Part 1 of 3 Series

A Fight for Options

by Israel J. Salazar
Assistant Editor

On November 3, students will have the opportunity to request that UHD’s administration rethink the way things are being done on this campus. If you are like J.B. Bobbitt, our student body president, you want UHD’s administration to support your request for options when it comes to where and how you buy your books. This is a timeless issue and just one of the many issues that all students are welcome to bring to the Town Hall Meeting that will take place in the Wilhelmina Cullen Auditorium on November 3, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Few consumers know what it is to spend $900.00 on books in a single year. It is a dubious honor reserved mainly for college students. In fact, for the textbook industry, we are money in the bank. While the bookstores in malls and charming little cafes may have to use elaborate merchandising schemes to gain access into the wallets of their patrons, bookstores located on college campuses need not employ such tactics.

This is not about emotions or ethics or even passion.

Bush Zero, Kerry Won

by Daniel Wibel
Dateline Staff Writer

Looking every bit the confident and seasoned Commander-in-Chief he hopes to become in November, Democratic Presidential Candidate John Kerry handily won the Presidential Debate on Foreign Policy the evening of September 30 on the campus of the University of Miami at Coral Gables. His Republican opponent, incumbent President George W. Bush, appeared uncertain, unprepared, and, at times, particularly inarticulate in this tightly regulated event. Even the President’s oft-touted personal charm and wit were nowhere near evident enough to armor him against the onslaught of Kerry’s polished demeanor and eloquent rhetoric. As Mark Shields of PBS put it, “it was Andy Griffith meets Barney Fife.”

It has been suggested that the series of three debates perhaps marks Kerry’s last and best opportunity to define his plan for America as best he was permitted, given the stiff regulations agreed on by the parties. Beyond that, this first in a series of three debates carried with it a huge responsibility for Kerry – to define himself to the American people – and he, as assessed by the vast majority of political pundits and as indicated by subsequent polls, rose effortlessly to the occasion.

From the outset, Kerry went on the offensive, effectively accusing Bush of misinforming the American people and mishandling both the war on terror and that in Iraq. When Bush stated that war is “hard work,” Kerry responded with a series of three debates that will help define the course of the United States for the next four years. The outcome of this debate will determine the future of the war and the success or failure of Kerry’s plan for America.

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A Poet of the Guitar; A Poet Indeed

by Jesús Arturo Ávila-Escamilla
Dateline Staff Writer

Many of us have heard flamenco music; others have listened to it, but very few of us have actually experienced it. You hear it in the background at classy parties or in cheesy love films, but how often do any of us actually stop and tune into it? With hectic class and work schedules, it becomes a bit difficult to actually “stop and smell the roses.” However, a handful of people got to do so Thursday evening, September 30 as Francesc de Paula Soler, also known as el poeta de la guitarra (the poet of the guitar), blessed the University of Houston-Downtown with the sounds of his guitar in the Robertson Auditorium.

Soler was born in Barcelona, Spain and began his musical studies on the piano at the age of five. When he turned eleven, he moved on to what poet, Federico García Lorca calls “un polífemo de oro” (a Golden Polyphemus) or just simply “la guitarra” (the guitar). He studied under some big names like Andrés Segovia and Narisco Yepes in his later years. Over the period of his illustrious musical career, he has received several honors and awards in the U.S. and as well as abroad. He has also worked with publishers such as Mel Bay and recorded collections of works.

Soler’s Thursday night performance was a real treat for any admirer of fine classical or flamenco music. Soler’s guitar recital didn’t just consist of flamenco strictly from Spain. Throughout the first part of his recital, he presented a wide array of flamenco styles composed by various Latin-American artists, ranging from Manuel M. Ponce (Mexico) to Eliseo Grenete (Cuba) to Ernesto Nazareth (Brazil). Soler demonstrated his command of all the musical pieces without taking
Editorial

Edgar Fuentes
Editor & Chief

Hurricanes slam the Florida coast. Earthquakes rock California. Mount St. Helens is rumbling once again. Could this be some terrible omen that President Bush will be reelected? Should we take this as a sign that the gods are angry at us? You know, it doesn’t really matter.

