

OP-ED/GUEST ESSAY

UHD should change its name to Houston Metropolitan University

BY PAUL FORTUNATO

Does UHD exist? Or do most people in Texas, including some current students, not even know that UHD exists as a separate and distinct entity—that is, not as part of the University of Houston.

We can keep the proliferation of Gator statues all over campus (or crocodile statues, more accurately), but that does not help UHD have a distinct identity.

The reality is that most people in Houston do not know that UHD exists.

We are the second-largest university in the fourth largest city in the U.S. This is an absurd state of affairs.

Wherever I go in the country, when I go to conferences, I have to explain very explicitly that I DO NOT TEACH at the University of Houston, that that university has a different president, a different application form, a different price, and a different mascot from my university.

NAME CHANGE continued on page 12





More than 1 million people attended The Houston Astros victory parade on Nov. 7. Credit: Isiah Archie



Orbit, Houston Astros' mascot, waves at the cheering fans. Courtesy: Jose Vazquez .

Houston celebrates World Series champions

BY EDWARD SAENZ & INDIRA ZALDIVAR

The Houston Astros won the 2022 Major League Baseball World Series. On Nov. 5, in front of

a sold-out home crowd at Minute Maid Park, the Astros won their second World Series title in franchise history, beating the Philadelphia Phillies 4-2.

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Right after the victory, fans took to the streets of downtown Houston to celebrate their local champions.

Reports of partying Houstonians, fireworks, and even gunfire, were made into the wee hours of the morning.

For Assistant Director of Student Activities Jose Vasquez, the "surreal" night included a friend of his

Credit: G.O.

jumping in a water fountain and watching other fans dance in the street or on top of cars.

"I just walked around taking photos and videos and letting others live in the moment," Vazquez said. "Everyone was well behaved and just having a good time."

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New ambassadors program aids Enrollment Management

BY DIANA AMBROSIO

The Vice President of Enrollment Management and his office have launched their new enrollment ambassadors program for fall 2022.

The creation of the program is meant to help enhance communication with potential and current students.

There are nine ambassadors in the program. These nine students were selected out of 690 applicants for the program. The ambassadors give insight into potential and current students through their interactions.

"These students were selected to show the diversity that UHD has to offer," said Daniel Villanueva, Vice President of Enrollment Management.

"The group includes non-traditional students, a variety of majors, graduate students, and more to show that every student has a voice."

ENROLLMENT continued on page 4



L-R: Rhode Villareal, Bryan Wilkinson, Nikkyam Bertteau, Barbara Bass, Ha Do, Jorge Mendoza, Paloma Esparza-Guerra, Steven Barnard, and Kristen Blessman were selected as UHD's first enrollment ambassadors out of 690 applicants. Courtesy: UHD website

Credit: G.O

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FIND US ONLINE!

UHD humanitarians share resources for domestic abuse victims



L-R: John Reyes from AVDA, Naomi Berger-Perez from UHD Counseling Services, Marieshah Wells from Disability Services Program, UHD student Jade Johnson, attorney Eugenia Mendez, paralegal Janine Cervantes-Reich, UHD detective Deionne Jackson share resources during the event on Oct. 28. Credit: Brijanet Figueroa

BY BRIJANET FIGUEROA

The Student Veterans Organization and the Department of Social Work held an informational program called "Silent No More" in the Commerce Street Building and via Zoom on Oct. 28 to recognize domestic violence and share resources.

During this event there were three live performances from UHD students, one of them was Vincent McCauley, a veteran, who played the guitar and performed the song "Disenfranchised Children." Another performance was from Kiersten Joe who sang "I'm Tired" by Labrinth and Zendaya to the crowd and lastly Jade Johnson who performed a dance to the song "Rise Up" by Andra Day.

Disability Services Program Assistant Marieshah Wells read the poem "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou. These performances moved the audience.

During this event, there were different tables that provided information for the attendees, one of them was Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse. Prevention educator John Reyes talked about how AVDA helps with free legal services, they have attorneys and paralegals who help with divorce, full custody, custody modification, and protective orders.

AVDA also helps with free counseling services for victims and their children, and they provide training with staff to be prepared to talk to victims of domestic violence.

"Almost 80% of abuse on campus incidents goes unreported, due to students not knowing who to report to, the abuse is from someone in their friend



UHD student Vincent McCauley performs "Disenfranchised Children." Credit: Brijanet Figueroa

circle, and lastly, they don't want their parents to know," Reyes said.

Mental health resources are available at the UHD Counseling Services for free for registered students. The new director is Naomi Berger-Perez. Located in the One Main Building, room 280, students can make an appointment online and the meeting can be held in-person or virtually.

UHD Police Detective Deionne Jackson shared that there is a self-defense training for all UHD women once a semester. This program is called Rape Aggression Defense, and Jackson is one of three women who instructs this class. The all-women's class includes lectures, discussions and self-defense techniques. While the fall 2022 class passed, Jackson encourages female attendees to sign up for the next one in the spring

While in session, the three-day class is offered once a week for three weeks. On the last class day, a simulation tests the physical application of everything learned. Upon completion, participants will receive a certificate of completion from the instructor.

Eugenia Mendez, who is a criminal defense attorney for The Santos Law Firm shared that clients who are victims of domestic violence are the individuals getting charged instead of the actual abuser.

Mendez shared that writing as many details as possible on police reports can help one's case, it is important to always take pictures because the more evidence, the better that an attorney can help you with your case.



L-R: Veterans Service Coordinators Tiffany Howell, Tebria Reich, and Dymond Jones helped organized the event on Oct. 28. Credit: Brijanet Figueroa

get active, regardless of

their level of running.

Members take

breaks with novice run-

ners and walk with them

as well.

UHD Runners Club invites Gators to healthy recreation

BY ALLISON NOLASCO

UHD Sports &Fitness offers many clubs the student body can join to encourage wellness.

