it is assumed that her seven delegates will now vote for Biden.

Subsequently, Mayor Buttigieg also made a statement to officially endorse Biden, strengthening the former Vice President's claim on the unbound delegates.

In addition, both Klobuchar and Buttigieg, are still on the ballots for Super Tuesday. With 14 states voting, including large states like

Texas and California, the two withdrawn candidates could still receive an impactful number of votes and more delegates.

With Sanders at 60 delegates and Biden at 54 delegates, the unbound delegates create an uncertainty for both candidates. Biden, who received a sudden spike in delegates in South Carolina, could acquire the unbound delegates and surpass Sanders by a large margin.

Former VP Joe Biden is a favorite amongst grass roots and centralists, so is a popular choice for older democrats. In contrast, Sen. Sanders is popular amongst younger and first time voters, and could potentially bring more democratic voters to the polls. Though they each have a different method of gaining support, many are concerned that the near equal split may lead to contention.

# President Trump's impeachment acquittal

By Lauren Anderson

On Feb. 5, President Donald Trump was acquitted of the two impeachment charges, concluding a nearly six-month journey of debate and political discourse within Washington.

The charges levied against the President were abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. The House votes for these charges were nearly identical; abuse of power was 52 to 48, while obstruction of Congress was 53 to 47.

The House Democrats were determined to remove Trump from office after it emerged that he had attempted to pressure Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelensky, to open an investigation into his political rival, Democratic presidential candidate and former Vice President, Joe Biden.

After his call with Zelensky, the White House halted sending military aid to the Ukrainian troops. However, Congress would intervene, resulting in the monetary support released.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), was initially hesitant in initiating impeachment proceedings, fearing further partisan division during an era of tumultuous political tension. However, after the whistleblower revealed the nature of the conversation between Trump and Zelensky, her mind was made up.

"The president leaves us no choice but to act, because he was trying to corrupt, once again, the election for his own benefit."

Pelosi believed that this incident should not be taken lightly; it is

allowing a foreign country to intervene in the 2020 election, similar to what had happened in the 2016 election.

The result of these actions would convince House Democratic members to pursue Articles of Impeachment; they believed that Trump abused the power of the Presidency, as he hoped to gain

political insights that would benefit his re-election bid.

For a President to be removed from office, the House needs to cast a vote in favor of impeachment. If the majority believes that he is guilty, the President is impeached, but not yet removed from office.

Afterward, the case moves to

the Senate Chamber, where Senators preside as "jurors" during the trial. Two-thirds of the Senate Chamber would have to vote in favor of removal from office, effectively ending a President's tenure in the White House and over the country.

However, impeachment is a political gamble, especially for vulnerable Democrats. Despite the risks, Senators Doug Jones (D-AL), and Joe Manchin (D-WV) voted along party lines in convicting the President.

On the contrary, the Republicans, siding with Trump, refuted these charges, labeling them as "phony" and "partisan."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-TN), a staunch supporter of the President, stated, "The idea of [Senate] Republicans voting

to convict Trump was inconceivable."

Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT), was the only Republican Senator to side with Senate Democrats in voting to remove Trump from office. However, his votes varied; he voted guilty on the abuse of power charge, yet he supported acquittal for the obstruction of Congress charge.

Although Romney supported Trump's removal from office, he wanted Congressional Members (both Senators and House Representatives) to focus on more pressing matters affecting individuals throughout the country.

Throughout this ordeal, Trump was optimistic about being acquitted, believing that he was innocent of the charges stated against him.



Celebratory video posted on Trump's Twitter after the acquittal  
Photo courtesy of Time Magazine

# Coronavirus travels across the globe

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease that has been spreading quickly since it was identified. The first case was confirmed in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, late December 2019.

Dr. Li Wenliang from Wuhan Central Hospital attempted to warn colleagues and the public communities about the newfound virus. When he first began sharing the news, he was warned by authorities to keep silent on the issue. Authorities asked him

to sign a letter stating he was not truthful in his warnings that he was and spreading rumors. Unfortunately, days after Li attempted to treat a patient, he contracted the disease and died around eight days after testing positive for the virus.

Many wondered what exactly caused the COVID-19 outbreak in the first place. As of today, the cause is still in question, but there is one possible answer. Upon investigation, it has been noted that a link between the

illness and an animal market in the city of Wuhan.

The disease is spreading like a wildfire due to international travel. Some countries have declared a public health emergency, resulting in stricter border entry and travel restrictions. The number of cases in China continues to increase, as well as the number of deaths. As of Feb. 27, around 80,000 global cases had been confirmed according to the World Health Organization (WHO), with a confirmed

2,800 fatalities.

With this epidemic, it is crucial to recognize what the symptoms of COVID-19 are. Signs will include cough, fever, and shortness of breath.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report, "Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure".

Reported illness have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Epidemics have been confirmed

in Iran, Italy and South Korea.

The CDC recommends some ways to protect yourself include washing your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds using soap and warm water, avoid touching eyes with dirty hands, and using a tissue when coughing or sneezing (to be disposed of).

WHO Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in a daily media briefing directly addressed countries saying "... this is your opportuni-

By Rosemary Miranda

ty. If you act aggressively now, you can contain this coronavirus. You can prevent people getting sick. You can save lives."

Ghebreyesus went on to list a number of ways countries can be prepared to detect COVID-19 and prevent hospital and community outbreaks.

"But we are not hopeless. We are not defenseless. There are things every country and every person can do."

# Trump delivers State of the Union Address

By Aansa Usmani

On Feb. 4, President Donald Trump delivered his annual State of the Union address to both chambers of Congress. His speech came on the heels of several prominent political events, from the disastrous Iowa caucuses to his Senate Impeachment Trial (though he was later acquitted).

Before the opening remarks, political tensions were displayed between Trump and House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, as the President refused to shake her hand after handing the annual address.

Similar to last year, the Democratic women wore white, symbolizing a century of the Women's

Suffragette Movement. Additionally, there were several Democratic members of Congress notably absent, such as Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14) and Congressman Al Green (TX-9), Congresswoman Maxine Waters (CA-43), among others.

Throughout the speech, Vice President Mike Pence and the GOP wing of Congress (Senate and the House) were cheering the accomplishments Trump had listed, ranging from previously established programs to apparent falsehoods.

An evident example is his "achievement" on Healthcare reform.

"Before I took office, health insurance premiums had more than doubled in just 5 years. I moved quickly to provide affordable alternatives. Our new plans are up to 60% less expensive — and better."

This remark contrasts the failed GOP attempts in repealing the Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare), which would have affected millions of Americans.

Like any State of the Union Address, the President extends invitations to certain individuals, calling upon their names and reading aloud their contributions towards the country or their achievements. This year, Trump invited

Rush Limbaugh, a prominent Conservative Radio Talk Show Host, Venezuelan Opposition Leader, Juan Guaidó, and many others. He also invited Janiyah Davis, a fourth grader from Philadelphia who was accepted into an elite public school.

During the Speech, Trump awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Rush Limbaugh.

"In recognition of all that you have done for our nation... and all of the incredible work that you have done for charity."

First Lady, Melania Trump, draped the medal around Limbaugh's neck, a move that

would later ignite controversy, both on social media platforms and on television. This award comes in light of Limbaugh's recent cancer diagnosis (as he has been diagnosed with stage four lung cancer).

President Trump continued his support for the Venezuelan Opposition Leader, Juan Guaidó, re-enforcing an anti-socialism sentiment echoed within the current Republican Party.

"Socialism destroys nations. But always remember: Freedom unifies the soul."

This statement was intended to show unity amongst the Venezuelan

people, especially those who are suffering from extreme poverty and food shortages under their oppressive, authoritarian, leader, Nicolas Maduro. Simultaneously, this message hoped to deter specific individuals from promoting "Democratic-Socialist" ideals and policies, like those supported by Senator and Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders.

Towards the end of the speech, political tensions were again ignited, as Nancy Pelosi began to rip up her copy of the annual address, signifying the divisive era of partisanship and her take on Trump's "accomplishments."

Regardless of one's political views, the State of the Union is an important address that the President delivers to the American People. Although this year had been more partisan than objective, it shows the direction that the current administration hopes to lead the country.



