

STATUES ARE CROCODILES

Three out of the four statues around campus that depict the university mascot, alligator, are crocodiles

BY EDWARD SAENZ & RYAN PRICE

Editors Note: This article is an update to an article in Volume 67, Issue 8 which had incorrect information on statues.

In July 2019, UHD had a series of alligator statues constructed in front of the One Main Building and Shea Street Building. However, it turns out the statues are actually crocodiles!

“It serves as a symbol of institutional pride for the university community and is a perfect addition to the [campus],” former UHD President Juan Sánchez

Muñoz said about the statues.

According to Ryan Price, a geo-sciences major focusing on paleontology, two of the “gator” statues have distinct crocodilian features. The statue that sits outside of the One Main Building by the METRORail entrance holds characteristics of both crocodiles and alligators.

“Crocodiles and alligators are members of the same group, Crocodylia,” Price said about how the mix-up may have happened.

To the average eye, the differences are not that noticeable.

The key differences involve the shape of the jaw and placement of the teeth and lips. The scales on the tails are also very different, mainly in placement and shape.

“The [scales] that line the back, this is called an osteoderm; it’s literally armor skin.”

According to Price, the scales on an alligator stay the same from the base of the head down to the neck, whereas with crocodiles, the scales are slightly modified.

GATORS? continued on page 2



Can you spot the difference between the One Main Building METRORail entrance statue (top) and the Shea Street Building statue (bottom)? Credits: Ryan Price



Los Caimanes perform in Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Auditorium on May 4. Credit: Amy Nguyen

UHD mariachi honors Cinco de Mayo

BY AMY NGUYEN

On May 4, the Mariachi Los Caimanes held their end of year concert at the Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Auditorium.

Assistant Director of Student Activities and

Mariachi Director Jose Vazquez opened the event by introducing the performers.

The concert was made up of 16 traditional and cover songs and two encores.

Accompanying each song were diverse

backgrounds displaying images relating to Mexican culture.

Vazquez stated that the image selection process began with over 100 images and hours of listening to the songs to correctly pair everything.

As Los Caimanes member Valerie Codina opened the concert with “Los Laureles,” a photo of Aztec tribal fabrics was displayed as Mexican textiles.

CINCO DE MAYO continued on page 6

Thursday Night concerts return to Discovery Green

BY MONICA GOMEZ

UHD Thursday Night Concert Series at Discovery Green began on April 7 after being on hold for two years due to COVID-19. The event will be every Thursday until May 26 at 7 p.m., with admission free for all.

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Crowd listens to the musicians perform for UHD Thursday Night Concerts at Discovery Green on April 28. Credit: Monica Gomez



Credit: G. O.

Denim Day

5



Credit: G. O.

Environmental justice

6



Credit: E.S.

Dateline thanks UHD

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Staff Spotlight Tasha Jones

BY JORDYNN GODFREY

Student Affairs Department Business Administrator III Tasha Jones spoke with the Dateline about her duties and responsibilities, her education, and notable projects she worked on in 2021.

Additionally, she offered sound advice to students on how to approach their educational and career goals, and on how to stay grounded throughout challenging days.

As a Student Affairs Business administrator, Jones oversees all

Fierce administrator shares career tips

finances, personnel, human resources records, contracts, and budgets for all departments of Student Affairs.

Notably, due to vacancies, Jones has even been assisting with managing finances for the Dateline.

Jones completed her undergraduate degree in Speech Communication and her graduate degree in Education of Student Affairs Administration at the University of Southern Mississippi.

As a first-generation student, Jones found that supporting students and being influential in their educational journey was important to her.

“I was a law student

and had to find my way,” Jones said.

“I [found] my passion was really to help students and serve in higher education.”

Notably, Jones worked on creating UHD’s in-house Student Counseling Services Center. Previously, UHD outsourced its counseling services through UT Health.

“I was involved in everything that had to do with money,” Jones said.

As of Fall 2021, UHD houses its own Student Counseling Services Center on campus.

After discussing her responsibilities and accomplishments, Jones

offered advice to those who may be aspiring to follow her chosen career path.

She stated that the key skills to do her role effectively are attention to detail, patience, multi-tasking, and not easily fold under pressure.

“You have to be a sponge,” Jones said.

“You have to be able to absorb and retain a lot of information.”

Jones also offered advice to all students. While having a goal is excellent for educational and career aspirations, she encouraged students to be flexible.

“Don’t be so attached to the outcome,” Jones said.

“What you want for yourself may not be the cards that you are dealt. Play the cards you are dealt.”

Finally, Jones revealed what helps get her through challenging days and how she maintains a great work ethic and positive attitude.

Jones emphasized practices that keep her grounded.

When presented with stressful circumstances, she likes to run her diffuser with essential oils and play music. In her spare time, she also does pilates, yoga, and gardening.

GATORS?

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“Alligator tails are really wide because it lets them swim, it’s like a big fin. So [the statue] has that right,” said Price.

