Sophia Simmons' larger than life headbands.....pg 6

In this issue
News ................................................................. pg 3
College Life ......................................................... pg 5
Arts and Entertainment ........................................ pg 7
Opinions .............................................................. pg 11
From the editor’s desk

by Quintin Coleman

I’ve always wondered why do people make such a big deal about culture.

I don’t intend to be dismissive of people appreciating their own culture(s) as it is a great thing for people to be proud of what they are. For the longest time, unless you fit into what mainstream society deemed as “normal” (the definition of which is changing almost by the day), you were seen as an outsider, or at the very least viewed differently compared to the “normals.” Now, we’re pretty much at the point, though we still have a little progress to make in that regard, where people can be who they want to be without judgement.

Social media fuels the idea of being yourself even further by being able to communicate with like-minded people in a simultaneous effort of being supported in being what you want to be and reinforcing the norms of a given culture. This is all well and good until people start to internalize the traits of a particular culture as if it’s a requirement to be part of that culture.

To my knowledge, there are two types of cultures: cultures you’re born in and cultures that you choose to be in. Cultures of both varieties have been championed as ways to express what you are as a person. However, culture doesn’t really make who you are as a person.

One of the issues with culture as it’s currently conceived is that a person’s personality and culture are seen to be inextricably linked. This view of culture manifests itself into many different areas, including studies of specific cultures themselves that boil down to mostly looking at the stereotypical behaviors and tendencies of a culture. Though this can be a useful tool to get a broad understanding of someone who belongs to a different culture (as long as that desire to understand a culture doesn’t come from a bad place), it isn’t a complete picture of who someone is.

Something that inspired me to have an issue about culture was the idea of breaking down the conceptions behind particular cultures, as well as understanding the people who are part of said culture. For example, UHD’s eSports organization had their first video game tournament on campus. As a gamer myself, it is pretty amazing to see something that was relegated to the nerdiest of nerds for the longest time become mainstream to the point where hardcore gamers don’t have to hide their interest in competitive gaming. UHD Fandom celebrated women in nerd culture, a culture that has been predominantly male up until recently. There was also a film festival hosted on campus that focused on only international films, one of which was about a woman who works to conquer her fears despite the trauma that she’s dealt with.

Aside from a prime and not that subtle opportunity to go over what’s in the current issue of the paper, I used some of those examples to show that what you are on the outside doesn’t dictate who you are on the inside. It’s far too easy to get wrapped up in thinking that you have to be something because you’re a part of a certain culture. However, that’s far from the truth. We’re in a time and place where we can be just about whoever we want to be. It’s okay to be part of a culture and even celebrate it when you can, but we should also work toward not being constrained by whatever limitations are placed upon us by a given culture and focus on being who we truly are, regardless of what others within that culture may say.

Quentin Coleman is a graduate student at UHD in the Master’s of Rhetoric and Composition (MARC) program. His ultimate goal is to teach writing at the college level. When he’s not tutoring at a community college part-time or doing homework, he’s deciding on whether he should spend a little too much money at Target on houseware items, what books to put on his new bookshelves, and how to best arrange his video game collection.

Submission policy

Dateline: Downtown welcomes submissions to the editor from any member of the UH system. Submissions should include the author’s full name, phone number or email address, and affiliation with the University, including classification and major. Writers’ Guidelines are available on the UHD/dateline webpage. Anonymous submissions will not be published.

Email submissions to editordatlinedowntown@gmail.com. Letters to the Editor and reader submissions may be edited for space, content, spelling, grammar and malicious, vulgar, or hateful statements. Submissions must be the original work of the writer and must be signed. All submissions become property of Dateline: Downtown and will not be returned.

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Contact us
April 2

The Gator SUPPORT Group event is organized by student counseling services. Every Tuesday for the month of April between the hours of 1 p.m. and 2 p.m., students can learn how to strengthen their relationships by learning how to connect with others and identify communication patterns. It will be held room S445 of the One Main Building.

April 3

‘Coffee Chats with Coach Cooper’ is a new event organized by the Career Development Center. He will be helping the UHD student community with career questions every Wednesday. The sessions are held between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. and are easy to join. Simply download the Zoom application on your device and join meeting ID 713-221-8980.

The UHD Gators Baseball Club travels to Austin to face the Houston Tillotson University Rams. The game begins at 4 p.m.

April 6

At 9 a.m. the UHD Men’s Soccer Club plays Prairie View A&M. The game will be in the southwest side of town at Bayland Park #L-2.

The UHD woman’s volleyball team will be playing in their home turf while competing in the Houston Club Sports Conference Playoffs. Come show them some support at 10 a.m. Location: UHD Student Life Center.

Come out to Finnigan Park to support the UHD’s Men’s Baseball Team. Today’s games will be against Lone Star College Cy-Fair. The first game begins at 2 p.m. followed by another at 5 p.m.