House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, rips up her copy of the address  
Photo courtesy of The Boston Globe website



Trump refuses to shake the hand of House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi  
Photo courtesy of The Boston Globe website

# Houston Rockets trade Clint Capela

By Laura Dunn

Late night on Feb. 4, it was announced that the Houston Rockets traded starting center Clint Capela in part of a never before seen four-way trade.

The Houston Rockets, Denver Nuggets, Atlanta Hawks and Minnesota Timberwolves made a twelve-player deal in

all. Houston Rocket players Capela and Nenê were picked up by the Atlanta Hawks. Nenê, however, was then waived by the Hawks the next day.

The Houston Rockets acquired Robert Covington, forward, from the Timberwolves and Jordan Bell, forward, from the Atlanta

Hawk's second-round picks. Covington, interestingly enough, started his NBA career with the Houston Rockets from 2013 to 2014 and is now back with the team six years later for 2020.

Capela and Covington were the main reason for the Houston Rocket's involvement in this

historic trade. However, this seemingly surprise mid-season trade has upset some loyal Rockets fans as the ever-revolving door swings around James Hardin. Many Rockets players have come and gone during Hardin's time here in Houston.

"There is a lack of team building,

and by the time the Rockets make it to the playoffs, Hardin is tired." Jim Williams, a die-hard Houstonian sports fan, told Dateline.

The managers are the ones that call the shots, not the fans, no matter how much they know about basketball. We will see if more long-term team

members come out of this trade in the end, and only time will tell if the trade will be beneficial to the Houston Rockets.



Photo courtesy of the @HoustonRockets via Twitter

# UHD traditions - Health Fair 2020

By Sheila Ortega-Calvillo

On Feb. 26, UHD hosted its annual Health Fair. The free event was open to all students, faculty and staff. The event offers free health screenings, food, gift bags, fitness assessments, chair massages, fitness demos, and information from community partners that Gators can take advantage of while visiting.

One of the most popular tables was Busy Bee, offering free HIV, hepatitis C, and syphilis testing, as well as complimentary condoms and pamphlets filled with safe sex information.

Students can continue to request these free resources from Busy Bee at any time by simply searching [beebusy.org](http://beebusy.org).

One of UHD's annual Health Fair traditions is to giveaway high dollar gifts, raffled at the entrance for those who visit enough tables. The giveaways at this fair were Apple AirPods, a backpack and a Fitbit Versa.

*Some of the many booths featured at this year's Health Fair*

*Photo by Sheila Ortega-Calvillo*



## FMA hosts BBVA professionals

By Deniece Joseph

The University of Houston-Downtown's Financial Management Association successfully held its first general meeting for the spring 2020 semester on Feb. 25.

As one of the most prominent business organizations on campus, FMA boasts a powerful mission statement, "To empower our members for success in Finance, in Business and in Life".

This was certainly held true at the group's recent workshop that welcomed past, current and future members. Where they were exposed to the benefits of active participation in the organization.

The workshop on "Developing a Business Plan" was presented by designated speakers from BBVA Bank. Scott Schuley, Business Banking Officer, Fertuna Belai, Vice President, Business Banking Officer, and Adam Madi, Vice President, Business Banking Officer II. They were joined by Christopher Baiz, Financial Sales Advisor, and Chris

Villarreal, universal banker. Students in attendance received helpful insight into key elements of a proper business plan, including how experts distinguish and analyze the potential of proposed businesses, both in theory and in practice.

Schuley also went on to highlight two major areas in which small businesses struggle, which he defined as unrealistic expectations and dedication, or lack thereof.

As professionals who meet high-level clientele on a daily basis, Schuley and the other guests were sure to leave a long-lasting impression, and a considerable amount of knowledge on those pursuing a career in finance and other areas of business.

The chapter headed by President Selena Requena and Vice President Keven Balderas promised students an educational, but

fun-filled semester. Including more activities geared towards an engaging campus life and professional advancement.

From their website, "The Financial Management Association at the University of Houston-Downtown (FMA-UHD) has a primary focus on facilitating educational advancement and knowledge in the area of finance, and general business practices. Additionally, this organization seeks to promote volunteerism and serve as an effective advocate for community engagement."



*Workshop attendees pose with speakers and FMA-UHD officers*

*Photo by Deniece Joseph*



*Health Fair offers free fruit and vegetables to UHD Students*

*Photo courtesy of the official Instagram of UHD Health Fair*



*Workshop attendees pose with speakers and FMA-UHD officers*

*Photo courtesy of the official Instagram of UHD Health Fair*

# Did you know...? Clubbing on campus

By Sheryl Sellers

Clubs, clubs and more clubs. There are over 90 clubs and student organizations to choose from at UHD for students seeking engagement, fun and service. Selections include fraternities, sororities, honorary societies, fitness clubs, student discipline clubs and many more. Here is a glimpse of just a few of the offerings at UHD.

The Garden and Compost Club organizes activities surrounding sustainability in the environment. This group is

actively seeking new members. Located at the Sustainability Garden near the police station, meeting times are Tuesdays from 2:30 p.m. -3:30 p.m. and Thursdays from noon to 1 p.m.

Animal lovers may want to pad over and sniff out the Animal Rescue Club. Members help at animal shelters and work with pet rescue groups.

Fandom UHD represents one of the more diverse clubs. Members include students interested in gaming and anime.

Enthusiastic students can glide over to the UHD Skater Club or the Bike Club, both offering fun and lively activities.

Regarding the Bike Club, owning a bike is not a requirement. BCycle rental bikes are available to students, faculty and staff at a discounted price.

“The UHD Bike Club is for everyone. Whether you are an experienced cyclist or have never ridden a bike in your life, we are here to help you reach your

goals,” explains Sheila Ortega-Calvillo, Director of Member Relations for UHD Bike Club.

The politically minded may discover inroads to advocating for justice through the Texas Freedom Network at UHD, Student Government Association or United Nations Association. These represent just a few of the organizations under the umbrella of political science.

Clubs and organizations are available within the disciplines of information

technology, financial management, accounting, marketing, engineering, supply chain management, government, human resources and education, as well.

Even though this is a concise list of the numerous student organizations available to you, diversity reigns within the available activities. This list, as well as the numerous other clubs and organizations, are certainly worthy of investigation. There is something for everyone looking to become

more involved on campus.

However, if there are no clubs that pique interest, students can also register new clubs through the Council of Organizations at the beginning of each academic school year. A list of current clubs can be found on the UHD website by following the links: Student Life, Student Activities, Student Organizations.

## Charlie Finch and his two decades in group fitness Faculty profile

By Anthony Raul Ramirez

Assistant Dean for the University of Houston-Downtown, Charlie Finch, Ph.D., has had an eventful journey through the fitness industry for over 2 decades.

Finch began his experience with fitness in 1993 in Columbia, South Carolina. While in his second year of graduate school, he began taking group exercise classes at a fitness studio known as The Firm. Over time, one of the owners approached Finch about working for the studio as a fitness instructor. He completed an instructor training course and began teaching at the studio for a free membership and to help pay for his graduate classes.

In 1997, Finch came to UHD as an assistant professor of

psychology and eventually taught multiple courses, including intro to psychology, abnormal psychology, human sexuality, and theories of personality.

When he came to the school, Finch also began working in UHD's Sports and Fitness department where he can still be found teaching step aerobics. He has taught group exercise classes at UHD for 22 years, as well as strength training and aerobics fitness at the University of Houston, the YMCA, the University of South Carolina, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Finch explains why he enjoys teaching fitness classes and encourages others to get involved. “Fitness helps overall health, attitude, stress levels,

and most importantly, you get to eat more of the foods you enjoy!”

Finch knows that exercising is a difficult habit to make, but he encourages students to get involved in the fitness classes at UHD. “I just want to encourage people to find a fitness niche that works for them. Not every class is perfect for everybody. You have to try a lot of different classes to find what fits you, but you do need to stick with what you find. That should be part of your everyday mantra. You've got to be physically active to be healthy and productive.”

While carrying different positions at UHD, Finch manages to use his experiences to help others make exercise fun.