“The head is another great place to go. So, an alligator head should be a [upside down U]. A crocodile is more of a V-shape,” Price said about the statue outside the One Main Building.

“This is a crocodile head with some messed up [osteoderms] that doesn’t look right.” Price went on to talk about how the teeth are a great difference between the two. When alligators shut their mouth, their bottom teeth cannot be seen. However, the OMB alligator statue appears to have the lip structure of a crocodile.

Crocodiles and alligators replace their teeth their whole lifetime, according to Price. Because of this, it was impossible to tell how many teeth any of the statues had.

“We can say that the



Geosciences student Ryan Price inspects the statue’s teeth. Credit: Shawn Awagu

One Main Building statue is a crocodile, based on the shape of the head and the tail. The tail, too big. The head is more of a V-shape with a pronounced snout as opposed to just being wide all the way around.”

The statues outside the Sciences and Technology Building and Commerce Street Building also had characteristics more in line with crocodiles than alligators.

“The heads on these two are correct,” Price said about the two buildings statues. “However, the scales

are incorrect and once again the feet aren’t characteristic of a gator or a croc, this is like a dragon. So, we can confidently say these are some type of crocodile.”

The good news is that the statue outside the Shea Street Business Building is an alligator. “The head looks good, big head with no prominent snout,” Price said. “The scales are uniform across the tail, not crazy pronounced like you’d see on a crocodile.” For once, the legs were done properly. The scales on an alligator’s legs should have a uni-



The “alligator” statue outside the northside of the Sciences and Technology Building is actually a crocodile. Credit: Ryan Price.



The only statue that properly depicts an alligator is the one at the southside staircase of the Shea Street Building. Credit: Ryan Price

form square pattern.

“Look at the mouth, it has this wide lip. If we could close this gators mouth, you wouldn’t see the teeth. The tail, all of it is good. The [Shea Street Business Building] is an alligator!”

When asked about how this type of mix-

up could happen, Price talked about the top search results on Google Images. While searching for alligator scales, multiple pictures of crocodiles showed up, and vice versa with crocodile searches.

“I typed in ‘alligator’ [top-down view] and the first four results

are crocodile,” Price explained. “You actually really have to scroll for a while to see an actual alligator. Unless you have an expert on hand you would just go with the first results, which it appears is what happened with the UHD statues.”

New Social Gators squad goes viral

BY KARINA RODARTE
EDITED BY RYAN PRICE

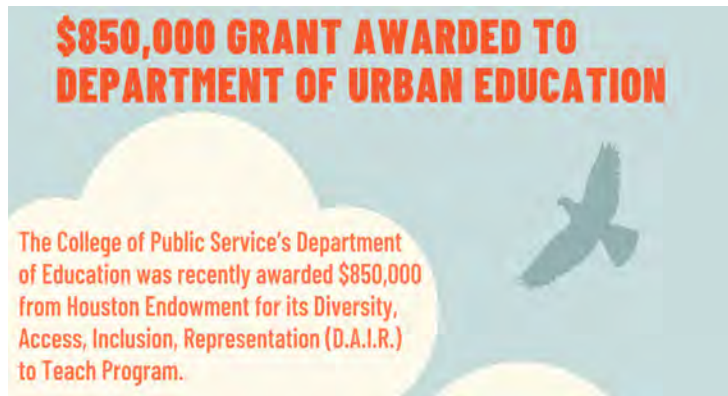
UHD is giving students the opportunity to learn about social media management from their new program called the Social Gators.

Social media has become a major part of everyone's lives. Whether that be businesses, celebrities, and, of course, universities. Seeing this trend, UHD has created the Social Gators, a hand-picked group of six students who have made it their mission to spread UHD school spirit.

Beginning in January of the 2022 Spring Semester, Social Gators: Litzzy Rodriguez Alvarez, Irvin Solano, Salma Uloa Pineda, Genesis Aguilar, Jesus Neito, and Kaela Palmer have already found success on popular social media sites, such as TikTok and Instagram.

According to Antrechelle Dorsey, the Digital and Social Media Manager for UHD and founder of the Social Gator program, the secret to their success lay in the amount of control that they have regarding what content they are allowed to produce.

"When I say they have full control, I mean full control," Dorsey said. "I trust them 100%."



Credit: Jordynn Godfrey

That freedom of control has paid-off, as the Social Gator social media accounts have managed to accrue thousands of follows and likes over the course of only a few months.

Additionally, just weeks after the program was started, FOX26 News hosted the Social Gators for a televised interview. The interview went well, so well that several local businesses inquired about the possibility of having the Social Gators run their social media accounts in the future.

Social Gator Solano, a biological science major, explained that being a part of the Social Gator program has helped him learn skills such as: networking, social media management, and online analytics. It also has given him a new outlook on his own self-worth and value.

"[Dorsey] truly taught us

all how to value our time and talent," Solano stated. "When I get offered research opportunities, I weigh my options very carefully and decide if it's worth my time and if the reimbursement is appropriate to the required time and effort."

