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Gators elect new SGA administration By Shaheryar Khan

UHD's Office of Student Activities announced May 4 the winners of the Student Government Association election for the 2021-2022 academic year.

SGA President-elect Shamika Jefferson and Vice President-elect Michelle Duvall will succeed SGA President Alan Modrow and Vice President Leboriah Chavez.

Both running parties, Shamika Jefferson and Michelle Duvall, as well as Riley Owens and Lorena Guitierrez, worked tirelessly, engaging with as

many Gators as they could. Although not elected, during the SGA election debate on April 22, Owens and Gutierrez emphasized that no matter the outcome of the results or what their roles are at UHD, they would do their best to make an impact.

The other winners of the SGA election include Miya Parker, the next chief justice; Ashley Martinez, the new senator for Marilyn Davies College of Business; and Mahalia Ogude, the new senator for College of Sciences and Technology.

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Shamika Jefferson (left) and Michelle Duvall (right) will take office as SGA president and vice president respectively on July 12. Photo courtesy of Michelle Duvall.

Mother and daughter finish strong, graduate together By Sheryl Sellers

It is truly a family affair for the mother and daughter team, Maria Esparza Garcia and her daughter, Mariey Garcia. They will graduate from UHD together on May 15.

Mariey graduates spring 2021 as an English major with a minor in creative writing and looks forward to attending graduate school in the future. Since she wants to work and get experience first, she is considering a career as an elementary librarian. Her future goal is to teach Chicano literature in higher education.

Mariey is the recipient of UHD's Fabian Worsham Award for creative non-fiction.

Maria Esparza, who will graduate with a degree in interdisciplinary studies, began her college experience prior to having children, by attaining her associate degree from Houston Community College in the mid-1990s. At that time, she was pursuing a career as a secretary, then decided on nursing, but as she began to have children, she put her education on hold.

Then one day Mariey said to her, "You know mom, you should go back to school."

And so began Maria's journey and the unique experience of attending UHD with Mariey.

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Spring 2021 graduates, Maria Esparza Garcia (left) and her daughter, Mariey Garcia (right). Photo courtesy of Mariey Garcia.



THE DATELINE

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The Dateline is the official student newspaper of the University of Houston-Downtown. Since its first issue in 1982, The Dateline is proud to be “Student Run since Volume One.” We strive to meet the needs of a growing university as well as the growing metropolitan city that surrounds us.

Submission Policy

The Dateline staff consists of students from the University of Houston-Downtown who complete all tasks required to produce the newspaper, which serves all UHD campuses. The opinions and commentaries expressed within reflect the views of the contributing writers. No opinions expressed in The Dateline reflect the viewpoints of 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 paid writers must be currently enrolled students at the University of Houston-Downtown.

Press releases, story ideas, news tips and suggestions are always welcomed. We encourage all students to contribute.

Any student interested in joining The Dateline staff may request more detailed information sending an email to the editors at editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com.

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The Dateline says farewell to our editor

By Sheryl Sellers

The end of any academic semester ushers in new beginnings and at the same time closes the door on memorable events. We relish both as we look forward to the next step and take the time to reminisce about those experiences and relationships that emboldened us.

For members of The Dateline staff, one such experience is the leadership we came to respect in our editor, Jaida Doll. Jaida will leave UHD at the end of the spring semester to finish her last step towards a degree in English taking a final required course at UH, a course not offered at UHD.

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank Jaida for the many contributions she made to the campus newspaper and also recognize one of her many accomplishments.

She accepted the position of editor midway through the spring 2020 semester when the current leadership vanished. Jaida picked up the reins and galloped full speed ahead to lead the staff in learning and writing in journalistic style and growing the newspaper.

Not only did Jaida edit the

stories to fit the space, but she also set the print and layout and handed the product over the printer for publishing. She was known to work through the night to meet the deadlines.

At each weekly meeting Jaida led a lesson on the do’s and don’ts of journalistic style and offered group breakout sessions to workshop articles in small groups. The staff was given tips on writing headlines, conducting interviews, correct verb usage and much more. (Semicolons have met their end.)

She always displayed patience and respect, never condescending.

Assistant editor, Indira Zaldivar, has these comments about working alongside Jaida.

“Jaida’s leadership was always very welcoming to anyone who did not know much of AP journalistic style. No one was turned down from The Dateline instead she always taught us in every meeting how to become better journalists, more inclusive of diverse people and writing more precisely and concisely. The Dateline grew so much under her leadership, surpassed publication goals, and she

helped foster a culture where one is proud to work with The Dateline team. She will be missed. It’s bittersweet seeing her move onto the next chapter but I’m confident The Dateline was a steppingstone for her bright future ahead.”

Well said, Indira. The Dateline grew from a handful of writers last spring to nearly 40 this semester. She led the team from creating approximately 12 pages of news and events during spring 2020 to upwards of 20-25 pages per issue in spring 2021.

Under her leadership The Dateline published a summer issue and a winter issue during semester breaks, historical according to Dateline Advisor, Dr. Joe Sample. Jaida has been instru-

mental in assisting with the redesign of The Dateline webpage and in adding cartoonists, and graphic designers to enhance the paper.

And we want also to applaud Jaida, for her recent accomplishment. During the semester English department awards, Jaida took first prize in the Best Essay Contest for Upper-Division English Courses.

Woo Hoo, Jaida!! We are proud of you!

Jaida, you will be missed. But we are not only confident that your future is bright, but also that your leadership will continue to enhance The Dateline as it moves into the next semester. The lessons you leave will be remembered and will continue.



Doll led The Dateline for three semester, but she was never officially recognized on UHD’s Student Leadership Wall. The Dateline team improvised (using a printer, a selfie and some tape) to assure she was recognized for her time with the newspaper. Photo credit: Indira Zaldivar.

Faculty Senate wraps up academic year By Sheryl Sellers

The final Faculty Senate meeting of the spring 2021 semester was held May 4.

President Loren Blanchard, Ph.D., addressed attendees at the start of the meeting and discussed, among other topics, the search for a new provost. Sr. Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and Provost Eric Carl

Link, Ph.D., departs UHD at the conclusion of the spring semester. On Feb. 12, he was officially named provost at the University of North Dakota.

The search will begin in the fall semester, and additional information regarding the search firm will be forthcoming with the chosen candidate in place by

January 2022. Several questions followed, the first from assistant professor of criminal justice, Nina Barbieri, Ph.D.

“Will the provost search be internal or external?”

Blanchard replied that a national search is anticipated and will also include some internal candidates.

Blanchard

also responded to lecturer of biology Rachael Hudspeth who inquired about an interim provost. Blanchard shared, “We are working on that and will have an idea before the spring semester ends.” An interim provost will possibly be in place during June.

English Professor, Nell Sullivan,

Ph.D., inquired about the structure of the search committee. In response, Blanchard stated that the committee will include representatives from the Faculty Senate, faculty, operations, and other groups. Whether the process occurs on campus or via Zoom depends on the timing. By October, meetings can take place in person.

Associate professor of biology, Amy Baird, Ph.D., stated that “some schools will not follow guidelines.” She questioned if Blanchard felt “any similar pressure” and followed with a question. “How committed are you to following guidelines?”

Continued on page 4

UHD eSPORTS seeks to form student teams, hire student workers By Indira Zaldivar

As students will return to campus this summer, UHD eSPORTS will also reopen its state-of-the-art lounge for current team members on July 1. UHD eSPORTS is also getting ready to hire student workers soon.

The job application will soon be posted on UHD’s Employment Services and Operations portal, according to Assistant Director of Student Activities Jose Manuel Vazquez and Global Teams Manager Richard Rodriguez. Students who are “knowledgeable about video games” and are in good standing with the university are welcome to apply. The student workers will represent the university when the varsity teams travel to convention centers and lead tours of the eSPORTS lounge on the second floor of the One Main Building.

While the gaming room will

only reopen to current student teams, Vazquez and Rodriguez welcome students to form teams of two or more to take the first steps in joining the scheduled practice sessions. Meanwhile, students can stay up-to-date by joining UHD eSPORTS’s discord channel accessible on UHD’s website.

According to Vazquez and Rodriguez, the pandemic halted some of their plans for the program as competitions in California and Florida got canceled. Competing fully-online is challenging as the internet connection is not equal among the players. “The slightest bit of lag could throw off a combination and you won’t land it,” Vazquez said.

Despite the pandemic, one of the five varsity teams, League of Legends, won the GGLeagues Summer 2020 League of Legends Division 2 Championship.

Rodriguez hopes that now that campus will reopen and competitions and conventions are going to take place in-person, that Gators will come in “full force.”

“A lot of our competitions will really ramp up once we can meet face-to-face,” Vazquez added.

When UHD eSPORTS launched in November 2018, it became Houston’s premier collegiate esports team and the city’s first eSports center. With the immense help of IT Department, former UHD President Juan Sanchez Munoz, Ph.D, and ambitious leadership of Student Activities, UHD was one of the pioneer schools in Texas to strive for collegiate esports. Through the eSPORTS program, UHD students are able to win monetary prizes, develop leadership and skills to work in the team, and build friendships. Rodriguez was a junior when he and UHD

students Ignacio Hernandez and Eashrak Zubair helped envision and design the popular eSPORTS lounge. Seeing the program develop and get established was a “dream coming true” for Rodriguez.

Now Rodriguez, has a job with eSPORTS, is getting ready to graduate in December with a degree in health and behavioral sciences, and is helping Vazquez and Student

Activities envision what is next for the program. To Rodriguez, the program has been a “blessing in disguise.”

Vazquez envisions streaming all the teams’ practices on Twitch every weekday and hiring a lead content creator. Rodriguez has an ambitious goal to lobby to have the current Student Life Center transform into the next UHD’s eSports center once the Student Wellness and Success Center opens.

Vazquez also mentioned that

Student Activities are remodeling S204 to include six 55-inch-screen TVs, “probably a projector,” to give students enough room to spread out and all the game consoles and “more controllers than you could think of.” Soon, this new hub will welcome all students to play all sorts of eSPORTS games competitively or just for fun.

For more information, contact esports@uhd.edu, call 713-221-577 or access the UHD eSPORTS’s page on UHD’s website.



UHD esports Global Teams Manager Richard “Ricky” Rodriguez (left) and Assistant Director of Student Activities Jose Manuel Vazquez (right) at UHD eSports room. Photo credit: Indira Zaldivar.

Faculty Senate (continued)

He answered that UHD and our sister universities will follow all protocols from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Blanchard is committed to ensuring a safe environment.

Professor of humanities, Edmund Cueva, Ph.D., questioned if faculty will make up the majority of the search committee.