Recently, Duyen Nguyen, a good friend of mine put things into perspective. What she did was nothing out of the ordinary, really. But what is amazing is that she did it despite being a college student with just enough money to pay for her gas and cell phone bills. She managed to gather some of her money to help the many Floridians who were affected by the recent string of powerful hurricanes. As we may recall, first it was Hurricane Charlie, then came Hurricanes Frances, Ivan and finally Jeanne, slamming against the so-called “Sunshine State.”

While I do not intend to undermine her actions, I would perhaps suggest that others generous Americans who are hoping to contribute also consider the thousands of people beyond the United States, particularly in the Caribbean, where receiving help is a matter of life or death. According to the Red Cross website, at least 2,400 people were killed in Haiti after Hurricane Jeanne hit just last month, making it one of the deadliest storms in history. Americans may have the privilege of constructing storm-resistant homes, yet the majority of people in Haiti and the Dominican Republic as well as other island nations which were affected do not have the economic resources to do so.

Ironically, without knowing that Duyen was contributing money to the Red Cross relief fund, I was on my own computer reading a Native American website, seriously considering donating money to help thousands of needy American Indian Children and families all across the country. I don’t think her story was a “guilt trip” to get me to do something kind, but I have certainly started saving money to make a “Quick Gift” of $25, the lowest amount available to choose from at Indians.org. That means no Starbucks for me; there are more important things on which to spend my money.

What each of us should do is donate to a cause we believe in; whether it be the American Cancer Society, Amnesty International, Greenpeace, PETA or any other local organization like the Salvation Army. Pardon the clichés, but we should remember that there is someone out there that needs the help more than we do; so while some complain about how jeans from the GAP make our asses look flat, others are thankful to be alive.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Dateline,

I’m a tutor at UHD’s Writing Center and while there are students who don’t find our service valuable (“They didn’t agree, come see for yourself).”

However, it seems as if UHD’s Administration thinks that Writing Center tutors offer a significantly worthwhile and valuable educational resource (if you disagree, come see for yourself).

Please remind your student workers that they should receive their first pay check not next Friday 9/17/04, but the next pay day 10/01/04. I know it seems like a long time, but their work days officially began 9/1/04 and since there were only 4 days in that pay period, it did not seem efficient to do a time sheet for that week. When the new time sheets come out, please include past hours worked on that time sheet to get them up to date...

Wow. So that’s what the paychecks of the little worker bees have come down to: efficiency. Well, it wasn’t very efficient for me, especially when that extra bit of income could have been efficiently used for gas and some damn food. It seems as if administration also thinks that it’s efficient for students to pay late fees on their monthly bills. I was under the impression that our bill collectors want their money on time just like any other bill collector. I’m pretty sure if the situation were reversed and administration was skipping a check, they’d pull the strings to get paid on time. Another tutor researched the legality of this “let-me-just-pay-you-when-I-think-it’s-worth-my-time” issue and found that in Texas, workers must be paid at least once a month, unless you work for a government, state or public institution, (and then some, according to TWC). In our case, we’re funded by the state, so you know what that means. This is just another case of the state enforcing its law on everyone except itself. It’s damn hypocritical and UHD’s administration blatantly took advantage of some of its student workers through this schtick.

I guess this is the degree of BS (not Bachelor of Science) that I have to get used to if I want a career in education, huh. Or maybe I should just go into business! ‘Cause knowing the way I feel, if all those UHD Administrative Big Wigs were workin’ for me, they’ll surely be paid on time. Or not. ‘Cause the BS rolls downhill, now doesn’t it. Eventually, I will get paid. Too bad it will be at the convenience of the administration and the inconvenience of my bank account.

