

DATELINE:DOWNTOWN

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From the editor's desk



Photo courtesy of LBC9 News

On November 12, the world lost a legendary figure in Stan Lee.

I won't profess to be the biggest comic book fan in the world (though I do enjoy the no-nonsense style of the Punisher, Spider Man and his variety of crazy villains, and the madcap antics of Deadpool), but even I, as someone who only occasionally delves into the world of comics, recognize what a big deal Stan Lee was to the world of comics, and to nerd culture in general.

Lee can be looked at in a couple of different perspective. He can certainly be viewed as a cultural icon. Indeed, he has made endless cameos in many television shows and movies, both animated and live action. Lee has also been the creator, either in part or in whole, of some of the most recognizable characters ever created.

He can be viewed as a prolific businessman that may exemplify the American dream. He started from a minor position at Marvel Comics and grew into the Stan Lee that many people

knew and loved. He even created his own company after leaving Marvel yet still retained his status as an ambassador for the company. Or maybe he could be viewed as just a man who was insanely creative and talented.

No matter the way Lee is looked at, either past, present or future, I think it might be best to use this space not to eulogize him (anything that I could say would not be sufficient enough to be a proper tribute to his greatness) but rather to draw some lessons from his life.

One of the biggest lessons that could be drawn (no pun intended) from his legacy is the principle of hard work. It's easy to simplify his success (and continued success) as being in the right place at the right time but I think that's too simple of an answer. Even after he became successful, he didn't stop working until he couldn't do it anymore. He maintained his Marvel movie cameo stints until his passing, still attended comic conventions well into his old age and wasn't afraid to delve into unfamiliar territory like co-writing a manga (Japanese comic for the unfamiliar) with a famous manga author or working on

a musical. This may be a high-minded and idealistic take but perhaps it's worth keeping in mind that hard work may very well take you further than you imagined.

It's impossible to quantify someone's lifelong career (especially given that the man in question died at 95) into a space of about 550 words. It's also impossible for me to go into a heartfelt tribute as I wasn't a diehard fan of Marvel growing up. What I can say, however, is that he did so much for so many people in so many contexts. He was someone who did something rare for his time: he wrote material that appealed to children but could appeal to adults at the same time (if adults took a critical look at those comics anyway.) His world became so large that it essentially formed the childhood of children for past generations and for generations to come.

Maybe we'll see another Stan Lee in our lifetime but more than likely we won't. Perhaps the best thing that all of us can do to maintain his legacy is to engage and revel into this gigantic world he helped create throughout his long life. Excelsior, true believer. You will be sorely missed.

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Texas candidates speak with UHD students during Gator Day of Action

By Emily Christiansen

More than twenty candidates running for office joined UHD students for a meet and greet hosted by the SGA and UHD's Center for Public Deliberation on October 24.

The Republican, Democratic, and Libertarian candidates represented offices ranging from precinct judges to house of representatives. The meet and greet was split into fifteen minute sessions. During each session, students sat at a table with two or three candidates and had a chance to ask them about different issues.

Dr. Windy Lawrence of UHD's Center for Public Deliberation opened the event with a speech on the importance of communication in politics. She described the current political atmosphere as one where opposing parties no longer engage in meaningful discussion. She encouraged people to "resist the temptation to get sucked into that polarization."

While the candidates did explain their plan of action if elected, they stayed away from disparaging other candidates or party views. Todd Litton explained how he supports expanding

national service through programs like Ameri-Corps to help cover the costs of college and serve the community. Mike Collier discussed his commitment to having an independent redistricting committee address gerrymandering in Texas. Patrick Gunnel said that he believes the federal government has too much power and that he does not support the 16th amendment.

The Gator Day of Action reflects UHD's ongoing commitment to civic engagement. The Center for Public Deliberation encourages citizens to become more involved with their com-

munities and the political process.

Emily Christiansen is a third year Technical Communication major. She enjoys reading Piers Anthony books set in Xanth and comics. She spends nearly all of her time with her boyfriend and kids playing board games, going to parks, or the library. She plans to work as a technical writer or editor after graduation.

Mental health poses challenges to students

By Sara Ali

Mental health problems have become very common and is one of the biggest challenges faced by college students. A study done by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) found that one in four students have a diagnosable illness, 40% do not seek help, 80% feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities and 50% of them have become so anxious that they struggle in school.

Some of the mental illnesses faced by students are depression, anxiety, eating disorders and addiction. One of the things holding back students from getting help is the stigma attached to mental health. Facing these mental illnesses has made their life more arduous, since college is a time where they are balancing school, family, social life and work altogether.

One of the most common mental health illnesses is depression. There was a survey conducted by the Association of University and College Counseling which found out that 36.4% of college students reported having depression. This makes it the number one reason that students drop out of school and if left untreated can lead to suicide. However, depression can differ from person to person. Symptoms of depression can be seen in physical well-being, emotional and thinking states. Other signs include a lack of enjoyment in activities they used to enjoy, not attending class or social functions and regular discussions about death or suicide.

Another mental health illness that has become common for college students is anxiety. According to the reports of The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) reports, anxiety disorders have become one of the most common illnesses in the United States. Some anxiety disorders can include Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive

Compulsive-Disorder, Panic Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD). Some of the symptoms for anxiety disorders can include problems concentrating, fearfulness and irritability.