Finch shows students

that we can always find time to be physically active, all it takes is an attempt.



Finch demonstrating a weighted forward lunge during his step-up aerobics class  
Photo courtesy of UHD Sports and Fitness website



Finch flexing with one of his fitness students  
Photo courtesy of UHD Sports and Fitness website



# Black Women Empowerment Brunch and Panel

By Indira Zaldivar

At the Black Women's Empowerment Brunch and Panel, the Student Government Association awarded students and guest speakers recognition for their dedication and commitment to black women empowerment. The event was organized by the Black Student Association and the Student Government Association and took place on February 18th, 2020 in room N480.

Sheila Jackson-Lee, House Representative in U.S Congress for Texas 18th Congressional District gave a powerful message to the audience in celebration of Black History Month.

"I always tell people who have months of celebration, Fiestas Patrias, or any of these wonderful holidays and when we are celebrating Ramadan, I always tell them this; whoever you are, you live your history every single day. I live my history as a proud African American who has helped to build this country. Black history is living history and it is comprised of the many people who have fought whose names you don't know."

Jackson-Lee

handed out some of the recognitions at the event awarded by the University of Houston-Downtown and SGA. Shenaedra "Shay" Tatum, president of SGA, was the first to receive recognition. The audience gave Tatum a standing ovation for being UHD's first African American female SGA president.

Tatum moderated the earlier panel discussion of guest speakers that included black women with exemplary civic engagement and successful careers. "Being around these women who are millionaires, best sellers, and their own light. Being in the midst of their success and encouragement makes you feel like you can move a mountain and you feel like you can do something greater."

The panelists also advised that one needs to set boundaries and identify limits. Brigid Roberson, CEO of Bridge2Greatness Incorporated said, "Know what your limits are. Sometimes we try to wear the cape all the time, but it is okay to take the cape off."

Dr. Creshe-ma Murray, associate professor at UHD, and coordinator for the

Communication Studies Program added, "At the end of the day you have to take care of your body and your mind. Take that PTO from God. Take care of yourself first and say no. No is a complete sentence. You don't owe anyone any explanation."

When the panel was asked what their hypothetical superpower would be, Dr. Conte Terrel, Executive Director of Fresh Spirit Wellness Incorporated and best-selling author said, "My power would be to show you, future you. Don't get too caught up with who you are now. Everything you are going through right now, is so you can become your best self later."

"If you have the ball, they're going to try to take it away from you. Haters gonna hate. Turn your kryptonite into your superpower," said Jolanda Jones current lawyer and former Houston City Council Member At-Large and HISD School Board Trustee, District IV. Jones repeated her message in Spanish and shared she learned Spanish by going to school in the third ward of Houston. She is currently running for Tax Assessor-Collector.

DoVeanna S. Fulton Ph.D., associate professor at UHD and Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, stressed the importance of unity and mentorship among women. "There are barriers but you find a way. It has been important to have a quadrant of women that are supportive."

Fulton is the only black woman dean at UHD. Influenced by the Black Feminist Theory, Bell Hooks, and Audre Lorde, she added, "The thing that spoke to me was this recognition that we were never meant to survive. By working together and being conscious of what we are doing and how we are doing it, is how we'll overcome those barriers."

As for career advice, Monique Umphrey Ph.D., President of Houston Community College Northeast encouraged women to embrace their natural essence even in male-dominated fields.

Speaking from her experience working in the information technology field, "Gain hard skills that will pass you through the HR screening but, as a woman, focus on the essence

of your humanity. The thing that will set you apart is not what you know or what you can Google. What will set you apart is your humanity."

Umphrey said, "The ability to be empathetic and share creativity is what will differentiate you in the ages of automation."

The panelists also shared words of encouragement including advice on losing a loved one.

Felicia Harris Ph.D., assistant professor at UHD, said, "My freshman year, one of our brothers was killed by police. It was before the national conversation about police brutality. He was committing a crime, he was armed, but I knew why he was committing that crime. We were poor and we were hungry. I had to figure out what this thug life was about and how easily it could cause my life to be taken from me. I took off running in the opposite direction. I needed to get out. It really shaped how I see injustice, and those who we call disenfranchised and marginalized."

After losing her daughter, Bria, to drowning in 2005, De-onesia Grays founded

Bria's House, a foundation that funds swimming lessons for kids in low-income families.

Amanda Edwards, an attorney and former Houston City Council member, said, "My father's death motivates me to be the voice for people who have an urgent need."

Edwards' father passed away from cancer. Edwards is currently running as a Democratic U.S Senator. If she succeeds, she will become the first black woman from Texas to hold that position.

The event received positive feedback from the audience.

Ameena Ra-sheed, student at UHD and executive secretary of SGA said, "I really enjoyed the panel for all college students going through individual battles and seeing women of distinction motivate and inspire others."

UHD alumnus and district case worker, Alma Vazquez said, "I encourage women to attend these events no matter their color because you'll hear encouragement stories that you probably wouldn't hear because of your background."

# UHD Bike Club hosts pizza social *(Continued from page 1)*

By Indira Zaldivar

The bikers departed UHD around 7 p.m. They visited EaDo Bike Co, a local bike shop located in East Downton. During the stop at Houston Graffiti Building, they took a group-photo and pictures of the newly painted mural of Kobe Bryant. As planned, bikers had a chance to socialize and eat at Luigi's Pizzeria located in Midtown Houston. The ten-mile trip ended back at UHD around 10

p.m. Elwin Jaime, a Master of Science in Data Analytics student, joined UHD Bike Club last semester and shared his thoughts on bike club, "What I like about the bike club is being around like-minded people who enjoy bike riding and the outdoors. My favorite part of the bike ride was being outside with the night sky and cool breeze after a long day of school."

"The goal of

UHD Bike Club is to show how riding a bike in the city is very convenient and how we can have fun doing it," said Lex Perez, one of the founders of UHD Bike Club.

"We just want to get people on bikes and show them things they've never seen before. There are so many things to see around the city like landmarks and murals. I just want to show that to the students of UHD. There

is a more urban feel of what the city is like and I want to show what Houston has to offer."

Lex graduated recently but continues to actively participate in the club, as well as with other organizations at UHD to help meet the criteria for the bicycle-friendly campus recognition awarded by the League of American Bicyclists.

Vannesa Requena, the President of UHD Bike Club and

biology student, bikes to school every day. "I want to entice students to come out, ride and see the city in a different perspective. I want to show them that there are other ways to get around than by car. It's way more fun."

Requena also explained that they are currently petitioning to get bike docks inside the parking garages so that bikers can stay dry. Other plans include, organizing an event

with the Animal Rescue Club, setting up Greek rights, and getting more members who are passionate about cycling.

Requena says, "We're looking for a lot of help. People that would like to step up and help us with the rides. Making sure everybody gets to their destination safely is our priority."

# February faculty senate meetings

By Sheryl Sellers

The campus Faculty Senate held their bi-monthly meetings at 2:30 p.m. on Feb. 4th and Feb. 18th in the Milam/Travis Room. As deemed by parliamentary procedure, the meetings began with a call to order and approval of the minutes from the previous meeting.

Tables and chairs for the senate members are situated in a U-shape with President, Dr. Michael Duncan, seated at the center of the table. President-elect, Professor Ronald Beebe and past President, Professor Hsaio-Ming Wang, seated to his right and senate secretary, Dr. Michael Cavanaugh, seated on his left. Senate members flanked the tables on either side.

On Feb. 4th, 22 of the 32 senate members were in attendance. Approximately seventeen faculty and staff visitors took seats at the back of the room. UHD President, Dr. Juan Sanchez Munoz, also attended and at times indicated his approval by applauding the speaker or announcement.

Two guests, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs, Dr. Eric Carl Link and Vice President of Admin-

istration and Finance, David Bradley, MBA, presented reports to the senate.

Provost Link began with a report on faculty and staff merit-increases and the formulas used to determine the increases. He recognized that UHD faculty are historically undercompensated and stated that the university will involve CUPA going forward. CUPA-HR monitors trends, workplace issues and conducts research for colleges and universities.