April 8

The 12th annual Gender Conference is coming courtesy of UHD College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In case you do not attend the conference, make sure you stop by to check out the art work submitted. It will be on display between April 3 and 18.

April 9

Room N420 is where the UHD SGA has organized a meet and greet with candidates for upcoming elections. The event is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

April 10

The UHD baseball team will travel to Marshall, Texas and compete against the Wiley College Wildcats. The game begins at 4 p.m.

The Health and Fitness workshop ‘Best Foot Forward’ will start at 2 p.m. in room N602. This interactive workshop is focused on addressing and preventing the most common types of foot pain. The event ends at 3 p.m. and requires registration.

April 12

The Student Life Center is offering two workshops this day. The first is a rape aggression defense workshop. The event begins at 9 a.m. and lasts until 12 p.m. It is free but requires registration.

April 16

The American Red Cross CPR/First Aid Certification begins at 9 a.m. The event ends at 1:30 p.m and costs $25. Registration is required. It will be at the Student Life Center.

The Gator Bowl Paint Party will be kicking off at 1 p.m. and will last two hours. The Student Life Center encourages students to come out and relieve some stress while helping Houston’s hungry. The party is for UHD students, faculty, and staff members. Participants will help create a unique bowl that will be donated to the Houston Food Bank for a June charity event. The painting will take place at the coffee house. Please remember that all of UHD health and fitness workshops require registration. Please find forms at the Sports and Fitness office or on-line at www.uhd.edu/sportsandfitness

April 22

Qualified health and fitness instructors will be hosting a Drug Jeopardy workshop in N602. You must register in the office of Sports & Fitness or on-line at www.uhd.edu/sportsandfitness

The event will last one hour and begins at 12 p.m.
eSports has strong turnout for first tournament

By Christina Loos

On March 7, UHD eSports held its first video game tournament and broadcasted it over Twitch, a popular streaming site. The game was “Super Smash Bros. Ultimate” and the tournament was the result of a coordinated effort between Fandom UHD and UHD eSports. During roll call, the eSports Center was packed with over fifty participants whose enthusiastic chatter filled the air. This enthusiasm lasted late into the night.

“Super Smash Bros. Ultimate” is a fighting game with a roster of characters from different Nintendo properties and several games made by other developers. Like any good fighting game, each character has a unique skill set.

After “Smash Ultimate” was released on December 7, 2018, it quickly became the third best-selling game on the Nintendo Switch console.

Amaris Sanchez, one of the tournament organizers and a student who works in the eSports Center, said that part of the reason “Smash Ultimate” was chosen was because of its popularity. She noted that during her time working in the eSports Center, she encountered a lot of students coming in to play “Smash Ultimate.”

Richard Rodriguez, one of the students involved in UHD eSports, echoed this sentiment. He explained that another reason it was chosen was because the game was easy to access. Since the game was released last year, many people could get their hands on it.

The rules of the tournament were simple. Each set consisted of two players for a best-of-three games, except for the top four players whose sets were best-of-five. The sets were commented on by a group of students whose infectious enthusiasm, informative play-by-plays, and friendly banter made the tournament even more enjoyable.

The tournament proceeded smoothly for the most part besides a minor technical issue that meant the commentators had to share a single microphone and some competitors not showing up.

The tournament ended around 9:45 p.m. with Golli (@beef___testosterone) coming out victorious.

“This group of people in the tournament, they go against other like-minded people at the university they didn’t even know existed and they all become friends,” he explained.

Christina Loos is a Technical Communication major and an English minor. She is passionate about social justice, horror, writing, and learning about other cultures. In her free time, she enjoys listening to 80s goth rock and new wave, writing and reading, and watching other people play video games because she isn’t very good at them.

Cardi B delivers great performance at rodeo

By Naomi Cardwell

Cardi B performed at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo on March 1, 2019 to a record-breaking crowd of 75,580.

Cardi B is a Grammy award winning artist; her career started off as an Internet celebrity after her videos on Vine and Instagram went viral. She got an opportunity to be on Love & Hip Hop: New York. This was just the beginning of her music career boost when she went on to create music with other talented artists such as Bruno Mars, 21 Savage, SZA, Chance the Rapper, Kehlani and of course, Offset, who is the father of her child, Kulture.

Cardi B wore an outfit designed by Bryan Hearns. He posted an image of Cardi B wearing it and described the outfit as, “My Selena ranchero cowgirl dreams came true.” This outfit was an amazing pink and blue cowgirl outfit which included a bejeweled hat, bra, jacket, chaps, and boots. She embraced the spirit of the Rodeo and performed her songs with a Texas sized love.

Cardi B stated that “The purpose of the Rodeo is to make money and to collect it to give scholarships out” and that “Whether being a doctor, a lawyer or being a F**king stripper you are going to need some education.” Not many people could say it like this and get the response that she did. However, Cardi B is admired for her candor, her truth and her boldness.

