

DATeline

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University kicks off Black History Month on South Deck

BY SHAHERYAR KHAN

UHD is an institution rich in culture and diversity. February is nationally recognized as Black History Month. On Feb. 1, the South Deck was once again lively this semester, as the Student Government Association hosted UHD's Black History Month Kick-Off Event called "We Stand With You."

Greek life at UHD got the crowd pumped as they graced the audience with their remarkable dances. The historically African American fraternities and sororities present were Phi Beta Sigma and Alpha Kappa Alpha from UHD, Sigma Gamma Rho from the University of Houston, and Iota Phi Theta from

Texas Southern University. The event continued with some poetry readings from TSU student and Iota Phi President Mark Stanley and UHD student and SGA Community Outreach Officer Sydney Castro.

Stanley recited an original poem titled "Black Blood vs White Tears," highlighting the racial injustices that have troubled the U.S. for years. The TSU guest showed emphasis in his poem by pausing at the end of each stanza and stating, "I am sorry, I am out of breath," a gesture in remembrance of George Floyd, a Black man murdered in Minneapolis, by white police officer Derek Chauvin.

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Gator community and special guests pose for a photo on the South Deck on Feb. 1, as the "We Stand With You" event concludes. Credit: Shaheryar Khan

UHD CAB creates inclusive celebration of love and friendship



L-R: Edwin Mendez, CAB Director Adriel Ayala, and Co-Director of Marketing Vanessa Balleza hand Gators flowers and gifts. Credit: Shaheryar Khan

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

Campus Activities Board tabled in the Student Activities lounge to commemorate companionship on Valentine's Day.

The event titled "Palentine's Day" offered Gators a station to make bracelets, cards, and goodie bags for their pals.

CAB Director of Arts and Culture Adriel Ayala explained his push to spotlight friendships in the event's name.

Valentine's Day "carries a romantic connotation" that makes "a lot of people uncomfortable and self-conscious."

Ayala explained that the day often makes people

too aware of their single status.

"It shouldn't be single awareness day because you're not alone," Ayala said. "You always have someone to fall back on."

The theme of the event creates a parallel with the 2021 General Social Survey. Americans are less likely than ever to have sex, partner up, or get married.

Furthermore, Ayala's Mexican cultural heritage also inspired him to name the event with a title inclusive of platonic relationships. For example, Latin Americans refer to Feb. 14 as "Dia del Amor y la Amistad" to celebrate both

love and friendship.

"Friends and family are there to have your back," he said. "It's a day to recognize them and acknowledge that blessing."

The event also aimed to remind students to practice self-care and self-love, according to Co-Director of Marketing Vanessa Balleza.

"Give yourself some five minutes," Balleza said. "Take some time. Have some fun."

CAB President Pam Trevino wants Gators to stay tuned to upcoming events. Announcements will be made on @uhdcab on Instagram.

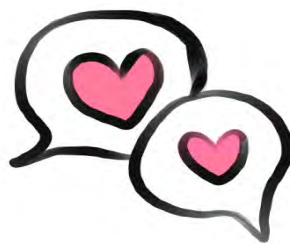


Credit: G. O.

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FIND US ONLINE!

Texas Rising draws attention to anti-LGBTQ laws, community action

BY ANITA GOOLCHARAN

UHD's chapter of Texas Rising hosted an event called Art + Laws on Feb. 3, presented by co-presidents Sydney Medina and Vijetha Sreerama.

The event highlighted Montrose Grace Place, a non-profit that helps homeless youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The speakers detailed how laws affect the LGBTQ community. Following the presentation, attendees painted art pieces that will be donated to Montrose Grace Place.

The presentation emphasized laws impacting the LGBTQ community. The 1964 Civil Rights Act, while a monumental win against workplace discrimination, exaggerated the need for other civil rights the LGBTQ community needs, such as protections against housing discrimination.

Some states have created laws extending civil rights

to the LGBTQ community, but Texas fails to protect the community with its lack of laws.

They also discussed Texas House Bill 25, which requires transgender student-athletes to be assigned to the team of their gender at birth. This bill can be harmful as it can perpetuate false narratives about the transgender community.

"No Promo Homo Laws" were also discussed. "No Promo Homo Laws" are a term given to laws that have an anti-LGBTQ agenda, according to activists.

These state laws vary in each state, however, the underlying meaning is to prohibit or limit the discussion of LGBTQ education. These laws are often associated with health and sexual education classes, but they can be applied to any subject in the curriculum.

These laws originated during the AIDS epidemic in conservative states to prohib-

it education of the LGBTQ lifestyle in a positive light.

According to Section 85.007 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, materials for educational programs for children younger than 18 must state that "homosexual conduct is not an acceptable lifestyle."

Texas law requires course materials related to sexual education to emphasize that "homosexuality is not a lifestyle acceptable to the general public."

Texas Rising helped raise awareness of the pressing issues faced by the LGBTQ community in Texas.

"We can make change here and better lives here, which is why we decided to partner with Montrose Grace Place this semester," Medina stated.

Sreerama stated, "Come help make a difference in your community," emphasizing that Texas Rising is trying to be as action-oriented as they can be in the current



Texas Rising's co-presidents Vijetha Sreerama (left) and Sydney Medina (right) present their artwork. Credit: Anita Goolcharan

climate. Texas Rising will volunteer to organize closets at Montrose Grace Place on Feb. 19, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Donations of clothes and black hair care products are appreciated.

UHD Texas Rising is currently looking for social media and communications officers.



SGA President Michelle Duvall (left) speaks with Lora King (center) and Roshawn Evans (right). Credit: Shaheryar Khan

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Following Stanley, Castro performed a spoken piece titled "The Big Blue Wolves," her rendition of Charles Perrault's "Little Red Riding Hood."

In her piece, Castro highlighted the tragic incidents that took the lives of a 25-year-old man from Brunswick, Georgia, and a

26-year-old medical worker from Louisville, Kentucky, Breonna Taylor.

"It has been 690 days since Breonna Taylor was murdered for sleeping in her own home," Casto reminded the people in attendance. "Unfortunately, the three killers have yet to be brought to justice."

UHD President Loren Blanchard continued the

Black History Month kick-off event

event by introducing the esteemed guests present, such as former UHD alumna Nissi Hamilton, philanthropist fighting racial justice, Roshawn Evans, and daughter of Rodney King, the man who was a victim of police brutality in 1991, Lora King.

"Although it might be a grey gloomy day, they will shine a light through the sky," Blanchard said referring to the guest speakers.

Vida Robertson, director of the Center for Critical Race Studies at UHD, delivered a powerful speech to the crowd that left many in awe. He quoted many prominent individuals of African American history, such as Carter G. Woodson, Malcolm X, Ta-Nehisi Coates, and Martin Luther King Jr.

"As African Americans and Americans of every persuasion, we are indebted to those 20 or so Africans who changed the course of the world," Robertson said. "Our lives are inextricably bound to one another. Both the enslaved and the slave masters are linked by the uniquely

American creed of equality."

The event was not over, as the next speaker was the returning Nissi Hamilton, an advocate for raising awareness on human trafficking.

"Human trafficking is the second slavery," Hamilton proclaimed as she gave examples in the media on how they manipulate the actuality of the situation of human trafficking.

Hamilton also shed light on how Black History Month is in February, the shortest month.

"It is so short because champions do not cut corners," the human trafficking advocate expressed.

The event ended with a question-and-answer segment with SGA President Michelle Duvall speaking with Lora King and Roshawn Evans. King spoke on her experience as a child when her father, Rodney King, was brutally beaten by police officers in Los Angeles. Evans shared his perspective on racial injustice and touched on the social work his nonprofit does for the community.

