

CAMPUS NEWS

College of Business American Marketing Association makes history, awarded Student Organization of the Year

BY SHAHERYAR KHAN

The UHD chapter of the American Marketing Association won the 2022 Student Organization of the Year Award and the Most Creative/Special Program Award during the One Main Event on June 23.

AMA UHD are back-to-back Student Organization of the Year winners after arranging several events throughout the academic year to elevate the Gator experience at UHD for business students and other majors.

AMA UHD was the only organization at One Main Event to walk away with not one, but two awards that night.

"Honestly, it's a huge deal, it's amazing!" said new

Vice President of AMA UHD Alejandra Perez. "With Org of the Year, it is our second time in a row, and we will get our third in a row, no question."

Following an award-winning team last year, the newly appointed officers for AMA are eager to retain their triumphant ways.

"Getting that recognition really showed that what we were doing was for something, really amounted to something," said new President of AMA UHD Jordan Salinas. "When we started, it was literally just us trying to put on events and trying get some traction going attract students."

With the pandemic causing significant ripples throughout the world, student life at UHD was a topic of



AMA Spring 2022 officers showing off their trophies. Courtesy: AMA

concern. Nevertheless, with the new Fall '22 semester rolling in, there have been signs of normalcy which both Salinas and Perez agree is a "breath of fresh air."

"With all the orgs growing, I'm just happy that

people are more excited to be in student orgs and the community we are building, we're developing an amazing culture engagement for these students," Salinas explained. "Coming in post-covid, I think we're establishing a

great culture, a great pace, some good trends, and motivating students, to get more involved."

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CAMPUS UPDATE

New Student Wellness and Success Center nears completion, opens 2023

BY ARIEL CRUZ

UHD introduces their latest addition, the Student Wellness and Success Center. Located adjacent to the Sciences and Technology Building, the center offers a new welcoming gesture defined by its overhang canopy.

Director of Sports and Fitness, Richard Sebastiani, is the lead of the new project.

He was responsible for putting up the current Student Life Center and is thrilled to bring UHD an



Under construction Student Wellness and Success Center is scheduled to open Jan. 2023. Credit: Shaheryar Khan

expanded facility. "It's a proud moment for me. Being able to bring something to students that is new is always something that I have priori-

tized my professional career on."

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OPINIONS

Jurassic Franchises odd impact on paleontology, museums

BY RYAN PRICE

Entertainment that focuses on scientific concepts dramatically impacts how we view those topics.

Despite years of scientific discovery, the science of paleontology has never been able to shake the impact of the "Jurassic Park" films, for better or for worse.

It has been well documented that movies often profoundly impact how we view our world.

Since its 1993 debut, "Jurassic Park" has been, for

many, the first time that the general public was exposed to dinosaurs.

It is important to note that "Jurassic Park" was never trying to act as a documentary but instead a tense, science-fiction thriller that used the current scientific understanding of dinosaurs as its hook for the general audience.

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FIND US ONLINE!

UHD detectives alert of job solicitation scams via email, advise students on how to avoid phishing

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

Phishing emails from GatorMail accounts caught several UHD students in job scams.

The university's IT department warned the student body via a June 21 email of an increase in phishing attacks and listed ways to protect oneself. Two days later, the Federal Trade Commission also alerted consumers nationwide of similar phony job postings.

"The only way we are going to stop this is by educating everybody," UHD Detective Raymond Jenkins, one of the detectives overseeing the cases, said.

UHD policy PSOB124 prohibits any job offers via email or any form of soliciting.

"You have to go to UHD's website yourself and apply for employment that way," UHD Detective Deionne Jackson added.

The lack of knowledge of the policy or the credibility attached to the GatorMail addresses where the phishing emails came from, made the appealing job postings hard to pass.

The phishing emails lured recipients looking for remote or virtual job opportunities. A couple of emails offered a virtual part-time or full-time job "that pays over \$1250 weekly" using the UHD logo in the signature line. Another promised \$450 for working 11 hours as a remote personal assistant.

Recipients were then asked to click a hyperlink attached in the email to enter their personal information. Some students provided their name, physical address, and even a copy of their driver's license, according to Jackson.

"That's too much information in the wrong hands," she added.

One of the victims was a freshman student who received multiple emails from a hacked GatorMail address. The scammer later attached a check with instructions on how to deposit it via their

BEWARE OF PHONY JOB POSTINGS

● **UHD does not solicit employment via email**

Per UHD policy, Gators seeking employment at the university need to apply via the ESO portal. If you receive employment offers via GatorMail or personal email, it is most likely a phishing attack.

● **Double check with the UHD Police**

UHD police welcomes you to review any job offers, including those made outside the university setting, to rule out any potential scams.

● **Research the company or contact person before entering personal information**

● **Sign up for consumer alerts**

The Federal Trade Commission alerts consumers periodically of trending scams nationwide.



REPORT TO UHD POLICE Room N117 | 713-221-8065

Credit: Indira Zaldivar

bank mobile app addressed to her personal email and sent her multiple texts over the next four days asking if the task was completed.