Dorsey and the Social Gators are very hopeful for the future of the program, and for good reason. A new social media lounge is being constructed, on-campus, with the goal to immerse the denizens with "all of the tools they need to succeed."

As a final note, the Social Gators will have two open spots in the coming semester. So, if you are someone who loves UHD, TikTok, and Instagram and wants to be a part of the growing social media sphere, then be on the lookout for applications to be the next Gator influencer.



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Join us for President Blanchard's celebratory Investiture on Tuesday, May 24, 2022

uhd.edu/investiture

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.

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Counseling Services launches weekly support group sessions

BY ANITA GOOLCHARAN

The weekly “Counseling Connections” held on Tuesdays and Thursdays welcome students into a safe and supportive environment to share their thoughts and feelings.

These one-hour, group sessions also help increase self-awareness and allow students to gain skills to cope with personal challenges.

The free sessions (for enrolled UHD students) cover different topics depending on the day.

Tuesday meetings discuss being a first-generation student and college transitions or adjustments.

Thursday sessions cover social confidence, mindfulness, and being an undecided student.

Support groups can be less intimidating to those looking for a way into therapy than a traditional, one-on-one session as they occur in a mutual setting which can lead to attendees feeling less alone.

Alison Hamilton, an intern of the UHD Counseling Services, expressed that universality is highlighted during these sessions.

“When you put a group of people together for counseling it normalizes what is going on in people’s lives,” Hamilton stated. “They feel a connection to other people, like I’m not the only one going through this, I’m not alone.”

These group sessions facilitate discussions of issues or stressors with peers. Two

department interns moderate the sessions and can help individuals of the group work through their thoughts, concerns, or emotions that they bring up during the sessions.

Discussions in the support groups are held to the same standards as individual therapy regarding confidentiality. Every individual that attends a group session has the right to confidentiality and privacy from the group leaders and the other attendees.

The goal of the support groups is to build a sense of community for people who may not have a strong support system or for those who may need guidance on topics such as mindfulness, social confidence, or student

SCAN TO SCHEDULE

TUESDAYS 12-1
College Transitions & Adjustments

TUESDAYS 1-2
First Generation.

THURSDAYS 12-1
Social Confidence

THURSDAYS 1-2
Mindfulness

THURSDAYS 2-3
Undecided Student

Credit: Anita Goolcharan

UHD Police shares tips, reports on safety measures on campus

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR & EDWARD SAENZ

The day after a female UHD student was assaulted on campus on April 19, members of the UHD Police Department met with The Dateline to raise awareness of the safety measures on campus and to describe what to do in the involvement of a crime.

The meeting was scheduled after UHD students received text and email notification of the incident. The notification sent around 1:21 p.m. on April 19, informed recipients that the assault occurred on the second floor of the W. I. Dykes Library located on the fifth floor of the One Main Building.

Three members of the police attended: Lt. Trinity Delafance, Corporal Tabitha Rivera, and Sergeant Ricardo Reyna.

“We are very concerned about the students, faculty, and staff,” Delafance said.



Callboxes are on all the floors of the buildings Credit: Edward Saenz

“We hate what happened... We want to educate not only faculty and staff but also students.”

Because the investigation is ongoing, the police were not at liberty to share details with the public. After showing concern for the incident, the officers discussed their desire to build a relationship with students, how to report suspicious behavior, and where to find safety measures on campus.

For example, Delafance, who has served for more than 23 years, wants more students to attend the events by



Callboxes are located inside the campus elevators. Credit: Edward Saenz

the police department such as safety seminars, self-defense classes, etc.

“I want to build a relationship with you guys so that you can share your experiences with us,” Delafance added.

Similarly, Reyna, who has served at UHD for more than 27 years, said that while they are in uniform, they want students to approach them. As UHD is an open campus, entrance cannot be restricted, and people’s rights need to be respected. The officers said students should not hesitate to report suspicious activ-

ity as most of the time a greet is enough to shut down the possibility of an incident. Furthermore, timely reporting increases the chances of apprehending the suspect.

“Our community safety is No. 1,” Reyna said. “If you see something, anything strange, let us verify. If our community says, ‘hey there is something going on,’ it’s our responsibility to... investigate.”

Talking from experience with victims of a crime, Rivera encouraged Gators to trust

their senses and notify when someone is acting weird.

“Just go tell somebody because your safety is first,” Rivera said. “For the most part you can go to class and do whatever you need to do and let us deal with the situation.”

Callboxes are located on all floors, in the elevators and parking lots. Students are encouraged to save the police department’s telephone number. Anonymous tips are also accepted via the University of Houston System

portal.

As for safety measures and programs, the officers cited their annual safety report and informational materials available on the UHD Police website and their social media accounts for updates and announcements on upcoming events. Other behind the scenes efforts include paroling and security cameras. The officers assured that campus is safe and that they are putting their “best foot forward to make sure campus is clear of crime.”