The beginning of Black History Month was a success, and the Gator community enjoyed more events after. Here are some thoughts from people who attended the event.

"There is so much power in knowledge," Chloe Butler, representative of Alpha Kappa Alpha said. "When we all are aware of that, we continue to spread such information. Everyone becomes aware of our journey."

TSU student Mark Stanley highlighted that "law-makers across the country are writing laws that seek not only to halt the teaching of critical race theory but also erase our history."

"It was refreshing to have a chance to be a part of something that had a main purpose of amplifying Black voices," he added.

Stanley continued the topic of how many states, including Texas, have made efforts to remove critical race theory from many curriculums.

NEDA educates on eating disorders

BY KARINA RODARTE

Eating disorders are types of psychological eating conditions that lead to unhealthy eating habits for an individual. They can start as obsessions with body aesthetic, weight, or food itself. As more revealing styles like low-rise jeans and crop tops/bustier tops come back into style, more people are growing more self-critical with their body image.

The National Eating Disorder Association marks Feb. 21 through Feb. 27 as National Eating Disorder Awareness Week.

NEDAwareness Week seeks to educate the general public about the realities and dangers of eating disorders, provide support to those affected by eating disorders, and prevent serious harm by teaching parents and individ-

uals about the warning signs of an eating disorder.

Binge eating disorder is the most common eating disorder in the U.S. It is characterized by eating quickly to the point of fullness and discomfort. Another symptom is eating an entire meal when one is not hungry and feeling too embarrassed to eat large amounts of food in front of strangers.

Anorexia nervosa is a fatal eating disorder characterized by extreme calorie restriction, intense fear of weight gain, and moderate to severe body dysmorphia. People with anorexia normally experience thinning hair, absent menstruation, hair growing all over their body, and ritualistic eating patterns. Another concern is the new “pro-ana” groups on social media that promote anorexia.

Parents may want to consider disabling the word and all related words from kids’ social media searches.

Another common eating disorder is bulimia nervosa. It is characterized by unhealthy behaviors after a binge including self-induced vomiting, laxative use, fasting, and excessive exercise. Some signs include eating in secret, using the bathroom immediately after eating, and teeth or gum damage from self-induced vomiting.

If you or a loved one need help with an eating disorder, the NEDA has live seminars, virtual support groups, and online forums available for free. You can reach the NEDA helpline at 800-931-2237 or text NEDA at 741741.



Affect 28% of Americans



Affect mostly women, 66% female



Kill someone every 52 minutes



Credit: Edward Saenz

THE DATELINE

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The Dateline is the official student newspaper of the University of Houston-Downtown. Since its first issue in 1982, The Dateline is proud to be “Student Run since Volume One.” We strive to meet the needs of a growing university as well as the growing metropolitan city that surrounds us.

Submission Policy

The Dateline staff consists of students from UHD who complete all tasks required to produce the newspaper, which serves all UHD campuses. The opinions and commentaries expressed within reflect the views of the contributing writers. No opinions expressed in The Dateline reflect the viewpoints of UHD, its administration, or students.

The Dateline reserves the right to edit or modify submissions for the sake of clarity, content, grammar, or space limitations. All submissions become property of The Dateline and may not be returned. All paid writers must be currently enrolled students at UHD. All paid writers must also complete vendor registration with the University of Houston System prior to contributing. Press releases, story ideas, news tips and suggestions are always welcomed. We encourage all students to contribute.

Always hiring!

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No experience required



Texas primary elections set for March 1

BY MONICA GOMEZ

Primary elections are a way to indicate voter preferences for their party’s candidate. During these primary races, candidates from political parties run to be on the ticket for the general election.

Notably, the Democratic and Republican nominees are big contenders for the general election. It’s an important aspect because the candidates who win their party’s primary election will represent them in the general election for which Texans are voting. These positions for the Texas primaries include district-based, congressional and judicial seats; legislative offices and the State Board of Education.

With this upcoming primary, it is the first time that the new political districts are playing a role in an election cycle. The new re-

districting maps were issued on Oct. 25, 2021. To find your new districting, check The Texas Tribune website. Early voting for the upcoming primary is from Feb. 14 to Feb. 25, and Election Day is on March 1.

The last day to apply for a ballot by mail is Feb. 18. Applications for mail-in ballots must be received, not postmarked to your county, by Feb. 18. It can also be submitted by fax or email, but Texans still need to submit the hard copy within four business days. Applications can also be downloaded through The Texas Tribune website.

For mail-in ballots, the deadline is on March 1 at your local county and must be postmarked by 7 p.m. and received by 5 p.m. on March 3. If you are voting in person, you can go on VoteTexas.org. The site includes a link called “My

Voter Portal,” so one can check local polling locations. Hours may vary for early voting, but for Election Day, the hours are from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. statewide.

Voting in person requires you to bring one of seven acceptable forms of photo identification listed on Vote Texas. Polling locations are also offering curbside voting, if you are physically unable to enter the polling location. More information can be obtained in the “Voters with Disabilities” section on Vote Texas.

To learn more information on the candidates running, Gators can check The Texas Tribute and Vote 411 websites. The most anticipated positions are for the U.S. House, governor, attorney general, and State Senate. The primary runoff is on May 24, and the general election is on Nov. 8.



@the_dateline

WRC offers writing guidance, strengthens critical thinking skills



L-R: WRC Tutor, Jaida Doll helps student Shaheryar Khan understand punctuation. Credit: Edward Saenz

BY EDWARD SAENZ

On the ninth floor of the One Main Building is UHD's Writing and Reading Center, a tutoring facility open to all UHD students, staff, and faculty, free of charge. Even alumni of UHD are welcome. If you have any affiliation with UHD, you are more than welcome to the WRC. The best part, the tutoring center exclusively employs

current and former students.

An infographic on the landing page gives some interesting statistics on the WRC.

The program, on average, holds over 3,800 tutoring sessions each year. A survey concluded that 88% of students believed a WRC session "made them a better writer." Furthermore, 92% of the students who used the WRC

more than three times received a C+ or higher in their English classes.

Jaida Doll, a UHD graduate and WRC tutor, said that her favorite part of the WRC is the "connection we form with students and the difference we can make in their academic journey."

"Students often arrive at sessions feeling overwhelmed or confused with their professor's assignment, but our tutors are able to guide them to a place of understanding, give them a starting point, and ease some of that stress," Doll stated.

The WRC assists with everything from essays, creative writing, lab reports, scholarship letters, resumes, and cover letters. Whether needing help with brainstorming ideas for

a paper or just a second set of eyes to review a completed draft, the center welcomes students during any stage of the writing process.

Students also have the option of tutoring both in-person and online. The WRC has specialized in online tutoring for several years.

"Everyone can benefit from the WRC," Doll continued. "We are happy to help students of any major, at any level of writing, and at any step in the writerly process. A lot of students think that strong writers don't need tutoring, but WRC can benefit even the best of writers."

For students who would rather not interact with a tutor, the WRC has an asynchronous feature where students can upload their work and a tutor will go over

it and send annotated notes back. The N925 room also offers Math and Science tutoring.

The WRC is also an excellent place to study. The facility has a roomy computer lounge with desks and small office spaces for solo studying.

Reading chairs offer lounging and quiet reading. The center even has larger tables for group study sessions.

"It's probably one of the quietest study spaces on campus," Doll added. "We would love students to invade our space."