Provost Link also responded to recent senate resolutions, which included a request for additional start up research funds for incoming tenure track faculty. Dr. Jerry Johnson, Associate Vice President, Faculty, Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) said that the program will give additional funding to allow for \$70,000-\$80,000 to go into research, amounting to \$3,500 distributed to each new faculty member.

An ongoing study of online teaching assessments was also discussed by the provost. A task force, chaired by psychology professor, Dr. Susan Henney, stated that the charging document

contains 12-13 items and a great deal of work is ongoing.

Bradley discussed the question of inadequate faculty and staff parking options. To alleviate this problem, 43 student parking spaces in the new lot behind the Sciences and Technology Building are slated to be renamed as faculty and staff parking. Bradley stated that faculty and staff may park in student spaces if necessary. A discussion followed regarding enlarging the lot behind the Commerce Street Building. Faculty noted that typically no parking spaces are available after 11 a.m. at the Washington Street Lot.

He then addressed the question of student involvement in faculty searches via the Student Government Association (SGA) and the possible benefits for SGA members to attend the faculty research presentations.

Following the above reports, the senate addressed updates and new business which included changes to the process of electing new officers.

Several matters were also brought up including:

Support of junior faculty while not disenfranchising

tenured faculty, update on the Bridge to 50 Plan, and funding for Organized Research and Creative Activities (ORCA).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:57 p.m.

Approximately two dozen visitors attended the second meeting on Feb. 18th, and President Munoz was again present. Provost Link reported on the creation of a three-year academic calendar.

He was joined by his "team experts," on the subject Daniel Villanueva, M.A., Associate Vice President Enrollment Management, Lucy Bowen, Executive Director Academic and Student Affairs, and Shannon Cunningham, Associate Registrar.

The three-year calendar will attempt to uphold to the 45-contact hours each semester as dictated by the Texas Administrative Code. A further goal is that the finished calendar will be better aligned with that of the entire University of Houston System.

Creating a 45-contact hour calendar has been daunting. Decisions on how to address the final exam schedule or start semesters earlier or end later were tested by the provost's team. Put into

the algorithm were transfer students from other systems such as Houston Community College and Lone Star College. A lengthy discussion on the topic ensued. Two options were considered, reducing reading days from 2 days to 1 day and reducing the time for a final exam from 2 1/2 hours to 2 hours.

A vote was taken and changing the time given for a final exam to 2 hours was passed. With this decision made, the three-year academic calendar can be completed.

Provost Link also discussed the need for a continuity of operations plan. In the case of an emergency, such as an outbreak of the coronavirus, it is essential to have a comprehensive plan in place. An update is typically presented each April and May. He also stated that a request for proposal (RFP) has been sent to various entities to determine the best company suited for a market compensation study.

Following Provost Link's reports, Associate Professor of English, Michelle Moosally, reported that the Common Reader program for incoming freshman has been put on hold for the Fall

semester. The need for continuing with a Common Reader will be determined.

Erica Harrison, Title IX Equality and Diversity Officer, reminded the senate members about the new Title IX law on sexual discrimination and sexual harassment. Under Senate Bill 212, all Texas university employees must report violations. An important feature of the new law states that if an incident is not reported, the faculty or staff member at fault must be terminated.

Further, conversations will not be considered confidential. Harrison stressed the seriousness of the new law and the need for faculty and staff to be aware of the rules and consequences.

Attendance on training, which will include a comprehensive definition of sexual contact, is mandatory for faculty and staff.

Next up was Dr. Ron Beebe's update on the efforts of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Mission statement and branding were discussed, and upcoming Town Hall meetings set for Mar. 18th and 19th. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m. The next meeting is set for March 3rd.

## Political rhetoric conference held at UHD

By Rosemary Miranda

On Feb. 25, a Communication Studies speaker event, hosted by UHD's Professor Mitha, was held at the Robertson Auditorium.

Political rhetoric was addressed by guest speakers. Speakers of the event included Texas State Representative Gene Wu, Benjamin Hernandez, and UHD's Dr. Lawrence.

Wu's presen-

tation was about the importance of learning how to talk to different groups of people.

He said, "When it comes to sharing ideas, it's not just about what you say, it's how you say it."

He also encouraged those that attended to understand that rhetoric can be weaponized.

When asked for advice on how to participate in an elec-

tion when one is not eligible to vote, he said, "Becoming part of an organization and engaging in social media is extremely effective." Another possibility is to become an intern for his office in which Professor Mitha must be contacted for further details.

Hernandez, the founder and CEO of Human Age Digital, demonstrated three ex-

amples of what people know think they know about each other.

An example he used was his "favorite description of himself" a "millennial, immigrant, once undocumented, regular guy."

The purpose behind the examples, was to present his movement. Which is to change who runs in an election, how they do it, and what they do once

they are elected.

One reason for this is because in cases such as the primary elections, only 15% of the population will even show up to vote.

He believes people must go beyond what they see. Additionally, regarding voting, he pushes young voters to participate in campaigns and use social media platforms.

Ending the

event, Dr. Lawrence declared, "Three secrets every person should know to change the rules and change the world."

The first voices plus ears equal strength. The second, diverse ways of seeing the world makes better decisions. The final secret, truth, empathy, and kindness makes the best communities.

# “All Over Again” - A magnifying approach to teenage angst and puberty

By Deniece Joseph

“All Over Again” is the debut novel by English-born A-Dziko Simba Gegele, who is of Nigerian and Jamaican decent. The novel takes place in Riverland, Jamaica where a 12 year-old boy faces numerous challenges and typical trials of life that seem insurmountable in the eyes of a child on the brink of teenagerhood. This charming coming of age tale humors the reader with a highly introspective plot that brings forth feelings of deep-seated satisfaction and frustration at the author for not continuing to tell the enchanting narrative of this clever and cunning child.

The unnamed male narrator is from the sleepy village of Riverland where he suffers from many pubescent issues such

as taking advice from your meddlesome parents, winning over your longtime crush, having an unbeatable enemy, transitioning through puberty, learning essential life lessons, second-hand embarrassment and worst of all, dealing with younger siblings who just don't seem to obey. The story begins with the protagonist seeking revenge against Daddy, his continuously reprimanding father, and Mary Janga, his six-year-old sister and the very bane of his existence. Throughout the novel, the reader is introduced to the main character's mother who encourages him to dedicate himself to his schoolwork, Grandpa, who serves as a voice of long acquired wisdom, and his cousin Delroy, the faithful assistant to the main character as he journeys to achieve his

goals. Second person narration is utilized to allow the reader to submerge themselves in the protagonist's world. From the chapter titles to the dialect, readers are persuaded to dig into their innermost memories, conjuring up unforgettable moments in their lives that can be triggered by Gegele's words.

At first, it appears as if our protagonist is Mary Janga. But she is later replaced by a far more domineering figure, leaving Mary Janga to primarily serve as an exaggerated representation of the difficulties of younger siblings. Gegele displays the quintessential cliché of any coming of age tale and highlights the protagonist's rivalry with the know-it-all Kenny who is affectionately referred to as

“Big Head, Big Mouth Kenny,” the protagonist. Kenny is arrogant, rich and spoiled, the opposite of the narrator who despises him for it.

Life lessons are a prominent theme as the young boy learns to forgive and to refrain from blaming others for things that out of their control. Gegele also introduces three essential principles that elicit a reflective philosophy. They cover “Friends & Family”, “Love is Love” and “If you love someone, don't hurt them.” The main character introduces a fourth principle that connects the previous three. The narrator puts forth “that's about saying goodbye to someone even though you don't want them to go because you understand they need to do what they need to do. It's about letting them go

like that but not letting them go because you can always call them or text them or write to them because Principle One and Principle Two and Principle Three.”

The novel focuses on the exploration of humanity furthered by the author's use of “This Voice” and “That Voice”, references to the classic plot device of the angel and the devil on the shoulder - conscience and temptation.

The novel also explores aspects of childhood adventure, classic family moments, the need to replicate exciting and exhilarating scenes from television, and the fantasy of escape. It demonstrates that parents only want what is best for their child. One scene from the novel that best depicts this is the pre-teen wanting to learn how

and being denied by his father despite the fact that he will be a teenager in nine days. The narrator responds to this refusal when he tries to drive the vehicle the instant he is directed to wash it by his father.