"They're really aggressive until this person actually deposits the check," Jenkins added.

After the check cleared, she was asked to transfer some of the check's funds through Zelle. The next day, her bank contacted her to tell her the check was fraudulent and that she was responsible

for the transaction.

"Our biggest challenge is trying to figure out how we can get the information to the students so that when they do receive the information, they automatically know 'this doesn't sound right,'" Jackson said.

Jackson suggested researching the company and the contact person before giving personal information.

Resisting the urge to act immediately is a tip by the Federal Trade Commission.

PROTECT YOUR ACCOUNTS

● **Enroll in free password management system LastPass**

UHD IT offers LastPass for free to UHD students, faculty and staff. LastPass manages and stores your passwords and sensitive information in a password-protected vault in your browser.

Once logged in, LastPass autofills the information for you encouraging you to generate different strong passwords for each site.



[View UHD IT's page to enroll](#)

● **Do not approve a DUO authentication request if you are not actively logging into a university system.**

DUO is a two-step authorization process designed to protect accounts. Do not approve a request you did not start.

● **Report all suspicious email**

Use the 'Report suspicious email' button in Outlook.

CONTACT IT Room S700 | 713-221-8400

Credit: Indira Zaldivar

"If the conversation is aggressive where they are constantly trying to get you to hurry up and do [tasks], you may want to hold off, give us a call, or come in the police department and ask a police offer," Jackson said.

"Or, if... they receive the check, at least question the check enough prior to depositing the funds in their account," Jackson said.

Some signs of illegitimate checks include typos, font inconsistencies, and com-

pany name inconsistencies.

As phishing attacks are common in the increasingly digital world, the UHD community is urged to report any suspicious emails to the police and IT departments. Sign up for the Federal Trade Commission's consumer alerts at ftc.gov. UHD students, faculty and staff may also take advantage of the password-management system LastPass offered for free by the university.



Spring 2022 AMA UHD President, Evangelina Vazquez holding the trophy for Most Creative/Special Program. Credit: Shaheryar Khan

AMA

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The second award AMA UHD won was the Most Creative/Special Program Award, which was the first time the club had received it, according to Salinas and Perez. The award is given to an organization that impacted the Gator community in the most creative way. The award is well suited for a marketing club.

The current president and vice president of AMA UHD say that the award was possible because of the diligent efforts of the previous president, Evangelina Vazquez.

"She [Vazquez] did a great job when it came to creative promotions and creative marketing," says Perez. "I'm really glad that

the stress and hard work really paid off and she got the recognition she deserves, which manifested into a trophy."

Vazquez was the president of AMA UHD for the spring 2022 semester and lead her team to win the Most Creative/Special Program award.

As such her team insisted on letting her keep the trophy in her possession.

"They all say that they're very proud and happy to have me as a leader to help them, but I always think with a great leader there's always a good team behind them," Vazquez said.

"I give them the recognition, too, and also everyone else who helped out, like the other student orgs, our advisors, it's like a whole community."

With most of the officers graduating, AMA UHD has

a new set of officers. The new president stresses how "lucky, blessed, grateful, thankful, and happy," he is to lead a team solely female.

"I couldn't be more lucky to have such an amazing team of certified gangsters," Salinas expressed. "I've got a team of straight hustlers that motivate me to be better, because I watch them strive individually to be great every day."

One of the goals for AMA UHD is to branch out and offer opportunities for students outside the business school, such as communications majors.

Look out for events hosted by AMA UHD as the semester goes on by following their Instagram page @ama_uhd. Information regarding future events and inquiries on how to join the club can be found on their social media.

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 UHD 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 UHD, 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 UHD. All paid writers must also complete vendor registration with the University of Houston System prior to contributing. Press releases, story ideas, news tips and suggestions are always welcomed. We encourage all students to contribute.

Always hiring!

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HOW TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL SEMESTER

- Maintain organization with classwork. When students receive their class syllabus, they should enter the assignment schedule on a calendar, preferably on their phones, to receive notification reminders.
- Color coordination is encouraged, so students can identify which class the assignment belongs to and turn it in on time.
- Listening to music without lyrics, such as classical or lo-fi, can provide a relaxing tone while working on assignments.
- Taking time away from distractions can help increase focus on classwork. UHD provides study areas at their library and throughout their campus.

Credit: Dalila Juarez

@the_dateline

UHD welcomes new, returning Gators back with 'Welcome Week'

BY SHAHERYAR KHAN

The first week of school was full of activities and freebies for students. Throughout the campus, students could connect and engage with the different organizations, services, and resources the university offers.

Students enjoyed free food, stationery, and t-shirts. Some lucky students won electronics. The Dean of Students Office & Student Activities hosted an event at the mural area where they offered free chicken to passing students.

Tim Coulter, a Professional Therapist for the Counseling Services, was part of Cupcakes with Counselors, an event for students to meet

in room A300 and meet the counselors and eat cupcakes.