Tutoring Hours (Spring 2022)
Monday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Friday - Saturday
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

One Main Building- N925
for more info, or to schedule an appointment scan the QR code:

Credit: Edward Saenz

NABA facilitates career connections, seeks to fill positions

BY JORDYNN GODFREY

UHD's National Association of Black Accountants chapter is looking for enthusiastic business students to join the organization and is seeking applicants to fill leadership positions for fall 2022.

NABA is an organization that provides networking, internships, and job opportunities to business students and professionals. The national organization was founded in 1969, and UHD's chapter was chartered in July 2020.

UHD NABA chapter President Shamika Jefferson, who is part of the MBA program with concentrations in Accounting and Project Management, gave the Dateline more insight into how this chapter was chartered and what students can expect to gain from it.

After joining

NABA in 2019, Jefferson thought it was strange that UHD did not have its own chapter, considering how involved its students were in NABA.

"We were bringing a lot of numbers to conferences. We had 64 people come from UHD [to the Dallas conference in 2019], all races, and we don't have a chapter ourselves," Jefferson said. "I was like 'am I missing something? We have to have a chapter here.'"

Jefferson, along with current Vice President Patrick Wallace, former Vice Presidents Adrian Gonzalez and Jerald Robinson, and former Secretary Brandon Smith, pushed for the chartering of UHD's own NABA chapter. They were officially chartered in July 2020.

Less than a year after its inception, the UHD NABA chapter

was named Student Chapter of the Year by Houston's NABA chapter.

"Our award was mailed to the university, and we didn't know we won," Jefferson said. "It was a surprise, and we appreciate all the blessings that UHD NABA is receiving."

NABA's mission is to address the professional needs of its members and to build leaders that shape the future of the accounting and finance profession with an unfaltering commitment to inspire the same in their successors. Their motto is "Lifting as we Climb," which Jefferson is passionate about.

"We can't just keep on moving forward. We have to look back and help others too," she said. "When I succeed at one goal, I will make sure I reach out to help someone else so they

can do the same. I will continue to inspire and cheer for everyone because everyone deserves to accomplish anything they put their minds and hearts to."

Jefferson also wanted to make clear that NABA is not just for accounting students or just for Black people.

"We are for business students," Jefferson said. "It doesn't matter what major. We are for all business students."

UHD NABA alumni work for businesses and companies such as Deloitte, PwC, EY, KPMG, Chevron, Shell, JPMorgan, and many others.

After being asked what motivated her to join, Jefferson had former UHD Professor Alicia Yancy to thank.

"Dr. Yancy told me about NABA. She told us how great it was and always told everyone

about it in her accounting classes."

The UHD NABA chapter meets twice a month on Thursdays at 7 p.m. In these meetings, students can learn valuable information from guest speakers in the professional business field. Upcoming events include "Interview Questions 101" with guest speaker Terry Pierce on Feb. 24, "Business Etiquette" with guest speaker Kevin Wilkerson on March 24, and many others. To learn more about upcoming events, visit <https://uhd.campusgroups.com/naba/events/>.

To join the UHD NABA chapter, students should email Jefferson at naba.uhdpresident@gmail.com.

"We are looking for anyone interested in our open positions for fall 2022 [semester]," Jefferson said. "We are

encouraging student leaders to join now, so they can shadow the position."

The leadership positions available are vice president, treasurer, public relations and marketing, external relations chair, and internal relations chair.

FOLLOW



"Lifting As We Climb"



SCAN HERE

Biden signs order to criminalize sexual harrassment in military

BY TAYLOR ENOCHS

President Joe Biden signed an executive order on Jan. 26, making sexual harassment a criminal offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice to improve the military's response to domestic violence.

"This feels so unreal," Mayra Guillén tweeted following Biden's approval. "My little sister shed light on the epidemic of sexual misconduct in the military. You'll never be forgotten. I miss you so much. Hope you're proud."

The order, included in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, calls from the "I Am Vanessa Guillén Act."



A mural in Houston is dedicated to Vanessa Guillén. Courtesy: Monica Gomez

Houston Army Specialist Vanessa Guillén was reported missing from Fort Hood in April 2020. The remains of her body were found on June 30, 2020. After the discovery was made, Aaron Robinson was detained in relation to

her murder but escaped and killed himself before the police were able to arrest him.

Following the U.S. Army report on her disappearance, evidence reveals that officers at Fort Hood ignored her complaints of sexual

harassment leading up to her disappearance. After her death, 14 Army leaders were fired or suspended due to the lack of initiative of Guillén complaints. The Guillén family is relieved at the outcome. Sexual harassment

cases can now be processed and prosecuted under Article 92 of the UCMJ which deals with violations of orders and regulations. Moreover, sexual harassment cases can also be prosecuted under Article 93, protecting subordinates

from superiors. However, there is still a lot of room left for reformation.

"We have a real problem with victims getting access to basic information to documents, that their attorneys often need to get their case to trial," retired Air Force Colonel Don Christensen said. "It's very hard for victims to get a copy of their own statement that they provide to investigators, hard to get rape kit results, whether accused DNA was found, results of exams on their phones."

The nation is optimistic about the approval of the "I Am Vanessa Guillén Act" and looks forward to justice in sexual assault cases.

Justice Stephen Breyer steps down from Supreme Court

BY SERGIO PRESA JR

Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer announced he will step down at the end of the Supreme Court's current term. Breyer, who was appointed by President Bill Clinton, is one of the court's liberal justices and sat on the Supreme Court for more than 27 years. His retirement is going to allow President Biden to pick someone to fill his seat, which will also maintain the court's current split between liberal and conservative justices.

Breyer, 83, is the court's oldest justice. For months now, Breyer has been urged by liberal activists to step down before the midterm elections in November. The activists argued that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg sat on the court for too long and should have retired during the Obama administration. She stayed

on the court until she died from cancer at 87. Her passing allowed former President Donald Trump to fill her seat with Justice Amy Coney Barret, which gave the court a more conservative edge.

On the presidential campaign trail, Biden promised to nominate a Black woman to the Supreme Court. After the announcement of Breyer's retirement, there were calls for Biden to make good on his promise. One of the calls for Biden to fulfill his promise came from Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington.

"The court should reflect the diversity of our country, Murray said. "It is unacceptable that we have never in our nation's history had a Black woman sit on the Supreme Court of the United States. I want to change that."

Demand Justice, a progressive activist group, hired a truck

to drive around Washington last year with a sign that read: "Breyer retire. It's time for a Black woman Supreme Court justice."

Dick Durbin of Illinois, who is also the Senate Majority Whip expressed agreement with the calls for Biden to follow through on his promise. Durbin said

in a tweet that Biden has the chance to bring "diversity, experience and an evenhanded approach to the administration of justice."

Two likely Biden picks include Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, who was a former law clerk for Breyer, and Leondra Kruger, a California Supreme Court

justice. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced that Biden's pick for the court will "receive a prompt hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee."

Some Biden supporters are calling for more court seats to be added to balance the conservative lean on the court. Breyer, however,

said a move like that could undermine confidence in the court. He said advocates should "think long and hard before embodying those changes in law."



Credit:Teodoro Lamas

Another influencer launches misleading blue light skincare product

BY EDWARD SAENZ

TikTok star Addison Rae made headlines last week when she announced a new addition to her ITEM Beauty makeup line. Called Screen Break, the product is a mist spray that promises to help prevent blue light damage to the skin.

Blue light is the type of light given off by electronic devices, which has been found to have beneficial ef-

fects during the daylight hours, such as boosting attention and reaction time. However, these effects can be disruptive at night.

This announcement attracted unwanted attention from the gaming community of all places. In October 2021, popular YouTube video game streamer Rachell “Valkyrae” Hofstetter, received backlash when she released her product RFLCT, which also promised to protect the

skin against blue light.