Sincerely,

Abby Mice
Writing Center Tutor

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“Win a Green Card!”

Dateline Staff Writer

Reality television has brought another controversial show to the masses with the inception of “Gana la Verde,” a Spanish-language reality television series that first aired this past July. The show is broadcasted five times a week on Houston’s Channel 6, which is one of several small Spanish-language channels that are airing it. Other stations airing the show are located in the Los Angeles, San Diego, and Dallas areas. Translated into English it literally means “Win the Green”, but to its contestants the value of the prize at stake surpasses that of any amount of money, as it is a year’s worth of free legal help toward their green card or visa cases from a prestigious law firm.

Gana la Verde is almost a Spanish-language clone of NBC’s “Fear Factor” complete with its own Joe Rogan look-alike, George X. Each episode pits six Latinos against each other in three stunts. The first round, which knocks off two of the original six, involves a daredevilish Fear Factor-type stunt, such as to trying to lasso a longhorn. The remaining four contestants are led to the “Gana la Verde” Restaurant, where they are served “food” that even knights and maidens and all kinds of medieval folk can be found selling their wares, entertaining, or just milling about on the cobblestone walkways.

Nevertheless, according to the show’s producers, hundreds of people are already on a waiting list to stuff their faces full of live worms and be dragged by horses running at breakneck speeds all for the sake of trying to better their lives.

“Ren Fest Time!”

Dateline Staff Writer

The Thirtieth Annual Texas Renaissance Festival is here again starting October 2 through November 14 from 9 a.m. till dusk each Saturday and Sunday. It will be held on the grounds 6.5 miles south of Texas Highway 105 on FM 1774 between Magnolia and Plantersville, 45 miles northwest of Houston.

This year’s Texas Renaissance Festival theme, The Quest, celebrates the thirtieth year anniversary of the country’s most acclaimed renaissance festival. Go back in time through an authentically recreated 53-acre British village right out of the sixteenth century where knights and maidens and all kinds of medieval folk can be found selling human-powered rides. The grounds are beautifully landscaped with lush gardens and 21 stages upon which over 200 performances take place daily. Visitors get a chance to experience the thunder of pounding hooves during the “Joust to the Death” tournament and enjoy the melodies of Cast in Bronze from the new Cloister Stage.

Dusk brings about the Royal Fireworks show that takes place over the festival’s lake. Camping spaces are available for $5 and the parking is all free! The Texas Renaissance Festival is guaranteed to be a great time for anyone who decides to go.

Tickets purchased for the first weekend of October 2nd and 3rd are only $11 for adults and $6 for children aged 5-12. Children 4 and under are free. At the entrance of the festival’s lake. Camping spaces are available for $5 and the parking is all free! The Texas Renaissance Festival is guaranteed to be a great time for anyone who decides to go.

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Tech Watch

Augmented Reality Invades PDAs

The Handheld Augmented Reality Project at the Vienna University of Technology has developed “The Invisible Train” for Pocket-PC. When the user points their camera equipped Pocket-PC at a specially marked wooden train track, the program digitally adds virtual trains to the video in the proper place on the track. Multiple users can connect to each other to control these virtual trains. It is hoped that such programs can one day be used to create new virtual worlds for game players as well as provide help for the disabled.

First Electric Sports Car

Venturi is set to produce the World’s First Electric Sports Car. First presented at the 2004 Paris Motor Show, the Fétish will feature a top speed of 105 MPH and an acceleration of 0 to 60 MPH in 5 seconds. On a full charge, the Fétish can last for up to 218 Miles. The car will go on sale in Tokyo in November 2004 and in Los Angeles in January 2004 at the hefty price of $665,010.