UHD POLICE DEPARTMENT SERVICES

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- Police Escort Assistance available 24/7
- Vehicle assistance is also available

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On-Campus Non-Emergency: 713-221-8065
Email: UHDPolice@uhd.edu

Follow @UHD_Alerts on Twitter to stay up to date on what’s on campus



Daily Crime Log updates



Follow on Facebook

Credit: Edward Saenz

UHD honors Denim Day

BY ANITA GOOICHARAN

UHD's sixth panel for sexual assault awareness month highlighted Denim Day.

Denim Day started in 1998 to protest the appeal of a convicted rapist.

The 45-year-old appealed his case to the Italian Supreme Court and argued that he engaged in consensual sex with his 18-year-old victim since she was wearing tight jeans that could not have been removed without her help.

The day after the arguments were made women in the Italian Parliament went to work in denim jeans showcasing their solidarity with the victim.

Since then, wearing denim jeans has become an international symbol against

rape and sexual assault apologists.

Denim Day emphasizes that victim blaming is wrong and attempts to bring awareness to sexual assault. The presentation covered various topics about sexual assault and misconduct and featured Lauri Ruiz, Interim Title IX and Equal Opportunity Officer and Casey Davis, Interim Chief of Police Administration.

The event emphasized that there is no excuse and never an invitation to harass, abuse, or rape.

"Your choice should be respected," Ruiz stated in her presentation, "it's okay to change your mind or want to stop."

The Title IX office acts as a neutral factor and enforcer of UHD's

Equal Opportunity Policies.

In the event of a sexual harassment or assault the Title IX office acts with complete confidentiality. The office will provide support and detail resources, but they do not force anyone to report the crime.

If a crime is stated to the Title IX office, it is up to the victim to decide if they want to pursue legal action.

Another presenter of the event, Davis detailed the legal process of sexual harassment and assault.

Davis advocated for victims to seek medical help and counseling regardless of their decision to report the crime as traumatic events can take a toll on the body and can strain a person's mental



health.

"It is not our place as law enforcement to further victimize anyone we are here to help in any way possible."

The UHD Police Department offers free self-defense classes to women at UHD and in the community each semester.

The UHD Police Department also has a safety escort service offered to faculty, staff, students and visitors. To request an escort to your vehicle, visit the Police Department in N118 or use a police call box.

CONCERTS

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On April 7, the concert series kicked off with Ren Patrick and as his opening act Oliver Penn. It is a free, public, family-friendly event that welcomes the entire Gator community. The event has a range of styles of music such as Tejano, Norteno, Latin alternative, rap, hip hop, and rock. A UHD Alumni, Carlos Calvo, attended AJ McQueen and American Psychos' performance on April 28.

"It was exciting for the artists to perform their original songs that they worked on before the pandemic," Calvo said. "After

not being able to attend many events sponsored by UHD during my undergrad, I'm glad I was able to enjoy the performances tonight."

There are complimentary refreshments such as various drinks and small finger foods such as sandwiches that are provided before and during the concerts. Several parking options are available if you plan to make the drive to the park, such as parking garages and surface lots that may come with an additional cost. On-street parking is free from 6 p.m. through 7 a.m. in the downtown area during weekdays and free every Sunday unless stated otherwise.

Credit: Shaheryar Khan



Credit: Nohely Martinez

Scholar says Ukraine's conflict affects view of East Asia

BY ANITA GOOICHARAN

UHD's College of Humanities and Social Sciences hosted a webinar featuring Professor David Kang to help answer and explain the Ukraine conflict's implications on East Asian countries.

As the Ukraine conflict has unfolded, students are often left

with many questions and concerns over the effects of the ongoing war.

Kang teaches international relations at the University of Southern California and specializes in comparative politics of Asia.

He has also authored numerous publications which analyze the development and eco-

nomical strategies used in East Asian countries.

Kang argued that for the past 50 years, the story of East Asia has not been the story of war and imperialisms, but rather the story of business and transformations of the region.

The former Fullbright Scholar briefly explained how the conflict is currently af-

fecting East Asia. Kang speculated that ongoing events would have a minimal effect on East Asian countries.

"The issues of East Asia are going to respond to the desires and needs and interests and priorities of the people and countries of East Asia," Kang said.

Another major point of the webinar included

a critique of Eurocentric models of history. Kang argued Eurocentric perspectives are often used to explain and make sense of the world which is not effective as it has led to a concentration on European history, therefore making it the Eurocentric perspective dominant.

This is problematic as the world does not

function like Europe does. To combat Eurocentric perspectives from influencing public opinions of East Asia, he suggested a lesson of East Asian historical perspectives.

"You can make a really strong argument that the biggest threat to the American way of life is not China," Kang said. "It's internal."