The Runners Club at UHD allows students to start running or walking with other members of different levels; some students will join to compete in 5k marathons and others to have fun.

Students can make friends and find a sense of belonging in a team. The Runners Club usually practices mornings and afternoons by the bayou next to campus.

Jose Herrera, a senior at UHD, joined when an email informed students about the club.

"I wanted to run with a group because running alone is boring," Herrera said.

"It is a fun way to connect with people and to motivate you to run. Because when you are by yourself, it is hard, especially if you don't like running." Exercise has

Exercise has many benefits, such as improving irregular sleep, increased stamina, and mental health. David Ramirez, a senior at UHD, joined the runners club to take care of his mental health.

"I always thought that when your physical well-being is great, then your mental well-being is also great," Ramirez said. "They go hand in hand."

Students tend to be overworked with school and other responsibilities. Joining a club and partaking in exercise will benefit their well-being.

Marcus Johnson, a senior at UHD, joined the running club after finding out many of his classmates are members.

"I enjoy working out, but I have struggled to run long distances since I was a kid," +Johnson said. "I saw the running club as an opportunity to improve upon myself and to build community on campus."

The club is open to anyone who wants to

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CAMPUS NEWS

Teaching Circle underscores value in service learning

BY SHAHERYAR KHAN

The Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence at UHD ran a yearlong teaching circle for Service Learning from the beginning of fall 2021 to the end of spring 2022.

The teaching circle was run by Zeenat Mitha, lecturer in communication studies at UHD.

The Teaching Circle provided an opportunity to work as a team and find some of the many ways students as well as faculty benefit when service learning is incorporated into courses, Mitha said.

Six UHD professors participated in the teaching circle: Assistant Professor of Arts Administration Ayden Adler, Associate Professor of Political Science Anita Chadha, Assistant Professor of Social Work Angela Goins, Lecturer in Music Larisa Jackson, Assistant Director of Sports and Fitness, and Associate Professor in the College of Business Candace TenBrink.

Executive Director of the Impact Learning Office Poonam Gulati was an advisor throughout the teaching circle.

"Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience,

teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities," Gulati said.

According to Gulati, students in service-learning classes apply the knowledge gained in their classes to understand community issues and offer creative solutions and ideas.

Mitha and Gulati led six other UHD faculty members in the Teaching Circle. They explored best practices in the field, reported on the types of service-learning projects and developed a list of community partners.

Mitha has incorporated service learning in her teaching for 12 years and states it "increases student engagement."

"This [service learning] will assist in getting faculty who are interested in having a host of opportunities to work with Service Learning," Mitha said.

According to Mitha, studies have shown that service learning enhances student performance and supports student retention.

"Service-learning provides students the opportunity gain skills, knowledge, and values that are required to work with vulnerable and marginalized populations," said UHD professor Angela Goins. "By completing their social work field placements/

internships, they are prepared to face 'real-world' scenarios with clients and build the confidence they need as social work practitioners."

Engaging in service learning has been shown to improve self-efficacy and self-esteem.

"In our review we found that students not only tend to perform better academically in a service-learning course, but that they also develop improved self-efficacy and self-esteem," said UHD professor Candace TenBrink.

Students can expect to gain valuable knowledge through a combination of theory and practice. With service learning, students can work on exciting projects with or for the community.

Faculty will have an opportunity to be creative and assist in encouraging student engagement and learning.

"I truly believe these steps taken in service-learning assist in student engagement and student success," Mitha said.

Grants are available through Service Learning for faculty and those grants go towards future projects.

To learn more about Service Learning and the teaching circle, contact ILO through email ILO@uhd. edu or contact Mitha through email mithaz@uhd.edu.

Department Email:

ILO@uhd.edu

Lessons Learned

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and more,



POONAM GULATI SALHOTRA, Ph.D.

FALL 2021-SPRING 2022 TEACHING CIRCLE

- Ayden Adler, Assistant Professor of Arts Administration, Ph.D.
- Anita Chadha, Associate Professor of Political Science, Ph.D
- Angela Goins, Assistant Professor of Social Work, Ph.D,
- Larisa Jackson, Lecturer of Music, Ph.D.
- Candace TenBrink, Associate Professor of Strategy, Ph.D.
- Poonam Gulati Salhotra, Executive Director of the Impact Learning Office, Ph.D.
- Zeenat Mitha, a lecturer in Communication Studies, Ph.D.

Credit: Edward Saenz

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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, AP syle, 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.





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CAMPUS NEWS



This year's ofrenda, in room N940 in the One Main Building, remembers the dead. Credit: Allison Nolasco

Center for Latino Studies honors el Dia de los Muertos

BY ALLISON NOLASCO

The Center for Latino Studies hosted a poetry competition for Day of The Dead. Students had to write a "calaverita," a funny rhyme dedicated to death and memory.

The winning poems were awarded a gift card and a certificate.

Maria Carrera, a student at UHD, placed first. She was encouraged by her professor to write a poem for the competition.

Carrera wrote a poem called "La calaca se creia." She drew the inspiration for the poem from her childhood.

"It was just funny it brought me back to my childhood memories," Carrera said.

"I was born in Mexico City, so that again is a big thing it is part of the school activities."

"El Dia de los Muertos" originated in ancient Mesoamerica, (modern day Mexico and northern Central America) and it is celebrated in many other Latin American countries and in the U.S.

It is a holiday about remembering dead family members and friends. Families who had loved ones that passed away create altars with pictures of the departed decorated with yellow flowers and "ofrendas" (offerings).

The ofrendas are food and objects that the departed would like. The flowers are supposed to attract souls to the altar.

Edwin Mendez, UHD alumnus, attended the event to reconnect with his culture as he never celebrated "Dia De Los Muertos" at home

"This year I decided to learn more about my culture because I was born in Mexico, but I never felt proud to be called Mexican because of all the stereotypes, so that is just me trying to get back to my roots." Mendez said.