Life Imitating Star Trek: Hypospray

The FDA has approved a new needle-less injection system developed by M.I.T. and Israel’s Ben-Gurion University. The device, known as the SonoPrep, can currently be used to inject a local anesthetic into the skin. Future versions will be able to inject medicine directly into the vein much like Star Trek’s Hypospray.
Smoke Them Out

The tobacco industry targets many young people, which leads to have vast amounts of college students who smoke on a daily basis, whether it is for leisure, a stress relief mechanism, or simply a bad habit. Smoking puts everyone at risk to develop serious health problems, regardless if the person is a smoker or not. Therefore, second-hand smoke is spread throughout the air for other non-smoking students to inhale. Second-hand smoke is that the smoke is exhaled from the smoker and given off by the burning cigarette.

There are several diseases that a person is at risk of obtaining by exposure of second-hand smoke, including lung cancer, heart disease, asthma. Maladies such as reduced lung function, bronchitis, middle ear infections, pneumonia, croup, and sore throats are also possible. Some of these diseases are fatal. Research shows that exposure to second-hand smoke from 8 to 20 minutes may cause reactions related to stroke. Oxygen is decreased and heart rate increases due the limitation of vessels that cause high blood pressure, which make it difficult for the heart to function normally. Smoking is a habit that is hard to give up. But it is also unjust to put non-smoking students at high risk to develop serious health problems.

Recently the government is working on a case against the U.S. tobacco industry for misleading the public. The government is demanding $280 billion for the wrongdoings of the industry. According to the government, the tobacco industry has misled people into thinking that there was no health risk caused by smoking. Yahoo news has quoted Attorney General John Ashcroft as saying, “We look forward to presenting the evidence supporting our case in court, and achieving relief, including the recapture of wrongfully obtained proceeds from the sale of cigarettes and preventing cigarette manufactures from marketing to young people in the this country.” He also believes that the fight against the industry is fair because it will help reduce unethical activity.

The tobacco industry argues that it is not fraud what they have been doing for so many years. They take into consideration that perhaps smoking has caused several health problems in the past but it did not amount to fraud. US attorney William Ohlemeyer states that Fraud is when someone has “a specific intention to mislead you or take money from you by deceiving you.”


Dr. K sees the World part III

Reading Japanese - NOT

Waiting in the clearly marked section for Green Car passengers (most everything in Japan is clearly marked. You go, Japan!), I discovered I was parched. Getting a drink required figuring out the nearby vending machine. Clearly my week’s study had not prepared me for the task at hand.

Oh, I had learned Japanese words for the major beverages alright – water (mizu), tea (cha), wine (wain). But I had learned them in the English alphabet (romaji), not the more commonly-used Japanese characters (kanji). Of course, all the machine’s contents were in kanji, but there were pictures and a few English words used as brand names. I picked “Aquarius,” thinking it was water (silly me). I simply could not make myself try the drink called “Pokari Sweat.” I knew it wasn’t sweat, but it was crystal clear (no pun originally intended), “Aquarius” was not water. It was a Japanese version of “Gatorade.” Apparently that “Sweat” drink, which I still haven’t tried, is in the same category.

Volunteer Opportunity

The Gulf Coast International Dragon Boat Regatta is currently seeking individuals and groups of all ages to volunteer for 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. shifts on October 23 and 24, 2004. Areas in need of assistance include race assistance, registration, children’s activities, arts and crafts, clean up, festival setup and hospitality.

For the past four years, the elaborately decorated 40-foot boats from all over the world have furiously raced toward victory on Pasadena Lake. This year, the fanfare will expand into Clear Lake Park next to NASA with festivities lasting from 11 am to 4 pm each day.

UHD organizations seeking to accumulate community service hours can take advantage of this opportunity and have fun doing it.

To sign up for the event or to get more information, contact Yolanda Anthony (days) at 713-780-8358 or Annabelle Ruch (evenings) at 832-771-7661. You can also visit their website at www.houstondragonboat.com.
The Danger of Identity Theft

by Lena Dahu
Dateline Staff Writer

Imagine your credit card bill said that you just spent $5,000 on a vacation getaway that you never got away to. What if you learned that you had insufficient funds because some anonymous thief wiped out your bank account? What if you heard that someone in Montana is currently using your name and social security number to write fraudulent checks? Think it can’t happen to you? Think again. Consumers and retailers lose billions every year to identity thieves.