Another common mental illness that millions of college students encounter is eating disorders. Eating disorders can be defined as extreme behaviors, emotions and attitudes that revolve around food and weight perceptions. Some examples of eating disorders include Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Binge Eating Disorder. This can manifest itself as having a distorted or poor body image, a fear of public eating, making excuses for not wanting to eat in public and excessive exercise.

Addiction is something that many college students have to contend with on campus. Some forms of addiction can come in the form of alcohol or drug abuse but those are not the only addictions out there. One of the things that leads to addiction is when the person becomes dependent on something to the point where it actively interferes with their life. Some of the symptoms that can include with this dependency include un-

explained fear or anxiety, sudden weight loss or weight gain accompanied with a change in grooming habits and slurred speech or impaired coordination.

Regardless of the mental health issue, stigma plays a big role with someone who is facing those issues. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), "stigma is when someone, or even you yourself, views a person in a negative way just because they have a mental health condition." Oftentimes, some people describe stigma as a feeling of shame and judgement from someone else, which can create huge challenges that prevent individuals from reaching out and getting the help they need. There are ways that people can stand up to stigma. Some of the ways include educating oneself and others about mental health, supporting those that are close to you that are dealing with issues and see the person, not the condition.

University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) campus has many resources to help students but the Student Counseling Service would be a good first step to receive help. This program is designed to help college students maximize their mental health and effectiveness at home,

school or work. The UHD counseling services is located in One Main Building, S445. Enrolled students have access to 5 counseling sessions per each new presenting issue. Come meet some of the counselors that are available on campus like Karen Jubert, M.Ed., LPC and Delphia Medina LCSW-S.

Editorial policy

Dateline: Downtown is the official student-run newspaper of University of Houston-Downtown. Editorials, cartoons, columns and letters are the opinions of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other student writers, editors, advisors of the University of Houston-Downtown, its administration or students.



Photo by Susana Caraballo

UHD addresses food insecurity with innovative program

By Emily Christiansen

UHD's Food Scholarship Program helps selected students by providing them a grant each semester to assist with grocery costs.

After UHD did a survey of qualifying students last year, 307 full-time students in good academic standing were chosen to participate. They receive 60 dollars for every credit hour in which they are enrolled in the current semester. The students use these funds to shop at the food pantry on campus.

The idea came from a partnership between UHD, the Houston Food Bank Food for Change program and a research study done by Rice University. This partnership is focusing on the link between food resources and student academic success. Students' food insecurity is a growing concern on many campuses.

Steve Kolowich wrote in *The Chronicle for Higher Education* that local studies done across American campus-

es showed that between fourteen and 59 percent of students are not getting enough to eat. According to the Houston Food Bank, 1.1 million people of all ages are food insecure in the Houston area. Many colleges, including UHD, are addressing this problem on campus with food pantries, food grants and meal-sharing.

A group of researchers from the University of Iowa and University of California - San Diego studied food insecurity among low-income students and found that it was "forcing some to encounter difficult tradeoffs between paying for college or meeting their basic needs." When students are that focused on necessities, it is harder for them to pay attention to their studies. This ends up affecting retention, which is always a concern at colleges.

The Food Scholarship Program was supposed to begin in Fall 2017, but after Hurricane Harvey, the food pantry was opened up to help all students who

were affected. Now, between 60 and 100 students visit the food pantry each week to choose from food donated by the Houston Food Bank. The program has been so successful that it was awarded the Houston Food Bank Higher Educa-

tion Partner of the Year award.

For students that need assistance, the Houston Food Bank's website has a list of over 1,500 community partners who provide food and other services.



Photo credit Emily Christiansen

New sports and fitness center proposed for UHD

By Sheila Delgado

Currently, there are plans to build a new Sports & Fitness Center here at the University of Houston-Downtown. The new center would be bigger than the one we have now, including things like a pool, jacuzzi, indoor and outdoor running tracks, as well as an expanded exercise zone. The question burning at the front of everyone's mind, however, is how will it be paid?

The price of the center will differ student to student, depending on their credit hours or status. A full-time student, for example, will pay \$150 a semester. Presently, full-time students pay a \$75 fee for the Sports & Fitness center that is currently on campus. The price for the proposed center will double and be included in the students' administrative fees, regardless of whether a student uses those facilities or not.

Karen Valdez, a UHD student who uses the center daily, says she doesn't mind the new fee. "[The Sports and Fitness Center] does get overcrowded. I go for the weights, like the dead-lifting equipment, but there's only one. So if someone's dead-lifting... you have to wait, so sometimes I'm just like oh I'm just not going to dead-lift today." She is, however, upset that she might not be here to see the new building.

The Sports & Fitness FAQ page claims that the anticipated completion date is Fall of 2021, if planning begins fall of next year. However, Assistant Director of Sports & Fitness Rhonda Scherer wants students to know that "[for] every semester you contribute to this building before it's built, we're going to extend a free membership to you once it's built if you[ve] graduate[d]." Another student (who chose to stay anonymous), however, doesn't care that the new center will have more equipment of space. "I am outraged," she says. She just wants to graduate without an increase of fees, especially for a gym she doesn't and won't use.