Sustainability expert connects humanities and sciences

BY JORDYNN GODFREY

The Department of History, Humanities, and Languages hosted a virtual presentation highlighting the connection between the environmental challenges humanity is facing and human health, on April 26

UHD Director of the Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability and Professor of biology and microbiology in the Department of Natural Sciences Lisa Morano gave the presentation titled “Environment and Health: Data, Passion and The Conversation Forward.”

She gave historical and modern examples of how the humanities and sciences can work together to create a passion for change and space for conversation.

Morano started the presentation by discussing the three major environmental problems according to environ-

mental sciences: biodiversity loss, nitrogen pollution, and climate change.

Biodiversity loss is the mass extinction of organisms on earth. There is a safe operating space for environmental problems, and biodiversity surpasses the safe operating space, resulting in irreversible damage to our ecosystems.

Morano showed that the human population, which is at an all-time high, is directly correlated to extinction rates of all species.

“The extinction rate of organisms on this planet is about 1,000 times the rate [of] extinctions we see normally,” Morano said.

“That rate is like the extinction rate that we had when the dinosaurs went extinct... There have been five mass extinctions of organisms on the planet and some people say we are in the sixth mass extinction.”



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

Morano emphasized that this is not simply an unfortunate event, but that biodiversity is vital to human health.

“We need biodiversity to run our ecosystems,” Morano stressed. She explained that biodiversity is directly correlated to our water, our food production, and natural systems. The loss of biodiversity significantly negatively affects

human health.

Morano explained that nitrogen pollution harms mass crop production, pollutes our water which can be particularly harmful to infants, and results in greenhouse gases such as nitrous oxide. Nitrous oxide and methane trap more heat than CO₂, contributing to warmer temperatures globally.

Additionally, Morano echoed what

environmentalists and scientists have been warning humanity of for decades – that if we do not change our actions now, there will be catastrophic consequences.

Notably, she explained the importance of humanities, particularly in inspiring change in communities, local and global and the Sustainability Triangle (the top of which is environmental health, and is supported by social stability and economic growth).

“Instead of just thinking about saving the environment... you have to think about all the stresses on the society,” Morano said. To protect the health of the environment, you must create social stability. Morano provided an example of this.

“If you tell people ‘Don’t cut down the Rain Forest,’ but they’re starving to death, that message is meaningless,” Morano said.

At the core of the Sustainability Triangle is in the arts and humanities.

“What we don’t do enough in science is teach awe and wonder,” Morano said.

She explained that it is one thing to be able to calculate data for scientific fact. However, Data does not move people. Even facts do not move people. What moves people is inspiration and connection.

Morano ended the event by encouraging connection. She stated that humanities help us connect to others, which is vital for creating environmental change.

“We cannot get anything done if everybody is the enemy,” she said. “We have to have environmentalists, economists, social scientists at the table to come up with solutions. We need to be able to connect to others and humanities gives us those skills.”

CINCO DE MAYO

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In between songs, Vazquez explained the significance of Cinco de Mayo and Mexican culture. Despite being known as a day for drinking as well as a misinterpretation of culture and history, Cinco de Mayo is an annual celebration of Mexico’s victory against the second French empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862.

He introduced the audience to two of his former members and the history of Los Caimanes, and recommended donations to future competitions.

UHD Alumni Jimmy Arredondo performed “El Rey,” which is about a man

who sees himself as a king wherever he went, always winning despite defeat, while a backdrop of someone riding a bull at a Mexican rodeo was displayed.

Arredondo participated in the Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza competition during the pandemic as one of the top 10 collegiate vocalists and received the Director’s Award for outstanding leadership in concert.

“The members grew the most musically despite their hardships,” Vazquez said, “We even used new equipment that was tricky yet worth the effort.”

Jeffrey Tijerina and Marianna Galvan-Sainz, sang a duet of the song “El Sol Que Tu



Los Caimanes’s perform “Cruz De Olvido” on May 4. Credit: Amy Nguyen

Eres.” The backdrop was a paper mâché sun rotating between air balloons in the sky as said in opening line “Sol Redondo y Colorado, Como una rueda de cobre” or a “round red sun, like a wheel of copper” was all brown and copper colored.

The image zoomed in and out of focus, as if it were done by an old projector, matching the

song’s mood and lyrics.

The concert closed with “Mexico Lindo y Querido” (Beautiful, Beloved Mexico) performed by Tijerina. The song was accompanied by an image of “Mexico” spelled out in peppers on top of rice grains, both ingredients are staples of Mexican culture.

In support, UHD Library, Student Activ-

ities, Esports, and fraternities Sigma Kappa Omega, Kappa Delta Chi, Sigma Lambda Gamma, and Phi Beta Sigma tabled and helped with crowd control of over 200 attendees.

As for food and drink, quesadillas, empanadas, and Mexican kebabs from French Corner Bakery were served and canned beer and soft drinks from Saint Arnold’s Brewery were offered. Some attendees got sombreros on a first-come first-served basis.