In the end, the clichés continue as we come to the end of the tale as the teenager prepares to overcome his opponent, Kenny, and approach his longtime crush while worrying over his mother's expectations and the meaning of his father's words. In a nutshell, “All Over Again” is an enjoyable, well-written book that highlights the often overlooked daily situations and magnifies them, forcing the reader to analyze their own actions.

# “Birds of Prey” emphasizes plot over characterization

By Katelyn Houser

“Birds of Prey and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn” arrived in theaters Feb. 7, 2020 to critical reviews, but the box office numbers told a different story.

The film revolves around Harley Quinn. After splitting up with the Joker, she tries to make a name for herself. But now that she no longer has the Joker's protection, every single denizen of Gotham she has ever wronged is after her.

One such person is narcissistic crime boss Roman Sionis and his right-hand man Victor Zsaz. Sionis and Zsaz have placed a bounty on a young pickpocket named Cassandra Cain who is in possession of the Bertinelli Diamond, a diamond with an encrypted code that grants the owner access to a

fortune capable of making anyone the most powerful and influential person in Gotham.

The film also follows the paths of Huntress, the last surviving member of the Bertinelli crime family and the rightful heir of the Bertinelli Diamond. We're also introduced to Black Canary, Roman Sionis's former club singer turned personal driver. The flock is completed with Renee Montoya, a former detective for the Gotham Police Department. Harley eventually crosses paths with the would-be Birds of Prey and together they fight Sionis and his army of thugs who are after both Harley and Cassandra Cain.

The film flies by for a comic book movie. Some scenes felt longer than others and just when the audience

would think the movie was about to switch gears, the momentum would stop and the film would backtrack to retell the story from a different perspective before moving onto the next beat.

Margot Robbie's constant narration throughout the film, while entertaining, defeated the purpose of the 10 - 15-minute flashback sequences. Robbie's portrayal of Harley Quinn along with her impeccable comedic timing alone are worth the price of admission and is a natural evolution for Quinn's character from the previous film, “Suicide Squad”. The movie was clearly meant to be a Harley Quinn solo outing, especially when the group the movie is supposed to be about is reduced to nothing more than a supporting

cast for Harley's emancipation.

Initial reviews on IMDB and Rotten Tomatoes appear to be mostly positive by audience and critics alike. Despite the warm reception, the movie only managed to open at a mere \$33.2 million at the domestic box office for the opening weekend. It is the lowest “big” comic book movie debut in recent memory and the worst DC movie release since the forgettable “Jonah Hex”.

As a Harley Quinn fan, it was exciting to finally see a girl power fueled movie. However

due to the film's scrambled storytelling and the little screen time the gang received, the film was ultimately a disappointment. Harley Quinn is a complex character. No longer a villain, she has been reborn into an anti-hero in the comic book world. But DC failed to show the outstanding personal growth Harley has made in attempting to keep the sociopathic criminal everyone knows. If the movie would have been

a character driven team outing rather than a plot driven scramble to the finish line, it would have given reviewers that extra push to convince the audiences to get into their seats.

The film is definitely not boring. The action sequences are great, had great humor and stunning cinematography. Unfortunately, this movie felt like a cash grab, successful or not.



Harley Quinn front and center alongside the Birds of Prey  
Photo courtesy of framedated.co.uk

# These are no gentlemen - Film review

By James Jurewicz

In "The Gentleman", Guy Ritchie delivers his stylistic mix of rich and complex storytelling. Another truly original film from the British director and a welcome start to 2020 cinema. This film is rife with Ritchie's signature R rated violence. At its core, The Gentleman is the story of a man ready to sell a successful business and finally enjoy his life. But this film is so much more.

Matthew McConaughey portrays Mickey, a destitute expat from the American South whose Einstein-like mind has earned him Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University in England. Instead of using his mind to make the world a better place, he establishes himself in the world of black market cannabis sales in the United Kingdom. In order to make

an intimidating name for himself, Mickey bestows extreme violence against anyone who crosses him. His opening credo is "If you wish to be the King of the Jungle, it's not enough to act like a King. You must be the King. There can be no doubt. Because doubt causes chaos and one's own demise." He quickly moves up the ranks in the European cannabis trade and is considered to be at the pinnacle of success in his business.

The threat of eventual legalization of cannabis in the United Kingdom is enough to motivate Mickey to sell. It is Mickey's violent past that keeps him from legitimizing his business upon legalization. Ready to settle down and retire, Mickey's most promising successor is an American entrepreneur "Mat-

thew Berger" played by Jeremy Strong. Berger is ready to cut the check for the whole empire though Mickey shows reluctance to sell and considers competing offers. The other interested parties are what really gives this film its teeth. Multiple criminal kingpins want in on the action and provide low-ball offers which are considered by Mickey as a personal insult. The situation really comes to a head when one of Mickey's elaborate grow ops is raided while filmed by a youtube hip hop group with superior boxing skills. Posting the video online, the group flex their boxing ability, handily defeating Mickey's stout security.

The group are responsible for instigating the chain reaction which Guy Ritchie films are famous for. They are also some of

the standouts of the film, be sure to stay after the film's closing scene for a fantastic song and music video. Colin Ferrell is brilliant as the group's boxing instructor and mentor, simply known as "Coach". Ferrell has an underutilized knack for a subdued style of physical humor. This is showcased by Coach's hilariously kinetic interactions with the other characters. We are shown most of the film through a conversation between Hugh Grant's amusing yet sleazy tabloid reporter "Fletcher" and Mickey's capable first lieutenant "Raymond", portrayed by Charlie Hunnam. Fletcher's goal is the extortion of Mickey, threatening to expose his illegal business practice if he is not paid £20 million. Hugh Grant disappeared into his role as Fletcher after

his 2 year big screen hiatus. Nearly unrecognizable, Fletcher's appearance, voice and mannerisms cannibalize Grant's 1990s-2000s typically likable rom-com persona. Fletcher is the character in The Gentleman who both manages to simultaneously be the most morally reprehensible yet least violent.

Ritchie is adept at making mainstream big budget movies. 2017's King Arthur and the Robert Downey Jr led Sherlock Holmes franchise (2009, 2011) among them. These movies offer straight forward storytelling for a mainstream audience and accessible characters with a clear-cut plot. Conversely, The Gentleman is a complex and original film with the interwoven stories of individual characters contributing to the film as a whole. Ritchie has

yet again created an entire British Underworld and we can all hope that it is only a matter of time till he creates a shared universe for his cinematic contributions. The Gentleman has more than enough material for a sequel, a quip made onscreen by the reporter Fletcher. The talented director really shines in a return to his roots ala Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels (1998) and Snatch (2001). Judging by the packed theater on the first weekend, Ritchie's films are still advertising well. The hearty laughs and theater-goers still planted in their seats through the after-credits scene illustrated that The Gentleman was enjoyable enough to capture and contain audience attention.

## "Sonic the Hedgehog" spin-dashes past box office expectations

By Carlos Reyes

The long awaited "Sonic the Hedgehog" movie arrived in theaters on Feb. 14, 2020 to both critical and financial success. Such success could not have been expected from the initial teaser trailer release showing a Sonic design that could only be described as nightmare inducing. The story revolves around the titular character Sonic, a blue hedgehog from an alien world born with great

power often hunted by other aliens looking to harness said power. Sonic's mentor Longclaw the owl, gives the blue hedgehog a bag of transportation rings, sending him to earth for his own safety.

Sonic spends the next decade on Earth on the small town of Green Hills, Montana, where he uses his supersonic speed to avoid being seen by the townsfolk, while pretending to be a part of their daily lives

from afar. Until one night, overwhelmed with loneliness, a frustrated Sonic unintentionally causes a nationwide blackout. The Nations Pentagon calls upon the help of Dr. Robotnik, a genius (played by Jim Carrey) for help in investigating the cause of such suspicious activity.

Once again on the run, with an open portal, and ready to flee to another world, Sonic seeks the help of Green Hill's resident officer, Tom Wachowski (played by James Marsden: X-Men, Hairspray, The Notebook), who shoots him with a tranquilizer gun. As he's passing out, Sonic accidentally, drops his

bag of transportation rings, activates a ring that opens up in San Francisco, and looses all the rings that drop into the city. Now the two must go on a trip to find Sonic's rings while avoiding Dr. Robotnik capturing Sonic for experimentation.