“Voices of faculty will be strong,” replied President Blanchard. “Every opportunity will avail itself to having a say.” He continued with a smile, “Give me a chance.”

Moving on from that topic, the president announced that over 500 individuals including students, faculty, staff, and their families received their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine administered on campus recently in partnership with Houston Methodist. HEB and Walgreens stated interest to partner with UHD to provide COVID-19 vaccinations. Arrangements are underway for vaccinations on June 9 from 9 a.m. to noon, July 23 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Aug. 21 from 9 a.m. to noon.

To further the cause to keep the UHD community safe, public testing kiosks will be located on campus beginning June 1 and will stay in place throughout the fall. Individuals may take the test any number of times. Results will be available the day following a

test.

The listening tour provided by Blanchard was “very productive” and the information garnered will be helpful for discourse at a future town hall meeting.

Continued discussion surrounded the fall 2021 semester. During fall 2019, 70% of classes were conducted face-to-face. The university’s aspiration for fall 2021 is 60% face-to-face. Campus staff is hard at work to re-populate the campus. He mentioned that the campus will look “remarkably different.” Students cannot hover around classroom doors and limits are set for the number of students per classroom.

Blanchard ended his remarks by appreciating the invitation to attend the meeting and stating that he would like to “drop in again.”

With a packed agenda, professor of educational research and Faculty Senate President Ronald Beebe, Ph.D., reminded the next speakers to keep their reports to five minutes.

Associate Dean of University College Carolyn Gascoigne, Ph.D., discussed the coordination of the first generation college student and parent/supporter programming and the Student Success Initiative.

A look at the numbers indicated that students are not taking advantage of the resources avail-

able to them at the university.

Director of FTIC Retention Services Jemma Sylvester-Caesar, Ph.D., answered the question of how the first generation and parent/supporter programming can be implemented with “a holistic approach.”

Initially, students should apply for scholarships and then choose a career path. Parents will be counseled to review the resources available to their student such as financial aid, and to attend focus groups which will provide outreach for first-generation students. The program will also include campus conversations.

In answer to a question posed by associate professor of urban education, Maria Bhattacharjee, Ph.D., the workshops for students are currently open and the program anticipates inclusion of parents in fall 2021.

Next, associate professor of English, Michelle Moosally, Ph.D., unwrapped the Program Review for the Senate, requesting faculty to thoroughly evaluate their curriculum, integration, and resources with emphasis on what could be improved and what resources are needed. Attendees voiced concern about the time necessary for faculty to complete the review.

Moosally also discussed, Hyflex, a teaching modality allowing professors

and instructors simultaneously conduct class online and in the classroom. Technical setup is currently available in 17 classrooms and 20 more are in the build out stage. Hyflex allows flexibility with face-to-face and online instruction, however, it is not a long-term plan. The goal is that this model will encourage students to come to campus.

Manager of Annual Giving, Sandra Jackson, encouraged the continued contributions to “Give to Gators.” She commented that in the past eight years, approximately \$500,000 has been donated. One result of the donations was introduction of the Food Market on campus. She thanked those present for their aid to the program.

Cueva returned to speak on the faculty climate survey. A standout item was that 54% of those who took the survey viewed someone being treated differently based on race and gender.

Assistant professor of science education, Franklin Allaire, Ph.D., briefed the group on the Writing Resolution Update. He reminded the group that the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence offers an online micro credentialing course, and there is a budget request for a stipend for tutors for specific writing courses.

A resolution was presented for a stipend or monthly payment for use of home office. The resolution passed.

Director of Quality Enhancement Plan and the Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning Poonam Gulati Salhotra, Ph.D., spoke on the A+CE program designed to enhance thinking skills.


Beginning with the fall 2022 semester, three modes will be put into place and the name A+CE will be replaced. These modes are awareness, integration, involvement,

and will include upper-level courses.








Professor of communication, Michael Duncan, Ph.D., concluded the meeting with a report on draft resolutions. One resolution is for relief for adjuncts and lecturers, parking permits for part-time faculty, and a reduction of course load to 5/4.

These resolutions were tabled to be addressed in the fall.

The meeting ended with Faculty Senate members thanking Beebe for his service during his term as Faculty Senate president.



Senate Updates

- 
UHD commences search for new provost as current Provost Eric Carl Link, Ph.D., transitions to new position.
- 
Faculty Senate can begin meeting in person by October.
- 
More than 500 individuals received their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine on UHD campus in partnership with Houston Methodist.
- 
More opportunities for vaccinations on campus on June 9 from 9 a.m. to noon, July 23 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Aug. 21 from 9 a.m. to noon.
- 
By June 1, UHD will implement public COVID-19 testing kiosks offering free, unlimited testing and next-day results.
- 
UHD hopes that 60% of fall 2021 classes will be conducted face-to-face, only 10% less than face-to-face classes in pre-COVID semesters.
- 
Hyflex classrooms will allow courses to simultaneously take place online and in-person,

New SGA administration (continued)

The mission of the SGA is to be the voice for UHD Gators and be part of the decision-making process regarding

university affairs. Every year, elections are proceeded to determine the next SGA officers to represent the Gator community.

Last year, the world forcefully had to implement the coronavirus into their daily lives, resulting in many alterations in

our day-to-day lifestyles. Modrow and Chavez led the Gator community throughout the 2020-2021 academic year in a virtual environment.

As the campus gradually grows closer to return to in-person learning, SGA's newly elected president and vice president duo, Jefferson and Duvall, are eager to start on their mission.

Initially, the results were supposed to be announced on April 30 at the One Main Event, hosted by Student Activities.

The event, however, was canceled due to inclement weather conditions that are notorious in Houston.

Following the announcement of the results, Duvall issued an official statement on what she and Jefferson plan to do as their first official step going forward.

"Shamika and I are ecstatic and over the moon about the election results," Duvall said.

"We have already met up and discussed the people we have in mind for our cabinet. The next

official step is the inauguration."

To celebrate, the new president and vice president pair took to Instagram and recreated the viral video of Vice President Kamala Harris calling President Joe Biden saying, "We did it!"

Jefferson and Duvall will be officially inaugurated into office on June 4 as UHD welcomes the students back to campus on July 12. This SGA election marks the first time two Black women are elected as SGA president and vice president of the UHD student body.



Ashley Martinez will serve as SGA senator of the Marilyn Davies College of Business for the 2021-2022 academic year. Photo courtesy of SGA website.



Miya Parker will serve as the new SGA chief justice for the 2021-2022 academic year. Photo courtesy of SGA website.

Mother, daughter graduate together (continued)

Maria's goal now is elementary education. She sees teaching a child as a "way to make a difference."

She recognized that she could earn her degree and follow with a teaching certificate.

Mother and daughter did not plan to graduate simultaneously, but during summer 2019 they were comparing hours remaining for degree completion and realized that they

could make that happen.

"It is an honor to go back and graduate with my daughter. At the same time, I am so proud of Mariey," Maria said.

Mariey echoed her mother's sentiments, "It's exciting to graduate with Mom. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity, and it's very cultural. Based on statistics, we are not expected to attend college, but we beat the odds. It is a thrill. Grandma (Maria's

mother) gets to see it. It's a culturally historical event and to work in the same house – it's historical to watch."

"When I first started on the journey," Maria said, "I did not think it would come back full circle, where me and my daughter would graduate at the same time. It is an odd experience and certainly a unique one. The reason why is because after I took a break to raise my children,

I would see myself through them as they accomplished their many achievements.

When I saw the opportunity to come back to school and succeed not only by myself but alongside my daughter, it was one I could not miss out on. It certainly has been a memorable experience, and I am filled with joy that I am in a position to say that my family is on the pathway to success."

They have

separate computers, so Mariey studies in her room, and Maria cracks the books in the dining room on Sundays next to her seven-year-old son, Gregory.

Gregory enjoys teasing his mom and reminding her, "You have a test today," and "Who goes to school tomorrow?" He has fun mimicking his mother as she does about his schoolwork.

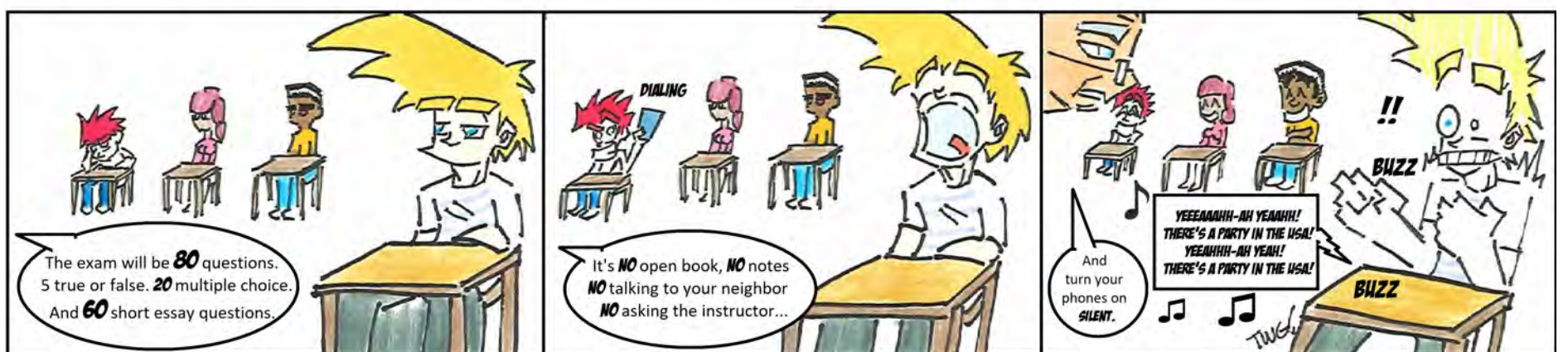
An added joy and excitement for

the family: Mariey wrote the commencement poem which will be read at the May 15 spring 2021 graduation.

Mom and daughter have matching dresses for their graduation pictures. They are excited that the family, including Maria's mother will be together to view the commencement. Following that, they have plans to go to lunch and celebrate as a family.

A BOWLFUL OF COLLEGE

By Jeremy Jones



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Robert
Wilson

By Sheryl Sellers

Music artist-in-residence and lecturer in jazz styles at UHD, Robert Wilson, acquired a treasure trove of experiences over the years, working with icons in the music and entertainment business. Upon learning that he was celebrated for over 30 years as an educator at UHD, and after reading his short biography on the UHD webpage, The Dateline was anxious to sit down with this notable and highly regarded musician and instructor to learn even more.

A native Houstonian, Wilson began his journey in music at the ripe age of 12 at the encouragement of his father, who observed his son's strong ability to play the trumpet. Never wavering in his support, his father frequently purchased the young boy music arrangements and several trumpets throughout his young years.