It seemed as if Cardi B truly connected with the large audience when she took a break and said “I want to thank my fans, because of you guys I won a Grammy. Because of you guys I get a chance to give my daughter the life I’ve always wanted to give her.”

Cardi B stated in her thank you post on Instagram that, “I’m OD honored for all the love Houston gave me! I remember the first time I came to Houston, I came out here to strip and people showed me maaaannn love and Houston was the first place me and set went on a date.” This is the type of love and energy Cardi B brought to the stage when performing.

The singer closed the night with singing one of her biggest hits, “Bodak Yellow.” Once she was backstage, Cardi B received a proclamation from the City of Houston that declared March 1 is now officially Cardi B Day. The proclamation stated that Cardi B “unequivocally expressed her support by mobilizing action into host the Hurricane Harvey Relief Drive on September, 16, 17.” The proclamation also stated that due to her show at the Rodeo the “Proceeds from her performance will impact the Houston Livestock Show and equate to more than $50 million dollars.”

The proclamation was issued by Mayor Sylvester Turner and ended with, “The City of Houston commends and appreciates Cardi B for her compassion during a historic disaster and dedicated services to the community, as her many contributions are greatly appreciated by the many lives she has impacted through her music and philanthropy.”

Naomi Cardwell is a Technical Communication major. Her career interests are in social media and mass communications. She believes in the city of Houston and wants to use her degree to help Houstonians be better informed. In her free time she loves being with family, friends and binge watching above average television.
The history and purpose of Lent

By Janet Salas

In the Christian church, Lent refers to a period of penitential Easter preparation. The period lasts for 40 days during which the Christians are expected to fast. In Western Churches, Lent begins six and half weeks prior to Easter on Ash Wednesday. The primary purpose of Lent is usually to allow Christians to fast and pray in imitation of Jesus Christ’s forty days wilderness fasting experience before he began his public ministries. As opposed to the Western Churches, the Eastern Churches begin Lent on Monday of the seventh week prior to Easter and ends nine days before Easter on a Friday.

Since Apostolic times, Christians have observed a period of fasting and preparation for the Easter Festival. However, the period was never formalized until the “First Council of Nicæa” in 325 CE. Notably, the preparation period was majorly known for being the time for penance for sinners and preparation of candidates for baptism. Like they are in the Eastern Churches today, fasting rules in the early centuries were strict. Butter, eggs, fish, meat were forbidden, and the Christians are taking part in the practice were only allowed one meal a day in the evening. In addition, the Eastern churches restricted the use of dairy products, oil, and wine. Over the years, the Western Churches has seen the relaxation of the strict Lenten rules. Notably, the two events that the churches still put a lot of emphasis on include Good Friday and Ash Wednesday.

Lent was started to mark a period for preparation for the Easter Festival. Even though the Eastern and Western Churches have different periods for Lent, the purpose was the same—preparing for the Easter Festival through fasting. Usually, it was the time for penance for sinners and preparation for candidates for baptism.

Throughout Catholic history, Lent was usually marked with three important practices—almsgiving, fasting and praying. Today, Christians do not only give up something, but they also seek to add something during this occasion; they either reach out to help those in need or address personal habits they feel they need to work on. Notably, the two are considered optional practices since the Church does not mandate Christians to do something extra beyond abstinence and fasting. In short, during Lent, the Church only requires Christians to abstain and fast.

During Lent, Catholics, among other Christians, are mandated by the Church to give up on various pleasures including social media, alcohol and sweets. The main reason for giving up these commodities is to allow Christians to demonstrate some levels of simplicity and foster a sense of self-control. Notably, many individuals choose whatever they want or prefer giving up on. In most cases, they give up on the things they enjoy the most. For example, if an individual’s favorite dish is fish, they can choose to give up on it during Lent.

While there are no universal rules regarding what to eat and that which is prohibited, most Christians usually avoid chocolates, cakes, cookies, soda, luxury foods, cream or ice-cream, and alcohol. On Fridays no meat is allowed to be eaten either.

In the Western Churches, Easter Sunday is dedicated to the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. During the period of Lent, Christians have observed a period of fasting and preparation for the Easter Festival. For the Western Churches has seen the relaxation of the strict Lenten rules. Notably, the two events that the churches still put a lot of emphasis on include Good Friday and Ash Wednesday.

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Fandom celebrates women in nerd culture

By Kelsi Rios

In celebration of Women’s History Month, Fandom hosted an event displaying some of the world’s most famous voice actors, such as Jennifer Hale and Tara Strong, and even an all female manga company’s named Clamp. They also acknowledged women in comics, manga, anime, and the video game characters themselves.