Steven Barrerae. a sophomore at UHD, celebrates the holiday with his dad's side of the family. It is a way for him to give praise to his lost relatives.

He has been to other schools that don't celebrate his culture, so it was refreshing to see something different.

"It is a beautiful thing," Barrerae said. "The fact that UHD is showcasing culture and putting it on a pedestal for everybody to see is something that makes me feel represented, and it is something I enjoy."

Academic Support Center presents Day of the Dead

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

"Los muertos" (the dead) were remembered during a touching poetry reading by the Writing and Reading Center.

Interim Assistant Director Jema Pantoja of Academic Support Center alongside WRC tutor Lianet Chacon Garrido organized the cultural homage. The open event welcomed students to express their feelings for their departed family and friends through poetry.

"I wanted to share the holiday with others who don't really know what Día de Los Muertos is about," Pantoja said.

"It was important to me because I have a lot of pride in my Mexican culture, so I wanted to share the holiday with others.

The "ofrenda" (offering), displayed photographs of those who departed including the 21 victims of the Uvalde school shooting. Flowers, "calaveras" (skulls), and monarch butterflies adorned the ofrenda.

Pantoja remembered her aunt Mariana, grandpa Enrique and wife, grandmother Socorro "coco," family friends, and even pets. "Unfortunately,

I have lost several

people in my life, but the holiday helps me to remember the beautiful memories spent together," Pantoja added. The moving poems

brought students to tears, while others were compelled to comfort them.

English Professor

song about not being able to live without the lost one," Fortunato said.

bered his uncle Rico, a years ago.

Paul Fortunato gave a rendition with his guitar of "Vivir Sin Aire" by Mexican pop rock band Maná.

"It is a general love

Fortunato rememgreat friend and mentor, who died of cancer two

"He was super positive even as he was dying and suffering," Fortunato said. "He had some kind of insight and peace that I try to learn from."

Día de los Muertos originated in ancient Mesoamerica (now modern Mexico and northern Central America) thanks to indigenous civilizations including the Aztecs, Mayans and Toltecs.

Now, the holiday is celebrated on the first two days of November predominantly in Latin American countries.

However, the holiday transcends borders where Latinos make their roots known worldwide.



Interim Assistant Director Jema Pantoja with Director Isidro Grau of the Academic Support Center showcase ofrenda in honor of el Dia de los Muertos. Credit: Diana Ambrosio

ENROLLMENT continued from front page

"The group includes non-traditional students, a variety of majors, graduate students, and more to show that every student has a voice."

Ambassadors can be found at various events such as the President's State of the University Address and Transfer Thursdays.

"There is a need for students to work and

help out in these areas," said Rhode Villareal, a current enrollment ambassador.

"There is an opportunity to talk to visitors and share our own experiences [we have had] at the university."

The ambassadors will be receiving a \$2500 scholarship for meeting the requirements of the program. While in the program, students may develop skills in marketing and

public relations. They can add their experience to their resume especially since they were selected and are working with the office of the Vice President of Enrollments.

"Everyone should consider applying to the program," said Villanueva.

After the application is submitted a group of people will be selected to attend the group interviews.

Ambassadors can roll over from semester to semester, but there will be room for new applicants for spring

Gators should look out for future information about applications in their gatormail.

"There needs to be a want to do the work because you have to go out there and represent the university, especially yourself," Villareal added.



L-R: Brvan Wilkinson, UHD President Loren Blanchard, Steven Barnard, Rhode Villareal, Barbara Bass, Kristen Blessman, and Paloma Esparza-Guerra on Sept. 28.

Maria Carrera is recognized as the winner of the "calaverita" poetry contest Credit: Allison Nolasco

CAMPUS NEWS

Inside the brotherhood of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

BY ISIAH ARCHIE

Jason L. Jackson is a current UHD senior studying to earn a degree in history. Throughout his time at UHD, Jackson has had the opportunity to join many student-led organizations and brainstorm with the greatest minds on campus.

Being a history major, he realized early on the importance of networking and the sense of urgency that he needed to have throughout his college career.

In fall of 2019, Jackson became a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. and now is currently the Supreme Xi Kappa chapter president.

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. was founded on Jan. 9, 1914, on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. It was founded by A. Langston Taylor, Leonard F. Morse and Charles I. Brown.

The three founders believed that brotherhood, scholarship and service were the three main pillars that men of business should



Jason L. Jackson serves as the president of the Supreme Xi Kappa chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Credit: Isiah Archie

align themselves with. They deeply wished to create an organization that viewed itself as a part of the general community rather than apart from it. They believed that individuals should be judged on their own merits rather than their family background, without regard of race, nationality, color, skin tone, or hair texture.

"I chose Sigma because of the great works of service in the community and the brotherhood on campus." – Jason L. Jackson

Members cover a wide range of ages from 24 years old to about 50 years old.



With the age variety, they try to make their service reach causes that they can all support. They most recently passed out meals and toiletries to the community by UHD that are in need.

"Our bond is unique and unmatched by any other organization," Jackson said.

Being a brother means wearing the many hats that come with being a mentor, friend, critic and listener and the many other words that describe lifelong relationships.

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. is always looking for great quality men of great morals and character.

They welcome brothers from all walks of life who are ready to commit to a lifetime of great brotherhood.

Sisterhood, community service at core of Rho Psi chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc, president says

BY ISIAH ARCHIE

LaBrittany Harper is a senior here at UHD. She is currently enrolled in the Urban Education program at the College of Public Service majoring in Education EC-6 with ESL supplemental.

Harper is the president of the Resilient Rho Psi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated here on campus.

As the president, Harper establishes the chapter's vision and goals in alignment with regional and national guidelines with initiative. She serves and supports chapter Sorors to develop quality programs for the UHD campus and community. Out of all the sororities, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc stood out for her.