The problem with both products is that makeup experts have found that no major correlation between blue light and skin damage exists. In May 2021, German-based skincare company Beiersdorf published its findings on blue light and its effects on the skin. Lead researcher Dr. Ludger Kolbe, chief scientist of photobiology, found that blue light had “negligible effect

on skin.”

“Through our research activities, we’ve managed to prove that the amount of artificial blue light emitted during conventional use of electronic devices is nowhere near enough to trigger harmful skin effects,” Kolbe explained.

“If you were to spend an entire week in front of a monitor uninterrupted at a distance of [12 inches] from the screen, this would be the same as just one

minute outside on a sunny summer day in Hamburg at midday.”

Rae’s product is launched through the makeup company Sephora. The company describes the product as clinically shown to “defend against blue light and skin pollution.” Given the parallels with Hofstetter’s product, it is expected that Screen Break will soon be removed from store shelves just like RFLCT.

Interestingly, scientific evidence says that while damage to the skin is not a major concern, blue light from screens is harmful to the human eyes, with many companies selling blue light-blocking glasses which have been shown to reduce eye fatigue and strain.

Three Houston police officers shot, suspect arrested

BY SERGIO PERSA JR

Three Houston police officers were shot near downtown Houston on Jan. 27. This led to a standoff with police that lasted for hours until the suspect was taken into custody.

Roland Caballero was identified as the shooter who opened fire on the officers. The standoff ended with Caballero getting a gunshot wound to the neck and ending up in police custody. The whole event started in the 1500 block of Tralee Street with officers responding to a disturbance call. When officers arrived on the scene, Caballero fled.

The suspect ended up crashing his car in Third Ward at the intersection of McGowen

Street and Hutchins Street. Immediately after the officers arrived, Caballero opened fire.

Police returned fire, but Caballero ended up carjacking a white Mercedes Benz at gunpoint. From there, he led the police on another chase and barricaded himself inside a home in the 1800 block of Lockwood Dr. where the standoff lasted until about 7 p.m. when Caballero was taken into custody. Officers Gadson, Hayden, and Alvarez, the three officers shot, were taken to Memorial Hermann hospital. The gunshot wounds were not life-threatening. One officer was shot in the arm, another in the foot, and another in the leg.

“I want everybody, all our leaders, no more excuses, everybody take an active role and get intentional and do whatever you can do to fight gun violence,” Houston Police Chief Troy Finner said during a press conference. “It’s not a difficult thing.”

This incident is the second shooting incident in that week involving law enforcement in the Houston area. The other incident involved Harris County Precinct 5 Constable Corporal Charles Galloway, who was shot and killed while he was conducting a traffic stop.

ERCOT launches dashboard to track live grid conditions

BY SERGIO PERSA JR

Texas’s power grid managing body, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas now has a dashboard that allows Texas residents to track current power grid conditions in real time.

According to ERCOT’s website, the dashboard has a timestamp, indicating when the information being displayed was last updated.

The information shown on the dashboard includes the grid’s current state, and the number of operating reserves at the time. In addition to that information, there is a color-coded meter on the dashboard as well.

There are several colors on the meter, such as green which means the grid is operating at normal conditions, yellow which means energy conservation is requested, and black which denotes the highest level of emergency operations, as well as other colors to show other conditions of the grid.

More information shown on the dashboard includes the power grid’s actual energy supply and the demand for energy supply. Hourly forecasts for supply and demand are also shown on this dashboard. This information is shown in real time as well. This set of data is also color-coded

using two colored lines and a shaded area. The purple line shows the grid’s committed capacity, the turquoise line shows the demand or amount of power used, and the purple shaded area shows the grid’s quick start capacity.

Quick start capacity is energy that can be provided from generators that come online within ten minutes of getting a notice from ERCOT.

Users interested in tracking current power grid conditions in real time should visit www.ercot.com/gridmktinfo/dashboards.

How to order COVID-19 at-home testing kits



- Order free tests at COVIDtests.gov
- Buy tests online or in pharmacies and retail stores (Walmart, CVS, Walgreens)
- Visit your local testing site/health department if you are not able to get a self-test when you need it

- Kits detect CURRENT INFECTIONS
- Kits DO NOT test for antibodies or previous infections



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

Reviews

Three inspiring films to watch during Black History Month

BY SASHA SMITH

February is a month of joy for those who are African American. This month, and every other, we celebrate Black heritage and culture, and reclaim the pain brought upon Black people throughout history.

There are a lot of films dedicated to African Americans that only broadcast pain and struggle as opposed to triumph and wins. This month, more than others, it is important to highlight the films that depict the inspiring stories of African Americans. Black history is more than just pain, it is also resilience. Here

are a few movie suggestions for Black History Month.

“Hidden Figures,” released in 2016, follows the true story of three African American women who worked at NASA as mathematicians. Katherine G. Johnson (Taraji P. Henson), Dorothy Vaughan (Octavia Spencer), and Mary Jackson (Janelle Monae) contributed scientific and technological breakthroughs to the space center.

This movie not only sheds light on the racial injustices faced by Black individuals, but does so in a manner that does not degrade their dignity. The core

themes outlined by the film are understanding, perspective, diversity, and respect. “Hidden Figures” focuses on those who have not had their story told to the fullest extent or have been glossed over.

“Hidden Figures” allows Black women to shine as bright as they were intended to and accurately portrays what can happen when one puts prejudice aside and believes in the power of women.

Beyoncé’s “Homecoming,” released in 2019, rocked the world as it revealed the intimate story of her 2018 Coachella performance, now nicknamed “Bey-

chella.” It also shows the diverse and cultural essence that was placed within the show.

The special behind-the-scenes footage gave viewers an understanding of the integrated Black history and composition she used to bring life to African American people and its culture. This documentary is a feel-good, performative watch, allowing more to be seen about the artist and the art. It gives a chance for Black culture to be recognized and unaltered. It is a love letter to African Americans and all we do.

“The Hate You Give,” released in 2019,

is a vital film for the Black Lives Matter movement. The story follows a 16-year-old girl named Staar Cater (Amandla Stenberg), who witnesses the shooting of her childhood best friend at the hands of a police officer. His death becomes monumental and his community wants justice for him.

This film not only is one that is so deeply in tune with the African American community but brings homage to those who have dealt with this exact situation. The film’s realistic portrayal and tackle on race, police brutality, and the Black Lives

Matter movement are phenomenal.

I would recommend this film and the book the movie is based on for anyone who wants to educate themselves on subjects that are prominent within the African American community. It is more suspenseful and emotional than the other films on this list, but it is an extraordinary watch.

These three films are a short list, but perhaps they will inspire audiences to seek out the many other films that pay homage to Black History. Happy watching!



Courtesy: Sarah Ramirez

Mitski’s ‘Laurel Hell’ album dreads idea of adulthood

BY YASMEEN AMMOURAH

The indie rock and alternative community was buzzing with excitement earlier this month with new album releases from artists Mitski, Animal Collective, and Black Country, New Road. However, Mitski’s “Laurel Hell” was the most anticipated and exciting release of the three due to her four-year hiatus.

At her last show in 2019, the Japanese American indie artist announced that she would indefinitely leave the industry after

almost an entire year of touring and working tirelessly. Later in 2021, she came back to the media through her management to promote the lead single, “Working for the Knife,” from her “Laurel Hell” album.

This album is one of the top albums of the year for me and is genuinely appalling on the end of the audience and seems as though this is a goodbye to her past self as a writer.

With extremely recognizable synths and ‘80s guitar riffs, Patrick Hyland produces an album that resonates to

an era of despair and growing up. Mitski’s lyrics reach a level of sadness that is relatable to the audience as it reflects societal standards of working to your highest capacity for something that you feel is killing you on the inside.