With encouragement from his trumpet instructor, Wilson started his own band. At age 15, he performed at the then iconic Pan-American Ballroom on North Main.

He and his band continue to perform throughout the Houston area, and as the reader will shortly find, his musical journey never waned.

His academia journey began 34 years ago with professorships in English in Malaysia, Seoul, South Korea, the University of Oklahoma and The University of Texas at Austin.

At the beckoning of four-time Grammy winner Joe Henderson, he then found himself at the University of California at Berkeley as a professor of English. At the time, the 80-degree weather in California was more appealing than the 100+ degrees in Austin.

However, after a few years, his mother became ill, and his brother needed his help back in Houston. With a resume showcasing his experience as an English professor, he found his way to the English department at UHD.

The 1991 Houston International Festival focused attention on the country of Japan. The Crown Prince, His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino, was a jazz aficionado and was intrigued by the music of Ray Charles. Houston mayor at the time, Kathy Whitmire, was aware of Wilson's musical history, and phoned UHD to ask the then provost, Dr. Molly Woods, to inquire if Mr. Wilson would get his band together to

play for the prince.

Woods was surprised to learn of Wilson's musical career since he only provided his resume on his English stints. He had not discussed his music acumen to her or to his peers. She quickly moved him to the music department where he remains teaching today.

The Dateline was interested to learn about his many adventures throughout his career in music, and in working with many great artists.

He performed with many other great names over the years including Judy Garland, Ray Charles, and Diana Ross. Asked about his impression of and experiences with these legends, Wilson provided interesting commentary.

He spoke about meeting a member of Louis Armstrong's band and meeting the iconic musician at a 1959 New Year's Eve party at the Armstrong home. They remained good friends until Armstrong's death.

He described his experience with Garland as "bad." She was, he said "difficult, and she drank a lot." He recalled the event that led to him to quit working with the star. It seems that Garland's daughter,

Liza Minelli, struck up an association with a man that Wilson grew up with. Becoming aware of this Garland called Wilson to her hotel room and blamed him for Liza's meeting the man. Although he explained that he knew nothing of the affair, Garland became very angry and threw a whiskey bottle at him that smashed against a wall.

Performing with Ray Charles was a much better experience for Wilson. His friend, David "Fathead" Newman,

renowned saxophonist, was performing with Ray Charles and he asked Wilson to tour with them. That began a two-year stint for Wilson performing alongside Fathead and Ray Charles.

Wilson also told of a conversation he had with Diana Ross in her dressing room at the time that she purchased the script for "Lady Sings the Blues," a movie chronicle of the life of blues singer Billie Holiday. Ross told Wilson that unless she owned the script, the studio would not

choose her to play Holiday. He recalled that Ross also wanted to "clean the story up" and Wilson counseled her not to, Billie Holiday's life should be told as it was, which included drug addiction and a volatile relationship. He commented that Ross did listen to him but did not take his advice. However, she was quick to call him afterwards announcing that she was nominated for an Academy Award for her portrayal in the film.

Continued on page 8



Photo courtesy of Robert Wilson

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

By Sheryl Sellers

There is a new venue opening soon near UHD: McIntyre's Downtown. It looks quite promising for socializing, watching the latest sporting events or just kicking back to relax.

Nearing completion of its buildout, the indoor/outdoor pub is located at the corner of Travis and Congress streets, just across the bayou from the One Main Building at UHD.

McIntyre's Downtown is being created along the same lines as its sister pub in Houston, McIntyre's in the Heights, located on 20th Street. That original location was developed with this current model in mind. The downtown location with its vast size and multiple levels will allow for more flexibility for large events and different entertainment options, in addition to the core model of an upscale and refined neighborhood sports bar.

Owner of the establishment, Chase

McIntyre has been in the hospitality sector since graduating from the University of Texas at San Antonio. He developed this location combining the feel of a place to relax and play games and a locale where one can watch sports on any one of the pub's 64-inch TV's.

Patrons aged 21 and over will enjoy the flexibility of seating and social style. Still deciding on exact names of each of the three floors, the "bayou level" and the "street level" are considered "The Pavillion." The upper level will be named the "McIntyre Floor." Waitstaff will be available on all three levels.

The lower area will be outfitted with picnic tables and games such as corn-hole, foosball, and shuffleboard. Back-to-back televisions will also be located on that level.

L-Shaped couches will be nestled on the street level along with picnic tables, and swings to sway the day away.

The large bar will sport signature cocktails and a variety of beer choices, including craft beer. Keeping with the industrial feel of downtown, the design of the bar takes on that same aura. Patrons will also have seating options at the bar or at high-top community tables.

A 187-inch LED wall-TV will reside on this level for the ultimate watching experience. McIntyre and general manager, Reagan Page also envision a Winnebago located on the Congress Street side for overflow bar service.

The upper level boasts a similar large bar area, a games area for the sports enthusiast, as well as TVs to follow the latest game. This floor also contains a more intimate gathering space (which can be reserved) for groups and is separated from the more open area by a sizable round table.

Room-width pull-down glass doors lead to an outdoor patio with rail seating overlooking the bayou

and east downtown. Swings and picnic tables for the leisurely make up this relaxing area.

As for ambience, some flooring will be outfitted in turf and other areas in paint polished cement. Live plants, garland, colorful lighting and enormous fans enhance the areas.

A hand-painted mural by artist Suly Florian, and a large hand-painted mural by artist Franky Cardona grace the walls offset by special effect lighting. Retreating from the upper level one is greeted by lit up text proclaiming "I wanna be loved bayou."

The venue has already commissioned food truck service to feature bar-type food.

On Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, patrons will enjoy musical entertainment from original and cover artists. The venue will also offer a steak night and a trivia night. Parking is available on the street or surrounding the establishment and one can easily ride

the Metro Rail along Main Street. Valet parking will be available on the weekends.

Seating capacity for the building is estimated at 300. McIntyre's will open at 2 p.m. Monday through Friday and at 11 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Sunday through Wednesday the pub will close at midnight, and Thursday through Saturday at 2 a.m. McIntyre's Downtown will be

interviewing for waitstaff, bartenders, barbacks and security.

"Being downtown will bring something it needs to elevate and bring life back to it," McIntyre said.

The venue is novel, appealing and provokes warmth and socializing on an upbeat scale.

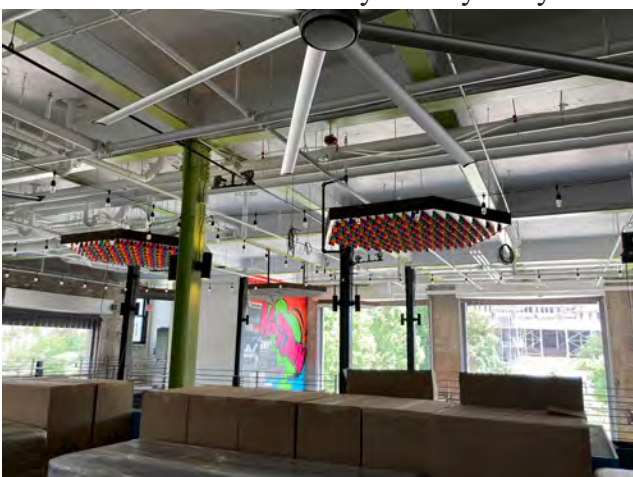
One can look forward to McIntyre's opening by late June.



Owner Chase McIntyre, general manager Reagan Page and business partner Kyle Berg, visit the establishment while it is still under development. Photo credit: Sheryl Sellers.



Photo credit: Sheryl Sellers.



McIntyres expects to open by June. Photo credit: Sheryl Sellers.



Photo credit: Sheryl Sellers.



Campus captures

For those Gators who miss attending our picturesque campus and for those new Gators who have not had the chance to experience it yet

Once campus hotspots, (from top to bottom, left to right) Gator Den, Student Activities Lounge, Gator Bite Cafe, and the main hall are deserted.



Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan



Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan



Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan



Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan

Faculty spotlight (continued)

Besides Joe Henderson, another favorite musician and friend of Wilson's is Chet Baker, a trumpeter who has been his friend for over 25 years. They caught up with each other some time ago in London while Wilson was on a trip there with UHD. Baker saved a table for Wilson at the club where he was performing. Wilson recognized the men at the table next to him as they asked

how he knew Baker. They credited Baker for their musical careers, stating that he was their inspiration. These gentlemen were none other than Sting, Eric Clapton, and Elvis Costello, greats in the genre of rock 'n roll.

Another captivating story told revolved around Wilson's favorite listening music: the music of renowned trumpeter Wynton Marsalis who performs with

the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra in New York City.

David Monette, recognized as the best trumpet maker for people he meets and at the same time likes. He made a trumpet for Wilson and had it ready in two months rather than the 12-month typical timeline. This trumpet was created while Monette made a trumpet for Marsalis, who to the delight of

Wilson called him to chat about it.

Wilson also created the Kemah Boardwalk Jazz Festival and brought in Fathead and other renowned artists. The Jazz Festival continued for 15 years, until canceled by Tilman Fertitta, owner of the Boardwalk.

Robert Wilson is the owner of 12 trumpets and 232 mouthpieces. His band will begin rehearsing again within

the next couple of weeks, and he is anxious to have his class attend their concerts – which is a requirement for the course. Another requirement is to write a 500-word essay following a viewing of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

Today, Wilson enjoys teaching online from home, assisted by his technically advanced wife Julie Wilson. She is quite a musician in her own right, singing with the band and proficient in English, Latin, Span-

ish and Portuguese.

"I really enjoy what I do at UHD," Wilson said. "I was delighted to help grow the music department. I love being at UHD. The people are very supportive, particularly department chair Dr. Azar Rejaie. And I thank Dr. Molly Woods for giving me this opportunity."

He looks forward to continuing at UHD for years to come. One imagines that the thought is mutual.



Campus captures



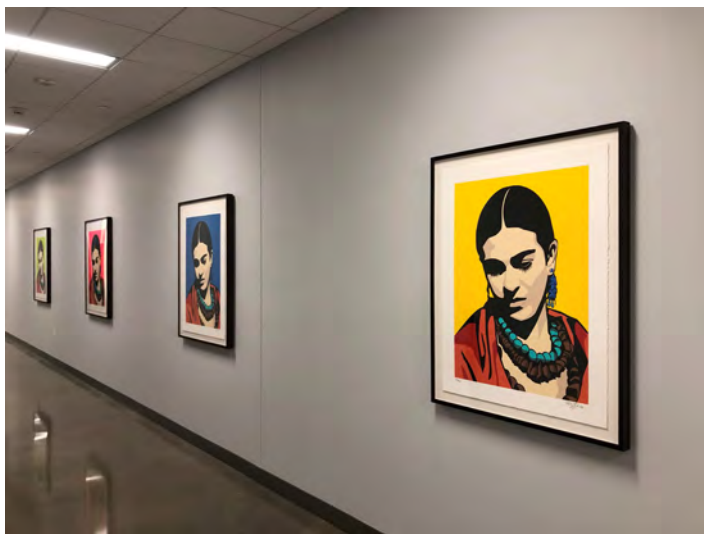
Garden at STB. Read about UHD gardens in Vol. 65, Iss. 3 and Vol. 66 Iss. 3. Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan.