"What stands out is that we are intentional in providing scholarships, service to the community and the bond of the sisterhood. Also, it aligns with my goals as an educator. But most of all we stand on Christian principles," Harper replied.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated was founded on January 13, 1913, by 22 collegiate women at Howard University to promote academic excellence and provide assistance to those in need.

As a sisterhood comprised primarily of Black, college-educated women, the Sorority considers the issues impacting the Black community and boldly confronts the challenges of African Americans and, hence, all Americans.

Over the years, a wide range of programs addressing education, health, international development, and the strengthening of African American families have evolved.

Since joining Delta Sigma Theta, Harper has learned just how great the sorority is. It has and continues to enhance her leadership skills and her passion for supporting the community, plus, building lifelong relationships with like-minded people.

This allows Harper to be a part of something greater than herself with a global impact that resonates in her heart and aligns with her personal ideals.

Harper advises our fellow lady Gators who are interested in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., to keep up with the latest updates, visit the national website www.deltasigmatheta.org. It provides a guide for membership.

They can also be reached on social media @ rhopsi_dst.



LaBrittany Harper serves as the president of the Rho Psi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. on campus. Credit: Isiah Archie

LOCAL NEWS

Houston's 2nd gun buyback event collects 1,208 guns

BY SONIA SANCHEZ

The city of Houston held its second gun buyback event on Oct. 8 at METRO'S Westchase Park & Ride at 11050 Harwin Dr. and collected a record number of 1,208 guns in exchange for gift cards.

The city considered the second event a success and collected about 400 more guns than the 845 collected from the first event in July.

"We believe this the largest one-day gun buyback collection, if not the largest, in U.S. history," the city of Houston tweeted.

The mayor's office divided the total numbers of guns as follows: 368 revolvers, 279 semi-automatic handguns, 243 shot guns, 227 rifles, and 91 semi-automatic rifles. Also, the city paid gun owners gift cards ranging from \$50 to \$200 per gun, depending on the type of gun collected.

During a press conference held during the event, Houston police Chief Troy Finner was pleased with how many vehicles showed up.

"I'm looking forward to even more gun buybacks." Finner said at the press conference, "It removes guns off the streets and puts them in safe hands, so that's a good thing."

U.S. Rep. Al Green was at the press conference to support the event happening in his own district. Green emphasized that the event was not an effort to take guns, but a way to return stolen guns to their rightful owners.

"We are, obviously, buying them. But if we find the gun, and this has happened, that was stolen, that gun is returned to the person that had the gun." Green said at the press conference. "You're going to get your gun back."

This event prohibited gun owners from turning in ghost guns and posted a 25gun limit per vehicle. Anyone turning in more than that was turned away and told to make a separate appointment with the city and police department.

The buyback initiative is part of Mayor Sylvester Turner's crime plan, dubbed "One Safe Houston." The \$53 million plan also includes more funding for overtime pay for officers, more domestic violence and behavioral health teams, and youth outreach programs.



Credit: Sonia Sanchez

Multiplatinum recording artist Takeoff shot dead in Houston bowling alley, minutes away from UHD

BY SHAHERYAR KHAN

Takeoff, one-third of the Grammy-nominated multi-platinum rap group Migos, was shot dead in downtown Houston on Nov. 1.

Known offstage as Kirsnick Khari Ball, Takeoff formed the trio Migos with his uncle Quavo and cousin Offset in Atlanta.

The 28-year-old rapper was killed when gunfire erupted and wounded two other people, according to police Chief Troy Finner. Takeoff was pronounced dead at the scene, while the wounded individuals were taken to the Finner stated Takeoff was "well respected," and there was "no reason to believe he was involved in anything criminal at the time."

hospital to be treated.

"Let me just ask ... that anyone who has information on the shooter or shooters to provide that information to HPD and let us solve this situation," said Mayor Sylvester Turner at a press conference. "Let us bring justice to this family."

The bowling alley is in a three-story Houston retail complex with high-end restaurants less than a mile from

UHD.

Seven rappers were killed in 2022, two of them in Houston.

Finner said he wants to meet with other hip-hop artists to talk about violence, although he didn't say Takeoff's killing had anything to do with is work in music.

"We all need to stand together and make sure nobody tears down that industry," Finner said.

Several fans gathered across the street from the bowling alley and created a memorial with roses, candles, and snacks on the steps of the complex. Takeoff's death happened to occur on Dia De Los Muertos. Many fans mourned

the death of Takeoff's untimely death.

Takeoff "paved a new wave of culture in hip hop history, inspiring many people and artists such as myself," said Houston recording artist YNGN. "His death was a huge loss to the rap world and his legacy will be remembered forever."

Migos' record label, Quality Control, posted on Instagram mourning the death of their member.

"Senseless vio-



A memorial setup outside the bowling alley where rapper, Takeoff, passed away. Credit: Shaheryar Khan.

lence and a stray bullet has taken another life from this world and we are devastated," the statement said, though police have said nothing

about the gunshot being a stray. "Please respect his family and friends as we all continue to process this monumental loss."

LOCAL NEWS



Houstonians cheering on the Astros as they ride through the parade. Courtesy: Jose Vazquez

ASTROS

continued from page 1

"It was special for me because I grew up watching the Astros with my dad," he added. It's the one sport where immigrants make up the majority of the rosters."

Less than 24 hours after the championship, the city of Houston announced plans for a celebration parade on Nov. 7. The parade took place on Smiths Street where over 1.7 million Houstonians attended.

Among the over one million other Houston Astros fans was UHD student Luis Velasquez. He described the vibe as exciting and hectic as people cheered and claimed sight-seeing spots by climbing on cars, trees, and light posts.

"Everyone want-

ed to see the players," Velasquez said. "It felt surreal having a second World Series [championship] under the Houston name. Houston winning brought the H-town community all together, all in one place."

The Astros played their fourth World Series in six seasons and rebounded from losses in 2019 and '21 by beating the Phillies in six games.

After winning 106

games in the regular season, the Astros swept the Mariners in the American League Division Series and the Yankees in the American League Championship Series, being only the third team in MLB history to sweep their way to the World Series.