Opening with “Valentine, Texas” is by far one of the strongest openings that makes listeners feel extreme shivers right when the song hits the climax. This song brings the same energy as her previous album, “Be the Cowboy,” which gave a

stunning beat drop.

With songs like “There’s Nothing Left for You Here,” her reach for not feeling valuable to a specific being or object speaks in such high power due to the other moving on and experiencing that.

Overall, “Laurel Hell” feels like an album that dreads the idea of living like an adult in extremely uncomfortable conditions that make you feel like a child. Mitski’s music encapsulates her own experiences as an indie artist that elevated to high popularity and her

relationships that she felt she ruined.

With such powerful song writing, Mitski truly makes this album one of her best and cre-

ates a sense of uncertainty in love and in life with a poppy beat in a lot of songs.



Mitski’s “Laurel Hell” in vinyl form. Credit: Yasmeen Ammourah

Reviews

'The Tiger Rising' compares animal captivity to human struggles



Courtesy: IMDB

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

"The Tiger Rising" is a 2022 drama film. In the film, a boy finds a caged tiger in the dense woods behind the Florida motel where he lives. He also protects and befriends a classmate, learning valuable life lessons in the process.

"The Tiger Rising" was filmed in Georgia and was released on Jan. 21.

A 12-year-old boy Rob (Christian Convery) and his father Robert (Sam Trammell) move into the run-down motel where the father takes a job as a repair person. Robert is stuck

at this menial job with an abusive boss, Beauchamp (Dennis Quaid), and has no room for growth or advancement. Robert is despondent with grief, after the death of his wife, and does not pay much attention to Rob, who grieves for his mother, other than assigning daily chores.

At school, Rob meets a new classmate, Sistine (Madalen Mills), who recently moved from Philadelphia. He saves her from a group of aggressive, bullying classmates. Both bond over the loss of parents as Sistine's father had left her family. Rob brings Sistine to the tiger, which strengthens their bond.

"The Tiger Rising" is a film adaptation of the 2001 Newberry award winning children's book by Kate DiCamillo under the same title. DiCamillo is known for writing successful children's fiction and has had five

books adapted into films. The most notable being "Because of Winn-Dixie" in 2005, starring AnnaSophia Robb and Jeff Daniels.

This is a movie about bullying, friendship and grief. Rob, Sistine and Robert are all bullied throughout the film. They also have experienced loss in their lives. Bright spots in the film involve the friendship between Rob and Sistine. They bond by visiting the tiger, pondering what its life would be like out of captivity.

"The Tiger Rising" was adapted and directed by Ray Giarratana. This is his second feature film as director in 22 years. Giarratana is primarily known for his visual effects work in sci-fi and action films. In this film, his creative depiction of Rob Jr.'s daydreams through playful animated sequences feels like looking at a children's book. The director was

able to make a faithful adaptation of the story by DiCamillo.

"To have this team imagine my story the same way I imagined it is a really emotional experience." Dicamillo stated in a promotional video for the film from TheAvenue_Film on YouTube.

Queen Latifah and Dennis Quaid are the largest names in "The Tiger Rising." Latifah gets more screen time and anchors the film as Willie Mae and through her voice-over narration. Latifah's character is also a mentor for the children dispatching advice.

"Ain't nobody gonna rescue you, you got to rescue yourself," Willie Mae tells the kids.

She is the only adult in their lives who displays sensible behavior.

Contrastingly, Dennis Quaid has little screen time. When he does appear in the film,

Quaid embodies a slimy character. He is a physically and emotionally abusive boss to Robert. The man is so out of touch, he eventually asks Rob to take care of the tiger, giving him the keys to the cage for some "extra spending money."

Quaid accentuates the character in flannel with silver jewelry, dark sunglasses, and a holstered revolver on his hip. He drives a windowless bright red jeep. He also openly mocks Robert in the presence of Rob Jr.

"That worthless Daddy of yours? He ain't the boss, he ain't nobody's boss. I'm the boss."

The characters are all suffering in some way, yet they are brought together through the presence of an exotic animal. To them, the tiger represents strength and hope.

Houston Grand Opera makes Mozart's 'The Magic Flute' come alive

BY MICHAEL KOWIS

The Houston Grand Opera has just finished their run of "The Magic Flute," an opera composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Directed by Barrie Kosky and Suzanne Andrade. The production is a magical experience that hopefully returns to our city soon.

The show starts off thick in the action with Tamino (Norman Reinhardt) being chased by a dragon, when three ladies clad in black (Caitlyn Lynch, Sun-Ly Pierce, and Taylor Raven), defeat the dragon with their battle

cries. Tamino wakes up to the sounds and musings of a bird catcher Papageno (Thomas Glass), who tells Tamino that he slayed the dragon.

The three ladies tell Tamino that they saved him and take him to the Queen of the Night (Rainelle Krause), depicted here as a giant spider. The Queen of the Night tells Tamino that he can have her daughter Pamina (Andrea Carroll) if he can rescue her from the evil Sarastro (Anthony Robin Schneider).

The Queen gives Tamino the titular magical flute, here represented by an ani-

mated fairy. The pair journeys to Sarastro's temple and learns that the queen of the night has been plotting to plunge the entire world into "Nox Eternae," or eternal night, and Papageno, Tamino, and Pamina must go through three distinct trials to vanquish the Queen of the Night.

This performance was rendered in 1920s silent film style and much of what would have been spoken in German was projected and animated onto a screen behind the action. This change was enjoyable as opposed to the more traditional set and spoken-word styles

because it made everything very accessible.

While some may prefer listening to the spoken word alone, first-time goers who have little experience watching an opera, might find magical the spoken words paired

with riveting technically complex and astounding arias. The best piece having come from Krause's rendition of her Queen of the Night aria sung during the first half of the show.

This is a show worth running to, not

just walking to. It is a performance that anyone can fall in love with. From the grand arias to the breathtaking whimsical, and imaginative animated backgrounds, this performance has something for just about everyone.



Courtesy: Lynn Lane

Reviews

‘Jackass Forever’ introduces new cast, revives old stunts

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

Johnny Knoxville, Steve-O, Chris “Party Boy” Pontius, Preston Lacy, Dave England, Jason “Wee Man” Acuna, and “Danger Ehren” (Ehren McGeheey) all returned for the comedy stunt film “Jackass Forever.” However, the original group cannot continue to do this job forever, so they decided to bring in some funny new people.

The cast members that are introduced in “Jackass Forever” include Pro surfer “Poopies” (Sean McInerney), actor/rapper Jasper Dolphin, stand-up comedian Rachel Wolfson, and stunt performer Zach Holmes.

The newcomers mesh well with the veteran Jackasses. They “pay their dues” as asked. They also possess that sense of naive mischief that makes

the series so much fun. When they are mercilessly pranked, they react graciously.

Dressed as mimes, Wolfson fearlessly performs the stun gun lollipop and Poopies courageously allows a Texas rat snake to repeatedly bite his face. Wolfson is a much-needed addition to an all-male cast as the first and only female cast member in the entire “Jackass” series.

“I just hope I don’t die” Wolfson said on “The Kelly Clarkson Show.”

Johnny Knoxville looks visibly older, as he now sports a shock of grey hair, along with most of the returning cast. Twenty years of mayhem and stunts have taken a toll. This does not stop him from being launched dozens of feet out of a cannon, adorned with feathered wings. He also unfortunately received brain

damage from a fuming bull giving his worst impression of a matorador.