“All women are being celebrated here at our event today. It doesn’t matter what their backgrounds are or exactly what they do. Each one of them is as important as the other,” explained Alicia Ipina, the president of Fandom.

During the event, they sold hot dogs and popcorn that the students could enjoy during the double feature film, “Alien” starring Sigourney Weaver and “Mean Girls” with Lindsey Lohan. Fandom even had a free raffle to win great prizes. Ipina wanted the faculty, students, and Fandom members to know how much she appreciated all the help to organize the event. She also wanted to mention that their next event, Anime Fest, will be on April 15th from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and to follow them on Facebook and Instagram @FandomUHD.
Sophia Simmons’ larger than life headbands

By Lissette Perez

Self-expression can often be one of the most difficult things for people to be comfortable with. For many of us, the opinions of others may stop us from putting on that eccentric outfit or getting that bold hairstyle, but for UHD student Sophia Simmons, it is the bold and the eccentric that excites her the most. She adores all things unconventional and everything and anything that sets people apart from one another. Her strong connection with her own unmatched style is not only what makes her so unique, but also what keeps her motivated.

Simmons is a senior majoring in corporate communication and there is not one day that goes by where she is without one of her signature headbands. Simmons is so deeply fond of her headbands that she describes them as her morning coffee, meaning she could not go about her day without them. She can either be at work, in class, or at the store and she will always have a plethora of flowers and ornaments adorning her hair. Simmons takes pride in owning her personality and she does that through the use of her dozens of headbands that her and her mother create. Her exuberant hairbands are colorful and bright and are meant to catch the eyes of any passerby, giving them a shock at the pop of color.

Simmons started her headband journey quite a while before she entered college. In fact, she started her journey when she was in middle school. When Simmons was asked about what sparked her interest in headbands she said, “I saw this lady on TV with a very vibrant headband on and I just thought to myself ‘why don’t I do that?’ so I brought it to my mom’s attention and asked if she could make it, and she said to me, ‘I’ll try’.” So, her mother tried it and that is how she her first headband was created. After that, they both began wearing headbands and could not see themselves without them. Simmons not only wears them, she also sells headbands alongside her mother.

Simmons and her mom try to keep their eyes open to appealing to different communities when selling headbands, but she admits that it can be difficult to cater to the general public since the style of headbands is different than anything anyone has ever seen. They sell their unique headbands at flea markets and other market centers where they show off their items and hope to attract buyers with a refreshing sense of style.

Simmons has a variety of headbands for any season and holiday. She has a purple and green Mardi Gras headband with a mini masquerade mask on it, an Easter one decorated with baby chicks, a Halloween one with glittery jack-o lanterns, and a wintery Christmas one with Christmas presents and mistletoes. She also has headbands made with some of her favorite singers in mind, such as Prince and Lady Gaga. Simmons’ favorite headband, however, is one with a variety of roses packed together, ranging from soft pink, hot pink, to bold yellows and oranges, finished with little pops of white Baby’s Breath. The headband once belonged to her grandmother; it was made for a Dia de los Muertos party. Her ideal headband would “touch the sky if possible, it would definitely make a statement” much like her other ones.

It is important to Simmons not to lose the vision that motivated her to start wearing her headbands in the first place. Her headbands have changed her view on life, “they make me feel like I’m my own person. They help me show people that I’m not going to change just because they want me to.” Furthermore, Simmons closes with a piece of advice she has for those struggling with freely expressing themselves is to “don’t ever second-guess yourself… roll with the punches, don’t let anybody’s comments or behaviors keep you from being who you are.”

Lissette Perez is a senior majoring in English-Creative writing. After graduation, she hopes to become an English teacher and continue writing. She has been a Staff Reporter for Dateline for two semesters and is also a Student Supervisor at UHD Sports & Fitness. During her free time, she enjoys drawing, playing video games, watching movies or documentaries, and reading comics.

Chili cook-off brings UHD together for good food

By Fabian Ramirez

Friday March 1 on the UHD South deck was the place to be if you were on campus, especially if you admire a good cup of chili. The temperature outside was comfortable, the downtown view was clear and there was good music playing. There was even a rowdy mechanical bull that seemed to be feeling the evening vibe. It was my first time attending a UHD Chili Cook-Off, so I took the time to walk around and get to know some of the UHD organizations that posted up a tent that day. I figured a good way to catch up with the history of the event and the sense of culture behind it would be by getting to know the some of the people that help make it happen.

2019 was a record-breaking year for the event. UHD’s Staff Council expressed to Dateline Downtown that the event’s momentum is increasing yearly.
College life

Female achievement

By Aansa Usmani

March—also known as Women’s History Month—celebrates women’s achievements throughout history and their contribution to society. Without some of the contributions made by these women, life could be different for most (or all) of us.

This piece chronicles the achievements of several interesting women and how they have helped modernize society through advancements in science, politics, and history. There are also modern women who have smashed the “glass ceiling” and have shown that regardless of gender (or age), women are as equal as men.