On Nov. 9 the Astros announced that Manager Dusty Baker had re-signed with the club for the 2023 season, kicking off the Astros off-season.



The parade took over the entirety of downtown Houston and the celebrations went on into the night. Courtesy: Jose Vazquez



Dateline Editor, Indira Zaldivar, and writer, Nohely Martinez celebrating at the parade. Credit: Shaheryar Khan



The Astros Mascot, Orbit, had his own float and was being cheered on by Houstonians. Courtesy: Jose Vazquez

Houston city council votes to approve, adopt redistricting plan

BY SERGIO PRESA JR.

Houston City Council passed a redistricting plan on Oct. 12, to establish new boundaries of single member city council districts in January 2024.

The 2020 census data was the basis for the plan's criteria along with public input and analysis by the city's Planning and Development Department, the city's demographer and legal counsel. The

census data showed that among current city council districts, the distribution of population is materially imbalanced.

The imbalance is required to be addressed in the new redistricting plan to comply with the United States' "one-person one-vote" principle that the U.S. Constitution lays out. The new plan will allow prospective city council candidates to verify residence eligibility to

run in a single-member district before the November 2023 general election filing period.

"The law requires us to balance the populations of our council districts and that is what we accomplished after much thoughtful discussion," said Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner.

Community members of Freedmen's Town in Houston's Fourth Ward are grateful for the way that the changes are not

impacting their district. Freedmen's Town has long been in District C, but there were recent proposals to move it to District H due to the district's recent popula tion decline.

Residents took their concerns regarding the proposal to a city council meeting on Oct. 11, telling city council members that it would be a setback for Freedmen's Town.

"Our precinct happens to have 5000

plus residents," said Zion Escobar, executive director of Houston's Freedmen's Town Conservancy. "Because of the changes in density over the last I would say 10-15 years, we have more density than most other places in district H or the nearby area."

Escobar said residents did not wish to kick any other neighborhoods out of the district, for they just wanted to preserve theirs. The community

was concerned that being moved into a new district could jeopardize various educational and improvement projects in the neighborhood's near future

"This place is where you come to experience the truth about the birth of Black Houston," Escobar said. "So many people's histories, genealogies and family stories are tied up here in Freedmen's Town."

Houston's Chuck Leah opens up about lifelong music career amid Grammy nomination

BY RYAN PRICE

8

Chuck Leah is a Houston-based singer, songwriter, and music producer with a varied career that is currently in the running for a Grammy award.

Leah was born in the small town of Weslaco, Texas, and found his love of music as a small child. He began playing music around the age of four and fell in love with the music his parent's listened to. Early on, Leah found himself enamored with the likes of Mozart, Opera, Led Zeppelin, and Bob Dylan.

It was not long before the urge to create music overpowered his desire to listen to it.

"I actually started writing songs before I really knew how to play guitar," Leah said regarding his childhood. By the time he was 14, he had already recorded his first few songs.

Leah honed his skills with his guitar, an instrument that, if one found an image of Leah, you would assume that it was permanently grafted to his person. But the desire to continue learning more instruments and experimenting with his style, never ended.

As of his last count,

Leah now plays around 80 instruments in total, most of which are string instruments. By the time he was a late teen, he had found, and embraced, his style.

Soon, he began touring the country, with several different groups, before moving to Houston to attend the Art Institute of Houston's professional audio program.

After that, Leah's career as a producer kicked off. He has since worked as a producer for both small and large music labels, including working for Prince.

Leah found that he did not enjoy working under the larger record labels as they wrestled too much control out of his music.

"They pick out the songs for you, they pick out the musicians, they pick out the arrangements... that's not what I was about," Leah said.

His favorite part of music is the control he has over his craft. He loves to give his fellow artists pieces to play and see where they take it. No editing or computers, just pure and simple music.

This style has led the five to great success, especially within the Americana genre. Starting in 2006, Leah has



Chuck Leah was born in Weslaco, Texas and started playing music at the age of 4. Courtesy: Courtesy: Chuck Leah

released four albums: "Drive,", "The Gypsy Kid,", "High Stakes,", and "Band of Ghosts." Along with these, he has also recorded several successful singles.

In 2019, Leah was hired by the Houston Museum of Natural Science to compose an original score for a film presentation. He has remained employed by HMNS ever since and moved to Houston permanently to be with his daughter.

In 2022, the five time Grammy award nominated artist released a new single, "Little Darlings." His mind filled with memories of his relationships, both present and past, as he drove from Connecticut to Alabama, an 18-hour drive, suddenly a melody came to him.

"As soon as it hit me, I had to pull over

conviction and has been

2004. His parole ended

in June 2020. Know-

ingly voting while on

parole or probation in

Texas is a second-de-

out on parole since

and record it in my car,... and I made a phone recording," Leah said regarding his experience writing "Little Darlings.".

Leah believes that there is Texas everywhere he goes. Born in Texas, he looked up to Texas songwriters his whole career. More than most, he understands what being a Texas musician is all about.

Many UHD students want to be



Chuck Leah's single "Little Darlings" is nominated for a Grammy in the Best American Roots Songs category. Courtesy: Chuck Leah

musicians, something that Leah is well aware of. For those interested, Leah advises caution.

"It's a really tough life. It's not something that you can do and be at home. You can make the best record ever recorded but if nobody hears it, it doesn't matter."

Music is very serious as a life choice and requires dedication of

the highest magnitude, he said. It was never about how much money he made but about making the perfect record for himself. But most of all, he asks students to "be true to yourself and be confident in what you do."

Leah's single, "Little Darlings," is up for a Grammy this year in the Best American Roots Song category.



Credit: Edward Saenz

Charges of voter fraud against Houstonian Hervis Rogers dropped

BY SERGIO PRESA JR.

Houston man Hervis Rogers, who waited hours in line to vote in the March 2020 presidential primary, had voter fraud charges against him dropped.