“Confluence” under the South Deck. Read more about the new mural in Vol. 66 Iss. 7. Photo courtesy of Jaida Doll.



Wildflowers bloom outside STB. Read about them on page 4 of Vol. 66 Iss. 6. Photo credit: Sheryl Sellers.



Some of UHD’s expansive art collection. Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan.



South Deck on the third floor of OMB. Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan.



John Scott’s “Prayer Meeting” on South Deck. Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan.



“Gators on the Bayou” mural. Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan.



UHD College of Social Sciences across from the “Produce Building” on Main Street. Photo courtesy of Jaida Doll.



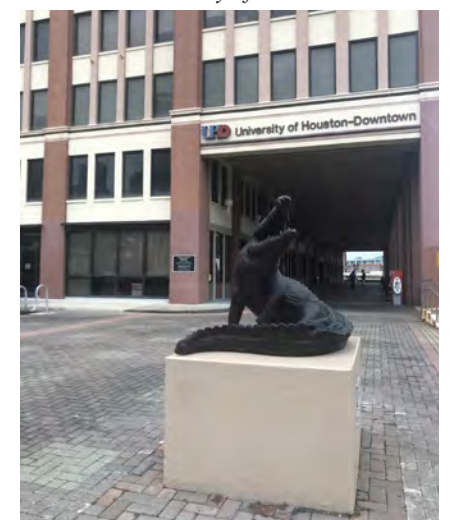
Gator painting on Main Street and Commerce. Photo courtesy of Jaida Doll.



Science and Technology Building. Read more about the recently installed solar panels in Vol. 66, Iss. 1. Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan.



One Main Building from the back. Photo credit: Shaheryar Khan.



Gators statue adorns the main entrance. Photo courtesy of Jaida Doll.

Nurse sues hospital over vaccine requirement By Aansa Usmani

In late April, Jennifer Bridges sued Houston Methodist for requiring that medical professionals received the COVID-19 vaccine. Her controversial stance comes amid a newly implemented requirement, requiring that hospital staff be fully vaccinated by June 7.

Since going public, other employees have contacted

her with similar concerns.

“Basically, they’re either going to quit, get fired, and some have reached out to me literally crying, saying they’re going to hold off until the last day and take that shot against their will because they have to feed their family,” Bridges told KHOU 11 news, “Once the research is done in a couple of

years, it’s fully FDA approved, then I am sure we will all line up and take it. Just not yet. Let us have more time.”

Bridges’ stance is not an anti-vax statement—the lawsuit concerns the short time frame of the vaccine’s production, believing that the FDA needs to gather more data and research.

Her bold

stance comes with a risk of being suspended or terminated, but she believes that it would be temporary, as she can find other ways of supporting herself.

Responding to Bridges’ concern, Houston Methodist CEO Marc Bloom touts the COVID-19 vaccine rule as the “opportunity to keep leading medicine,” helping prevent

further spread of COVID-19.

In line with the medical Hippocratic oath, he states that it is “the employee’s obligation to keep their patients safe.”

The COVID-19 vaccination rule states that employees must be fully vaccinated by June 7. Failure to comply will result in a two-week sus-

pension, and if still non-compliant, they will be terminated.

Whether it be Johnson and Johnson, Moderna, or Pfizer, Houston Methodist said the vaccine requirement would ensure that its staff does not further spread the coronavirus to vulnerable patients or loved ones.

HPD finds largest smuggling case in Houston By Ann M. Lummus

Darren Edwards, assistant chief with Homeland Security Command reported that the April 30 raid and investigation turned into a human smuggling investigation after entering a home on Essington Drive near Southwest Houston. Chief Edwards said the scene struck him as “more of a smuggling thing and not a trafficking thing.”

U.S. Immigration and Customs

Enforcement and Homeland Security Investigations are the lead agencies countering both issues.

The youngest ages found inside the home are 20-year-olds, including five women and 85 men. The people did not have enough resources in supply like food and water, with some not fully clothed. With the pandemic Several people within the home tested positive for COVID-19.

The identity or further information on the homeowner has not been released at the time of this writing. In the report, neighbors were not aware of the number of people inside. Reports say neighbors brought food and water for the immigrants and care packages, including T-shirts, pants, tortillas, soup and bottled water.

Neighbor Chandra Price said, “This is a mid-

dle-class neighborhood with a lot of retired people. You wouldn’t think that something like this could happen here.” The neighborhood is near the Houston Police Department on Gessner, 2.3 miles from the crime scene on Chessington Drive.

Houstonians initially thought it was a human trafficking incident since the Department of Homeland Security in

2019 deemed Houston the leading city for human trafficking. DOJ defines human sex trafficking as an act induced by force, fraud, or coercion, including a person who has not attained 18 years of age.

Traits of trafficking are recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining a person for labor or services, using force, fraud, or coercion for subjection to involun-

tary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

As defined by HSI, human smuggling involves providing a service—typically, transportation or fraudulent documents to an individual who voluntarily seeks to gain illegal entry into a foreign country. HSI advises the crime may start as human smuggling but quickly turn into human trafficking.

Vanessa Bryant sues LASD By Sheila Delgado-Rey

On Jan. 26, 2020, former NBA star, Kobe Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, and seven other victims died in a helicopter crash.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff Department did not secure the crash site, and news of Bryant and his daughter’s fate was not kept secret.

The department leaked information about the crash which was subse-

quently publicized when TMZ reported the breaking news.

By February 2020, rumors abounded concerning deputies who shared pictures of the crime scene, while some even bragged about working on the scene.

In response, the LASD claimed that they were “deeply disturbed” by such allegations.

Following these rumors, Vanessa Bryant, wife of Kobe

Bryant and mother to Gianna advocated for the LASD to release the names of the accused deputies to hold them accountable for their actions.

However, after LASD refused to provide the officer’s identity, Bryant filed a civil claim against the LASD and Sheriff Villanueva to contest the “photo leak in September, seeking undisclosed damages to remedy civil rights violations,

negligence, emotional distress, and violation of privacy.”

The LASD argued that if the officers’ identities were not protected, “hackers may attempt to seek out and gain access to the individual deputies’ devices to locate any photographs and publish them.”

In early March, a judge ruled in favor of Bryant. On March 17, Bryant released those names

via Instagram.

The post identified the officers who leaked the photos including deputies Joey Cruz, Rafael Mejia, Michael Russell and Raul Versales.

Allegedly, Cruz showed photos of the crash site and the remains of the two members of the Bryant family with bar staff and customers only two days after the crash.

It was one of those customers who decided to file a complaint, stating that the photos were “very,

very disturbing.”

Cruz also allegedly shared the photos of the site and victims’ remains with his niece.

Despite efforts from the LASD to redact the names of the deputies involved, Bryant believes that “these specific deputies need to be held accountable for their actions just like everyone else.”

Her lawyers say that they “look forward to presenting Bryant’s case in open Court.”

CDC, FDA lift pause on J&J vaccine By Lauren Anderson

On April 13, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommended a pause on the Johnson and Johnson vaccine after blood clots were reported in six women, ages 18 to 48.

After thorough safety review conducted by the CDC, FDA, and the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the FDA and CDC on April 23, lifted the pause and recommended the administration of the J&J vaccine resumed.

About 8 million people in the U.S. have received the J&J vaccine without any serious reactions. The risk is extremely low, about one case per million vaccinations, but for women ages 20 to 50, the risk may be higher.

The FDA recommends that those who have received the J&J vaccine should contact their doctors if they start experiencing some of the signs of a blood clot, such as headaches, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the Biden administrator's chief science advisor, stated that doctors seeing people with these symptoms should ask if they recently received the vaccine.

Officials say mild headaches and flu-like symptoms are no cause of concern in the first few days after receiving the vaccination, since these symptoms are common, harmless side effects caused by the immune system's forming defense against the coronavirus.

Fauci also stated that receiving

the vaccination a month or two ago is not concern for the clots, since the cases occurred within six to 13 days after people received the shot.

"We are totally aware that this is a rare event. We want to get this worked out as quickly as we possibly can and that's why you see the word 'pause,' in other words, you want to hold off a bit," Fauci said. "We want to leave that up to the FDA and the CDC to investigate this carefully. I don't think it was pulling the trigger too quickly."

Researchers say that the blood clots seem to be caused by a reaction to the vaccine by the immune system, which generates antibodies that activate platelets, which is something that helps form normal blood clots that repair

wounds. The disorder has been called "vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia."

Researchers have yet to find a way to predict who is at higher risk for the disorder and have not identified any underlying condition that could cause certain people to be susceptible.

Dr. Fauci stated that if a common trait can be identified in the people who developed the clots, it could help scientists determine who is at risk and warn those people against receiving the J&J vaccine.

An important ingredient in the J&J vaccine could explain the connection between the shot and the blood clots. The technology that is used to make the vaccine, called the adenovirus, is used to cause an immune response to

the coronavirus, but it can instead cause an immune response against certain blood components that can cause clotting.

No blood clots have been reported with the vaccines made by Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna, since they use a different technology, called mRNA.

Doctors treat this disorder with blood thinners to stop the growth of the clots, and with intravenous immune globulin, which can remove the antibodies that are causing the problem. However, U.S. health officials warn against using

a common blood thinner, heparin, and recommend using alternative medicines instead.

This is because heparin causes a rare syndrome that is quite like the blood clots, so it is possible that heparin will make the situation worse for these patients. Because the conditions worsen quickly, researchers stress that treatment should begin as soon as possible. However, despite the seriousness of these blood clots, the benefits outweigh the risks, since the blood clots are extremely rare.

Continued on page 13



Photo courtesy of EconomicTimes.com

Biden announces withdrawal from Afghanistan By Salvador Hernandez

On April 13, President Joe Biden declared that the U.S. would withdraw all combat troops in Afghanistan with the tentative date of Sept. 11 as the point of the complete withdrawal from the region.

The date marks the 20-year anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks which served as the catalyst to the invasion of Afghanistan. The decision by Biden marked an end to a conflict that has spanned generations and represents a shift

in policy, focusing on problems at home and stabilizing problems with the Chinese government.