“Always stay true to yourself and never let what somebody else says distract you from your goals” - Michelle Obama

Marie Curie;

In 1898, she discovered the radioactive elements of Polonium—named after her native homeland of Poland—and Radium alongside her husband, Pierre Curie. The couple were later jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics, making Marie the first woman to attain such an achievement. Nearly a decade later, she received an additional Nobel Prize for Chemistry. This second award also made her the first woman to receive two awards in separate fields. Her contributions towards science have created medical breakthroughs in treating cancer, performing x-rays and surgical procedures.

Suffragettes:

Since the late 1800s, women, such as Susan B. Anthony have been advocating for equal suffrage and equal participation in government. This movement, later on dubbed the “Suffragette Movement”, was comprised of women who believed that, like their male counterparts, they should be allowed the right to vote. Often times, women were arrested and subjected to torture by being force fed and other heinous acts. In 1920, their dedication paid off when Congress enacted the Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote and advocate their political/communal voices.

“Nevertheless she persisted”- Mitch McConnell

Amelia Earhart:

After being captivated by an airplane at a State Fair, Earhart decided that she too would like to pursue such a career. At the time, women usually had domestic roles such as being a dutiful housewife and mother. She challenged those ideals and became a pilot at a young age of 25, making her the sixteenth woman to attain an aviation license. Her flights caught the attention of the media, flying solo across the Atlantic, reaching the South of Wales. Another trip caught the attention of the world, yet it is still unknown what had happened.

“Anastasia” stellar combo of music, costumes

By Aansa Usmani

Everyone knows that UHD’s faculty, staff, and students are passionate about art. It matters not if it comes in the form of music, paintings, sculptures, dance or theatre. The UHD family and Houstonians are convinced that artisans of every sort have roots in the Bayou City.

By Synneetra Williams

Just in case you missed it, “Anastasia: The New Broadway Musical”, was at The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts at 800 Bagby in the heart of the Theatre District during the first week in March. For those who enjoy musicals and get carried away when the orchestra plays and melodious voices fill the atmosphere, visit hobbycenter.org to sign up for the announcement list for this Broadway show season.

I had the opportunity to see this spectacle called “Anastasia.” If you crave mysteries, then this is the show for you. It is about a young Russian heiress who finds herself lost and unsure as to who she is. This dazzling show transports us from the twilight of the Russian Empire to the euphoria of Paris in the 1920s, as a brave young woman sets out to discover the mystery of her past. Pursued by a ruthless Soviet officer determined to silence her, Anya, played by Lila Coogan, enlists the aid of a dashing conman and a lovable ex-aristocrat. Together, they embark on an epic adventure to help her find home, love, and family. Meanwhile, her aging grandmother and aristocratic queen, has been searching for her granddaughter since she was a child. If she does not find Anastasia or Anya as she is also called, her evil, drunken nephew will take the throne. The queen’s stress level continues to rise as she receives letters from young women all over the world claiming to be her precious, long-lost granddaughter. When Anya finally makes it back home, she chooses the man she loves over the throne even though she disappoints her grandmother gravely.

The score will move anyone to tears. The costumes, set, and colors were breathtaking. “Anastasia” is directed by Darko Tresnjak, the music is by Stephen Flaherty, and lyrics are by Lynn Ahrens. Whether a show is at our O’Kane Theatre or The Hobby Center matters not. The arts give Houstonians one more reason to be proud of the Bayou City and all its eclectic and cultural entertainment.

Synneetra A. Williams is a native New Englander and now a Houston resident who read the dictionary for pleasure while growing up. With Gator Pride, she is a candidate for the Master of Science in Technical Communication at The University of Houston-Downtown. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Professional Writing at UHD, and an Associate of Applied Science, AAS, in Digital Communications with a graphic design specialization at Houston Community College. As a graduate writing tutor at the Writing & Reading Center at UHD, she is passionate about teaching. She is convinced that when you educate others, you give a special gift that keeps giving throughout generations.
When life goes from right to left

By Syneetra Williams

Do you remember your senior year in high school? Many young, vibrant teenagers are preparing for their senior proms, various activities, graduation, and then college. Life for anyone at this stage is exciting. It is great to be a teenager as you embark upon adulthood. The world is your oyster, and now, you are about to take the driver’s seat. All is well; what could go wrong?

At age 17, life for Houston native, Alton G. Cooper took an abrupt left-turn when he had an unexplained stroke during his senior year. As a result, the entire right side of his face was paralyzed along with the right side of his body temporarily. He asked: “What went wrong? Why me? Why now?” He pondered these questions as he attempted to pick up the pieces, restart, and graduate.