In July 2021, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton ordered the arrest of Rogers because he voted while on parole. After the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals ruled that Paxton does not have the ability to unilaterally prosecute election crimes, a district court judge dropped the charges against Rogers. "I am thankful that

Rogers said.

gree felony, carrying a possible prison sentence of up to 20 years. Rogers says he was not justice has been done," aware that he was ineli-Rogers was arrested gible to vote. in 1995 on a burglary

According to

Rogers' advocates, not only did he work two jobs, but he also waited six hours in line to vote as evidence he did not know he was not eligible. Rogers would have received a life sentence if convicted since he is over 60 years old.

In 2007, state legislation was passed that requires the Department of Criminal Justice to

notify people it used to have custody of about their eligibility to vote, but then-Gov. Rick Perry vetoed it.

In recent years, Paxton's office prioritized prosecuting voter fraud cases. The attorney general's office did not immediately respond to a request for a comment.

Rogers received

help from the ACLU of Texas.

"We honestly were relieved and so happy that Mr. Rogers was able to put this traumatic ordeal behind him," said Tommy Buser-Clancy, an ACLU of Texas senior staff attorney. "He never should have been prosecuted in the first place."

'Black Adam' is a must-see for more than just Dwayne Johnson fans

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

"Black Adam," released on Oct. 21, is the newest addition to the DC Extended Universe film series.

The film is set in Kahndag, a fictional sovereign nation situated somewhere in the Middle East.

Kahndaq suffers under the criminal organization Intergang. Black Adam (Dwane Johnson) is an imprisoned individual imbued with a godlike power, intentionally released by archeologist Adriana Tomez (Sarah Shahi) to protect the country.

Black Adam can fly, has strength comparable to Superman, and he also can shoot lightning from his hands. The character was bestowed the magical powers from a council of magical wizards, the same wizards from the 2018 "SHAZAM" film.

Adam's presence is considered a threat to international security, so Movie Review



Black Adam Genre: Superhero Action

In Black Adam, Dwayne Johnson is finally bestowed a DC Comics Superhero worthy of the action star.

WORTH THE WATCH!

Credit: James Jurewicz

a team called the Justice Society is sent by the United States government to capture him.

Notably, Kent Nelson/alter ego Dr. Fate (Pierce Brosnan) and Hawkman/Carter Hall (Aldis Hodge) make up part of the team. Hawkman is best explained as a flying man adorned with large metal hawk wings and a spinning mace both made of extraterrestrial steel.

Johnson was long overdue as an action star to be cast in a superhero film. Black

Adam is not specifically a superhero but an anti-hero. He can get away with things a hero could not, like killing the villains.

Enjoyable and entertaining, the ticket was well worth the price of admission to see Johnson finally appear as a comic book inspired super being.

The DC Extended Universe was once thought to be dead, although after a shuffling of Warner Brothers leadership, it has been resurrected. During the

last week of October, James Gunn was named the executive in charge of all the creative content for the DC side of WB.

For comic fans, and more specifically DCEU fans, this is a wonderful and welcome development. Gunn breathed new life into the DC comic book characters with the film sequel "The Suicide Squad," followed by the spinoff HBO Max streaming show "Peacemaker."

Both works were well received and led to their characters appearing in the film "Black Adam." Character Amanda Waller (Viola Davis) was featured in promotional material for the film.

Stay after the credits as there is a surprise treat for fans of the DCEU. "Black Adam" is recommended for Dwayne Johnson and superhero fans and is now playing in cinemas.

'Ticket to Paradise' carries comical sabotage plan, warrants a watch

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

"Ticket to Paradise" is a relaxed rom com with likable characters and pleasant tropical scenery.

Lily (Kaitlyn Dever) and Wren (Billie Lourd) travel to Bali for a post law-school trip to celebrate graduation. When the women are snorkeling, they are accidentally left behind by their boat, stranding them in the sea.

Spotted in the water by a local seaweed farmer named Gede (Maxime Bouttier), the young man valiantly rescues the women in his motorboat. As a swift and burning romance develops between Lily and Gede, Lily becomes determined to stay in Bali. Lily writes to her parents in an email describing her new life choice.

The divorced couple of David and Georgia Cotton (Julia Roberts and George Clooney) are incidentally brought back together through their mutual dislike of their daughter's new plan. The sleazy ways the parents team up to try to get the couple to split up becomes the film's focus.

Roberts and Clooney work so well together it becomes easy to ignore their sketchy plan and enjoy their performances. This is the fifth time they both appear in the same film.

Balinese culture is represented in the film. Gede is shown having

his canines filed flat in a tradition of preparation for the wedding ceremony.

Tanah Lot, the popular Indonesian rock formation also graces the screen. The area features beautiful Hindu temples and is a coveted tourist destination. The Balinese translation for Tanah Lot is "Land in the Sea."

Georgia is also surprised by the appearance of her boyfriend Paul (Lucas Bravo) both as their airline pilot and then later in Bali. His arrival provides a humorous and awkward subplot.

One major nitpick for the film would be the email announcement as a method to let her parents know of her



Credit: Edward Saenz

intended international relocation. A video chat or even a phone call seems much more considerate.

makes little sense is

when the unmoored

Another scene that

boat, during an island visit, strands the parents with Lily and Gede and the men go to hunt a wild pig. They were on the island for 30 seconds before making this decision.

Despite a few nonsenses, it was an enjoyable film throughout the 104-minute runtime. The film is now playing in cinemas.

Netflix's 'The School of Good and Evil' defies black-or-white morality

BY JEMA PANTOJA

The 2022 Netflix film "The School of Good and Evil," follows two extremely different teenage best friends, Sophie, and Agatha. The two go through a whirlwind adventure at an enchanted institute known as the School for Good and Evil.

The school trains children to become fairytale heroes and villains.