The conflict has been costly for the U.S. not only in monetary terms but in the loss of life. During the conflict approximately 2,000 troops have lost their lives and 100,000 Afghani civilians have either been injured or killed due to the conflict.

The Biden administration has argued that the war has met the objectives

with the driving out of al-Qaida and the execution of the leader and perpetrator behind the 9/11 attacks, Osama Bin Laden.

Currently there are approximately 3,500 troops stationed in Afghanistan. President Biden stated that troops would begin withdrawing on May 1 and would gradually start from there. In addition to the U.S. presence in Afghanistan, there are also 7,000 foreign forces on behalf of our NATO allies.

Senator Rand Paul shared a tweet expressing his appreciation for the Biden Administration's decision to withdraw from Afghanistan

"It's great when we can find places to agree. I'm grateful President Biden is keeping President Trump's plan to leave Afghanistan, even with a delay until fall. The time to bring our troops home is now or as soon as possible. Enough endless wars," Paul tweeted.

In contrast,

there are those who see the actions of the administration as premature. They view the withdrawal executed by the Biden administration as a strategic dud because the Taliban could take advantage of the power vacuum that the U.S. will leave in the area.

In an interview with CNN's Fareed Zakaria, Hillary Clinton expressed her disdain for the withdrawal.

"It's one thing to pull out troops that have been supporting

security in Afghanistan, supporting the Afghan military, leaving it pretty much to fend for itself, but we can't afford to walk away from the consequences of that decision," Clinton said.

The Afghanistan war has cost trillions of dollars to fund. It is unknown if there have been any talks of the U.S. extension or if the phased withdrawal would draw any backlash from the Taliban.

Oldest American, dies at 115

By Lauren Anderson

On April 17, Hester Ford, the oldest living American, died peacefully in her home in Charlotte, North Carolina, surrounded by her family.

According to the Gerontology Research Group, Ford was at least 115 years and 245 days old, but her family told CNN that she was born Aug. 15, 1904, which would make her 116 years old.

Ford was born in Lancaster, South Carolina, which is where she grew up and planted and picked cotton and plowed fields. She married John Ford, had 12 children, and moved to Charlotte in 1960, which is where Mr. Ford died three years later at the age

of 57.

Mrs. Ford continued to live alone in her home until she was 108 years old. Her family insisted on helping her when she fell and bruised her ribs in the process.

She has 68 grandchildren, 125 great-grandchildren, and about 120 great-great-grandchildren. She celebrated her final birthday last year with a drive-by parade of family and friends, who honked and waved as they drove by.

Her family stated that her daily routine consisted of breakfast with half a banana, a walk outside for fresh air, looking at photo albums, completing puzzles and listening

to gospel music.

She is a member of the Macedonia Baptist Church where she attended mass every Sunday before the pandemic took place.

She lived through two pandemics, including the Spanish flu of 1918 and the current COVID-19 pandemic, two world wars, and the start of the civil rights movement.

“She not only represented the advancement of our family but of the Black African American race and culture in our country.” Tanisha Patterson-Powe, Ford’s Great-Granddaughter, said.

“She was a reminder of how far we have come as people on this earth. She

has been celebrated all over the world by local governments, community leaders, social media, foreign dignities and presidents as a cherished jewel of society for holding the honor of being the oldest living person in America.”

Last year, county commissioners declared Sept. 1 as Mother Hester McCordell Ford Day in Mecklenburg County in Mrs. Ford’s honor.

Mrs. Ford has seen 21 people become president, but the one that was the most special was when Barack Obama was elected as president.

At some point, she even received a letter from Obama, and his wife, Michelle Obama, wishing her a

happy 111th birthday.

Mrs. Ford knew how important it was to vote, especially since she was not allowed to in the past because of the color of her skin. She even went out to vote in the last election despite there being a pandemic.

Patterson-Powe said she wants to carry her

great-grandmother’s sense of resilience forward.

“Although she has passed, her legacy and memory will continue to live on through her family and everyone she has touched to make the world a better place for generations to come,” Patterson-Powe said.



Hester Ford. Image courtesy of Associated Press

Apollo-era astronaut, Phillip Chapman dies

By Emily Saldivar

NASA astronaut Phillip Kenyon Chapman passed away April 5 at age 86. The Apollo-era astronaut, known for being the first Australian-born American astronaut, spent his last moments in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Chapman was born March 5, 1935, in Melbourne, Australia but moved to Sydney when he was a child.

He attended Parramatta High School and, in 1956, earned a bachelor’s degree in physics and mathematics from the University of Sydney.

He went on to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and earned a master’s degree in

aeronautics and astronautics in 1964 as well as a doctorate in instrumentation three years later in 1967.

From 1953 to 1955, Chapman served in the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve. Immediately after, he worked for Phillip Electronics Industries Proprietary Limited for two years until he spent 15 months in Mawson Station, Antarctica with the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions for the International Geophysical Year.

During the 1958 IGY, he worked as an auroral/radio physicist which required most of his time spent at a remote

base near Taylor Glacier.

During his time exploring the land, he was the first human to climb Chapman Ridge, which rises to about 1,000 feet.

In 1960, Chapman spent some time as an electro-optics staff engineer for Canadian Aviation Electronics Limited for in-flight simulators and then moved onto becoming a staff

physicist at MIT, where he continued work in electro-optics.

However, once he gained his U.S. citizenship, he was selected as a scientist-astronaut by

NASA in 1967. He served as the Apollo 14 Mission scientist and served as a member of Astronaut Group 6.

Continued on page 12



Phillip Chapman. Image courtesy of NASA.

NASA helicopter Perseverance lands on Mars By Emily Saldivar

The Mars helicopter, known as Ingenuity, was built by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California after its inventor, Indian Institute of Technology's alumnus Bob Balaram, pushed for its creation for almost two decades.

The Perseverance Rover sent to Mars carried a passenger along for the interplanetary ride.

Making the helicopter a reality was no easy task, its existence has proved highly useful for JPL, which oversaw the technology demonstration project the helicopter's main purpose

With carbon-fiber blades that make up its two 4-foot-long counter-rotating rotors,

this helicopter was designed with great purpose in mind.

The Mars helicopter tagged along and rode to the red planet attached to the belly of the Perseverance rover during the launch July 30, 2020.

It successfully survived the trek, deployed safely to the Martian surface, and was able to communicate with Perseverance and the flight operators back on Earth on Feb. 18.

On April 19, Ingenuity had its first successful flight where it hovered at a height of 10 feet, completed a turn, and then landed. The next two flights were of a similar pattern.

Though that may not sound like much of an achievement, that first flight

was a very important milestone as it was officially the first powered, controlled flight on another planet.

Each flight after that consisted of farther distances covered and higher altitude gained.

Chief Engineer Bob Balaram, stated, "So far, the engineering telemetry we have received and analyzed tell us that the flight met expectations and our prior computer modeling has been accurate."

There are a few important things to know about Ingenuity to fully grasp the importance of its journey.

Besides being the first powered flight, surviving the voyage to the Martian planet and being able

to lift off in such a thin atmosphere was no easy feat.

The helicopter weighed less than 4 pounds and after being folded into the Perseverance Rover, there was no guarantee it would survive the dismount onto the surface of Mars.

After that comes the challenge of lifting off the ground without human control. Despite

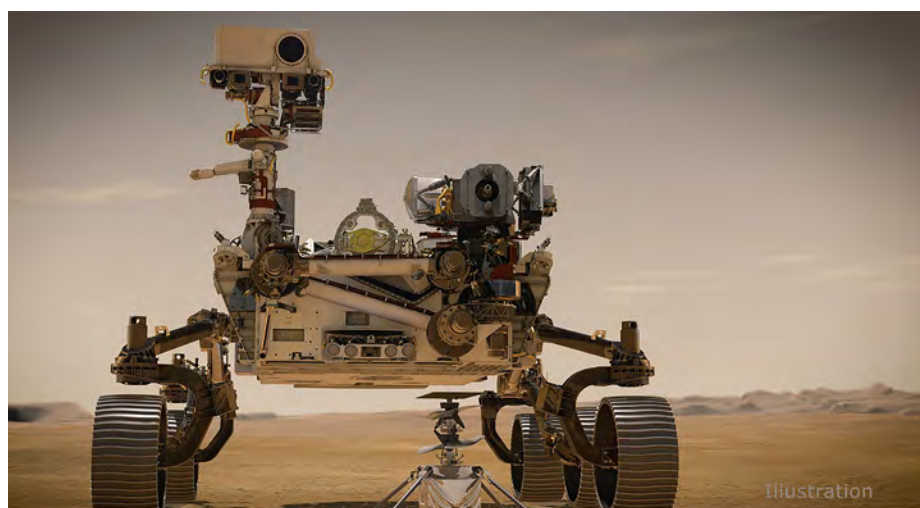
the line of communication, Ingenuity has set up with Perseverance and Earth, it must be able to take off, fly, and land with minimal instruction from Earth.

Despite these challenges, Ingenuity was successful in completing its first mission. Besides the test flights, there will be no extensive data besides that related to flights gathered by

the helicopter due to a lack of instruments.

However, Ingenuity will take several colored and monotone images of its surrounding area, which is always useful.

The original flight from April 19 was live streamed but is now available for watching on NASA TV.



Perseverance. Image courtesy of NASA

J&J vaccine (continued)

At the time of this writing, there have been 15 cases of the blood clots, 13 of them in women under 50, confirmed out of the 8 million who have received the vaccine. CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said that as regulators have reviewed the rare events, newly identified patients have been treated appropriately without the use of heparin.

Regulators feel that their messages had gotten out to doctors, so now they know how to take precautions when treating patients with the blood

clot disorder and can continue distributing the J&J vaccine.

"What we are seeing is the overall rate of events was 1.9 cases per million people. In women 18 to 49 years there was an approximate 7 cases per million. The risk is even lower in women over the age of 50 at .9 cases per million," Walensky said in a news briefing.

"In terms of benefits, we found that for every 1 million doses of this vaccine, the J&J vaccine could prevent over 650 hospitalizations and 12 deaths among women ages 18-49,"

she said. "In the end, this vaccine was shown to be safe and effective for the vast majority of people."

While the FDA and CDC said that the use of the J&J vaccine should resume in the United States for all adults, health care providers should warn patients of the risk of developing the rare and serious blood clots.

This decision also comes with a warning towards women under 50, since they appear to be at a higher risk.

Chapman (continued)

During an ABC News Weekend Magazine interview in 1969, Chapman stated, "What motivated me to join the program is that I was deeply interested in space technology. I was in the country so I could work on space technology. NASA called for applications to become scientists-astronauts and that is as close as you can get to space technology."