The story is straightforward, but at times it can come off as derivative of other films like E.T.. The movie has a small problem with product placement, however, what it lacks in originality, it makes up for in subtle self-awareness, undeniable charm, and well delivered one liners.

The movie's unprecedented success stems from the fact that, after the critically panned movie trailer previewed a horrendous design of the titular

character, Paramount Pictures listened to fan feedback, delayed the release date by a month, and spent extra money to adjust Sonic's image into something truer to the source material. To Paramount's surprise, the decision paid dividends. According to

Box Office Mojo, the film has officially crossed the \$200 million mark. The studios decision to remain true to Sonic's more seminal design became well received by audiences both familiar and new to the

franchise. This movie may mark one of the few instances a movie studio took fan feedback to heart, turning an expected box office flop into one of the most successful video-game movies of all time.



Sonic the Hedgehog before and after redesign  
Photo courtesy of CNN



Movie poster with Sonic The Hedgehog & Tom Wachowski  
Photo courtesy @DolbyCinema via twitter.

# Y2K-esque glitch in "WWE 2K20" - Video game review

By Anthony Raul Ramirez

Imagine being a kid opening presents on Christmas to find a brand new video game to play alongside your friends, and then one week later no longer being able to play that game anymore due to a flaw in its development. This is exactly what happened to people who bought "WWE 2K20."

The video game is the latest installment in the annual WWE video game series that has produced one every year since 2000. These yearly releases do seem beneficial, at least from a traditional standpoint,

considering the game releases a month before Christmas. But this also creates a severe lack of development, as the developers have less time between releases to modify and improve the product.

Since the original publishers (THQ) lost rights to the series in 2012, current publishers (2K Sports) and developers (Visual Concepts) are attempting to ground the games in more realistic gameplay mechanics.

Because of the environment with which character mod-

els interact, including ring ropes, barricades, weapons, tables, and everything else found in pro wrestling matches, the more "realistic" mechanics lead to several interesting situations.

The current installment was filled to the brim with glitches, sparking the hashtag #FixWWE2K20. Fans were quick to notice similar flaws and glitches as the hashtag began trending on Twitter as early as the day of the game's release on Oct. 22, 2019.

More interestingly, the Y2K20 glitch

Coined by newLEGACYinc in YouTube video entitled "WWE Y2K20," this glitch forces the game to crash when attempting to load from the main menu, making it virtually unplayable. Fans eventually discovered that the game would work if the console's date was set back to a day in 2019, proving that the entrance into the new year is at fault for the crashes. For whatever reason, "WWE 2K20" became unplayable in 2020.

The game crashing glitch was

eventually fixed with an update patch, but not without damaging the reputation of developers, Visual Concepts. "WWE 2K20" was Visual Concepts' first attempt at the 2K series without assistance from former developer, Yuke's. This first attempt was received as an abysmal failure by fans and critics.

To put things into perspective, the last installment "WWE 2K19" was rated a 76 by critics and a 5.6 out of 10 by users on Metacritic, while "WWE 2K20" was

rated a 42 and a 1.4, respectively.

The failure of "WWE 2K20" is best described by Mitchell Saltzman in his IGN review of the game, "'WWE 2K19' looked like it stopped the downward trend for the series, but 'WWE 2K20' doubles back, breaks its ankle, and tumbles down the slope'".

It is an absolute tragedy to see how far the WWE series has fallen, as well as how many fans have given up completely on the product.

# BBQ contest kicks off Houston Rodeo

By Laura Dunn

The 2020 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo takes place between Mar 3 - 22 this year, but it always kicks off with pre-Rodeo events. This coming weekend's event will excite and delight Houston area food fanatics' taste

buds. From Thursday, Feb 27 - 29 you can head down to NRG for some BBQ at the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest.

Over 250 elite teams will be competing for a chance to prove who can truly deliver the best of the

best. Each team is invited to enter the contest making it an honor to compete. The exclusivity makes winning highly coveted. These teams won't be holding anything back.

Tickets for this event allow access to the contest, a BBQ

brisket plate, and access to live music areas. The carnival rides will also be in full swing. Access to the team tents are invitation only, requiring private tent passes distributed by the teams themselves. Despite this, the public can still enjoy the many other

attractions this event is offering. If you happen to have a private tent pass, a grounds ticket is still required to access the rest of the event.

The hours for the contest are as follows:

Thursday Mar. 27 from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Friday Mar. 28 from Noon to 11 p.m.

Saturday Mar. 29 from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.

# "Allie Cat" Comics

By Carlos Reyes

By Carlos Reyes



By Carlos Reyes



# Artificially inseminated cows and Brad Pitt

By James Jurewicz

When it was announced that “Parasite” had won its fourth record breaking Oscar to close out Academy Awards, it became apparent the awards were headed in a new direction. These awards are all firsts for South Korea who, after 30 submitted films, garnered four Oscars. This appeared to be a refreshing and welcome change by the Academy to include more diversity not only its winners, but its nominations as well. During the ceremony, it was apparent that writer and director of Bong Joon Ho had not expected the film to win as many awards as it did.

“Parasite” took home four Oscars for Best Original Screenplay, Best International Feature Film, Best Director and Best Picture.

After hoisting their second trophy of the night, a surprised

Bong Jun Ho remarked via his translator “I applaud and support the new direction that this change symbolizes”.

Ho then excitedly added himself “I will drink until next morning”.

Previously, the award for Best International Feature Film was titled Best Foreign Language Film. This change opens the Oscars to a much larger pool of entries than ever before, dropping “Foreign” and replacing it with the more inclusive “International”.

The film “1917” brought in three awards from its ten nominations. Mark Taylor and Stuart Wilson brought the buzzing planes and sounds of war to life for “1917”, they also brought home golden statues for Best Sound Mixing. Guillaume Rocheron and Greg Butler allowed for the peaceful delivery

of war through their brilliant visual effects also taking the top spot. The Cinematography Oscar went to Rodger Deakins for his meticulous work on “1917”. Deservedly so for a film seemingly done in one continuous take. “Ford v Ferrari” won two of the four Oscars it came for. Best Film editing went to Michael McCusker and Andrew Buckland, whose tight editing simulated the adrenaline rush of the Ford GT Supercar. Best Sound Editing also went to “Ford v Ferrari” with Donald Sylvester winning in the final film released by the iconic studio under the 20th Century Fox logo.

A big announcement for movie fans was made on Oscars night by Hollywood’s perennial nice guy, Tom Hanks. On December 14, 2020, the first ever Oscars museum will open its doors

to the world. Fairfax and Wilshire will house numerous cinematic artifacts and make them available for viewing by the general public.

Hanks quipped, “That very afternoon movie stars were at Fairfax and Wilshire working on construction.”

Many large studios have protested the inclusion of streaming services in award ceremonies due to the lack of screenings at cinemas. These protests didn’t stop Laura Dern from winning her first Oscar for her supporting role in the Netflix film, Marriage Story. The film Judy brought Rene Zellweger the Oscar for Best Actress. Zellweger seamlessly portrayed Judy Garland for the film, best known as Dorothy from the original Wizard of Oz. Brad Pitt and Joaquin Phoenix both won their first ever long overdue

Oscars for Best Supporting Actor and Best Actor respectively.

Brad Pitt thanked Leo in his speech, “Leo I’ll ride your coat-tails any day,” referring to their roles in the film “Once Upon a Time In Hollywood.”

Joaquin Phoenix won for his maniacal portrayal of Batman’s nemesis in the film Joker. Phoenix had a memorable speech that referenced the artificial insemination of cows for human consumption and continued with the condemnation of milk on breakfast cereal. Phoenix is vegan and a major supporter of animal rights. Joaquin’s speech included a reference to his late brother River Phoenix. River died of a drug overdose in 1993 at the Johnny Depp owned club, The Viper Room in Los Angeles. He was only 23 years old.

A tearful Joaquin closed his quirky speech with a heartfelt quote from River, “Run to the rescue with love and peace will follow.”