"I have not seen this much positivity and energy on campus since 2018!" said Coulter.

Since the pandemic, UHD student traffic on campus has been low due to many students taking only online classes. With more classes being offered in person, the 2022 fall semester has seen the most campus activity since 2020.

"Even if it's my last semester, I do want to get more involved," said UHD senior Allison Martinez Nolasco.

"Welcome Week was very energetic this year," said UHD student Shawn Awagu. "Between the return to in-person learning and a huge population of returning

students who've never been to campus, there was a lot of excitement and energy to see the welcome faces the campus has."

UHD student Kasandra Aviles enjoyed the festivities, but states that the events "could have been better."

Aviles wished for there to be more organizations to be displayed for students to engage with.

"Every org does it's part and we need to portray that," said Aviles. "We need to break the norm of UHD being a commuter school and show new students that we can be like the traditional schools too."

"Everything was mid," UHD student Musa Alanssari said about his first week at UHD.



Dr. Hope Pamplin poses with sign at Counseling Center. Credit: Shaheryar Khan

UHD receives Trellis Foundation Grant

BY MADIHA HUSSAIN

It is no secret that the recent COVID-19 lockdowns have negatively impacted the mental health of the UHD population. To assist students following the pandemic, UHD has received a nearly \$200,000 grant from the Trellis Foundation that will facilitate certain services over the course of two years. The Trellis Foundation Grant will not only provide counseling for students, but also other comprehensive wrap-around services. These wrap-around services will include food insecurity support, employment services, and financial assistance.

As Dr. Hope Pamplin, Director of UHD Disability Services, pointed out, these wrap-around services are necessary to ensure the well-being of students.

"We have great things happening, but they're happening in silo. Some people are doing great things here, and some people are doing great things there. Students aren't able to go to one place and get everything they need," Pamplin said.

The grant will also allow student leaders to represent the UHD student population and work alongside other team members to increase community engagement. One of the main goals of community engagement is to expediate changes through policies and programs that will better help minority students with their overall wellbeing.

The Trellis Foundation is a charitable organization that aids low-income and minority students in Texas achieve their postsecondary education.



UHD Gators playing a game of Wipeout. Don't get hit! Credit: Diana Ambrosio

SWSC

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With construction nearly ending, the facility will be accessible by Jan.17, 2023. The new Wellness and Success Center will be 75,000 feet, layered into three floors. The center will offer many recreational activities and open lounges for socialization and studying.

The first floor has three basketball courts, a multi-purpose room, along with expanded weight room areas. The second floor will offer expanded cardio areas that will face the Houston skyline, offering amazing views.

"We will also have an indoor running track, that's going to be new for us, so we are very excited about

that, and a bouldering wall," Sebastiani added.

Throughout the years, the campus has grown exponentially. The construction of the center was made to meet these demands and made only possible by the student body of UHD.

"I want to give the students full credit because they voted for themselves to have a rec fee to construct a new facility," Sebastiani mentioned.

As a result, UHD will offer all alumni that have graduated before the center opened a free alumni membership equal to their contribution. Students that have paid that additional fee to construct the facility can enjoy the center based on however many semesters the students contributed.



Photo of nearly completed Student Wellness & Success Center. Credit: Shaheryar Khan

Local museum confronts hate speech with interactive exhibition

BY BETTY CRUZ

The exhibiton, which took place at Holocaust Museum Houston, drew over 50,000 visitors when it opened in December 2021.

It was a bilingual exhibition designed to showcase examples of hate speech and educate the public on effective ways combat negative language.

The exhibition, called “Speaking Up! Confronting Hate Speech,” was curated by Leora Kahn, president and founder of PROOF: Media for Social Justice, David Simon, the Director of Yale’s Genocide Studies Program, and Carol Manley, the Chief Curator and

Registrar at HHM.

The Genocide Center in Johannesburg also collaborated in the curation.

The exhibition used powerful visuals to engage and motivate visitors to take action against acts of hate and combat them.

Alarmed by the increase of hate crimes around the country, Kahn and Simon felt it was imperative to put this kind of project together with the museum and the Genocide Center.

“We looked at what was going on in terms of hate speech. We wanted to do something to talk about it,” said Kahn.

The exhibition showed how hate speech had incited

violence throughout human history with appropriate historical context.

Examples included how a radio station encouraged ordinary people to kill the Tutsi minority, resulting in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

It also included how Nazi propaganda played a role in the systematic annihilation of 6 million Jews during the Holocaust.

The exhibition incorporated domestic hate speech examples and its consequences, too.

In a 2020 rally, Former President Donald Trump used racist rhetoric to refer to the coronavirus. Soon after, Asians and Asian Americans reported a surge of crimes

motivated by race.

A study by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at the California State University released last year analyzed hate crime data submitted by various police departments, indicating that hate incidents rose close to 39% in 37 major cities. In Houston, hate crimes increased by 4% from 2020 to 2021.

As a society, Kahn argues that people must stand up against social injustice, racism, prejudice, and hatred.