Steve-O received second billing to Knoxville in the opening credits, and he earns it throughout the film. He has more screen time than any other cast member. He also takes some of the hardest hits and performs the most extreme stunts.

Ehren McGehee, aka Danger Ehren, also gets more screen time than ever before, and pays for it dearly. McGehee receives more hits below the belt than anyone else in the film. A particularly intense bit involves a test of men’s protective athletic wear. The bloody results leave longtime “Jackass” cinematographer and camera operator Lance Bangs gagging in his N-95 mask.

The best bit of the film was called “Silence

of the Lambs.” This involved gathering all the cast together in a rigged room. They are told that Knoxville is going to be filming a stunt with a rattlesnake. The lights turn out, and everyone is terrified of the snake they believe to be loose.

Meanwhile, some of the veteran cast members use night vision goggles and reptile toys to mess with the temporarily blinded Jackasses with Pontius in the corner giving his best “Buffalo Bill” impression.

Professional skateboarder and veteran “Jackass” Bam Margera’s appearance in the film amounts to a cameo. During early production, Margera was asked to take regular drug and breathalyzer tests to clear insurance for Paramount. He failed to comply and was kicked off and out of “Jackass Forever.”

Margera subsequently sued the production.

Without the twisted vision of co-creator and director Jeff Tremaine, the “Jackass” series would not exist. He has a terrific understanding of both sides of the entertainment industry, the business side and the artistic one. Tremaine also has a sadistic personality, sometimes asking the cast to repeat painful and dangerous stunts for better shots.

This sequel managed to be more disgusting, sheds more blood and is more hilarious than any other “Jackass” movie. It also has the distinction within the film series to feature the most people knocked unconscious onscreen. With all the research on concussions and CTE in the past two decades, for the “Jackass” franchise, this is both a brag and a concern.

The third film truly felt like the final goodbye from the MTV gang. After cast member Ryan Dunn perished in a car wreck in 2011, all hope of an eventual reunion seemingly vanished. Ten years later the cast reunited for their best effort yet. There is a tribute for Dunn after the conclusion of the film’s credits.

A decade away rarely benefits the production of a sequel. In some cases, the source material should have been left alone to avoid being seen as an unapologetic cash grab. Instead, “Jackass Forever” is one of the best of the four films and debuted the number one movie in the box office opening weekend.

“Jackass Forever” is now playing in movie theaters.

‘Parallel Mothers’ forms unexpected connections

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

“Parallel Mothers” is a Spanish drama film directed by Pedro Almodóvar. The plot concerns two single women who befriend through their pregnancies. The film was shot primarily in Madrid, Spain and stars Penelope Cruz, Milena Smit, and Aitana Sanchez-Gijon.

In the film, two soon-to-be mothers share a hospital room and become friends as they connect over their concurrent pregnancies. Janis (Penelope Cruz) just turned 40 whereas Ana (Milena Smit) is still a teenager. Janis is excited to have her baby as a single parent while Ana is more reserved and nervous.

Janis’ conception was the result of a romantic encounter with a married man Arturo (Israel Elejalde), whose wife is sick with cancer. He does not want Janis to have the baby.

Cruz anchors the film as the main character. Her performance requires intense emotional range, which she delivers. Cruz is Spain’s sole female Oscar winner for her role in Vicky Cristina Barcelona (2008). Smit’s acting compliments Cruz well, her character seeing Janis as a mentor. Ana has an absent mother in the character of Teresa (Aitana Sanchez-Gijon). She spends most of the film more concerned about her acting career



Courtesy: Sony Pictures

than caring for Ana or her granddaughter.

“Parallel Mothers” is a complex film with strong, melodramatic elements. Unexpected plot twists start early and subvert the audience’s expectations. Included in the film is a subplot of mass graves in the Spanish Civil War. Janis hopes to use

Arturo’s forensic anthropologist connections to excavate the area where her great-grandfather was buried.

Almodóvar is a great director, and it shows onscreen in “Parallel Mothers.” The performances he can get from the four main characters are excellent. Everyone has great chemistry, and the

director could generate this. Cruz has worked with the director seven times and Almodóvar admits that he wrote the role of Janis specifically for the actor.

Cruz describes her acting process in an interview with CBS Sunday Morning and her will to act with full effort.

“You have to really go there with no fear,” Cruz said. “He is always there to pick me up, literally pick me up from the floor. I could not come out of the scene.”

Cruz won the award for best actress at the Venice Film Festival for her performance in “Parallel Mothers.” Cruz first attended the Venice Film Festival

in 1992 after her debut film “Jamón Jamón,” which won Director Bigas Luna the second-place Silver Lion award. Cruz is nominated for best actress at the 2022 Oscars, and Alberto Iglesias is nominated for his haunting yet playful original score.

“Parallel Mothers” is a dramatic story of motherhood, human connection and, some true history regarding The Spanish Civil War. Both women do their best throughout their difficult circumstances.

“Parallel Mothers” runs two hours and is currently playing in cinemas in Spanish with English subtitles.

Microsoft purchase may kick-start gaming industry monopoly

BY EDWARD SAENZ

The video game industry has started 2022 off with a bang. In early January, Microsoft announced it was in the process of acquiring Activision Blizzard for \$70 billion, the largest purchase in the history of the video game industry. With this purchase, Microsoft acquires Activision's massive collection of games, most notably Call of Duty and World of Warcraft.

"Gaming is the most dynamic and exciting category in entertainment across

all platforms today and will play a key role in the development of metaverse platforms," Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella said. "We're investing deeply in world-class content, community, and the cloud to usher in a new era of gaming that puts players and creators first and makes gaming safe, inclusive, and accessible to all."

While this is the largest and most publicized purchase in the current gaming industry, it is far from Microsoft's only high-profile purchase. In June 2014, Microsoft

made headlines when it spent \$2.4 billion on the popular indie video game Minecraft. At the time of purchase, the media called the purchase a terrible deal for Microsoft. With well over 238 million sales, Minecraft has become the best-selling game of all time, and the deal has since become Microsoft's most successful acquisition.

Later that same year, in 2014, Amazon bought the game streaming platform Twitch.tv for \$900 million. A deal that was reportedly won over fellow tech giants Mi-

crosoft, Facebook, and Google.

Just a few days after the Microsoft announcement, Sony announced it had purchased Bungie Studios, creators of the popular online game Destiny 2, for \$3.6 billion. A purchase Yahoo! Finance analyst, Michael Pachter, said Sony "vastly overpaid for" and was done in panic response to the Microsoft deal.

"Bungie does about \$200 million in revenue. So, I think Sony vastly overpaid," Pachter said. "I think this was a statement that we're not going

to let Microsoft get ahead of us, so we'll just buy something out of desperation. It's not really a deal that makes a whole lot of sense to me. The others do."

Amidst the industry-changing acquisitions made by Microsoft and Sony, video game publisher Take-Two, creators of the Borderlands and 2K sports franchises, quietly purchased popular social games developer Zynga for \$12.7 billion. When the purchase was announced on Jan. 10, it was called the biggest acquisition in the history of the video

game industry, until the Microsoft purchase just seven days later on Jan. 18.

Popular video game streamer Stefan "Datto" Jonke, spoke on the recent announcements in a video on his YouTube channel.

"I don't know enough about the business world of video games to know if this is good or bad, but people seem excited about it. If it brings us better games, then that's cool," Datto said.

Team USA overcomes slow start at Beijing Winter Olympics

BY EDWARD SAENZ

In case you didn't know, the Olympics are going on. Only a short six months after the postponed 2020 Summer Games, the Winter games are fully underway.

Popular video game streamer Matthew "Nadeshot" Haag tweeted about the confusion around the Winter games.