Inclusion and diversity were prevalent in both the show’s presentation and among the Award winners of the evening.

After Taika Waititi won his first Oscar for Adapted Screenplay on JoJo Rabbit he closed out his speech by saying that his win “is for all the indigenous kids around the world.”

Actor Zach Gottsagen became the first ever Oscars presenter with Down syndrome. It was also a historic night for South Korean Cinema taking in the countries first Oscars. All in all, a very memorable and entertaining night in Hollywood.

# “Hair Love” wins Oscar and shouts diversity

By Anthony Raul Ramirez

The animated short by former NFL player Matthew A. Cherry and Karen Rupert Toliver “Hair Love” recently won the Oscar for Best Animated Short Film. The story details an African-American father attempting to help his daughter style her natural hair.

The story begins with the daughter looking at videos on her tablet of different ways she could style her hair Neither father or daughter can replicate the hairstyle. The daughter returns to her tablet and shows her father the video. This time we see the daughter is in the video with the stylist. The father and daughter attempt the hairstyle together,

successfully replicating it. They then leave the house after the daughter takes a drawing from the wall. They arrive at a hospital with the woman in the video in a wheelchair and wrap on her head, hinting that she has gone through a medical treatment. This is the little girl’s mother, and the picture the daughter took was of her mother’s bald scalp with a crown on her head. The family leave the hospital, showing throughout the credits that the mother has beaten her illness and continues to show both her daughter and husband how to love and style their natural hair.

This was the first Oscar nomination and win for both Cherry

and Toliver. Toliver stated during their acceptance speech that “Representation matters deeply, especially in cartoons. Because in cartoons, that’s where we first see our movies and how we shape our lives and think about how we see the world.”

Cherry added ““Hair Love” was made because we wanted to see more representation in animation. We wanted to normalize black hair. There’s a very important issue out there, it’s the CROWN Act, and if we can help to get this passed in all 50 states it’ll help stories like Deandre Arnold, who’s our special guest tonight, stop to happen.” Cherry also dedicated the award to Kobe Bryant.

The special guest mentioned is Deandre Arnold, a senior of Barbers Hill High School in Mont Belvieu, Texas who was banned from school until he cut his dreadlocks because of school dress code. This led to the Texas Legislation Black Caucus to attempt passing the CROWN (Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Act, a law banning discrimination on the basis of hair styles and textures. A video by ABC News also details the story of Ashanti Scott, a high schooler in Louisville, Kentucky where the school district decided to ban hairstyles such as dreadlocks, cornrows, and twists, all styles commonly worn

by African-Americans. California passed the CROWN Act on July 3rd, 2019, enacting it January 1st, 2020, fol-

lowed by New York and New Jersey. Several cities have passed the law with multiple states currently considering it.



“Hair Love” characters, Zuri, and her father, Stephen struggle to tame Zuri’s hair  
Photo courtesy of @MatthewACherry via Twitter

# Angry alumni ally against archaic administration

By Shayla Hebert

Barbers Hill Independent School District gained national attention for refusing to allow High School Senior, DeAndre Arnold, to participate in the 2020 graduation commencement. This is not the first time an individual school district for Mont Belvieu, Texas has found itself garnering negative attention in the news.

In August 2017, a Native American preschool student was also suspended for breaking the “long” hair policy, even after the parents provided documentation for cultural exemption.

In May 2008, the son of Superintendent Greg Poole flipped his father’s truck, knocking over a utility pole. Poole refused to allow his son to be

questioned and was subsequently arrested for his impeding of the investigation.

To alumni of Barbers Hill, incidents like these are not surprising. After the most recent incident, Barbers Hill alumni started to speak out about their own experiences with the Barbers Hill student code and schools. Two alumni began a Facebook group which was intended to support DeAndre Arnold, but quickly grew into an open forum for students, past and present, to speak about their time at Barbers Hill.

The responses were disturbing. Female students responded in droves. They recounted being pulled from classes, sitting in offices or in school suspension for

hours, missing tests and lessons, all because the administration believed their appearance to be too distracting.

The most disturbing are the comments about young girls receiving “swats”, what Barbers Hill calls spankings, by adult administrators, often male, alone, behind closed doors.

Male students responded with the constant detentions they received for “inappropriate” hair length or beard stubble. For some students the strict control on hair length required them to get haircuts nearly weekly. Other students mentioned their parents getting fed up and giving them a buzz cut for fear of suspension.

Beyond the measurable impact on

grades from missing instructional time and practical assignments due to detention and suspension, nearly all the students have mentioned some form of bullying due to the dress code.

The stories from other students and alumni ranged from crying in class to attempted suicide. Due to the lack of cultural and physical exemptions in the handbook, alumni have also called into question the student handbook’s compliance with the Civil Rights Act, American Disability Act, and Students Rights.

These experiences should be enough for the district to revisit their policy, but Superintendent Greg Poole stands fast by the dress code and student hand-

book.

The morphic nature of society, especially current-day, demands an equally fluid rule system. Employers and universities embrace diversity and rarely make regulations about the autonomy of a student’s body, unless it is a safety concern.

Yet, the Barbers Hill School District defends its rules by asserting that the strict standard increases student success rates and prepares students for the professional world. However, the idea that these rules mimic the “real” world is laughable.

The disappointing truth is the archaic, non-inclusive code of

the Barbers Hill School District is decimating the confidence and individuality of students while risking their safety and stability. When a dress code is the reason even one student contemplates suicide, it is not the students’ fault... the district is at fault.

\*Personal accounts are from alumni of BHISD within the aforementioned Facebook group, names and direct quotes are not included due to the sensitivity of the information.



DeAndre Arnold speaks to Ellen about his controversial experiences at Barbers Hill. Photo courtesy of Texas Tribune website

# We must never forget - Celebrating black heroes

By Sheryl Sellers

Feb. 2020 marks the 94th commemoration of Black History Month. Created in 1926 as Negro History Week by Carter G. Woodson, an African American historian and educator, it became a month-long celebration in 1976. February was chosen to correspond with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, two strong and notable advocates of equality for African Americans.

Thinking about the lives of the black men and women who contributed immensely to the abolition of slavery and the civil rights movement, the names of Martin Luther King, Jr., Frederick Douglass, and Rosa Parks come easily to mind, rightly so. However, there are lesser known, or at least lesser memorialized that also deserve celebration.

One of those heroes is Fanny Lou Hamer. The 20th child of sharecropper parents, she was born into slavery in 1917. Although her life was fraught with poverty, she fought tirelessly for the rights of blacks to vote while the government tried endlessly to stop her. The right to vote belonged to black men and women, but they were being barred from exercising that right. Hamer suffered imprisonment and beatings merely for the color of her skin and for her activism. Due to her steadfastness to exercise the right to vote, she and her husband were cast from their sharecropper home where they had lived and served for 20 years. Still, she never gave up her quest for the justice the black population deserved. Hamer died in 1977 and a memori-

al to her stands in her hometown of Ruleville, Mississippi. Remember Fanny Lou Hamer.

Anyone who watched the movie “Hidden Figures” will remember the prejudices endured by mathematicians Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson. These black scientists were the brains at NASA who sent John Glenn into space. Their intelligence was disregarded for the color of their skin. These women fought back against the system that pushed to keep them down. Remember Katherine Johnson (who died on Feb. 24, 2020 at the age of 101), Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson.

History books remind us that George Washington Carver invented the cotton gin but completely

left out the inception of inoculation by an African in the 1700s. In 1706 an African, Onesimus, was gifted to Puritan preacher Cotton Mather. Onesimus explained to Mather how Africans would take smallpox pus from an infected person and place it in a cut sliced into the skin of a non-infected person. This practice caused the non-infected person to become immune to the disease. Though considered dangerous, the procedure was tested in 1721 during a smallpox outbreak in Boston. Only 2 percent of those requesting the inoculation died, compared to the fifteen percent of those not inoculated. This practice was used on soldiers during the Revolutionary War and led to the concept of inoculation in the United States. Remember Onesimus.