In 1999, his hero, king, best friend, and the head of the family, his father, Alton Cooper, passed away. Three years later in 2002, out of nowhere, a second stroke ensued. How could this happen to a man in the prime of his life? Just blinking his eye sent excruciating pains throughout his entire body. “I couldn’t cry if I wanted,” said Cooper. The healing process took more than a year. For him, his life was marginalized by a stroke: his body is never the same after two strokes. Your perspective on life changes forever” said Cooper.

For Cooper, his family and friends were his backbones that brought him to a healing place after the first episode. Now, with the loss of his father and a second stroke, life was almost too painful to bear.

Although unlikely, it happened again. At the age of 43, he developed an aneurysm and had another stroke that nearly razed his body and life because it was worse than its predecessors. It brought him to his knees on Father’s Day June 17, 2007. As he laid on his apartment floor, unable to move or to call for help, he cried out to God. “Lord, are you going to let me lay here and die after you brought me this far?” At that moment, emergency personnel entered his place and rushed him to Methodist Hospital and into surgery.

For more than three months, he slept in a hospital bed. The road back to lucidity and wholeness was grueling. “I was in ICU for at least four weeks,” said Cooper. His 6’2” healthy, muscular frame started to look emaciated. “I weighed 210, and my weight dropped to 167 pounds dramatically, and then it increased to 187 slowly.” His doctor did not expect him to live because of the severity of the stroke.

“His physician said that he was not going to make it and crossed him off,” said Janise, one of Cooper’s beloved sisters. “This incident was so bad that he was non-responsive. He could not open his eyes, move, or walk but he could hear. I whispered in his ear and told him what the doctor said. It was as if

the ‘Cooper mentality’ and determination took over in his mind and spirit; he started responding with finger gestures, eye blinks, then he started writing. His ability to speak clearly returned slowly.”

“I had my third stroke because a blood vessel in my brain ruptured,” said Cooper. According to the Mayo Clinic, an aneurysm is ballooning at a weak spot in an artery wall. An aneurysm’s walls can be thin enough to burst. The third stroke relegated him left-neglected with a clutched hand which means that the entire left side of his body was inoperable, and his hand was virtually useless. “I experienced rage because I couldn’t pick up two pounds. My temper had reached its peak” said Cooper. “I had no control over my bodily functions. Many times, I felt helpless because I didn’t know if I would ever walk without assistance or speak in my natural cadence.”

“My journey began when my

Continued on page 12

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**“Amelie” a foreign film that tells human story**

By Joshua Williams

Sometimes, I wonder what it would be like to be part of a decent “culture.”

Culture’s Latin root is colere – to grow, to nurture, to tend to something. Perhaps a plant, or a child, or a languid yet furious disappointment with the non-existent “Ways” people follow – in any case, one develops something, moving it from a germinal, mundane state to a mature, more impressive one.

American “culture” doesn’t really have that aspect, though. Culture means, rather, in my first sentence, to most as a set of habits that are largely unchanging – the customs of a group.

For example, “Americans” are supposed to be like hamburgers (unless they are vegetarians), movies (unless they are Amish), fast cars (unless they are Texan), and replace it with something simpler, perhaps Scientology, which would, hopefully, replace the uneasy mental sensation of being trapped in a barren belief system with the actual physical horror of being trapped in an isolated compound with fanatics. That’s the core of the ongoing zombie apocalypse obsession – to strip this problematic cultural construct away and replace it with something simpler, where good and evil would be more easily detectable. Good luck with that one, morons. That reminds me – I need to learn how to skin a deer. No reason.

**Why Greenland is looking attractive these days**

By Mike Duncan

By Joshua Williams

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I grudgingly admit, then, that there is an “American culture.” Maybe the democracy, when it works, excuses some parts. But the powerful gravitational pull that it exerts reminds me of my willful helplessness every time I find myself eating BBQ despite liking pigs or buying tons of plastic products when I want to recycle, or when I vote for the slightly less evil. No nugget independence, no guts to walk away from Ome- las, or better yet, to take the painful risks to reform the perpetual broken system – which is always the fault of people, not the rules.

Perhaps UHD will open a branch campus in Greenland and I can just transfer. Surely Thule needs a rhetorician. I could take the two things I unquestionably enjoy, my job and my family, and transplant them to an icy exile – my three-year-old does like “Frozen” an awful lot – where we can nurture a different kind of culture. Dog sledding, ice fishing, seal hunting. We can let it go… no, we have the Internet there, too. Nope.

Perhaps the moon is available.
Strange but true by Samantha Weaver

It was 20th-century American author and futurist Robert Anton Wilson who made the following sage observation: “Only the madman is absolutely sure.”

Lightning isn’t solely a phenomenon of Earth: Astronomers have noted lightning bolts on Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Venus.

Historians say that Russia’s Peter the Great was nearly 7 feet tall.