"Am I the only one that is absolutely hammered because I had NO IDEA the Olympics are back?" Haag said. "Feels like it's glitch in the matrix. I haven't heard or seen anything about it anywhere in the last couple of weeks or months. So strange."

The XXIV Olympic Winter Games, or Beijing Games 2022, began on Feb. 4 and are currently ongoing in China. Beijing won the bid for the 2022 Winter games in 2015. This marks Beijing as the first city to host both games, having hosted the 2008 summer games. Along with this, China joins eight other countries in having



Team USA marches into the Beijing National Stadium during the opening ceremonies for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. Courtesy: Lintao Zhang/ Getty Images

hosted both games.

The Winter Olympics fields 14 sports, most notably snowboarding, figure skating, and three types of skiing. Heading into the 2022 Winter Games the U.S. leads the world in all time medals in three sports: snowboarding, figure skating, and skeleton.

On Jan. 24, the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee announced the team of 224 athletes who would be repre-

senting the country in China. Among the names are 26-year-old Alpine Skier Mikaela Shiffrin, three-time snowboarding gold medalist Shawn White, and snowboarder Jamie Anderson, the most decorated woman in the history of the winter X-Games, who has a chance at becoming the first ever snowboarder – male or female – to win five Olympic medals.

Despite the star-studded roster, the USA had a rocky start

in Beijing. The team did not win a single gold medal through the first 20 games, held over four days. On day five, Lindsey Jacobellis ended the streak by winning gold in women's snowboard cross. The next day, Nathan Chan, Chloe Kim and the freestyle skiing team managed to bring home three more gold medals.

During his gold medal winning performance, Chan set a men's international figure skating world

record with a score of 113.97, beating out Japan's Yuzuru Hanyu's score of 111.82, which he set in 2020.

Snowboarding super star, Shawn White, announced during the event that the 2022 Winter Olympics would be his final event he would compete at. Despite falling on his first run in the qualifiers, he landed his second run and qualified for the Men's Snowboarding finals, where he would place fourth.

Mikaela Shiffrin entered the 2022 Winter Games with the media calling her the "greatest Alpine skier in the world." A title she more than earned. Shiffrin's accolades include being a three-time overall World Cup champion, a four-time world champion in slalom skiing, and a six-time World Cup Slalom event winner. Despite the achievements list, Shiffrin performed poorly in all her events, most notably the Slalom event, where she once again failed to make a podium finish for the second Olympics in a row.

In February 2021, Beijing announced that the 26 venues, including training venues, for these sports would be running entirely on renewable energy. As of Feb. 11, Germany is currently in the lead with seven gold medals and four silver medals. The U.S. holds onto third place with five gold medals, five silver medals, and one bronze medal. The 2022 Beijing Games are scheduled to conclude on Feb. 20.

Love language strengthens communication, emotional awareness

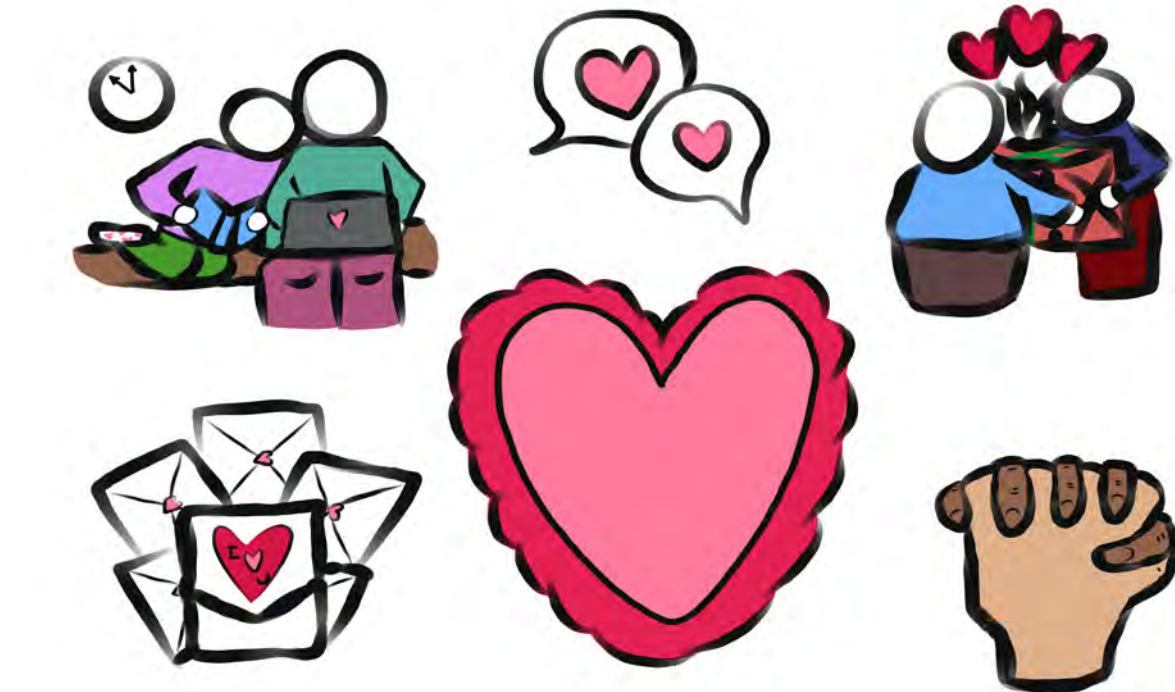
BY ANITA GOOLCHARAN

Communication is key in any form of relationship as it is the building block of trust and closeness. In romantic relationships, communicating your feelings to your partner allows for your relationship to flourish. Practice mindfulness and emotional awareness of your partner to the next level by identifying their favorite love languages.

Renowned marriage counselor Gary Chapman identified the concept of love languages. Chapman groups love languages into five distinct categories of ways that love can be communicated. The five love languages are affirmation, quality time, gifts and tokens of affection, physical touch, and acts of service.

These pathways to enhance a relationship are not limited to special occasions or Valentine's day. They can be implemented in everyday routines and do not need to be dramatic gestures.

The language of affirmation includes being encouraging, supportive, and complimentary. This language highlights verbalizing support for your partner.



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

However, affirmations and support can also be non-verbal. For example, showing up for your partner's performance significantly affirms support similar to the verbal exchange of "good luck" or "you will do amazing."

Spending quality time with your loved one is a great way to express the second love language. Whether you set aside time for a weekly date night or have shared activities that allow time for engagement, spending quality time with your partner allows for depth to be achieved. Quality time allows for deep

conversations where couples can discuss their relationships and feelings independent of the outside world and its influence.

The language of gifts and tokens of affection involves gift giving even when there is no special occasion. In other words, this language can be spontaneous or require planning. The tokens of affection can be for public or private demonstrations.

Harvard researcher and behavioral ecologist Caitlin O'Connell argues that when gifts are personal and symbolic of affection,

they strengthen relationships. Gifts can serve as a reminder of the relationship as they express appreciation and commitment to someone. Gift giving creates sentimental memories as the memory of the gift persists throughout the relationship.

This could be the simplicity of giving your partner flowers on a Sunday morning or the complexity of planning a weekend getaway with your loved one. Expressing your love with gifts and affection does not necessarily mean that you need to break the bank. While everyone

would be satisfied with a Cartier bracelet, creating a scrapbook about the evolution of your relationship can hold more meaning.

The language of physical touch is very intimate as it involves physical contact. Many psychologists believe that love is grounded in touch. The simplicity of having a secret handshake is just as important as a daily hug from one's partner. Professor of neuroscience at John Hopkins University Dr. David Lindon claims that interpersonal touch is a "crucial form of social glue."