The new Sports & Fitness building would be built near the Science and Technology building. The current building would, if funding suffices, be renovated into a student union. There is a possibility that students could get what the renovated second floor in the current Sports and Fitness Center has tried to offer students: larger spaces for student organizations, game room, a programming space and more.

Still, UHD is the only university in the University of Houston system that does not have a student union or a spacious Sports & Fitness center. "It's kind of underwhelming," notes an anonymous faculty member.

Perhaps this is why UHD students have not stopped pushing for a new Sports & Fitness center. Two years ago, this same referendum was passed but was not taken to the Texas legislature. Since then, students have graduated and new students have entered the school. Now this new group of students will get an input of a vote that this year will go to the Texas legislature.

Nonetheless, Dean of Students Samuel Santos cautions students to remember that "even if students pass this referendum, it doesn't mean that we're actually going to build [a new center], this is just to show that there's support on campus for it, there's other pieces we have to go through."

A referendum for accepting or rejecting the proposed center, as well as the fee increase, ended on October 29 but the results of the survey have yet to be revealed. Dateline: Downtown will continue to report on this story as it develops.

Bayou Review continues to be successful

By Sara Ali

The Bayou Review is the student-run literary arts magazine of the University of Houston - Downtown. The faculty advisor is Professor Daniel Peña. This opus includes essays, reviews, visual art work, poetry, and fiction. The university's community is encouraged to submit their works. One of its goals is to accentuate the arts and humanities by providing a medium for students who are passionate and enthusiastic about creative writing. Students from UHD's Literary Magazine Production class, critique story submissions for publication. For example, the students critique publication in either Prose, Visual Arts, or

Poetry sections. Students get the opportunity to gain knowledge about magazine production while also earning internship credit. The journal also features other works of visual and literary arts outside from the university community.

The general editor for the Bayou Review is Mariana Cano, an Interdisciplinary studies major who has been with the magazine for a year. She was asked to join by the advisor that asked for her help with designing the cover of the magazine. She had submitted a submission previously, became intern and then finally became the editor. Cano says that "my experience with the magazine was really good, fun, and crazy. Little things can cause things to be hectic but

it was fun. This magazine helped me change my mind about what I would want to do with things in life." She asserts that the Bayou Review to her means that she knows what she is doing because she enjoys it and will continue to pursue opportunities like this in the future.

Since its inception in 1987, the Bayou Review has served as a gateway for the university students to enter the world of literary arts. It provides a platform through which students and emerging writers can express themselves artistically with inspirations through prose, poetry and visual works.

The growth of the magazine has been immense since its humble beginnings but still produces phenomenal publications. Each issue of this work deals with a certain theme. Some of the themes from the previous issues have been Love (2013), Hurricane Harvey (2017) and the Prison Issue, which focused on the stories of incarcerated men (2018). It was decided and chosen by the editorial staff to be a general issue, which will come out at the end of this semester.

The magazine works to stay relevant as new pivotal events arise around the world and covers them in great depth. This magazine gives a voice to the stu-

dents which enables them to articulate their opinions. Through these publications in the journal, students get a chance to dream about a life where they are the shining star which is dedicated to promoting "inspiration." These works hope to inspire spiritual growth, personal reflection, development and community learning and connection.

For more information about the Bayou Review, the editors can be reached at editor@bayoureview.org or stop by the office in S250 in the One Main Building of UHD. They can also be reached by phone at 713-221-8260.



Photo courtesy of the Bayou Review

Gator in sheep's clothing

By Joshua Williams

UHD is helping those students to start saying "I can" out loud for the world to hear. Professor Abigail Koenig's COMM 2310 class has teamed up with the Black Sheep Agency to assist with their Better Make Room Campaign.

The goal of this campaign is to sell enough t-shirts to build a scholarship fund which can be used to propel students into college. The Outloud Campaign is a collaborative effort by both Black Sheep and Omaze to design t-shirts, which will have student's "I Will" statements in bold and stylistic writing. Black Sheep hopes to turn these statements into inspirational messages for students unsure about heading to college.

Koenig hopes the project will help develop student communication especially in regards to working in groups. When asked what she wanted the students to take out of this, she mentioned that she wanted students to get "an understanding of how social media can be used in public relations."

With many public related companies now using social media as a means to advertise and promote their products, it's welcoming to see a non-profit organization used social media to influence potential first time genera-

tion college students to actively seek out their dreams.

The project thus far has been a collaborative effort from all members involved. Students in Koenig's class were put into small groups to come up with ideas for launching the campaign. After each group expressed their ideas to the class everyone eventually agreed on four in particular.

The ideas include a series of 30-45 second Instagram videos of first-year college students at UHD where the class will ask these students about getting into college, a photobooth where students can have their picture taken with the #BetterMakeRoom hashtag superimposed over their picture, creating a series of long interviews for the Better Make Room YouTube page and creating a launch party for #BetterMakeRoom.

All of these ideas have been put inside a social media calendar so the students would be able to track their progress. Before undertaking this project, students did prior research on first-time and first-generation college students across the U.S. and found that many of them are facing economic hardship and are looking for the alternative rather than the traditional route. But Koenig believes these first-time students aren't afraid of college but they are missing something



Photo by Susana Caraballo

else. "I think some students don't see the value of it right now," Koenig said while addressing the issue.