Oprah Winfrey is a well-known billionaire, but few people have heard of Madam C.J. Walker. Born Sarah Breedlove in 1867, she was the first of her family to be born free from slavery. Through her manufacturing of cosmetics, Walker became the first woman of any ethnicity to become a self-made millionaire. As a civil rights activist she traveled with a group to Washington D.C. where they petitioned then President Woodrow Wilson to make lynching a federal crime. As a philanthropist in 1913, she gave a large donation for the building of a YMCA in Indianapolis. Walker died six years later. Remember Madam C. J. Walker.

Remember also Matthew Henson, a black explorer who co-founded the North Pole with Robert Peary.

Remember Lloyd Hall who developed methods to preserve and sterilize food.

Remember the Buffalo Soldiers, the black soldiers in Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders. Following a military skirmish in Cuba, John “Black Jack” Pershing is quoted as saying “If it had not been for the Negro cavalry, the Rough Riders would have been exterminated.”

These are but a few of the black heroes and innovators and activists that must be remembered. The list includes, authors, scientists, inventors, musicians, and more. February is the month to honor these fine men and women. We must remember the sacrifices they made and their many contributions to society.

## Have we lost our civility?

By Christopher Ladewig

In today's political climate, it is easy to lose track of other people's perspectives. For the sake of one's virtues, it is impossible to hear differing political opinions, resulting in a purely toxic, partisan discourse.

Our nation calls itself "the melting pot" because it is a nation of immigrants from different backgrounds and lifestyles, bringing in a diverse array of views and beliefs. The diversity of opinions is what makes our country great, educating others on different ways of life and systems of beliefs.

However, it seems as though the country has lost its ability to unite as one, despite personal or political differences. The

rugged individualism, once a symbol of pride, has now become a symbol of divisiveness.

Indubitably, the past few years have been extremely turbulent, as the current administration's sole objective is to appease their supporters, dismaying individuals who either disagree or do not align with their policies.

The main issue isn't over one's political affiliations; it is over the lack of bipartisanship. The lack of partisan compromise and negotiation has resulted in further tribalism within American politics, affecting relationships, interactions, or perceptions of one another.

No longer are politicians taking the

"middle ground," as it is deemed too politically risky. The standards have been lowered to suit one's agenda, resulting in a constant seeking of affirmation, whether it be from their supporters or certain media outlets. If a politician of a specific party joins a coalition with a rival party, their image either becomes more tainted or commended.

Perhaps, this explains why politicians tend to be staying within their party ranks, agreeing heavily on partisan lines, rather than compromise and understand the opposing side's arguments.

As a result, politicians have now implemented a new tactic in combating compromise or any chance of bipartisanship.

Known as "attack, then question," it helps them frame their narrative and paint those who question as "fake news" or "dishonest." Attack first. Ask questions later. This is the new way to argue.

The rhetoric of "fake news" leads to further partisan tribalism, resulting in individuals isolating themselves from opposing opinions or a questioning of their views.

These newer methods in eradicating opposing arguments—before even hearing the facts—is a modern-day approach. The solution to this is having open-ended debates, yet, it does not answer how one has their set beliefs. They would rather have someone conform to their ideals and affirm them, instead of further questioning or debating their set

values or principles.

If one were in a dictatorship, it would work well, as the questioning of higher authority would result in being silenced or murdered.

However, the United States of America is not a dictatorship. It is a Democratic Republic, meaning that the people have a voice through their elected representatives.

As students, it is crucial to be respectful of others' views or ideas, helping to engage in further civic discourse and a better understanding. In these current times, it seems that decorum is disregarded; the ability to see each other as equal and engage within a well-seasoned civic argument is a mere pastime.

It is essential to find a middle ground; it encourages one to come

to terms with their own principles and moral beliefs, seeing how their values are above any political allegiance. In doing this, we can continue to uphold the American tradition of being an open, liberal society towards anyone's ideals.

Within these debates, winning is the main objective, proving that one's point is far superior to their opponent's. However, it also shows that there is a lack of support amongst one another, abandoning civility for the sake of "being right."

This fear of losing has put hatred within their hearts and closed their minds from any form of rationale. How long will these pointless debates continue? Will they only end when fascism emerges?

## The Kobe experience

By Milton Johnson

On Jan. 26, the National Basketball Association (NBA) lost a legend. Former Lakers Basketball Player, Kobe Bryant, alongside his daughter Gianna, her friend and their family, and the pilot, were killed in a helicopter accident.

Even if you are not a sports person, Bryant's court reputation speaks for itself.

Since Bryant

passing, I have reached out to various college students across town, such as the University of Houston, the University of Houston-Downtown, Texas Southern University, and Houston Community College.

However, one person stood out to me, as their responses showed the impact Bryant had on them during their youth.

Cameron Tate,

19, is a current student at UHD. Besides being a close friend, we were together when we heard Bryant's passing.

"I felt like it was unreal, bro, like my boy, is gone," Tate laments, recalling the day he learned of Bryant's passing.

Although it took a while, he was finally able to open up about the impact of Kobe Bryant in his life, explaining that

Bryant was an immense inspiration to him.

"He is the reason why I play basketball," Tate explains.

Tate also explains how he plans to commemorate Bryant by living out his legacy. "I'm going to continue to play ball and play in his name."

Tate's story stood out to me because he was genuinely hurt over the

loss of an NBA legend; he was not like most social media users who jumped on the "fake" Bryant fan bandwagon.

Bryant's life is an example of leading humbly, and treating every day as if it is their last. He helped create the Mamba foundation, motivating women to become involved with basketball. That same foundation helped train his daughter,

Gianna, to become a women's basketball player, with aspirations of someday playing in the Women's National Basketball Association.

In celebration of Kobe Bryant's life, here is a word of motivation from him.

"The most important thing is to try and inspire people so that they can be great in whatever they want to do."

## Wonder Woman is now DC's first superhero

By Carlos Reyes

On Jan. 22, DC Comics published its 750th issue of Wonder Woman, acknowledging her previous accomplishments and stating Wonder Woman as the "first" public character in the DC Comics timeline. This is an unprecedented decision given Superman's status as the first superhero both in release order and in the company's timeline.

The moment Wonder Woman revealed herself to the public is shown in the issue's closing story, "A Brave New World," written by Scott Snyder and illustrated by Bryan Hitch, both whom

are comic book legends.

Set in Queens, New York in the late 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was delivering an empowering speech, hoping to raise the American spirits on the cusp of the second World War.

During the speech, an individual attempts to assassinate the president, but their efforts are thwarted; the infamous heroine, Wonder Woman, arrives and neutralizes the assailant, saving the president.

The story sent a clear message to the comic book world, declaring

Wonder Woman as the first superhero to have ever been in the public eye within official canon going forward.

Online forums and social media outlets expressed the usual divisive response. Some fans would use alleged agenda setting by DC Comics as an excuse, while others would blame the feature films for influencing the source material. After giving the story some thought, the decision by DC Comics to place Wonder Woman as the first superhero makes thematic sense.

Wonder Wom-

an comes from Paradise Island, an island protected by the Greek gods where every inhabitant is hundreds of years old. It makes sense for her to eventually embark on a journey to the world of man and reveal herself to the public a few months ahead of Superman.

To draw a more familiar comparison, Wonder Woman and the Amazonians can be compared to Thor and the Asgardians. They are both connected to familiar mythologies, though mortal and capable of dying, but able to live for hundreds of years. In retrospect,

Wonder Woman's long lifespan adds logic behind DC Comics decision to amend their timeline.

For those "in the know" who are concerned about Superman's place in the timeline or worried this would diminish his status in any way, there is some comfort. If you have read the events of "Doomsday Clock", you would know that Superman is no longer DC's first superhero. He is the hero that was inspired by the Golden Age Green Lantern, Alan Scott.

At the end of "A Brave New World," Alan Scott was inspired by

Wonder Woman's actions therefore donning the Green Lantern moniker. As shown at the end of "Doomsday Clock," Superman still remains the focal point of the metaverse which not only impacts the DC multiverse but the comic book medium as a whole.

It appears that the revision behind Wonder Woman's placement in the DC Comics mythos does not have a larger impact on the medium or the company as a whole, but rather adds a chronological ret-con to a timeline deprived of it.