Athletes playing baseball on steroids have been in the news in recent years, but drugs are nothing new in America’s national sport. During the late 1960s and ’70s, Dock Ellis was a valued pitcher who played for several teams, including the Pittsburgh Pirates. On June 12, 1970, Ellis took LSD, thinking it was an off day for his team. By the time he realized that the Pirates were scheduled to play the San Diego Padres that evening, it was too late. The drug proved to have no ill effect on Ellis; in fact, he pitched a no-hitter. When he recounted the event to a reporter 12 years later, he said he remembered only bits and pieces of the game, though he felt euphoric. Many years later, after being treated for addiction, Ellis became a coordinator for an anti-drug program in California.

A woman in Tennessee was once arrested for biking while intoxicated—and she was on a stationary bike at the gym at the time.

A newspaper reporter once asked Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French Forces during World War II and later president of the French Fifth Republic, if he was happy. De Gaulle replied, “What do you take me for, an idiot?”

Thought for the Day: “Before you become a writer, you must first become a reader. Every hour spent reading is an hour spent learning how to write.” — Robert Macfarlane
This month’s edition of Insightful Awareness focuses on Multiple Personality Disorder—now known as Dissociative Identity Disorder—a disorder in which one has two or more distinctive personalities. According to “Psychology Today”, the reason for its name change was to better understand the condition and how it affects one’s imagination, “rather than by a proliferation or growth of separate personalities.” This disorder does not have proper statistics, as there are no current observations or scientific inquiries into this, yet it is speculated that around one percent of the population suffers from this.

According to “The Healthy Place”; there are attributing factors that can create potential in developing this disorder. Although these factors are not scientifically proven, an expert on this matter inserted her personal experiences into her disorder’s development.

Factors: (Source: The Healthy Place)

• Denial - When one is experiencing something uncommon to them or to their peers, they begin denying it and believing that whatever is occurring (whether it be physically or emotionally) is not, rather it is a figment of one’s imagination.

• Trauma - Traumatic stress can cause this through trying to cope through difficult situations in which one had not been exposed to previously.

• Age - In early childhood, a person’s personality is forming forming, yet if something as repetitive as trauma occurs, dissociation may develop physically affecting their brain and enveloping its way into one’s psyche.

• Sensitivity - Those with a lower tolerance for sensitive matters may envelop more traumatic stress or have a harder time dealing with difficult matters.

• Comfort - Through one’s self-diagnosis, it can be both comforting and an impediment when dealing with negative situations.

Besides these factors, other stressors/circumstances can develop an alteration to one’s personality; the “developed” identities stemming from trauma can either deny, be critical, or have conflicts with the other personalities engrained in one’s cerebral cortex. The DSM-5 has created criteria that must be demonstrated in order to be diagnosed with DID. These requirements have made it easier to detect DID in an individual along with recognizing the symptoms. Symptoms that cause significant distress or distraught in an individual, affecting them socially, or other cerebral functions is a predominant sign of DID. Alongside distress, an individual who experiences more than two distinctive personalities (personalities such as having different views on topics, or differences in perceptions, relations, etc) is also a harbinger of DID; when an individual is experiencing another identity, it is common for them to have frequent lapses of memory associated with other identities. These lapses can include forgetting people, places, events, or other significant recollection information (this is not to be confused with the typical “I forget”).

A common treatment option for this disorder is long-term psychotherapy. This intends to deconstruct the multiple “personalities” and create one personality for an individual. Although there is no set medication to treat this disorder, antidepressants or tranquilizers may be prescribed to control the dissociative symptoms. The proper treatment attained can help individuals in both their personal and career lives.

If you or someone you know needs to talk to someone regarding mental health issues confidentially, here are some useful phone numbers to call/text:
Suicide Hotline: 1-800-784-8433
Depression Hotline: 1-630-482-9696
Grief Support: 1-650-321-5272

Aunsa Usmani is a first-year college student attending the University of Houston-Downtown. She is a Political Science major with plans to run for political office. She identifies herself as a social justice warrior, advocating for women, LGBTQ, immigration, and other liberal causes. Alongside politics, her passions include photography, writing, and debate. Although relatively young, she has demonstrated literate competency, writing about topics ranging from mental health to current events.

An ode to fly tape
When the seasons wane, and the temperature turns Unwelcomed visitors appear in my home. Despite their consistency of arrival, I have yet to learn how They slide under doors and squeeze past window cases. Diptera will spring forth from drains for the core of a Pome, A swarm of iridescent bodies vibrating loudly on my shoe laces. I suppress my primal urges, my desire to rampage; A fly swatter erect in my hand while I yell and scream. Hot feet pounding through a succession of rooms A scene funny to envision, but for my heart I must engage Methods of elimination which are hung from a beam Casting long abstract shadows like a carnivorous bloom. An ode to fly tape. The Diptera intruders land unquestioningly, Never contemplating the fatality of the gummy surface. Celluloid window stripes entrapping the culprit indefinitely. In the past each fly thought movement was a guarantee. Tacky rolls of yellow paper, a simple column on a lace. They assume they will be released the same way they landed, freely.