The biggest challenge for both Koenig and her students isn't the tools of social media but the audience. Koenig, a former freelance copywriter for the Black Sheep Agency, says teaching a service learning class that revolves around social media requires an understanding of both the audience and the message. For her students, the message of social media is a difficult one to understand but Koenig has worked hard this current semester to teach her students the meaning of social media and why everyone uses it today.

When asked whether the students were up to the challenge of cre-

ating a social media campaign, Koenig commented that her students' well intentions will help them out the most. "They took the class because they wanted it to, not because they had to."

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WWE in hot water due to Saudi partnership

By Joshua Williams

WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) decided to not cancel one of their most recent show in Saudi Arabia despite being in hot water with the U.S. government after journalist Jamal Khashoggi was allegedly murdered by an Saudi Arabian hit team.

Although WWE's Crown Jewel took place on November 2 at the King Saud University Stadium in Riyadh, many news outlets have criticized WWE for not immediately canceling their show after Washington Post journalist Khashoggi was found dead at the Saudi consulate on October 2. The Trump administration and other U.S. politicians have since warned of "severe consequences" if evidence was found linking Khashoggi's murder to the Saudi Arabian government. WWE issued a brief statement on October 11, which simply stated, "We are currently monitoring the situation." Khashoggi's murder took place less than a week before WWE issued the statement.

WWE's Crown Jewel is part of a 10-year partnership between WWE and Saudi Arabia, most specifically the Saudi General Sports Authority, in support of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia's social and economic reform program. The deal is reportedly due to WWE's financial success after launching their own streaming service back in 2014.

With WWE deciding to continue on with the show despite the negative feedback from news outlets and the public at large, one has to wonder where does this put fans of the WWE who have shown their loyalty to the product since its inception?

This isn't the first time this year that WWE has had some negative feedback when it came to its partnership with Saudi Arabia. Back in April of this year, WWE promoted The Greatest Royal Rumble, the first event of WWE's partnership with Saudi Arabia which took place at the King Abdullah International Stadium. While the event was a financial success, most attention was focused on the lack of representation for women with female wrestlers being barred from competing inside Saudi Arabia.

Although the country has long denied rights to women, WWE still decided to air promotional pieces of local women in Saudi Arabi during the show, expressing their thoughts regarding gender equality and the perceived progression the country was experiencing. Veteran wrestling journalist Dave Meltzer criticized WWE's decision to air such video packages on an episode of the Wrestling Observer (is it a podcast, radio show, or internet show?), calling it "a uncomfortable political statement" rather than something that adds to the quality of the show.

WWE has since tried to circumvent the issue by creating an event dedicated to women's wrestling called WWE Evolution. The event was the first pay-per-view event to feature only women with the likes of Trish Stratus, Lita, and former UFC women's champion and now current WWE women's champion Ronda Rousey being part of that bill. WWE decided to set Evolution just five days before their return in Saudi Arabia.

And yet through all of this back and forth with maintaining their image, WWE hasn't driven away their loyal fanbase. For decades, WWE has catered to their audience by showcasing their larger than life wrestlers such as Hulk Hogan and Stone Cold Steve Austin, and allowing these wrestlers to interact with the fans. This interaction with the fans has created an unbreakable bond, one that has only been threatened by the age of the internet.

Indeed, with many fans of WWE now plugged into the internet, keeping news from breaking out of their main headquarters in Connecticut has been difficult for the world's preeminent professional wrestling company. Before the internet, WWE had the ability to lock down which news would and wouldn't leak out to the public. However, today's fans are able to simply click on one link and discover something that they weren't supposed to. If WWE decides to continue their partnership with Saudi Arabia, one has to wonder whether their decisions will begin to drive their fans away, if it already hasn't.

WWE fans have been in this situation before, threatening to abandon the product they love by using Twitter to voice their displeasure. This was demonstrated the most back in 2014, when current movie star and former wrestler Dave Bautista was criticized by fans of the WWE for taking a main event spot away from one of their favorite wrestlers in Daniel Bryan. WWE had a handle on the situation after they rewrote their scripts to add Bryan into the main event match to one of their biggest shows of the year, WrestleMania.

WWE uses its power and influence to keep their fans happy but can they do it while also fighting off bad press? So far, fans of the WWE have only mildly voiced their concerns regarding the Saudi Arabia issue. Perhaps when the news outlets begin to attack the fans for not abandoning the product is when the fans will start to rebel but for now everyone seems to be on board. Everyone but the press and the government that is.

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



Photo courtesy of WWE

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White Oak Music Hall turns on the bright lights

By Jesus Garay

Editor's note: This article is a revised article that was published in the October 23, 2018 issue of Dateline: Downtown. The previous version was a draft that was not meant for publication. The editorial staff regrets this error.

They have come a long way from their debut album, 2002's "Turn on the Bright Lights," yet somehow, Interpol has managed to maintain the same sound despite changes in the musical landscape. Most artists evolve or change musical directions in their careers after a while, but the new entry in their discography, "Marauder," keeps the same post-punk revival sound that made them famous in the indie music scene. In support of their new album, "Marauder," Interpol began touring back in June in Vienna, Austria with three stops planned for Texas in late September. One of those stops was on Sept. 29 at the White Oak Music Hall.