He later left near the end of the Apollo Program in July of 1972 due to what he believed to be a lack of opportunity for scientists in the astronaut corps. Chapman dedicated

the next five years of his life to working on laser propulsion at Avco Everette Research Laboratory before moving to Arthur D. Little. He was also part of the NASA/DOE SPS Concept Development and Evaluation Program in the late 70s.

Later, he was elected as president of the L5 Society, now known as the National Space Society, which was successful in campaigning to stop the U.S. Senate from ratifying the Moon Treaty, which would have excluded any commercial activity on the Moon. He was also on the Citizens' Advisory

Council on National Space Policy and was chief scientist for two companies that were both developing commercial reusable spacecraft.

One of his last notable accomplishments was founding the Solar High Study Group whose purpose was to further the development of solar power satellites.

He is survived by his wife, Maria Tseng, and his children Peter Hume Chapman and Kirsten de Querilleau Chapman from his first marriage to Pamela Gatenby, who preceded him in death.

India surpasses COVID-19 death toll

By Shaheryar Khan

India shatters global records as COVID-19 related deaths skyrocket in astronomical numbers. The surge of COVID-19 cases emerges as India Prime Minister Narendra Modi set sights on allowing massive crowds to partake what many experts have been calling “super spreader” events, such as religious festivals and political campaign rallies.

As the United States prepares for the upcoming summer, 150.42 million people have received at least one dose of the

COVID-19 vaccine and 108.92 million people are fully vaccinated, according to Our World in Data. India, on the other hand, witnesses mass cremations. Hospitals are understaffed and lack the essential resources needed to keep the infected citizens alive.

“People die in front of our eyes every day. These are people who should have been saved,” a volunteer at a cremation site told NBC News.

As the pandemic continued to play its course, many

people opted to have more lenient attitudes towards preliminary safety precautions and the new, more contagious strains of the virus.

India broke its own record regarding daily COVID-19 cases and death toll May 6, with 412,262 new infections and 3,980 fatalities over the last 24 hours. These numbers, however, are believed to be an undercount.

India, underprepared for the second wave of the virus, has received aid from the European Union, as well as

neighboring countries like Pakistan and China. Although the relationship between the Asian countries has not always been civil, the neighboring nations decided to keep the tensions to the side and offer help.

Pakistan’s charity medical organization, Edhi Foundation, has offered to send their ambulances to virus hotspots in India.

Faisal Edhi, the managing trustee of the Edhi Foundation, told Al Jazeera that he wrote a letter to Modi.

“We sympathize with you greatly and during this strenuous time, we would like to extend our help in the form of a fleet of 50 ambulances along with our services to assist you in addressing, and further circumventing, the current health conditions,” the letter reads.

China, who shares border tensions with India, also reached out in solidarity. Chinese President Xi Jinping offered to help India fight against the coronavirus pandemic, as Xi expressed his

condolences to Modi.

“China is willing to enhance cooperation with India on fighting COVID-19 and provide support and assistance to India,” Xi said on television, according to the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

To offer aid to India, donate to Oxygen for India, a volunteer-run campaign who delivers medical oxygen to infected individuals. For more information, visit OxygenForIndia.org.

Officer pulls gun instead of taser, kills Black man

By Lauren Anderson

On April 11, 20-year-old Daunte Wright was shot and killed during a traffic stop in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota after an officer mistakenly pulled a gun on him instead of a taser. The body camera footage that was released shows Potter holding a gun, but yelling “taser, taser” before firing a single shot. The officer who had fired the shot, named Kimberly Potter, 46,

a 26-year veteran of the police department.

Officers had originally stopped the vehicle for expired registration tags, but when they realized that Wright had a warrant for a gross misdemeanor, they attempted to arrest him.

After he re-entered the vehicle, Potter fired the shot as Wright drove several blocks before crashing into another car. Wright was pro-

nounced dead at the scene, and the woman who was with him in the car was hurt but is expected to survive. Protests broke out because of this incident.

The shooting has increased tensions of a community that has been on edge from the trial of Derek Chauvin, the former police officer responsible for the death of George Floyd.

Ignoring curfew, crowds gathered

in front of Brooklyn Center’s police headquarters, throwing objects, such as fireworks, bricks, and bottles, at public safety officials. Reporters stated that law enforcement fired tear gas and stun grenades at the crowds.

Brooklyn Center Mayor Mike Elliot says that he supports the termination of Potter from the force.

“My position is we cannot afford

to make mistakes that lead to the loss of life,” Elliott said. “I do fully support releasing the officer of her duties.”

Tim Gannon, the chief of the Brooklyn Center Police Department, disagreed with the mayor’s stance on Potter’s termination, saying that she has the right to a “due process.”

Activists criticized the police department for using

force, but Gannon defended his department’s decision, stating that he needed to disperse the crowd after an officer was hit with a brick. Wright’s grieving mother, Katie Wright, urged calm and said that she didn’t want anyone else to get hurt.

“All I want is my baby home,” she told reporters.



20-year-old Daunte Wright pictured before his death. Photo courtesy of Dante’s brother, Dallas Wright.



On April 12, protesters gathered in Washington Square, NY to protest Dante Wright’s death. Photo courtesy of Timothy A. Clary/AFP via Getty Images.

DMX dies, leaves musical legacy

By Salvador Hernandez

On April 9, Earl Simmons, known professionally as DMX, passed away in the White Plains Hospital in New York at the age of 50, due to complications related to a heart attack which he suffered April 3. DMX's passing marks the loss of a rap legend who left his mark through his achievements in his career and the positive influence he had on his fans and fellow peers.

DMX had a rough upbringing dealing with the

absence of his father who abandoned him and his mother at the age of seven. DMX often had to deal with the harsh discipline which he received from his mother in the form of physical and psychological abuse. The only few shining lights which he had as an escape from his troubles were music and bonding with the stray dogs around his neighborhood of Yonkers.

In 1998, DMX shocked the hip-hop scene with his debut studio album "It's Dark and Hell is

Hot" which contained the hit songs "Ruff Ryders Anthem" and "Get at Me Dog." The album showcased DMX's style laced with a rough and aggressive delivery which perfectly translated his pain, emotion and realness felt in his songs.

DMX followed his debut album with the release of "Flesh of my Flesh, Blood of my Blood" which included the memorable and emotional hit "Slip-pin" outlining the realities of abuse and loss which he felt as

a child. Both albums debuted at the top of the U.S. Billboard 200 chart.

Throughout his career DMX collaborated with his fellow East Coast rappers such as Nas, Jay-Z and Styles P. DMX also dipped his toes into acting with the classic performance as Tommy "Buns" Bundy in *Belly* starring alongside Nas. He also had roles in action movies such as "Cradle 2 the Grave" and "Romeo Must Die" starring alongside Jet Li.

To many he

was the rapper that filled the void which was left by the deaths of Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac.

Through the formation of the Ruff Ryders, DMX was instrumental in discovering and signing talents to Ruff Ryders such as Eve. A pioneer of the rap industry, DMX paved the way for other female rappers, such as Nicki Minaj and Cardi B.

His record label, Def Jam Recordings mourned his death and praised his accomplishments in a statement saying, "His message of triumph over struggle, his search for the

light out of darkness, his pursuit of truth and grace brought us closer to our own humanity."

DMX passing affected many in the hip-hop community and his fans surely made his passing felt when they made a makeshift memorial for him outside the gates of the White Plains Hospital.

DMX always looked to faith to heal and showed this through his release of a Christian rap song entitled "Lord Give me a Sign" from his "Year of the Dog... Again" album which he released in 2006.

Marvel releases trailer with all-Asian cast

By Emily Saldivar

On April 19, Marvel Studios released the trailer for its next addition in the MCU, *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*.

The story follows Shang-Chi, a skilled martial artist whose father, Wenwu, trained him as an assassin. Shang-Chi later escaped the Ten Rings organization and attempts to live a normal, quiet life in San Francisco.

Shang-Chi is played by Simu Liu, a Chinese-Canadian actor who's starred in several shows such as "Kim's Convenience," "Orphan Black," "The Expanse," and "Fresh Off the Boat." On April 19, Liu's birthday, he shared a picture of the first teaser poster for the film shortly before the teaser trailer came out.

Many are

excited about a new Marvel film, but it is receiving extra attention for another reason. This is the first major superhero film from an American studio to feature a predominately Asian cast – a big milestone in entertainment history. In an Instagram post, Simu Liu is pictured wearing leis and standing beside the director of the film, Destin Daniel Cretton. The caption reads, "We made a baby!!! We can't wait to introduce him to the world in 9 months."

The response to the trailer was mixed with overseas fans due to the hesitance of a Western studio accurately portraying a heavily Chinese-influenced story but has been positively received by American fans.

However, for those who are

just learning about this new hero, the trailer itself gives little insight into that possible plot for the upcoming film. While comic readers may be familiar with Shang-Chi's original storyline, it may not be completely helpful with the new film.

According to Marvel's website, the synopsis reads, "When Shang-Chi is drawn into the clandestine Ten Rings organization, he is forced to confront the past he thought he left behind."

While fans were quick to speculate who would take the role as Shang-Chi's father as the comics have used Fu Manchu originally, an infamous villain that Marvel lost the rights to. However, it is clear now that Wenwu, or the Mandarin, has been named Shang-Chi's

father and is listed as being an antagonistic character in the story. Other cast members to look forward to include Awkwafina as Katy, Tony Leung

as Wenwu, Michelle Yeoh as Jiang Nan, and Ronnie Chieng as Jon Jon.

Despite the delay caused by the pandemic during its

initial filming in February 2020, "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" is scheduled to release Sept. 3.



Image courtesy of MoviePosters.com

Interactive Dr. Seuss Museum arrives in Houston By Amber Williams

From there to here, and here to there, Dr. Seuss is everywhere. America's favorite children's author brings his world to the City of Houston in an interactive museum in the George R. Brown Convention Center. This interactive museum spectacular kicked off in Toronto, Canada in 2019 and has

since traveled around the United States. The museum is presented by Kilburn Live in collaboration with Dr. Seuss Enterprises.

"The Dr. Seuss Experience' brings the extraordinary world of Dr. Seuss to life, and we couldn't be more thrilled to give everyone the opportunity to see and experience

their favorite stories and characters as if they jumped right off the pages," said Susan Brandt, president of Dr. Seuss Enterprises.

For the Houston experience, the interactive museum resides in Exhibit Hall A. It is one of the first large-scale, out-of-town attractions in Houston since the pandemic. "It's

been a tough year, but we think that late spring/early summer will be a good time to head back out into the world, safely of course," said Kilburn Live CEO Mark Manuel in a statement. "The Dr. Seuss Experience is needed now, more than ever, to reignite the magic of physical play and let children's imagi-

nations run wild."