Released Oct. 19, the film was adapted from the book series by Soman Chainani, originally published from 2013 - 2020.

The film adaptation is a mixture of "Harry Potter," "Descendants" and "Once Upon a Time." The school for good looks like the inside of a wedding cake. Meanwhile the school for evil looks like the goth version of Harry Potter.

Sophie, a Cinderella figure, has always dreamt of becoming a princess, living an extravagant life, and having her own happily ever after with her own prince charming. So, when Sophie finds out about the school, she does everything she can to attend. Her best friend Agatha is the opposite of Sophie. Agatha lives with her mother in a cottage in the forest, where they concoct potions together.

When both Sophie and - unexpectantly -Agatha get abducted to be taken to school, they enter a whole new world of good and evil, black magic, and charming princes. However, the enchanted school holds many secrets that are kept away from the students.

The Netflix film adaptation steps away from cookie-cutter heroes and villainous stereotypes with charm, cleverness, and the magic of friendship.

Right from the start, the film surprises by announcing that Sophie belongs to the school of evil and Agatha to the school of good. Throughout the film, Sophie and Agatha work together to prove to everyone that Sophie is good, and that she belongs to the school of good.

The journey to get Sophie to the school of good proves to be a tough challenge, especially when Sophie eventually turns evil



Credit: Edward Saenz

to get what she wants. Spoiler alert, the power of friendship is what saves the day and both schools - good and evil - come together, giving the audience a sense of a happy ending.

"The School of Good and Evil" illustrates how the world is not black and white or good and evil. In fact, most people are morally grey and sometimes it takes breaking some rules to make the right choices.

Storytelling event allows locals to share stories, gain acting experience

BY BETTY CRUZ

With all eyes on him, a man filled up a bucket with all kinds of alcoholic drinks on a small, dark stage.

He wobbled a little bit, side to side, and dared the audience to have a cup of all he drank that Christmas night with his friends.

In reality, the man was not drunk. Writer and reader Cris Skelton was acting out a story someone submitted to Grown-up Storytime.

Every month, GUST provides a platform for writers to share their stories and have them performed by individuals at the Continental Club, located in downtown Houston.

"People, many of whom are not professional writers, send us their stories," Producer Blair Ault said.

"We take [these works], give them to people in the community, and have them perform them one night." GUST began in 2007 as a project created by BooTown, a theater group from the University of Houston's main campus, which then grew into a storytelling event held on the third Tuesday of every month at 8 p.m.

"We tried a couple of things because we knew we wanted to do a weeknight storytelling event, but we did not know exactly what that would look like," Producer Emily Hynds said.

The event allows Houstonians to tell their stories and/or obtain performance experience.

It also enables the general public to enjoy stories in a unique way since the writer is not the one telling the story. The actors represent the stories as they see fit.

The producers accept a broad range of nonfiction or fiction stories but prefer first-person narratives with minimal dialogue over poetry or streamof-conscious pieces.



Cristina Brown reading "The Haunted House" by Sarah Yates at Grown-Up SCARY Time. Courtesy: Steven Patlan

They recommend sending short stories with detailed descriptions so the audience understands what is happening in the story.

If needed, the team works with the writer to make edits.

GUST holds free workshops for writers and performers around Houston to give writers feedback and teach readers the basics of acting on stage.

The leadership team selects stories based on what speaks to them and what the audience will like listening to. They then match the story with a performer before the show. Most performers do not have a theater back-

ground. Many started as audience members who wanted to stand on stage after seeing a performance or were regular people who reached out and wanted to get involved.

Skelton relishes being part of the organization and has been a core GUST member since 2010.

He is the "exception to the rule" as he has acted in the past and was active in the Los



Maria-Elisa Heg performing "Ankles in Tehran" by Donya Ziraksari at Grown-Up SCARY Time. Courtesy: Steven Patlan

Angeles acting circle before moving back to Houston.

"We [performers] love doing justice to the words the person has written," Skelton said.

"It is important to find the kernel of a story that resonates with you the most, and try to make it feel the way the [writer] intended to feel or find things they did not expect."

As a writer, he loves to share personal stories and thinks it is a unique experience to have his stories read by other people. For interested Gators, GUTS has an upcoming event.

The last show of the year will be on Dec. 20. The show will be livestreamed for those who cannot make it in person.

To join in the fun, email the producers at grownupstorytimehouston@gmail.com.

Follow the organization's Facebook page at Grown-up Storytime, on Instagram at @ grownupstorytime, and watch past shows on the Grown-up Storytime's YouTube Channel.

SPORTS & GAMING

UHD Wellness & Success Center approaches grand opening

BY JESSE FITZGERALD

RODRIGUEZ SR.

Are you wondering what's inside the newly built 35-million-dollar Wellness and Success Center located across the Buffalo Bayou? Ready to invigorate your lifestyle, body, heart, and mind?

"Give us a shot, come experience it, get connected, there's something for everyone," Sports and Fitness Director Richard Sebastiani said.

Sebastiani is responsible for the overall administration, direction, leadership, and vision of the Sports and Fitness department and its programs.

The mission of the Student Life Center and the new Wellness and Success Center is to "support the academic lifestyle and student success [and] empower our students so that they may have the opportunity to come experience some of the programs we have to offer," Sebastiani noted.

Since its inception, the Student Life Center has offered students opportunities in leadership development, communication skills, social skills, amongst other key areas that encourage students to become more confident and as a result, contribute more to the UHD community and abroad. The current facility offers a wide array of sports and fitness connections to intramural sport tournaments for the following: badminton, cornhole, and bowling.

Also, club sports like baseball, basketball (men's), volleyball (women's), and wrestling are accessible after sports and fitness registration. Even aerobic group exercise classes are accessible every day, so get your sweat on and "stop

saying and start doing," read a sports and fitness advertisement. But do not forget to warm-up first!

"It is never too late to get on an exercise regiment, working out, and incorporate a healthy lifestyle and we'll be here whenever you're ready," Sebastiani said.