There were long lines to get in and there was probability of rain but once you went through the gates you could see the stage, located outdoors, set-up for the show. The merchandise table had shirts, posters and hats among many other things. The concert was aimed at fans who have followed their career through six studio albums, only three tracks off their recent album made it to the White Oak setlist. Their concert began with "Pioneer to the Falls," a slow song, but quickly picked up pace with "All the Rage Back Home." The guitars were low on volume at times, there was

a minor mistake at the beginning of a song as well about halfway through the set but that did not affect the experience whatsoever. Most of the setlist would seem unfamiliar to the casual fan due to their selection focused mainly on seldom-played songs but they did not leave off their well-known hits. Songs such as "Narc" and "Obstacle 1" took us down memory lane and reminded us why we still listen to them after all these years. Interpol does not focus on the spectacle, they thrive solely off the emotion of their music and that was evident at this concert.

SETLIST:

- 1) Pioneer to the Falls
- 2) All the Rage Back Home
- 3) If You Really Love Nothing
- 4) Public Pervert
- 5) Roland
- 6) NYC
- 7) The Rover
- 8) Leif Erikson
- 9) Not Even Jail
- 10) Number 10
- 11) Rest My Chemistry
- 12) Narc
- 13) Take You on A Cruise
- 14) NYSMAW
- 15) Evil
- 16) Lights
- 17) Flight of Fancy
- 18) Obstacle 1

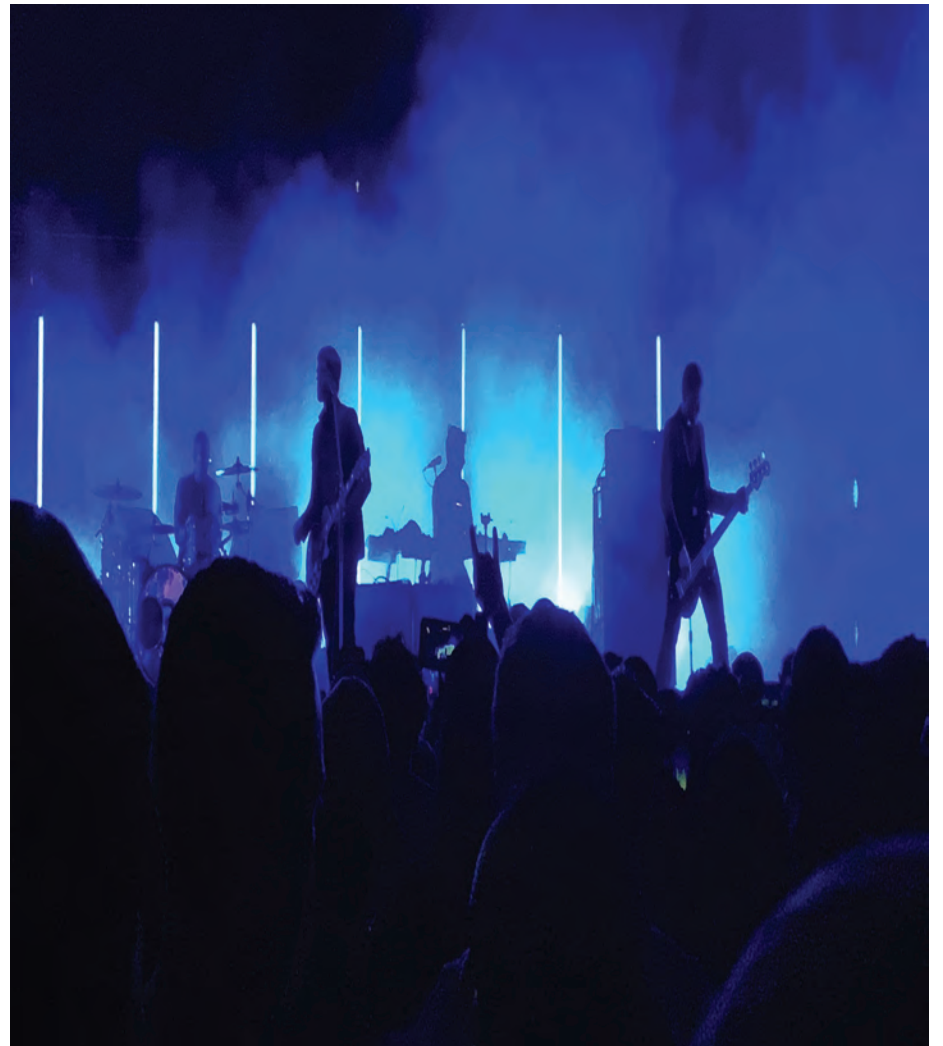



Photo taken by Jesus Garay



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“Bohemian Rhapsody” will rock you

By Ashley Medrano

For Queen enthusiasts, the announcement of the band’s biopic, “Bohemian Rhapsody,” created a mass feeling of anticipation. The two-hour film was finally released in theaters on Friday, November 2. Although PG-13 is far from the truth about the members’ lives, the film illustrates for fans and regular moviegoers a glimpse of Queen as a band and the life of legendary lead singer Freddie Mercury, played by Rami Malek (Elliot Alderson of “Mr. Robot”).