She also believes that people must focus on their similarities rather than differences and talk amongst themselves.

“[Through dialogue and

sharing stories that make us realize we’re alike], we [can] get people to understand each other and not feel threatened,” said Kahn.

The exhibition sponsored by the UHD’s College of Business ended on Aug. 28. The museum offers free admission for Gators on Thursdays from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. and on select dates to educate them on the dangers of prejudice and hatred through myriad exhibitions.

Now that the exhibition has left Houston, the general public in El Paso, Johannesburg, and Melbourne, Australia, will have to opportunity to see it and learn how to fight hate.



Credit: Sarah Ramirez

Biden announces student loan relief program

BY SERGIO PRESA JR

President Joe Biden announced a plan to forgive student loan debt for millions of people.

The president’s plan would extend the payment freeze one final time and forgive up to \$20,000 in loans for borrowers. The plan was announced after extended negotiations between the White House and lawmakers.

“Education is a ticket to a better life, but over time that ticket has become too expensive for too many Americans,” Biden said. Some on the left say the president did not go far enough, while others on the right say it is unfair to Americans who did not go into debt.

Loan forgiveness fulfills one of Biden’s campaign promises to introduce major reforms into the student loan system and provide relief to borrowers. Under the plan, borrowers who took out loans with the Department of Edu-

cation and who make less than \$125,000 a year are eligible for up to \$20,000 in loan forgiveness if they received a Pell Grant. Individuals at the same salary cap who did not receive Pell Grants are eligible for \$10,000 in loan forgiveness.

Biden says the action targets working and middle-class people who were hit the hardest during the pandemic. In the coming weeks, the DOE will issue instructions for people to apply for forgiveness.

“I am glad they are passing the student loan forgiveness since I was not able to pay back last year’s loan. Things happen and now this is something I do not have to worry about once I graduate” Dalila Juarez, a UHD student, said about the loan program.

The UHD Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid declined to comment on the president’s plan. The office said they would make an official statement once more information was available.

Harris County to place \$1.2 B bond referendum on November ballot

BY SERGIO PRESA JR

Harris County officials are taking steps to put a \$1.2 billion bond referendum on the Nov. 8 ballot.

If voters say yes to the proposal, it will allocate \$100 million to public safety facilities, \$900 million to transportation, roads and drainage projects and, \$200 million to parks. County departments were authorized to develop a capital improvement bond by a 3-2 party-line vote from county commissioners.

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo said the proposal’s guidelines needed a “worst-first” approach so that funds go to the places they need most. The worst-first requirement addresses a concern from Commissioner

Rodney Ellis about past bond initiatives shortchanging poorer neighborhoods.

“There ought to be money set aside, in my judgement, for those areas that have been historically neglected,” Ellis said. It is still uncertain which projects will receive funding from the bond. Judge Hidalgo thinks a list of projects should be drawn up when voters decide whether to pass the bond.

The timing of creating the referendum is cutting it close to election time. State law specifies that counties must call for bond elections no sooner than 90 days before the designated election day and no later than 78 days before it.

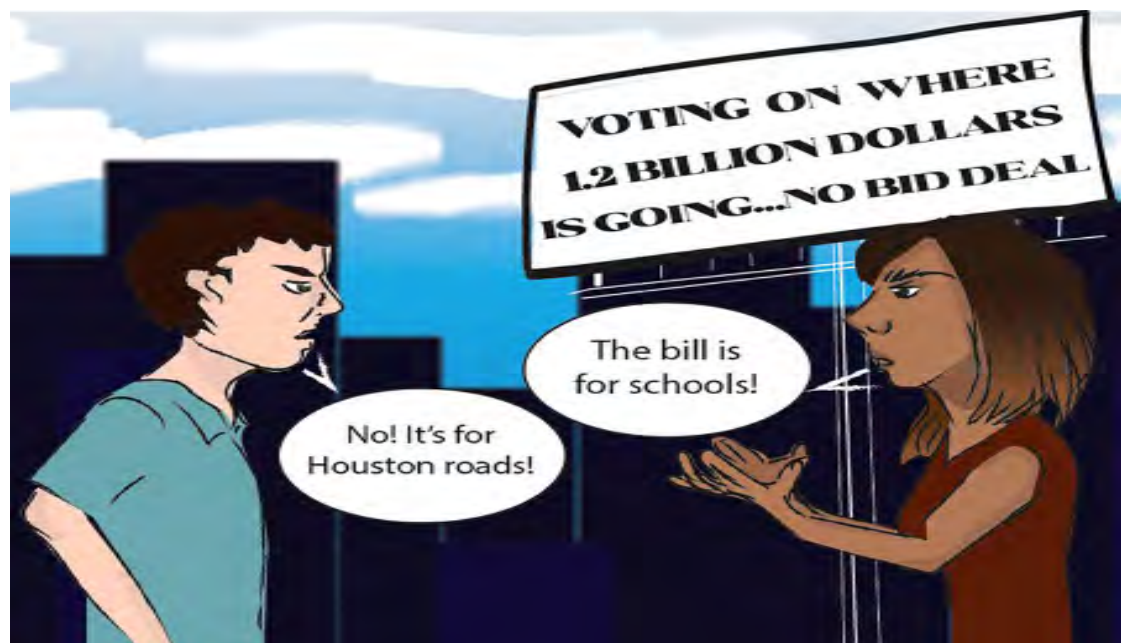
A special meeting will convene between Aug. 12 and

Aug. 22 for county commissioners to take a formal vote to schedule the bond referendum.