Tickets are on sale now. General admissions for adults over the age of 13 is \$28. General admissions for children ages 1 through 13 is \$23. Infants under 12 months have free admission

VIP tickets for \$50 for all ages, however, there is a time limit between 1 p.m.

and 6:30 p.m. "Super Stoo-Pendous" tickets are \$50 for all ages, and the passes are for all day. The best part, no crowds!

All tickets require appointments online, and the museum will follow COVID-19 safety protocols.

The exhibit is open from May 15 through Aug. 15.

Former reality star runs for governor Madiha Hussain

Caitlyn Jenner recently announced that she filed the appropriate paperwork to run for governor of California against the incumbent Gov. Gavin Newsom. Despite not having any previous political experience, Jenner, a known Republican, claims that she wants to become the governor to save California. She has criticized Gov. Newsom (D) for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic

and the homelessness problem in California.

In an interview with Fox News anchor Sean Hannity, Jenner revealed her opinions on multiple political stances in more detail. When asked about immigration, she vowed that she would ensure the deportation of illegal immigrants as governor.

Even though Jenner has no previous political experience, she would not

be the first celebrity to enter the political world. Donald Trump, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Clay Aiken, and other celebrities have seen some political success.

Schwarzenegger commented, "Anyone has a chance," when asked about his thoughts regarding Jenner's bid to run. There are multiple parallels between Schwarzenegger and Jenner's gubernatorial

run. Schwarzenegger famously won the governor's seat of California during a recall election in 2003.

Jenner also hopes to become a role model for transgender people by becoming the governor. Although Jenner is one of the most visible trans women in America, she landed herself in hot water due to her controversial stance on trans girls in sports.

"This is a question of fairness. That's why I oppose biological boys who are trans competing in girls' sports in school. It just isn't fair," she told TMZ news.

Jenner has been open with her conservative political views before. She backed Texas presidential candidate Ted Cruz (R) and eventually Donald Trump (R) in the 2016 elections, even though both candidates had

poor LGBTQ+ stances.

Over 1.6 million Californians have signed a petition to trigger a recall election to oust Gov. Newsom. Although an official date for the recall has not been announced, it is expected to occur in November. Jenner is currently running against about a dozen people to compete for the governor's seat.

Bullying scandals exposed in K-pop industry By Jema Pantoja

South Korea is notorious for online and in-school bullying, but a recent movement emerged aiming to save students from abuse by creating better regulations. The K-pop industry is no exception. Over the past few months, victims have been making anonymous allegations and standing up to their bullies who are now active artists in the K-pop industry.

K-pop is an industry with millions of fans worldwide.

With K-pop idols leading an active following on social media, controversy is never too far away. The latest scandal to follow K-pop idols are not from their current lifestyle or reputation, but rather from their past before they became public figures. All over social media and online forums, plenty of people have come forward with bullying accusations towards current K-pop idols.

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From left to right: Hwang Hyunjin of Stray Kids, Seo Soojin of (G)I-DLE, Lee Hyunjoo former member of April. Image courtesy of Harper's Bazaar Singapore.

Beauty influencer James Charles demonetized

By Emily Saldivar

Beauty influencer James Charles's YouTube channel was recently demonetized following accusations of sexual misconduct with minors.

On April 20, a YouTube spokesperson released a statement regarding demonetizing Charles' YouTube account.

"We can confirm that we have applied our creator responsibility policy and temporarily removed James Charles from the YouTube Partner Program." The question is, when did this all start?

The first accusation came out in February from a 16-year-old TikTok user accusing Charles of sending him nude photographs via Snapchat despite knowing his age. Charles took to his Twitter where he released a statement refuting the claims. However, that wasn't the end of the story as

the initial accusation caused more than fifteen additional people to come forward and claim they had similar interactions with the beauty influencer, according to Insider. The first change happened in March when the YouTube show Instant Influencer announced via Variety that they decided to cancel the 21-year-old's position as host for the second season of the show. This came as a shock to many as the show is centered around winning a mentorship with James Charles himself as well as a cash prize. After the success of the first season, Charles was excited when he happily announced the second season via Twitter. However, the question of who will replace Charles has yet to be answered.

On April 1, Charles used his YouTube channel to release an apolo-

gy video where he confessed that he did send explicit photos to two underage people but only because they lied about being 18 years old. Despite him taking accountability for his actions, he faced more backlash and releases another statement on Twitter that warns against those who are potentially spreading false narratives against him. Then on April 16, Morphe cosmetics released a statement via Twitter about their decision to end their partnership with Charles. The statement reads, "In light of recent allegations against James Charles, Morphe and James have agreed to end our business relationship and wind down sales of the Morphe x James Charles product offering." They end the statement by stating that their goal has always been to create

a safe space and they are continuing that goal.

In response, Charles posted his statement on Twitter reiterating Morphe's decision as well as adding his sentiment, "I am continuing to take time away to learn, grow, and listen, and look forward to coming back one day in the future as a better version of myself."

Despite this,

his YouTube channel remains demonetized for the time being as per YouTube guidelines.

In a video explaining the Creator Responsibility Initiative, creator liaison, Matt Koval explains that YouTubers are held to certain guidelines whether it is online or offline. In the video, he states, "Not to sound all dad-like here, but you might say that with great

popularity comes great responsibility."

While James Charles is temporarily banned from monetary gain through YouTube, where he is the highest paid beauty influence making about \$25K per brand video, according to the New York Times, his other platforms are still up and running. However, he has decided to take some time away from social media.



Image courtesy of CelebMagazine.com

Bullying scandals exposed (continued)

By Jema Pantoja

While some of the idols accused of bullying have taken responsibility, others have either denied or never confirmed the accusation.

Some of the latest K-pop idols accused of bullying by former classmates are Hwang Hyunjin of Stray Kids, Seo Soojin of (G)I-DLE, and Lee Hyunjoo of April. Stray Kids' member Hyunjin was accused by a former classmate of verbal abuse. After the news went viral, JYP

Entertainment, the agency representing Hyunjin, investigated the matter fully and met with the accuser and interviewed former teachers and classmates. According to the investigation, the conclusion is not clear whether or not Hyunjin is at fault. However, despite the conclusion, Hyunjin issued an official apology on social media where he expressed the remorse and regret he felt for his actions. Since his apology, Hyunjin has

put a pause on his group activities and took an indefinite hiatus.

(G)I-DLE's Soojin was accused by a former middle school classmate that made claims that Soojin slapped her, made a group chat to outcast the classmate as well as being accused of stealing other classmates' money and belongings. Through her agency, CUBE Entertainment, Soojin denied the allegations and responded that when

she was a student bad rumors always followed her. Following the controversy, CUBE Entertainment decided to remove Soojin from (G)I-DLE's latest song by re-recording the song and editing the music video to minimize her appearance. Both CUBE Entertainment and Soojin denied the bullying accusations and intend to take legal action against the accusers.

Former April member, Hyunjoo, recently came un-

der fire when news broke that her former members bullied the idol before she left the group in 2016. On an online forum, a user who claimed to be Hyunjoo's younger brother made allegations and broke his silence on how Hyunjoo endured bullying from her former members while she was an active member in the group from 2015 to 2016.

In 2016 when Hyunjoo left the group, it was reported that she left to pur-

sue an acting career. However, Hyunjoo's brother revealed that she was ostracized, developed severe anxiety that caused breathing issues and even tried to commit suicide. In response, DSP Media, the agency representing April, has stated that Hyunjoo faced obstacles due to her mental and physical state and did not address the bullying accusations. Hyunjoo has decided to remain silent on the matter.

Reviews

‘Shadow and Bone’ streams on Netflix By Jema Pantoja

The 8-episode Netflix series “Shadow and Bone,” released April 23, was adapted from the young adult fantasy book trilogy “Shadow and Bone” and “Six of Crows” duology by Leigh Bardugo, originally published from 2012 through 2016. Although the “Shadow and Bone” trilogy and the “Six of Crows” duology take place during different time frames, the series ties both storylines together to bring romance, action, drama, mystery and witty comedic relief.

“Shadow and Bone” introduces fresh faced actors and brings to life the trilogy and duology novels’ endearing characters Alina Starkov (Jessie Mei Li), General Kirigan (Ben Barnes), Malyen Oretsev (Archie Renaux), Kaz Brek-

ker (Freddy Carter), Inej Ghafa (Amita Suman), Jesper Fahey (Kit Young), Nina Zenik (Danielle Galligan), and Matthias Helvar (Calahan Skogman).

The series is set in an imperial Russian-esque magical human world where “wizard/witch” types, known as Grisha, have powers to control or summon air, water, fire, metal and even the human body. The Grisha can heal or harm others with the motion of their hands, known as what they call “small science.” The world is geopolitically divided between East and West Ravka due to the dark “Shadow Fold” created by the “black heretic” thousands of years ago, where flying man-eating creatures, known as Volcra, reside.

The main character, Alina Starkov, grew

up in an orphanage in Karemzin and later joined the second Army as a cartographer alongside childhood friend Malyen “Mal” Oretsev. Alina discovers the dormant ability to control light when she tries to save Mal from the Volcra while passing through the Fold. Alina is The Sun Summoner, known as the fabled saint, is a representation of hope for the Grisha. It was prophesied that she will bring an end to the Fold and peacefully unite Ravka as it once was. This puts a giant target on her head. Once Alina’s powers have been revealed she is taken to the “Little Palace” where Grisha reside and practice strengthening their abilities.

As Alina struggles to hone her power, she finds that allies and enemies can be one and the

same and that nothing in the magical Grisha world is what it seems. There are dangerous forces at play, such as the Darkling known as the “Shadow Summoner” and a crew of charismatic criminals led by Kaz Brekker.

The series plays on different allegories and hero stereotypes common in fantasy novels. The contrast between light and darkness, betrayal by those closest to you, a love triangle, a prophecy of a chosen one outside of the kingdom and rogues who are only out for themselves.

Despite stereotypical tropes, “Shadow and Bone” offers one novelty, the country the series is set is populated entirely by humans. The series addresses the subject of racism and discrimination in their main character

Alina. The citizens of Ravka distrust Alina because her physical features reflect her “half-Shu” status (in the series, the Shu, are the people of Shu Han, an alternate China reality). Despite the ignorant disdain from the citizens that proves to be another obstacle, Alina breaks expectations as she proves she is the powerful Sun Summoner. Although the pro-

ducers made a few changes from the novels, the series is sure to leave the Grishaverse fanbase satisfied and wanting more. “Shadow and Bone” is a captivating series with endearing characters who are sure to grab your attention with the adventures they embark upon.

“Shadow and Bone” is now streaming on Netflix.