The Los Caimanes was established around three years ago and has grown immensely since then. The Mariachi Los Caimanes will perform again at Wortham Theatre on May 24 for President Loren Blanchard’s honors ceremony.

LOS CAIMANES SETLIST	
Los Laureles	
Baila Esta Cumbia	
Siempre Hace Frio	
No Me Queda Mas	
Que Creias	
Cruz de Olvido	
El Rey	
Adios Amor	
Me Gustas Mucho	
Si Nos Dejan	
Volver, Volver	
Moño Colorado	
Y Andale	
Sabor A Mi	
Que Nadie Sepa Mi Sufrir	
El Sol Que Tu Eres	
Mexico Lindo y Querido	

Petro-proximity puts children's health at risk, experts say

BY JORDYNN GODFREY

On Monday April 25, experts from and in collaboration with Children at Risk gave a Facebook Live presentation on a recent report done on the health risks to children residing in close proximity to petrochemical facilities. The experts pushed for government policy change, rather than encouraging parents to change residency.

President and CEO of Children at Risk Bob Sanborn moderated the event. Guest speakers included four experts. Affiliate of Children at Risk and UT School of Public Health Malak Awad authored the report that was presented. Director of the Center for Social Measurement and Evaluation at Children at Risk Sharmily Roy provided direction and guidance to Awad throughout the research process in the authoring of her report.

Additionally, Air Alliance Houston affiliate Leticia Gutierrez, and Houston Pediatrician Dr. Priyam Chhabra spoke on their unique perspectives of the harmful effects of petro-proximity.

Sanborn started the event by emphasizing the risks to children residing near petrochemical facilities. He stated that these children are significantly negatively impacted.

“Research shows that children [residing near] or going to petro-proximate schools are at a higher risk of asthma, ADHD, headaches, nosebleeds, short-term memory dysfunction, liver disease, and many different types of cancer,” Sanborn said. “This has an impact on school performance, absenteeism, general quality of health, and general quality of life.”

Children at Risk's analysis showed that



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

there is a significant relationship between child academic performance and proximity to petrochemical facilities with an impact of up to five miles and the deepest impact within a one-mile radius.

The report noted that the most at-risk areas in Texas are Corpus Christi, San Antonio, and Harris County Houston. Astonishingly, Awad noted that in Harris County, some schools were surrounded by as many as 10 petrochemical facilities. Awad stated that this was especially

surprising due to Harris County's high population.

“Research showed that residing next to a petrochemical facility has many health impacts on our vulnerable [young] population, our future generations,” Awad said. “To see that there were 10 petrochemical facilities within a five-mile radius of a school was very alarming.”

Furthermore, Sanborn noted that 83% of HISD schools are considered poor-performance schools, and all of them are within

a five-mile radius of a petrochemical facility. Children's poor academic performance is directly influenced by petro-proximity, which means major change is needed.

Dr. Chhabra explained why children are at a higher risk of petrochemical effects than adults. Due to their small lungs, children need to breathe faster to get the same volume of air in a breath cycle, exposing them to more air pollutants. Additionally, children are shorter and closer to the ground where higher concentrations of petrochemical pollution reside.

Furthermore, petrochemical pollutants negatively affect early childhood development, their central nervous system, and can even cause harmful effects in utero.

“Infants born to mothers exposed to [petrochemical neurotoxins] in utero are born

with smaller head sizes, they don't grow as fast, they have developmental delays, facial anomalies, and have a lower IQ,” Dr. Chhabra said.

All speakers at this event expressed the need for federal and state policy change. While it seems that encouraging parents to relocate their children to safer areas free from petrochemical pollutants is an option, it is not realistic. Relocating a family is difficult, especially in a city as heavily populated as Houston.

Sanborn encouraged the community to push for policy change to ensure that schools are not located near harmful facilities, as well as holding industries accountable for the pollutants they are putting out into the environment.

Children's health and academic performance are dependent on creating a cleaner future.

Texas appeals court grants delay of execution for Melissa Lucio

BY SERGIO PRESA JR

Melissa Lucio's execution sentence has been delayed by a Texas appeals court.

Lucio is accused of beating her two-year-old daughter Mariah to death in 2007 but mounting doubt of her guilt in the matter led to her lawyers to request a stay of execution for her.

The request was granted to give a lower court the chance to review evidence that Lucio was never able to present before that she claims will exonerate her. Lucio's lawyers say her conviction was the result of a coerced con-

fession after relentless questioning.

Her lawyers also say that Lucio's history of being sexually and physically abused contributed to her giving a coerced confession. Prosecutors have repeatedly said that Mariah was a victim of abuse and pointed to her body, which was covered in bruises. Lucio says that her daughter sustained those injuries after she fell down a staircase days before her death.

“I am grateful the court has given me the chance to live and prove my innocence, Mariah is in my heart today and always.” said Lucio in a statement provided by

her lawyers.

“Thank God for the miracle.” said Esparanza Trevino, Lucio's mother as she thanked her supporters.