The executive director of the Office of Management and Budget said if the bond passes, it could cost the owner of a \$300,000 home an extra \$32 per year in taxes over the life of the 25-year-bond.

Republican Commissioner Jack Cagle is skeptical of the costs of the bond, believing that debt will cost someone somewhere down the line.

Commissioner Tom Ramsey, also a Republican, feels that the bond process for 2022 and thinks a 2023 bond discussion would make some sense. Ramsey will not be supporting a 2022 bond issue.



Credit: Sarah Ramirez

'Better Call Saul' adjourns series, fans emotional outcry ensues

BY DALILA JUAREZ

The Breaking Bad prequel series, "Better Call Saul," has concluded the series with its sixth season.

Season 6 of the show premiered on April 18, and was split in two, due to the pandemic and actor Bob Odenkirk suffering a minor heart attack during production. The mid-season finale concluded on May 23, leaving fans with a cliffhanger.

The final six episodes were broadcast on July 11, with the series finale premiering on Aug. 15.

The series narrates the life of Jimmy McGill (Bob Odenkirk) before he became his alter ego, Saul Goodman. The beginning of some episodes also provides a glimpse

into the aftermath of the original Breaking Bad television series.

"Watch Better Call Saul if you like Saul Goodman being himself than being controlled by Walter White in Breaking Bad." UHD student Diana Ambrosio said.

Viewers see the long-awaited arrival of Saul Goodman's persona and how he became a successful defense lawyer before meeting Walter White and Jesse Pinkman. The creative minds of writers Vince Gilligan and Peter Gould work to tell past and present storylines.

The segments set in the past are displayed in color, while the present-day segments of the story are in black and white. There were cameos from characters and

actors of the Breaking Bad series that left fans of the original show ecstatic. Once the final episode concluded, AMC displayed a history of Jimmy McGill's wardrobe with the message, "Farewell and Thank You."

"Better Call Saul" has recently won the Hollywood Critics Association Award for Best Cable Network Drama Series, Best Actor for Bob Odenkirk, Best Actress for Rhea Seehorn, who plays Kim Wexler, and Best Supporting Actor for Giancarlo Esposito, who plays Gustavo Fring.

The show is currently nominated in seven categories for The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, also known as The Emmys.



Dalila Juarez poses with restaurant logo from television series. Courtesy: Dalila Juarez

Idris Elba fights lion, not as cool as it sounds, 'Beast' fails to deliver

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

Dr. Nate Samuels (Idris Elba) takes his daughters on a trip to South Africa where their late mother was raised. Their safari runs right into the path of a deadly rogue lion who is killing humans for sport and the family confronts a militant group of poachers.

"Beast" was directed by Icelandic filmmaker Baltasar Kormakur and stars Idris Elba, Sharlto Copley, Leah Sava Jeffries, and Iyana Halley. The film was made during the pandemic.

There have been many recent movies released made in the same format, with a small cast, and a remote setting.

Martin (Copley) is a passionate anti-poacher; his home is full of a collection of confiscated snares and animal traps. The first lions introduced in the film are friendly and well-adjusted, they even recognize and embrace Martin instantly.

The animals look shockingly realistic,

although they were all digitally created. Computerized creatures in film have been difficult to master, the graphics in "Beast" seem flawless. The animals look fantastic, especially in the daylight, which is exceedingly difficult.

Copley has gained extensive Computer Generated Image acting experience from both his previous films "Chappie" and "District 9," which required the continuous usage of computer graphics.

Through that talent, this film is able to show Copley hugging a CGI lion.

In comparison, this movie was remarkably similar in plot to a film from 2020 starring Megan Fox called "Rogue." Fox portrays a mercenary in Africa protecting a diplomat's daughter from a rouge lioness. The film carried a similar yet more emotionally effective anti-poaching message and stance, it was also a better movie.

Back to the movie "Beast," there are two scenes in the film that



Courtesy: Universal Pictures

are downright laughable. Towards the end, Nate has a lengthy and ridiculously, yes somehow successful, wrestling match with the massive lion. "Beast" also delivers on a true cinematic first, Nate weaponizes a noxious black mamba snake heaving it toward the growling lion.

This film was advertised as an exciting monster movie although the ultimate cheesy results are one note, aside from a vague anti-poaching message the film does not have much to say. While the movie is worth watching, do not bother to see it at the theater. "Beast" is a movie you rent at home for \$3.99.