“Bohemian Rhapsody” begins 15 years before Freddie Mercury’s death in 1991. The opening scene provides a small peek of young Mercury’s life before he became the lead singer of the band. Once Mercury meets his band mates and Mary Austin, the film focuses on Austin and Mercury’s relationship, Queen’s growth, and the dark side of Mercury’s life leading up to the legendary 1985 Live Aid concert.

For fans of Queen, the movie provides the stories behind some of the band’s greatest hits, such as “We Will Rock You.” The paramount piece, however, is the soundtrack that brings Queen to life. The soundtrack demonstrates for new fans and old the musical growth of

the band while nourishing the viewers with music. The realistic ‘live concerts’ allow the audience an opportunity to attend a Queen’s concert through the immense energy and large screen.

Rami Malek’s appearance and performance as Freddie Mercury is the closest interpretation of Mercury that has been seen on screen, although the inaccuracy of certain timelines and stories may deter some fans from watching the movie. The narration can be easily overlooked due to the soundtrack, energy, and performance by the cast. Actors including Lucy Boynton, Gwilym Lee, Ben Hardy, Allen Leech, and Tom Hollander bring Queen’s story to life.

“Bohemian Rhapsody” takes viewers back to a time when Queen was breaking the norms of music while providing a new experience to their audience at concerts. Do not feel “Under Pressure” and “Keep Yourself Alive” because Queen still lives.

“Bohemian Rhapsody” is in theaters now.



Photo courtesy of 20th Century Fox

Write About Now Poetry Slam

By Emily Boyd

“Are you ready for the next poet? Bring em’ up, bring em’ up, bring em’ up!” -WAN Poetry

Poetry is a creative talent that leaves imprints not only on pages, but minds as well. Write About Now Poetry (known as WAN) is a local Houston event that encourages everyone to share their imprint. Every Wednesday, they invite all who join to share their story on stage in front of supportive and encouraging individuals. Some go by the name of “Masters, Masters” and others go by their full name. Regardless of what name one goes by, everyone is welcomed and accepted when they walk through the door. The message that participants give will always stand out.

“I am worth every syllable.”
-Masters, Masters

These poets dive into insightful topics, as well as personal ones. Some talk about their respective journeys to recovery through hardship, and others bring about topics that they never thought they would be able to talk about to the public. These individuals have the courage and the ability to stand out. They serve a message that just about anyone who feels lost or alone could understand and connect to someone else’s trials and

tribulations.

“What if I prayed and he disappeared too.” -Winnie (Poem: GOD.)

Those who wish to share their story are not required to be professional poets. These events welcome famous poets as well as those who have never shared their work. The WAN poetry group holds special events to welcome new individuals into becoming comfortable for being themselves. They offer events such as Thanksgiving potlucks, which is happening on November 21, and hold events every Wednesday to encourage individuals to join. It is a community event that inspires togetherness through the art of poetry.

What is so special about these events is the mark it leaves on the attendees. A thirty second poem can leave a huge impact on someone it connects to. It can inspire someone to gain the courage to share their work, encourage someone to be proud of their creativity and individuality, and can allow one to feel welcomed and loved in a group that shares the same love for words and stories. Above all, it can make one overcome difficult times. WAN poetry brings hope and connection from one being to another just through words of encouragement. It makes people feel as if they are not alone.

“When I did not feel like moving, my blood set the example.” -Chris Diez

There are many poetry events held all around Houston. They bring light to the beauty of creative writing and encourage others to share their story. WAN holds their events every Wednesday at Avant Garden at 7:30pm for the public to attend. They offer tacos, drinks, and an

open mic for a \$5 cover charge. It is a place of comfort and relief. It is possible to exhibit creativity, individuality, opinions and personal stories at events such as WAN. It is an event one would feel proud to attend.



Photo by Emily Boyd

“Venom” movie a box-office success

By Sonia Sanchez

The movie “Venom” has been highly anticipated since director Ruben Fleischer announced he was working on it about two years ago. Although the critics’ reviews haven’t been good, I knew I still had to give it a chance, because the trailer looked really exciting. Once “Venom” finally premiered in theaters, I knew I had to watch this movie on a Saturday night with my boyfriend, and we eagerly chose to watch it in 3D.

Before discussing the movie itself, I have to say that, despite Venom’s origin change, the movie still had an entertaining plot. The critic reviews may not be positive, but they do not do the film justice. Fans around the world have definitely spoken since, according to Cinema Blend, Venom just had a \$111 million opening weekend in China. Viewers of this movie and fans of the character will have a lot to be excited about. Whether you are an avid Marvel fan or not, you should watch this movie.

Eddie Brock, the man who

eventually becomes one with Venom, was properly introduced in the beginning of the movie. He is set up as a likeable investigative journalist that is always trying to expose the truth. His story hits a low point when he gets nosy and reads about the Life Foundation human trials in a classified document in his fiancée’s laptop. This led to him and his fiancé both losing their jobs. He then agreed to sneak into the Life Foundation to see these human trials for himself. He then got possessed by Venom.

Venom is a conflicted anti-hero originally set out to expand his kind and take over the world, but Eddie helped change Venom’s mind about that. Although Venom constantly wanted to bite off everyone’s heads off, he eventually adapts to the personality of Eddie. He vows to be Eddie’s protector in order for them to survive together.