Image courtesy of @shadowandbone on Instagram.

‘Stowaway’ streams on Netflix By Amber Williams

“Stowaway” is a thrilling and exciting way to spend a movie night with suspenseful, emotional acting and outstanding storytelling. The film is by Joe Penna, who directed and written the movie with the help of the co-writer, Ryan Morrison.

Joe Penna, a Brazilian musician, and filmmaker

began his career on YouTube as “MysteryGuitarMan” and currently has 2.67 million subscribers. He has also directed three other films, such as “Instant Getaway” (2014), “Meridian” (2012), and “Beyond” (2015), but he is best known for the movies “Artic” (2018) and “Turning Point” (2015).

“Stowaway”

follows three astronauts (played by Anna Kendrick, Toni Collette and Daniel Dae Kim) on a mission to Mars. When they are too far away from earth to return, they realize an unplanned passenger is in the ship with them (played by Shamier Anderson). Now they have to make the tough survival choices as they continue

their mission, now faced with low oxygen, limited rations, survive with low oxygen and food and save the mission.

The film starts with the three astronauts preparing for launch and then taking off to begin their three-year mission – to see if it is possible to create life, such as plants, on Mars and see if life is sustain-

able. If one knows about the scientific aspects of astronauts launching into space or is interested in how astronauts launch into space, then the first ten minutes are about the scenario. It was interesting to see how the launch sequence happens. However, there was a feeling of the film is dragged on to prolong the movie. An example of this

is when the launch sequence is finished, and the astronauts will work into their respected areas – one is a commander, a doctor, and a microbiologist. Since there are many scientific explanations and phrases, plus seeing the astronauts into their respective fields or doing more work off-screen, it will be difficult for one to follow during the beginning of the movie.

Reviews

'Mortal Kombat' streams on HBO Max

By James Jurewicz

After a 25-year hiatus, *Mortal Kombat* is back on the silver screen and also on the HBO Max streaming service.

A martial arts action fantasy, the film is a reboot/reimagining of the original, directed by Paul W.S. Anderson in 1995. The original is considered to be one of the best film adaptations to be based on a video game. The *Mortal Kombat* franchise is utterly unique. No other franchises contain four-armed inter dimensional half-dragon brutes or military special forces soldiers with jacked cybernetic arms.

"*Mortal Kombat*" follows the story of Cole Young, portrayed by Lewis Tan. Cole has a strange birthmark on his chest

in the form of an encircled dragon, fans will recognize this as the *Mortal Kombat* franchise logo.

Originally in arcades in 1992, "*Mortal Kombat*" was then eventually ported to home video gaming consoles almost a year later in 1993. The game franchise contains a rich history of colorful characters, all with their own mythology and backstory. Every character comes complete with their own theme and special superpowers and labeled with a creative name. Sub Zero controls ice, and Reptile sports active camouflage. There is a very deep well of material for Hollywood filmmakers to draw upon. The 2021 film is comparable to the 1995 version.

There seems to be so much packed into this feature that many diehard fans of the franchise will be content with the new vision. The franchise easter eggs and video game verbiage can be found all throughout the film. As opposed to the fighters having their powers before involvement in "*Mortal Kombat*," the powers have to be awakened by the individual. It is called their "Arcana." This is different from the games where the fighters already possess their special abilities.

While there are complaints about the graphics, "*Mortal Kombat*" was given a small budget of \$55 million in order to see how hungry audiences were for another

film version. The filming locations are remote and stunning, "*Mortal Kombat*" was filmed in South Australia. The practical special effects are terrific, not a surprise from a James Wan Production. James Wan is known for the *Saw* franchise and attained major success with the superhero epic *Aquaman*. Wan chose first time director Simon McQuoid who got his showbiz start directing commercials. There are shaky story elements, though this is an unfair nitpick of a franchise known for an inter-dimensional war of worlds. Some parts of the film were intentionally vague in order to leave room for a sequel. For a film about a fighting tournament, it is un-

fortunate the audience never gets to see it.

Kano is one of the standout performances of "*Mortal Kombat*". His wisecracks and humor accentuate the film well. Kano has a soccer hooligan demeanor that allows for laughs between the violence and gore of the film. Cole Young is a serviceable new character in the film. Due to his having no knowledge of "*Mortal Kombat*" he is able to be a guide for the audience members with little to no "*Mortal Kombat*" knowledge. Lewis Tan performed well and was fun to watch fight, but the writing of his character dialogue had a dryness to it. Jessica McNamee was very well cast as Sonya, and she matched her

video game counterpart identically.

"*Mortal Kombat*" is a fun martial arts adventure fantasy film. The movie and is worth the near two-hour runtime. The pacing holds the viewer's interest, and the story is fantastical enough to invoke genuine excitement. The fights in the movie are brutal and realistic reflecting the video game franchise well. The movie has so many fun and unique characters with supernatural abilities, a sequel with a longer runtime would be fantastic. "*Mortal Kombat*" is worth the watch either on HBO Max or safely socially distanced and masked up in the movie theater.

'Stowaway' (continued)

However, the film begins to pick up when the fourth person is found on the ship. The acting becomes more realistic and relatable since the fourth person is an engineer and is confused about how they board the shuttle and what to do to help out the crew. After the person is found, the movie begins to show the other advertised struggles,

such as the struggle for oxygen and food supplies for the next three years. Harsh decisions are made, and the actors made the decisions more challenging because of how the others responded. The conflict of other casts is shown because of the hard choices, and complex missions are taken place because of the race of time.

Overall, the

film was exciting and interesting. It was something that will make the audience guess what is going to happen next. It's a drama towards the end, but a realistic one that makes you connect to the characters over the harsh conditions the astronauts have to decide.

"*Stowaway*" released on April 22 and is streaming on Netflix.



Image courtesy of Newsweek.com

State lawmakers refuse to educate youth on finances

By Jesse Fitzgerald
Rodriguez Sr.

Should our state lawmakers create and pass a bill to educate our youth on finance, how Wall Street functions and the tax code?

As college classes end, summer classes begin, but the lack of financial education remains in stagnation as the board of education across the country postpones the important curricula necessary for students to live a more affluent and successful life.

How can students succeed in the real world if they do not learn the secretive financial system that their own state legislates and requires them to live in accordance with the law?

As a mandatory and a prerequisite to graduate from high school, college, and thereafter, without question, college tuition is on the rise, taxes are on the rise for

the regular employee, while those who are privy and wealthy to the tax code (and the financial system) capitalize as a result.

As of now, a Financial Literacy 2020 Legislation exists in states across the country, except in Texas. Did the ongoing financial crisis in America and the pandemic across the globe wake up a nation or did it create a bigger problem?

Currently, pre-K through 12th grade and a college education prepares boys and girls and young adults of all ages with an academic, professional, but not a personal finance education. Why?

Former Senator Doug Jones, a Democrat from Alabama, wrote back in April 2019 in a featured article, “Only five states require high school students to learn financial education or demonstrate ‘financial literacy’

in order to graduate. Those five are Alabama, Missouri, Tennessee, Utah and Virginia.” But this may soon change.

To further emphasize and raise awareness, the National Conference of State Legislators suggest that “Financial literacy focuses on the specific knowledge and concepts consumers need to manage their money and build wealth, depending on an individual’s situation.”

So, when will our education system require and add financial and educational courses to the core curriculum? It is inevitable: Children and young adults will unavoidably become our future leaders. The question is, who will it be?

I believe if we want to compete at a national level and remain the superpower as China pushes to take over the financial market, trade, etc.,

financial literacy and monetary education is vital for the development of the human mind, the culture, and our environment as a whole.

From one crisis to another, history repeats itself. Poverty and unemployment persist in large numbers. Our federal government bails us out in times of financial crisis and “gives us fish” but will not “teach us how to fish.” So, the youth and young adults have turned to social media, online platforms, and other vital resources to learn how to invest in their personal development, earn an honest income, and earn a respectable and fair income to survive and provide for their families.

Alternatively, if teachers, instructors, and professors cannot teach us personal finance or our children, and those thereafter, then who

will?

In the end, according to the Council for Economic Education, “You’re never too young to learn about money.” CEE conducts a comprehensive look into the state of K-12 economic and financial education in the U.S. every two years, collecting data from around the nation.

According to CEE, as of 2020, only 21 states require high school students to take a course in “personal finance,” an increase of four states since 2018; 25 states require high school students to take a course in economics, an increase of three states since 2018; and five states, plus the District of Columbia, still do not include personal finance in their standards.

In retrospect, the CEE stated in 2020 that research shows that “requirements” are the main driver of economics

and personal finance being taught in schools. Regardless of the numbers, students across the country take up the cause to push for more financial education. It is no secret, he or she who is highly educated in finance, has a higher chance of managing their money, savings, and credit lines more adequately.

Inevitably, lawmakers in each state control our education system, influence our political system, and capitalize from our legislative system, respectively.

In the process of this drastic change, I only hope that better wages, fair trade, and an adequate education system are created in and around our higher education institutions and reorganize themselves accordingly to compete by improving social and environmental standards—globally.

‘I Heart Mac and Cheese’ disappoints



By Gean Garcia

On May 7, I checked out “I Heart Mac and Cheese” on the far-left side of downtown, right underneath Interstate-45, in hopes of interviewing them.

The place was hard to find, and it required getting into a paid parking lot, as the locale nestles itself around bigger businesses. Upon arrival, I met the site manager, Rachele Ester.

Ester informed me that I Heart Mac and Cheese is a ghost kitchen, a deliv-

ery-only restaurant. In Houston, three to four of these ghost kitchens circulate the city, and they are all identifiable by their blue food truck appearance, along with the words “Reef Kitchens” emblazoned on their side.

A new location will open in the Deer Park/Pasadena area on May 19. To place an order, one should search for “I Heart Mac and Cheese” on Google.

Reef Kitchens claims that customers may order on

various platforms, such as UberEATS, Grubhub, Postmates, or DoorDash. However, I found that the only way to order was through DoorDash. Everything else glitched, which the employees recognized as an ongoing error in the system.

For this reason, it is best to order from the Leeland St. vessel, located at 900 Leeland St., Houston, Texas. Much like the Dallas Street location, the Leeland ghost kitchen is also in a paid park-

ing lot.

Because the I Heart Mac and Cheese vessel on Dallas Street was challenging to find and complicated to order, I do not recommend ordering from there. Instead, customers should order from another location.

And if one finds himself unable to pay the parking pass and leave the parking lot, say to the screen these magic words: I heart mac and cheese.



I Heart Mac and Cheese operates as a ghost kitchen, a delivery-only restaurant with four locations in Houston. Photo courtesy of I Heart Mac and Cheese.