'Fall' fails to rise to occasion, good for home viewing, not for theaters

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

Just a year after losing her husband to a horrific rock-climbing accident, a woman is goaded by her friend to climb a 2,000-foot-tall television tower located in the desert. After the women reach the top, the access ladder collapses to the ground.

The tower itself is a rusty red eyesore, surrounded by remote uninhabited desert. Rumor has it, the inspiration for the tower in the film was said to be inspired by a similar television tower near Sacramento.

Grace Caroline Currey portrays Becky, the main character in "Fall," supported by Hunter (Virginia Gardner) who could be described as a reckless social media adventure influencer.

"I have already got 300 likes," Hunter chirps annoyingly, more worried about her social media clout than keeping Becky at ease. The protagonists' actions in this film are recklessly irresponsible, and they break every rule when it

comes to going on a trip of this nature.

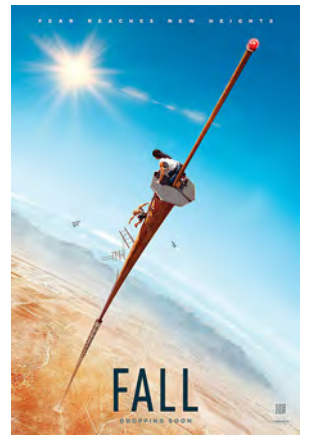
They fail to notify ANYONE of their intended trip, they also bring only 50 feet of rope, no food, and a quarter of a bottle of water, as Hunter needed to leave room for her camera drone.

Becky is in no shape to climb anything. Sadly, she gave up all extreme sport activities after her husband's death the previous year.

Jeffery Dean Morgan is the most recognizable actor in the film although obviously his screen time was minimal. Morgan portrays Becky's concerned father, James.

The film's rating was also changed in post-production, from an R rating to PG-13, using digital technology to clean up foul language. Often, studios strive to release PG-13 films as opposed to R to expand audience access for higher earning potential.

The film, however, is not without its flaws, there are some scenes



Courtesy: Lions Gate

in this film that make absolutely no sense. In self-defense, Becky kills and eats a vulture - delicious. Despite this, the movie is still worth watching, the exciting scenes induce vertigo, and the movie was interestingly shot.

The filmmakers offer a realistic and entertaining representation of the harrowing adventure, a film that takes place in only one location could easily be a bore. Instead, "Fall" is able to fully engage the viewer.

"Fall" was fun to view in the theater but not necessary, the movie had a "direct-to-streaming" vibe.

Anime Houston returns, anime culture occupies city once again

BY AMY NGUYEN

Anime Houston kicked off their second year at the Hyatt Regency Houston in Downtown from Aug. 12-14 with over 5,000 attendees. The event celebrated Japanese themes and pop culture for locals and tourists.

The convention was founded by Houston native John Swasey, voice actor, ADR director [recording engineer for dubbing], scriptwriter for Funimation and Sentai Filmworks, who is known for his anime roles as Van Hohenheim from “Full-metal Alchemist: Brotherhood,” All For One from “My Hero Academia,” and more. He also established sister convention Anime Dallas in 2018.

“Hosting these anime conventions, for me has always been about giving my fellow actor friends a chance to meet fans like you in the area,” Swasey said. “And we also raise money for charities. And like Dallas, Houston has an abundance of incredibly talented VA’s. And they are

always excited to meet you, the fans.”

The event had prominent guests like actors Johnny Yong Bosch who played as Adam [second Black Ranger] from “Mighty Morphin’ Power Rangers,” Dante Basco and Michaela Jill Murphy who played as Prince Zuko and Toph from the animated series “Avatar: The Last Airbender.”

Attendees got a chance to experience what it is like to record in an anime dubbing studio and watch their performance on screen immediately after. With the help of two ADR directors and an audio engineer, they hosted a Q&A about the behind the scenes of being a voice actor.

Voice actors have voice-over demos, do auditions, and network for employment opportunities. However, it is not advised to get a job through an actor as networking.

“It is recommended to take classical acting as even if someone takes acting classes, they still need practice,” said audio engineer Afshar Kharat.

The venue hosted a Sumo wrestling match from Shogeki Sumo, video game tournaments of Nintendo’s Super Smash Brothers and Mario Kart franchises, and Karaoke Nights. Other activities throughout the event were Q&A panels with celebrities and discussion topics among fans and cosplay meetups of their choice for contest.

Vendors from across Texas and local Houston-area artists sold Japanese animation-themed merchandise at the Artist Alley in the Expo Hall below the first floor. The event highlighted Japanese singers Kohei Hattori and PAiDA for music events.

A volunteer for Anime Houston, Jordy Vazquez, described his experience as “fun,” although he did not have much free time due to a low number of volunteers.

“[The venue] provided two meals, and I barely had time to look around from having to handle two voice actors, but it was fun to see the artist vendors, My Hero Academia Dungeons and Dragons gameplay, and the



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

ending ceremony.”