"If sports isn't your thing, the Wellness and Success Center will introduce students to a demonstration kitchen to show them how to prepare nutritious meals."

He added among other interests like indoor and outdoor personal one-on-one training and group sessions will also be available and extremely beneficial to anyone.

and Success Center plans to open its doors to the UHD community on the first day of class in the spring semester in January 2023.

can be expected in the new sports and fitness facility include a bouldering wall, two additional studios for fitness and training classes, one extra ball court, expanded areas for weight training and cardio equipment, and larger locker rooms, just to name a few.

Even an outdoor pool was in the 2020 plans mentioned by Sebastiani, but unfortunately, due to the budget, maintenance, lifeguards, and the need for an aquatic's coordinator, among other things, hindered the project from moving forward. However, the new 75,000-square-foot Wellness and Success Center will more than be appreciated and welcomed by students, staff, faculty, and even alumni.

Just as important, twice a year, the UHD

The new Wellness

The upgrades that

Health Fair, sponsored

by the Sports and Fit-

Food Bank "educate

students and the uni-

versity community on

health issues with the

objective of promoting

The next event will be

held on Nov. 16 from 9

a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the

Academic Building in

Fair offers fitness as-

The UHD Health

sessments, fitness dem-

onstrations, free food

distribution and valu-

health and wellness

other opportunities.

Fair is free to UHD

able information about

services, screenings and

This UHD Health

room A300.

mittee, and the Houston

students and employees, and free groceries are ness, the Wellness Comaccessible (while groceries last of course) to UHD students, faculty, and staff. Over 20 organizations/companies engage in an intricate role in this fair, among better health outcomes." them: the American Heart Association, Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center, Harris County Public Health, the Houston Police Department, and UHD Student

Counseling Services. A healthy body equals a healthy mind,

and the benefits therein are astronomical, so start a sports and fitness connection today.

At the end of the day, the current Student Life Center is available

for students to reach out and possibly incorporate some different but advantageous habits for student engagement, personal development, and professional success. While the Student Life Center is only 35,000 sq. ft. and can get quite crowded, the new Wellness and Success Center will be an estimated 75,000 sq.

So, if you are on the fence, contemplating, and indecisive on whether to visit the Student Life Center and later the new Wellness and Success Center, take this into consideration.

"I want all UHD students to have the

opportunity and experience another positive, motivating, and stimulating environment aside from their academics and studies throughout their academic career," Sebastiani said. "I want students to experience the whole university, the sports and fitness programs, and take advantage of this field of recreational resources and all it has to offer. It's been a privilege to open two recreational facilities for the UHD community."



Computer Generated renders of the inside of the future Wellness Center. Courtesy UHD

Computer Generated renders of the outside of the future Wellness Center. Courtesy UHD



OPINIONS

NAME CHANGE

continued from front page

And even afterexplaining all those things, I usually have to still correct people who introduce me to others, saying that: "Here's Paul. He teaches at the University of Houston." NO-O-O!

That's in other parts of the country. What happens when I walk around the city of Houston? The same exact thing happens.

One colleague mentioned meeting our Congressman Dan Crenshaw recently and having to explain that UHD is an actual university. The man who represents us to the rest of the country did not know we exist.

Some people might think that we benefit from the fact that we

have the "University of Houston" in our name, that people can recognize this entity and therefore feel confident about it. I suppose that is true, but they only have confidence in the name for as long as they are completely wrong about what we are.

We can continue to fool people that we are the University of Houston and benefit from that misconception. But the minute someone realizes that we are not the University of Houston, in other words, when they realize the truth— they lose their confidence in us. That is because we have essentially been lying to them.

If you go to any other city, and you see a college or university with the moniker

"Downtown" on it, you can pretty safely assume that it is not a university, but rather a campus that is part of another university. I was in downtown San Antonio, and drove past "UT-SA-Downtown." Guess what- it is not a university. It is a campus of another university.

One person asked me about University of Houston-Sugarland, or University of Houston-Katy. To go to those universities, you have to apply to that one sole entity, the University of Houston. (Sorry to belabor this, but it's continually necessary, given the fact that we have cluster-F'd this whole name thing).

The one counter example is the University of Houston-Clear Lake, which is like UHD, its own entity. The difference there is that UHCL is not 4 miles from the

University of Houston (like we are) so it's easier to tell the difference. And UHCL has a very developed set of graduate programs—48 masters programs and three doctoral programs. They have a history of serving NASA and they therefore have a measure of social cache, a real identity. UHD, on the other hand, has only 9 master programs and no doctoral programs.

Years ago, there was an effort to change the name.

"Students want to keep our name. Nobody wants to change it," a student told the Houston Chronicle article on April 14, 2010.

I wonder if anyone asked that student if they knew that UHD was not part of the University of Houston. I'm afraid to know what they would answer.

In that same article.

the Chronicle reported that "Regents voted in December 2008 to change the name of the 40-year-old school, saying too many people think it is a satellite campus of the University of Houston rather than a stand-alone university."

Nothing has changed since that time. And nothing will change. We will never be able to build a substantial identity if we do not have an identity.

Other state systems have embraced this logic of having an identity. The State University system used to call their universities SUNY-Stony Brook, SUNY-Binghamton, and SUNY-Buffalo. Well, how much better does the University of Buffalo now sound? Give them an identity. Give them some pride. Calling ourselves

the University of Houston-Downtown is like saying: "I'm not good enough to be at the University of Houston, but I'm hoping you won't notice that I'm not really part of that entity. And I'm really nervous of being found out-so please don't inquire any further!"

The only way to break out of this trap is come up with a completely different name and have our own identity, our own brand.

What would also help would be to have at least one Division One team so that we could have a game-say a volleyball or soccer game-against the UH. We would most likely get our butts thoroughly trashed, but then at least people would say: "Oh that's a different university!"

"Yes! Thank you!"



Credit: Giselle Oviedo