As an employee of Wal-Mart, I see it happen all the time. At least once everyday, I receive a call from a credit card company that has a member whose credit card has been stolen. The credit card is typically used in my store to purchase hundreds of dollars worth of merchandise. When the fraudulent activity is finally detected, I have to go through the agonizing process of searching for the specific receipt that recorded to the purchase and fax it to the credit company so that they can resolve the matter. My agony is not nearly as great as that of the victim. The crime will show up on their credit report, and then they have to go through the process of canceling all credit cards, closing all bank accounts, and proceeding to practically establish a whole new identity for themselves. According to statistics from MSNBC.com, only 1 in 700 identity theft cases is solved.

However, there are some simple steps that you can take to prevent – or at least lower the likelihood of – identity theft:

* First of all, always shred all financial receipts and credit card papers. These small receipts have all the information that thieves need in order to use your name to do their Christmas shopping.
* Second of all, always check your bank statements every month for any signs of fraud or misuse, or for any purchases made that are clearly not yours.
* Periodically check your credit report, maybe twice a year, to make sure that there is no record of delinquent accounts on you’re the report that was not caused by you. Also, make sure that all the credit accounts that are listed on the reports are actually yours.
* Never give out your social security or bank account number via telephone or email. Many thieves catch their prey this way.

Should you ever become the victim of identity theft, here are a few steps you should take to resolve the matter:

* First of all, contact the three major credit card bureaus: Experian, Equifax and Trans Union, to alert them of fraud and tell them that your credit card was stolen. This will help them alert you as well as other credit bureaus of any accounts that might have been opened under your name.
* Obtain affidavits of identity thefts and send them to all the banks and credit card companies that have unauthorized accounts opened in your name.
* Close all those accounts, stop payments on the unauthorized checks, and put a hold on your social security number. Finally, file a complaint with the FTC and the Department of Justice.

Your best bet to protecting yourself is to be certain that your credit card, bank account and social security numbers are always well hidden. Always research websites online to make sure they have security features that make it hard for hackers to obtain your numbers. UHD’s student e-services, for example, uses Veri-Sign, which secures your private information. For information on identity theft and credit card fraud go to www.consumer.gov or www.usdoj.gov

Starbucks Comes To UHD

by Stacy Martin
Dateline Staff Writer

The old adage “Build It and They Will Come” rings true because after three years of discussions with UHD President Max Castillo, UHD students, faculty and staff have finally gotten what they wished for – a Starbucks coffeehouse. Starbucks officially opened on September 27, 2004 and it is conveniently located on the immediate right hand side of the entrance to the cafeteria, which is on the Academic Building’s third floor.

UHD’s Starbucks will carry the same variety of coffees and other beverages that all Starbucks coffeehouses carry. In addition, our Starbucks will soon be offering a lunch menu consisting of sandwiches, fruit cups and salads. And since UHD’s Starbucks is a licensing store, not a corporate store, the prices may be lower than expected.

The construction, training and hiring of Starbucks employees began after President Max Castillo met with Howard Schultz, director of retail operations and marketing of the Starbucks Corporation during the summer session and the two men negotiated a contract that sealed the deal for a Starbucks coffeehouse to be built on campus. President Castillo credits the students for driving the issue to completion. “You guys [UHD students, faculty and staff] were the reason that Mr. Shultz and I opened a Starbucks at UHD. It took three years, but we finally got Starbucks built at UHD,” he said.