He volunteered at the Guests section in the Expo Hall, where he aided attendees purchase guest celebrities’ autographs and photographs. That said, having more volunteers could have helped the event run smoother.

At the ending ceremony, Swasey and other fellow guests thanked the attendees for coming and provided

several animation themed merchandise prizes from a ticket lottery.

Donations from the event benefited The Trevor Project as a charitable beneficiary to provide fans a safe, welcoming, and fun venue to see remarkable entertainment, celebrate cosplay, and connect with fellow fans.

Anime Houston is expected to return during the summer of 2023.

‘Jurassic World: Dominion’ returns nostalgia to silver screen

BY RYAN PRICE

Jurassic World: Dominion is a 2022 action-adventure science fiction film and the third entry in the Jurassic World trilogy directed by Colin Trevorrow that brings heartfelt nostalgia and fantastic action sequences but suffers from poor pacing and weak writing.

The film features an all-star cast consisting of: Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard, DeWanda Wise, Mamoudou Athie, Isabella Sermon, Campbell Scott, BD Wong, Omar Sy, Justice Smith, and Daniella Pineda. Additionally, Dominion also stars returning Jurassic royalty as Laura Dern, Jeff Goldblum, and Sam Neill reprise their roles from the original 1993 film, Jurassic Park.

The plot revolves around the consequences of the last entry, Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom, whereupon dinosaurs, and other prehistoric creatures, have been unleashed upon the planet and

mankind must find a way to live alongside them. Additionally, a plague of genetically altered locusts have been released and, subsequently, are on the cusp of causing a massive ecological disaster.

Pratt and Howard’s characters have spent the last few years, alongside their adopted daughter (played by Isabella Sermon), preventing illegal dinosaur poaching. In the process, Sermon is kidnapped for mysterious reasons, and they begin a globe-trotting story in order to locate her. Dern, Goldblum, and Neill’s characters visit Scott’s Apple-esque dinosaur sanctuary in order to solve the mystery of the giant locusts. Eventually, the two stories intersect and the mystery of the kidnapping and the locusts are revealed.

The plot bounces from amazing action sequences, including an Atrociraptor motorcycle chase in Malta and an extremely intense scene involving the massive-clawed Therizinosaurus, to very slow, and poorly

written, dialogue sequences that act as nothing more than exposition dumps. One example of this occurs early in the film, as Scott and BD Wong’s characters painfully explain what is, essentially, the plot to the entire film.

Bizarrely, while the film is ostensibly about dinosaurs, the plot’s main focus is on the threat of the giant locusts instead. Controversially, as the Jurassic franchise is based on the work of the author Michael Crichton and locust threat feels very much like something he would write a novel around, this is a Jurassic World film, and it stands out that the narrative’s stakes have nothing to do with dinosaurs.

Despite this, this does not mean that the movie is devoid of its prehistoric icons. Dominion is packed with dinosaurs, pterosaurs, and marine reptiles. All of them beautifully, for the most part, recreated both digitally and practically. The inclusion of newer feathered dinosaurs,

like the Pyroraptor, alongside fan favorites the Velociraptor and Tyrannosaurus rex, are a welcome addition to the franchise and add a sense of scale and adventure to the screen.

Unfortunately, the writing of the movie suffers from the inclusion of so much dinosaur screen time. No characters, including the original cast, are given any time to develop or interact in between the plot developments and dinosaur action sequences. Even the long-awaited reunion of Alan Grant (played by Sam Neill) and Ellie Sattler (played by Laura Dern) and their romantic subplot is heavily sidelined in favor of more plodding exposition and prehistoric thrills. The biggest sin however is that the movie lacks a proper resolution. The movie goes from a tremendous action sequence and, in the span of around one minute, wraps everything up. Roll credits.

Many of the films pacing issues have been rectified by the extended cut of the film



Courtesy: Universal Pictures

which adds an additional fourteen minutes of footage that was cut from the original, theatrical, release. While the additional scenes do improve the pacing, especially in the first half of the film, they do not altogether correct the issues that the film suffers from.

Altogether Dominion, in its extended format, is worth a single viewing. Its nostalgia, prehistoric chaos, and gratuitous action make it a worthy summer blockbuster even if its pacing and plot are a little strange.

JURASSIC

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Although some creative license was used to make the animals on screen in “Jurassic Park,” Spielberg did his best to incorporate as much current scientific knowledge of the film’s iconic dinosaurs as he could into the story of paleontology.

In an ongoing poll I have been conducting on random individuals, I ask, “What is your favorite dinosaur?” It should be no surprise that the leading five results are all animals featured heavily in the Jurassic franchise, leading with the infamous *Tyrannosaurus rex* and *Velociraptor*. But how much has the film’s popularity skewed these animals and the science of paleontology itself?

I have worked in museums and paleontological research for over five years now and can say, with certainty, that the general public’s understanding of these animals is damaged, in some cases, beyond repair. I have seen visceral reactions when I mention that many dinosaurs, like the *Tyrannosaurus* and *Velociraptor*, had feathers. Similarly, the famed venom-spitting frilled

creation of the *Dilophosaurus* used in the film is completely inaccurate and was designed by Spielberg purposely for the movie. Despite this, almost every children’s book or walk-through animatronic attraction has featured the spitting and neck-frilled version of this dinosaur, with many never understanding that this was an artistic choice made for an action movie.