An ode to fly tape, a proclamation that I agree sounds silly to decree. Such a simple invention deserves our collective affections. Believe me. I wish all could see the importance of such ingenuity. It is the pinnacle of modern creations! This invention should be celebrated yearly with libations, And fireworks for all to see, at least, that would please me.

Amanda Howard is a recent graduate of UHD earning a bachelor’s degree of Natural Science with a minor in Biology. She currently teaches garden education to high school students with the Texas A&M Argilife 4H program and works in the campus student food market. Her passions include: organic food production, sustainable living and tackling food waste. When Amanda is not obsessing over perfecting her compost methods she can be found quilting, illustrating and writing either poetry, or short stories.

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Columns

Insightful Awareness

By Aunsa Usmani

As a mental health advocate, my mission is to educate others on mental disorders, helping to remove the stigma surrounding those suffering from these issues. The more we educate ourselves on these issues, the more likely we will be able to understand those suffering from them. DISCLAIMER: I am not a licensed psychologist, the facts and figures are from the internet. If there are any serious concerns, please visit your local therapist.

This month’s edition of Insightful Awareness focuses on Multiple Personality Disorder—now known as Dissociative Identity Disorder—a disorder in which one has two or more distinctive personalities. According to “Psychology Today”, the reason for its name change was to better understand the condition and how it affects one’s identity, “rather than by a proliferation or growth of separate personalities.” This disorder does not have proper statistics, as there are no current observations or scientific inquiries into this, yet it is speculated that around one percent of the population suffers from this.

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When life goes left con't from page 8

doctor told me that my ability to walk unassisted was between God and me. Since I was home from the hospital, I started doing menial tasks to strengthen my arms, legs, and hands such as house cleaning, raking the yard, and sweeping. My concern was the ability to get from point A to B.” During this time, Cooper’s significant other and caregiver introduced him to painting by giving him paint brushes, and she insisted that he create something. “I took art classes through Memorial Hermann TIRR initiative,” said Cooper. “I became inspired my things around me, and I painted for therapy and pleasure. I chewed large wads of bubble gum to rehabilitate my speech impediment. My hand remained clutched for six months. There is a six to nine-month window to get and remain active, or the damage from a stroke can be permanent. I never gave up because I wanted to use both hands equally to create vivid abstract paintings freely.”

In 2017, after watching the news reports on ubiquitous political villainy and violent crimes perpetrated against society’s most vulnerable, his emotional state led him to a creative mode. He picked up a palette knife, and acrylic paints in primary, secondary, and tertiary colors. Cooper conceived, crafted, and ultimately gave birth to his opus Chaos. “She is so named because she came out of a dark and a violent place yet created with love and passion for life,” said Cooper. “My emotional state at the time is now displayed on the glass for the world to behold. She is my birth-child.” Chaos was laid on glass, framed in gold-metal, and her dimensions are 34 X 58 X 1. Wherever she is, her splendor exudes the room, and she captivates her viewers in perpetuity.

When he is not traveling and working on commissioned special projects, Cooper can be seen on Facebook and YouTube creating one-of-a-kind abstract designs on canvas, wood, metal, and glass. As he progressed from stroke victim to stroke victorious, so have his compositions. He believes his world is one big canvas just waiting to come to life, paint stroke by paint stroke. “Every time I open my eyes, art is all around me. My paintings are my children, they are a one-of-a-kind” said Cooper. “There are no duplicates; each piece stands alone.”

Through determination and self-therapy, Cooper became whole again. “I survived three strokes and three brain surgeries, and yet I thrive.” He advises those who face insurmountable circumstances to “Never give up!”

Female achievement con’t from page 7

to Earhart; she wanted to be the first woman to fly all around the globe. Her flight began in Miami and after taking a brief stop in Papau New Guinea, she flew toward Howard Island, yet never arrived. It is assumed that she may have crashed somewhere near there, but to this day her plane and body have never been recovered.

Rosa Parks:

In the late 1950s, Rosa Parks helped initiate a peaceful boycott, later leading to a desegregation of society. After a long of work, she sat down in the segregated section of the bus, hoping to reach home and unwind. When the bus driver demanded that she give up her seat to a white man, she refused. The police were called and she was arrested for violating a city’s ordinance of segregation. This action led to a boycott of buses from the African American community, demonstrating that they were fed up with the Jim Crow Laws. This effect led on to a desegregation of buses—and later on—a desegregation of society.

“Well-behaved women rarely make history”. - Unknown

To conclude this piece, here is a motivation quote hoping to inspire other female individuals to continue pursuing higher education and become the person destined for success:

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