Our new Starbucks is run by eight friendly associates and their shift leader, Tanisha Anderson. They open the store at 7 a.m. Monday through Friday and close at 8 p.m. everyday except Friday, when they close at 5 p.m. They are also open Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.
Indian Paintings on the Walls of MFAH

by Briana Pedraza
Dateline Staff Writer

The Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH) will welcome a former Smithsonian exhibit beginning October 10. The unique collection is a display of several paintings and other pieces that relate to Native American Plains Indians, done by American painter George Catlin. Catlin, a former lawyer, acted on his curiosity for the Plains tribes and created a collection of paintings through his visits with 50 tribes in the Western Territory. The first ever American artist to explore this way of life, Catlin’s goal was to illustrate the behavior and traditions of Indian.

The collection, titled George Catlin’s Indian Gallery, promises a natural glimpse into nineteenth century Indian living and the inventiveness of the people. The Indian relationship with nature and the fascinating social structure of the society are also significant issues that Catlin confronts in his collection. Another idea held by the painter was the fear that Indian culture could one day vanish. This served as the driving force behind Catlin’s move to document such an intriguing culture.

With Catlin’s many motivations and causes for representing these Indians there are also a few noteworthy gender issues present in his collection. One instance is the fact that many of the compilation’s portraits are of male Indians, suggesting their superior role in the tribes. In fact, many of the artist’s subjects are dominant tribal leaders and warriors and few women are seen in the collected works. While portraits are significant in the collection, Catlin also provides a glance at the charming Indian surroundings and the natural beauty of the land. Ironically, Catlin even noted which tribes he thought to be less ruined by American influence.

Coincidentally, the grand opening ceremony of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. took place on September 21, 2004. Speaking against the backdrop of the U.S. Capitol, W. Richard West, Jr., director of the museum spoke to a crowd of over 20,000 people, mostly American Indians, explaining that the museum “insists that Native communities and cultures are very much alive, if often challenged by hard circumstances, throughout the hemisphere.”

The MFAH will open the Catlin exhibit on October 10, 2004 and run through January 17, 2005. Students with a valid ID can experience Catlin’s collection for $3.50 and admission is free to visitors on Thursdays. Visit the MFAH website for hours and admissions schedule at www.mfah.org.
responded by agreeing unreservedly with the President, and cited his own military combat service as the experience that had led him to this conviction – he’s been there, he related; he knows what “hard work” war is from the perspective of the men and women on the ground. Bush’s own military service with the Texas National Guard, the record of which has been the subject of recent controversy, did not come up.

One of the most revealing exchanges came in response to Bush’s defense of his belief that 9/11 changed the way America should look at the world, and that preemptive war on Iraq was unavoidable and necessary to prevent another attack. Bush’s conviction afforded Kerry the opportunity to counter by reminding the President that the 9/11 Commission had confirmed that Saddam Hussein and Iraq had played no role in the September 11 terrorist attacks. Senator Kerry further accused the President that by invading Iraq, he had diverted America’s resources away from the real enemies in the war on terror, Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. While Bush accused him of waffling, Kerry reiterated his belief that Saddam Hussein was, indeed, a threat to peace and that the world is better off without him, but qualified this by maintaining that the threat Hussein posed to America was by no means imminent, and that the rush to war had been unnecessary and wasteful.

Another point went to Kerry when he reminded Bush that even the President’s father was, during his own term in office, keenly aware that a long-term ground war in Iraq carried with it the very likely danger of American troops becoming bogged down for years, which is why he didn’t send military personnel deeper into rural Iraq. This predicted outcome of war with Iraq, avowed the Senator, had become a reality for America, the result of “colossal errors of judgment” by the President. He went on to say that he had a plan by which he would see all troops gone from the country within four years. When Bush repeated his played-out accusation of inconsistency surrounding his opposing Senate votes on Iraq, Kerry responded by acknowledging that his own mistake had involved “the way I spoke about the war,” but Bush’s mistake had been to actually start the war. “Which is worse?” asked Kerry, hands spread. It was a powerful and defining moment for a candidate who has had difficulty defining the basic differences between himself and the incumbent.

The next presidential debate between Kerry and Bush will take place on Friday, October 8 from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. Its topic will be the economy and all that entails. Stay tuned.