“With my experience giving tours out in the hall, I have noted a few kids, and even adults too, that I’ve managed to disappoint when I start to correct some of the scientific inaccuracies,” said Colin Diggins, a paleontology lab technician at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, said.

Diggins continues by pointing out that many people are upset and shocked to discover that the dinosaur, *Velociraptor*, was not as large or terrifying as the movies paint them to be.

At the same time, the Jurassic franchise has also been an incredibly important tool in nurturing a love for paleontology and dinosaurs in the public eye. It was a major inspiration for me and several other paleontology students. David Temple, the Head Curator of the HMNS Paleontology department, had nothing

but positivity for the films, despite their inaccuracies.

“It inspired a new generation of dino-lovers. All children love dinosaurs. Most people love dinosaurs!” Temple pointed out.

“One of the jobs of museums is getting people excited about science and getting people excited about certain aspects of science and the movies do that.”

Temple stated that the movies, “get people excited about what we do and getting people exposed to the specimens and getting them to interact with our collections, I can’t see a downside to it.”

The Jurassic franchise was likely a major contributor to what we now call the “golden age of paleontology.” These films allowed the general public to experience fast and warm-blooded animals, where previously dinosaurs were regarded as lethargic lizards. It has exposed the idea of maternal care amongst dinosaurs, as seen in 1997’s “Jurassic Park: The Lost World,” which is now widely regarded as the standard amongst many dinosaur varieties.

Despite its negative impacts on the public, the Jurassic franchise has been an overwhelming boon for paleontology. To end on a



Display of T.rex at HMNS. Credit: Ryan Price



Display of Quetzalcoatlus at HMNS. Credit: Ryan Price

quote given by Paleontologist Dr. Steve Brusette in a 2018 interview for “The Guardian”, “[paleontology] used to be a rather dry academic topic carried out by old men at Ox-

bridge or Harvard. Today, it is practiced by a diverse group of scientists in many parts of the world, and it was ‘Jurassic Park’ that provided the momentum for that change.”

Interview question perpetuates racism, negative stereotypes

BY BETTY CRUZ

Millions of job seekers in Houston apply online to find a new job or learn about a job opening through referrals at any given moment.

In the past, I have tapped into the job market and found job opportunities through networking and referrals from connections in the marketing industry.

In July, a CEO of a local writing company contacted me via LinkedIn about a potential freelance job that involved writing blogs for a medical billing company.

After learning about the project’s scope, she recommended me to the business owner and concluded that it was not a good fit for her company.

I scheduled a video interview with the owner to learn more about the freelance position. During our meeting, the

interviewer asked me, “where are you from?”

Indeed, people have asked me this question outside formal meetings and conversations. In general, I do not find it offensive and answer it.

When I said I was from Central America, the potential employer insinuated that I would not be capable of doing the job because I was not a native English speaker and was not born here.

The interaction lasted 10 minutes, and I did not hear back from the person, which did not upset me.

Upon feeling vexed by his comments and conducting my research, I realized the owner had asked an inappropriate question.

Interviewers need to know that they cannot ask interviewees about their birthplace.

Shobi Nunemacher, the president of Referral Staffing Solutions, explained why in an interview for Business News Daily.

“Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes it illegal to discriminate against someone [based on] national origin. If [interviewers] ask, [they] could be accused of discriminating against [a candidate].”

Before people decide to raise the question, they need to check their biases and ask themselves what exactly they want to ask.

I once saw a man ask many times, and in an uncouth way, a woman with Asian features where she was from even after she insisted she was born in Texas.

Many people of color get asked this question all the time because they do not fit into the image of America,

which is white. Someone like Elon Musk, who is from South Africa, would never be asked about his nationality.

It is a problematic and harmful question. In addition, it is irrelevant to a person’s ability to do their job and work for a company.

On a personal level, people can feel like they do not belong because of their outward appearance.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, there are other types of interview questions candidates cannot be asked.

“Employers shouldn’t ask about age, sexual orientation, or heritage. Suppose you’re asked these types of questions during an interview. In that case, you can either respond [in an indirect way], or elect not to respond and alert the interviewer that you’re not entitled to answer their

question,” said Lisa Gonzales-Hatfield, the Career Coach and Liaison to the College of Public Service at UHD.

“You can also report the experience to the HR department of the business you’re interviewing with.”

The UHD Main Career Center and the Marilyn Davies College of Business Career Center offer mock interviews throughout the semester to prepare students on how to answer interview questions and deal with these potential situations.

“Current UHD students may schedule an appointment with their career coach in our Jobs4Gators system for interview preparation.” Gonzales-Hatfield stated.

“If there are concerns about illegal interview questions, they can be discussed with their coach during the appointment.”