Lastly, the language of acts of service involves helping with necessary tasks. A couple that lives together can share everyday tasks. Your partner often has a routine that they go through and recognizing and helping them with that routine demonstrates that you understand your partner.

If your partner is in college, helping them with their projects or assisting them with their homework demonstrates that you understand how stressful or time consuming their task is and that you are willing to help participate.

Understanding your partners' preferred way of communicating love not only helps to maintain a happy relationship, but also builds strength. Every relationship is different, therefore, the communication in these relationships must evolve. In other words, there may be times when you may need to change your love language to meet your situation.

Practice mindfulness and express love to your partner in their preferred love language. This will maintain your relationship at a low-stress level where you can understand each other's needs.

New McDonald's Menu Hack campaign encourages unhealthy eating

BY DALILA JUAREZ

The famous fast-food restaurant chain McDonald's has released a "Menu Hack" for its consumers to enjoy. The new strategy provides patrons as much food as possible without paying extra money.

The featured products contain four unique combinations using the chain's popular entrees mixed into each other. The rare entrees create a new question of wheth-

er McDonald's selling these options benefit its customers by saving them money or harms them by introducing life-threatening problems that can last for years.

McDonald's marketing team decided to get creative by giving the food items names such as the Crunchy Double that includes a McDouble and McNuggets together, or the breakfast item Hashbrown Muffin, which is the Sausage Egg

McMuffin with a hashbrown in the middle. It is a hack that people may have done just to experiment with their meals. However, there is no way any person could adequately bite into the enormous Land, Air, and Sea burger, which includes the Big Mac, McChicken, and Filet-O-Fish.

As the new promotional items were released, people wondered if the combinations were a health concern. Regular fast-

food entrees contain hundreds of calories, so imagine how many more calories these menu hack items would total. If it looks too good to be true to eat more for less, it probably is.

As of now, the Menu Hack's impact on health is unknown. But vast research on older McDonald's menu items underscore concerning health consequences.

For example, the risks of eating McDonald's are quite common,

such as heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It can also cause obesity faster and make it hard to exercise and reduce unnecessary fat. Once someone is obese, fatigue becomes the next concerning factor.

Consuming McDonald's can be challenging to overcome, especially for those with busy lifestyles, such as college students. The health risks McDonald's food poses can distract them from learning new

course material due to feeling tired after eating fast food. It may favor students who are eating on a budget, but there is no guarantee that their health will be safe afterward.

Trying the new McDonald's Menu Hack meal once may not be harmful but eat at your own risk.

Banning Holocaust-themed book perpetuates widespread erasure of history



Courtesy: The Jerusalem Post

BY JORDYNN GODFREY

On Jan. 10 of this year, a school board in Tennessee voted unanimously to ban “Maus,” a comic book about the Holocaust based on true events of the author’s family history, from the eighth-grade curriculum. The comic book, depicting mice as Jews and cats as Nazis, was banned for displaying curse words and a naked character.

One school board member stated that the

comic book “shows people hanging.

“It shows them killing kids, why does the educational system promote this kind of stuff? It is not wise or healthy.”

In response to this sentiment, “Maus” author Art Spiegelman stated: “This is disturbing imagery.

“But you know what? It’s disturbing history.”

In fact, Spiegelman, ripped the Tennessee school board apart for

their decision in an interview conducted by CNN, calling them myopic, autocratic and fascist.

“I’ve moved past total bafflement to trying to be tolerant of people who may possibly not be Nazis? Maybe? Because having read the transcript of the school board meeting, the problem is sort of bigger and stupider than that,” Spiegelman said.

He went further in his critique of the concerns of nudity, stating that the nudity is “specifically a small image that has my mother right after having slashed her wrists in a bathtub being found.

“It’s a tiny image, so you have to really want to get your sexual kicks by projecting on it. It seemed like a crazy place to get them.”

Indeed, focusing on aspects such as lan-

guage and nudity in a novel about the Holocaust seems absurd and completely misses the point of such a novel.

Unfortunately, book banning and history erasure is an old and ongoing issue in the U.S. Recently, many schools have adamantly opposed the teaching of things such as the mass genocide of Native Americans and critical race theory. Another problem is that they have been actively minimizing the reality of slavery in the U.S.

This is incredibly concerning as teaching these historical events helps ensure that we do not forget and, therefore, do not repeat such heinous actions. However, if these events are not being taught, how will future generations remember? Spiegelman commented on this very concern, calling the

Holocaust a “harbinger of things to come.”

“It’s already started happening, the dog whistles abound.”

Spiegelman continued, saying that erasing critical race theory out of public-school curriculum and never facing up to teaching children about the genocide of Native Americans stem from an issue “broader than any one group issue.”

“One would think that the word remembrance is important,” he added.

To deny generations the ability to learn about history as it happened is to actively pretend such horrifying events never happened in the way they did. There is already a part of the U.S. population that does not even believe in the Holocaust, as insane as that is. It is incredibly concerning that similar

sentiments seem to be seeping into our education system.

This minimizing, and almost complete erasure, of history is undeniably reflecting our troubling past, as Spiegelman passionately stated. This is not education – this is propaganda.

How can we do our future generations such a disservice as to deny them the full truth of history? Actions such as book banning and glossing over history make our society feel dystopic. And, unfortunately, as these things continue to happen, it is getting harder to deny that we are indeed living in a type of dystopia.

I am afraid to admit that Spiegelman may be right – this is a harbinger of things to come.

Political participation should not end after casting ballots

BY YASMEEN AMMOURAH

With the 2022 primary midterm elections arriving in March, Texas is paving the way for the chance to become a purple state. This makes one wonder if either Democratic or Republican parties truly hold the values that we desperately hope for, or if we should even trust the politicians in power.

In the past couple of months, candidates for all representatives have been announced, such as Gov. Greg Abbott rerunning for his same seat, and Beto O’Rourke as one of the Democratic opponents. In both parties, there are obviously extremely different views which factor in with how Texas could look in the next few years.

Conservatives’ campaigns promote problematic points of view under the guise of



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

the American dream. No abortions, no critical race theory for grade school students, no gun restrictions, and no plan to work towards a renewable energy sourced state. With a state as conservative as Texas, there is no doubt that values like these are praised, especially post-pandemic.

Conservatives create a hostile environment for people

of color in Texas, but the Democratic party also impacts the future of Texas governing. Candidates on the ballot are not represented well enough. Even in the Democratic Party, there are still ideals that would be considered conservative. There are still more white people running for office than people of color even though Texas has one of the largest Hispanic

populations in the U.S.

Additionally, Texas politicians are more worried about undocumented immigrants and police laws than the overwhelming COVID-19 cases.

With the laws that the Republican Party inflicts on human rights, the only ballots that they will appear on for this upcoming primary election will be on the registered

Republican party. For

example, Republicans in Texas passed the “fetal heartbeat bill” that specifically states that Texas should “enact a state constitutional amendment to defend the sanctity of innocent human life, created in the image of god, from fertilization until natural death.”

This is a fight against the constitutional right of separation

of the church and state, which hurts the largely Muslim and Jewish population in Texas, and women specifically.

Midterms are important, but politicians aren’t the friends we should depend on.

We’ve learned that in the past few years that depending on Democrats would be just as fearful as depending on Republicans as seen through Biden’s empty promises. Though these are votes that depend on the representatives in Congress, it is obvious that democracy is failing the people.

With many politicians working towards policy and economic benefits, the meaning of the people’s land is lost when voters let participation end after an election. Political participation is needed to prolong efforts that stand a chance in this game.