Even though Riot was almost another version of Carnage, a fan-favorite villain in the Spider-Man universe, he still caused hell as a good villain. However, the movie didn’t do Riot justice

because he was walking the whole time as he possessed different bodies. He was introduced when he possessed a Malaysian lady from the Life Foundation and then switched to a little girl at the airport. He should have had more screen time as a symbiote and been presented as more lethal the closer he got to Venom.

There were hardly any extra 3D effects that made it worth paying for, so save your extra money on some snacks or drinks. That doesn’t mean the graphics were bad though. Venom was designed as creepy and slimy as he is usually portrayed to be.

“Venom” is a must-see film for all to see. It’s still out in theaters near you as of this publication, and it is worth watching it on the big screen. Be sure to see it before it stops showing because nothing compares to the experience of watching the Venom versus Riot action at the movie theater.

Sonia Sanchez is a senior at UHD majoring in Professional Writing with minors in Communication Studies and Digital



Photo courtesy of Sony Pictures

Media. She is graduating this fall as an honor student in English and Communications. Her plans after graduation are to work full time in the media industry and attend graduate school in Technical Writing.



NaNoWriMo Is Coming!

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Monday, December 3rd

12—1pm, N420

Pizza Party with author,

Daniel Peña

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UHD students, professor present graphic novels at Gator-Con

by Emily Christiansen

Students from Professor Beth Secor’s Creating a Graphic Novel class showcased their work at UHD’s inaugural Gator-Con that took place on October 25.

Secor and her students started off the first panel of the event by speaking about each of their projects. Professor Secor led the seven students in a discussion about their influences, interests and themes.

The students’ projects are diverse. Each student chose a subject they are passionate about. The themes include the effects of immigration, discrimination, and pollution. Brenda Chapa described her the purpose of her graphic novel as helping people understand the effects of political extremity towards immigrants. Mariana Cano Saldaña-Ayarzagaitia connected her interest in sustainability and created a story about pollution. Cruz Villafuerte Cardoso used his characters to discuss identity and “the caricatures of the ideas placed upon themselves.” Eliseo Villanueva used the metaphor of boxing to capture the struggle of the son of immigrants.

Secor explained how she used early examples of comics such as “Nemo” to show her class the possibilities of this art form. She describes her own interest in comics starting at 9 years old when she began visiting the local library. Secor said that she was “fascinated

by these drawings that told a story.” The students talked about their own influences. Amanda recalled the children’s book “Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats” with the iconic illustrations of Edward Gorey. Chelsea Markcray became interested in the graphic novel “Persepolis” in high school, while Bobby Ramos discovered a copy of “X-Men” at the thrift store.

The students also discussed how the process of creating a graphic novel changed their original concept. Amanda and Eli said they had to simplify and concentrate on what was vital to their stories.

By the end of the semester, each student will have finished an eight-page graphic novel complete with front and back cover design. The next step is finding a place to display their work to the public.

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Lunch for less

By Victoria DeLeon

One of the perks of being a student at the University of Houston-Downtown is the location. We are right in the heart of downtown and walking distance from restaurants that every UHD student should try. Frankly, it's part of the experience of being a student at this campus. Even if the restaurants downtown don't offer any kinds of student discounts, they almost always have specials going on so that you can have a great lunch without breaking the bank.

Frank's Pizza
417 Travis Street, Houston, TX 77002

You've probably heard students on campus saying to one another "Hey, let's go to Frank's." In fact, during my first semester at UHD, I heard that same phrase almost every day and always thought it was a person until I finally walked over to Frank's Pizza with some friends one day. Frank's offers giant, foldable slices of New York Style thin crust pizza that's great for sharing with a group of friends. This restaurant is famous for their sauce,

and believe me, it does not disappoint. You can visit their website regularly to keep track of their updated coupons in order to save a couple of bucks on lunch. For those UHD students who are 21 and over, Frank's backyard is Downtown's neighborhood bar that even offers outdoor seating. It'll feel like everyone there is friends with each other, especially when there's a sports game playing on the television they have out there. Don't leave UHD without trying Franks! To see their complete menu offerings, go to www.frankspizza.com.

Barnaby's Café
801 Congress Avenue, Houston, TX 77002

Barnaby's has several locations around Houston and luckily, one of them happens to be just a ten-minute walk down Main Street from UHD. This American cuisine sit-down restaurant has one of the best menus in Downtown Houston, which includes burgers, sandwiches, salads, chicken entrees, Tex-Mex, lasagna, desserts and more! Maybe your morning class was cancelled and you decide to go out for breakfast. Barnaby's has a great breakfast menu from 11am-3pm. This colorful restaurant guarantees a pleasant dining experience downtown. Not only is the food amazing and the atmosphere fun to look at, but it's also dog friendly! While I don't have pets, I've seen Barna-

by's dog friendly policy firsthand when I dine with my best friend and their Yorkie when we go to Barnaby's. This restaurant also offers various snacks for your dogs. Check out their menu at www.barnaby-scafe.com.