The news of Lucio's granted stay of execution was relayed to her over the phone by state Rep. Jeff Leach. The Republican representative has helped lead a bipartisan effort to stop her execution.

When the execution was delayed, Leach said he was grateful the court had “pushed the pause button on her execution, saving the state of Texas from the irreversible blunder of potentially killing an innocent citizen.”

Lucio's stay of execution came minutes before the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles was set to consider her clemency petition to commute her death sentence or grant a 120-day reprieve for her. More than half of the Texas Legislature asked for Lucio's execution to be halted.

State law makers, both Democrats and Republicans traveled to Gatesville where female death row inmates are housed and prayed with Lucio. Lucio was convicted and sentenced by 12 jurors, 5 of those jurors have questioned their decision and asked Lucio to get a new trial.

DISTRACTED DRIVING ACCIDENTS UP 17%

TXDOT TIPS FOR FOCUSED DRIVING TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS




- Always give driving your full undivided attention
- If you have to talk or text, pull off the road entirely and come to a complete stop
- Either turn your phone off, or put it away when you drive and use the settings to block calls or texts
- Tell friends, family, and coworkers that you are not available for contact while you are on the road

Houston Zoo celebrates its Centennial

BY RYAN PRICE

The Houston Zoo just reached its 100th anniversary. The entity, which began with a single American bison

named Earl, has since grown into a keystone institution with over 6,000 individual animals and 16 conservation partners across the globe.



Houstonians getting a chance to pet Tex the Turtle. She is an Ambassador animal and is specially trained to be around humans. Credit: Ryan Price

“Today, the 30th of April, I designate as Houston Zoo Day,” announced Mayor Sylvester Turner during the Houston Zoo’s Centennial event on April 30.

The centennial event began with keynote speakers, Lee Ehme, President and CEO of the Houston Zoo, and Turner. They spoke on the history and importance of the zoo in both the determination of the city and the achievement of the conservation projects.

“One-hundred years only comes once, and we’re so excited because there’s so much progress made at the zoo from a standard zoo to a major conservation organization,” Ehme said when asked afterwards about why the event was so important.

The event includ-

ed special centennial themed animal-keeper chats, bird house and ice sculpture making, and special “conservation activity” tents designed with kid-friendly activities that encourage environmental conservation.

Houston residents Reina Bowman and her five-year-old son Asher, spoke to the excitement of the event.

“Our favorite part of the event was building the bird houses, it was super fun!” Bowman said.

Bowman went on to say that the zoo had been a major part of her life since she had her children.

“I have wonderful memories with my older two, coming all the time... weekly!”

For most of the interviewed attendees,



Credit: Amy Nguyen

the highlight of the event was the keeper chats, of which four occurred every hour. Many attended the popular blue-throated macaw keeper chat, where the zookeepers explained how the birds ate, communicated, and what the public could do to help keep the species alive.

Among this crowd was husband and wife Shane and Christina Laxton. For Shane and Christina, the Houston Zoo holds a special

place in their hearts as their first date was at the zoo, and they were equally excited to be a part of Houston history.

The Houston Zoo has inspired and encouraged Houston for 100 years and will continue to engage future generations for years to come. Turner said it best in his keynote-speech.

“The Houston Zoo has over 6,000 animals and today, they are not just our animals, they are our residents.”

Houston to unveil memorial for unjustly murdered veteran

BY EDWARD SAENZ

A Vietnam war veteran who was killed by Houston police over 40 years ago is having a public plaza downtown dedicated in his honor.

“Mr. Campos Torres was brutally murdered in 1977. Nothing we do will bring him back to his loved ones. The monument will send a message; his life mattered, and our city will never let something like this happen again.” said Mayor Sylvester Turner at the opening of the Campos Torres memorial.

Jose Campos Torres was a 23-year-old Hispanic veteran who fought in the Vietnam war. On May 5, 1977, Campos Torres was arrested by Houston police outside a bar near Houston’s East End neighborhood. He was arrested for disorderly conduct and was

promptly beaten.

Upon being taken to jail for booking, a supervisor said his injuries were too severe and to take Campos Torres to the hospital.

Instead, the responding officers beat Torres more and threw his body into Buffalo Bayou.

His body was found three days later.

Following the discovery, responding officers, Terry W. Denson and Stephen Orlando, were charged with murder. Then Police Chief B.G. Bond also fired three other officers involved in the incident.

The murder attracted nationwide attention, first on the overall assault and possible drowning, but later focused in on the racial aspect. Particularly the history of racism and misconduct that the Houston Police Department had repeatedly

shown over the years.

The officers were convicted on the state level, and an all-white jury sentenced Orlando and Denson with negligent homicide, a misdemeanor charge. The charge came with one year of probation and a \$1 fine.

The racially designed jury and small criminal convictions led to state-wide protests. The protests eventually led to negotiations between HPD officials and advocacy groups. As a result, additional HPD policies were created to address police-on-community racial relations.