Houston Tunnels
1001 McKinney Street, Houston, TX 77002

These restaurants are just the tip of the iceberg. We haven't even began to explore the restaurants that are underground. If you take the MetroRail to the Main Street Square stop, just three stops from UHD, you'll arrive at that McKinney Tunnel Entrance. Downtown Houston's "underground" is a system of tunnels 20 feet below Houston's downtown streets and more than 6 miles long. This is where you get to explore food from different cultures. The restaurants in the tunnels offer what feels like an endless amount of options to choose from, so I'd suggest visiting the tunnels after class because you never know how long you're going to be there, especially if you're a first timer. I spent two hours walking through the tunnels trying to figure out what I wanted to eat for lunch. Restaurants and cuisines vary from Whataburger, Argentinean, Tex-Mex, Chinese, Thai, Mediterranean, Vietnamese, barbecue, Italian and more. After your first few visits, you'll be able to navigate

the tunnels with ease. Your favorite spots won't take 30 minutes to find anymore. You won't be walking around in circles trying to find that one authentic Thai place. It just takes practice. If this will be your first time exploring the tunnels, I suggest going with a friend before going alone. The tunnels have something for everybody.

We live in one of the most diverse cities in America, so the possibilities when it comes to trying different foods are endless. As a student at one of the most conveniently located universities in Houston, I want to encourage you to go out and explore Downtown Houston and the amazing food it has to offer. It's easy to get comfortable, but once you've taken that first step out of that comfort zone, you'll realize that there is always more out there. Make this part of your college experience.

Rebuttal to "Our Confused Sexual Ethics"

By Mike Duncan

Editor's Note: This is a response to Dr. Adam Ellwanger's "Our Confused Sexual Ethics" in the October 23, 2018 issue of Dateline: Downtown

When I was an undergraduate many years ago before becoming a professor later in life, I took many anthropology courses in my long search for a major. While there (imagine actually learning something in college!), I learned something of great importance about sex - all of it is "normal," which is another way of saying that none of it is "abnormal." The vast array of possible practices, with the obvious exceptions of acts where adult consent is impossible, is to be expected. The only change is in how over time various cultures and legal systems drift toward and away from accepting the variants.

Take stereotypical heterosexual monogamy sex. After dinner, at night, in a darkened bedroom, in bed, little or no clothing, missionary position, male initiated and focused, with consent generally implicit. Note how specific and lockstep it is. It's the very definition of kink, so rigidly imposed that it makes those who dress up as Batman and Robin and throw

pies at each other as foreplay look tame (I just made that one up, but I am positive there is an enthusiastic community of practitioners).

Dr. Ellwanger's argument is that the promotion of non-monogamous sex by a shadowy 'left' boogeyman contradicts the focus on increased explicit consent demanded by the #MeToo movement and will somehow lead to a horrific orgy that will destroy Western civilization. If only the hypocritical left would see the error of their libertine sexual dysfunction and settle down like civilized taxpaying conservatives!

As a teacher of rhetoric, Dr. Ellwanger should know better than to stuff a straw man AND a slippery slope into the same argument. But let's forgive him for the logical fallacies. The contradiction he insists upon isn't there. Frankly, if you know anyone engaged in sex outside of the previous described lights-off-after-dinner monogamy, you will find that there is actually far MORE interest in explicit consent in such alternative arrangements, not less.

Poly relationships, for example, require a great deal of constant negotiation to keep all partners informed and cool with whatever is going on. The BDSM folks, even after becoming more

mainstream lately, remain obsessed with explicit and repeatedly confirmed consent because of the heightened physical danger inherent in their activities. Swingers have strict rules, too, about how prospective couples are introduced and incorporated. I could go on as the variants are legion, but do your own research. The model for post-#MeToo behavior already exists - in the supposed fringe.

Indeed, the more distant from "normal" sex, I realized to my shock back in those anthropology courses, the more ethically bound the sex got. It was the so-called "normal" that was questionable, insisting that it was not only socially superior, but ethically superior. As a further blow, it has sexism built in, allowing men to stray from the standard, but not women. Even with #MeToo, the double standard lingers; a man with multiple partners other than his wife remains an admirable stud to the same that claim allegiance to monogamy. We even have one as a President, I've heard.

I have known Dr. Ellwanger as a colleague at UHD for nearly a decade and we have had many interesting debates in that time. He has freely admitted to me of being a Platonist, which means he believes in some form of absolute truth and that such truth can be used as a basis for moral action. His defense of monogamy stems from this philosophical center. I am nearly the direct opposite; I don't think absolute truth is knowable,

and thus hold that our morals must stem from what works best for all if everyone is held to be of equal worth.

Therefore, I would flip his argument on its head. His self-described 'conservative' position seems more based in his own sexual preferences rather than a healthy commitment to individual freedom for all. Like many conservatives (but not all), freedom to him does not include sexual freedom, because that would threaten the currently elevated social stature of monogamy. He could turn a critical eye to monogamy's many problems and wonder why, if monogamy is such a strong social and ethical bulwark against chaos, that it fails so often to maintain its ideals. But he does not. The ethical confusion with which he titles his article is better located in him, not the positions he criticizes and exaggerates.

To sum up: everyone should be careful, courteous, and kind to their partners while proceeding in all instances, but life is too short to check in with Dr. Ellwanger before copulation.

Dr. Mike Duncan is an Associate Professor at the University of Houston - Downtown.