Following the State of Texas’ controversial convictions of the two former officers, the case was reviewed by the U.S. Department of Justice. This led to Orlando, Denson, and a third officer, J.J. Janisch, each being convicted of violating Campos Torres’

civil rights and being given ten-year suspended sentences, with Orlando and Denson being sentenced to an additional nine months in federal prison.

The memorial is located at 1301 Commerce Street and Buffalo Bayou, close to the spot where Torres was thrown into the bayou.

“Facing injustice, recognizing racism, acknowledging wrongs --- that is how a city heals and moves forward to become a better place for everyone.”



The Jose Campos Torres memorial. The plaza will open in late May. Credit: Edward Saenz

Movie Review

Nicholas Cage portrays himself in year's funniest comedy

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent is a 2022 action-comedy film directed by Tom Gormican.

The film stars Nicholas Cage fictionalized as himself as well as Pedro Pascal, Tiffany Haddish, Ike Barinholtz, Sharon Hogan, Lilly Mo Sheen, Alessandra Mastronardi, and Neil Patrick Harris.

At a low point in his career, Cage accepts a bizarre \$1 million

offer from Javi Gutierrez (Pedro Pascal), an eccentric billionaire and Nicholas Cage super fan. Cage is asked to attend Javi's birthday weekend as the guest of honor on his secluded island.

Meanwhile, the CIA has been monitoring Javi, believing him to be an international arms dealer involved in a recent political kidnapping. Agents Vivian (Tiffany Haddish) and Martin (Ike Barinholtz) recruit Cage as an undercover operative

to obtain evidence of Javi's supposed criminal involvement.

The film operates on a meta-like level. Javi is a film buff that conspires with Cage to write a film screenplay together. The plot points from their conversations begin to happen to the duo onscreen.

There are constant references to other Cage films in the movie including "Ghost Rider," "Guarding Tess," "Face-Off," "Gone in 60 Seconds," and "The Croods." The references

are creatively woven into the plot of the film, the more subtle references may go unnoticed.

"The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent" is the funniest comedy to be released so far in 2022. The film has hilarious dialogue, entertaining action, and clever Cage Easter eggs throughout.

"As actors we like to hide behind a character but as soon as the character has your own name it is a whole different ballgame," Cage said on Jimmy Kimmel Live.

The Oscar-winning actor mentioned that his April 20 appearance was his first on a talk show in 14 years.

Cage and Pascal were well matched for what turned out to be a buddy comedy film. In the film, Cage is reluctant at first, but appears to develop a genuine bond with Javi. Their bromance was the highlight of the movie.

Ike Barinholtz is suitable in his role as CIA operative Martin, and he plays well off

Haddish. Barinholtz' character seems to disappear halfway through the film with his limited scenes.

Seeing more from Haddish would also have been nice although her character is more serious, therefore she was not given many jokes.

The film is portrayed to possess enough emotional depth for multiple screenings.

The R rating was an appropriate decision for an adult comedy as this film holds nothing back.

Movie Review

Liam Neeson flexes versatile acting skills in 'Memory'

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

Memory is a mystery thriller film released on April 29, that showcases the flexibility of beloved action actor Liam Neeson.

Alec Lewis (Liam Neeson) is an older hitman who yearns to retire. Intentionally botching his last intended victim pits Alec against human traffickers, gaining unwanted FBI attention of Agent Vincent (Guy Pierce) in the process.

Alec is hindered by his rapid onset Alzheimer's, which he poorly manages with medication. He still exhibits dangerous and deadly skills, easily dispatching the people sent for him. While he may kill people for profit, he does have clear codes and morals he lives by.

"An Arthurian quest to right a very horrible wrong," Neeson described the movie while speaking with JoBlo Celebrity Interviews.

Agent Vincent is just a few steps behind Alec for most of the

film. Vincent holds similar morals as Alec, never compromising his principles as an FBI agent.

Neeson still taking on such physical roles is impressive as the actor will be turning 70 this summer. His layered portrayal of Alec is fantastic, offering an accurate portrayal of dementia.

"My main concern was introducing elements of Alzheimer's affliction, hopefully the subtleties of the onset of Alzheimer's doesn't interfere with the thrust of the story," Neeson continued.

Although the poster portrays the film as a generic Neeson thriller, possibly a clone of the actor's popular "Taken" series, "Memory" subverts expectations.

Intricate mystery keeps the audience guessing throughout. Heavy violence and disturbing elements make this an R rated film.

In an interesting coincidence, Guy Pierce was also the star of the Christopher Nolan film "Memento"

(2000) where the lead also suffers from debilitating memory issues. Just like in "Memento," Neeson's character similarly writes vital details on his skin.

Originally a novel called "De Zak Alzheimer" by Belgian writer Jef Geeraerts, the film is also a remake of a Belgian film called "The Alzheimer Case." (2003)

"Memory" is set mainly in El Paso, Texas although much of the film was shot in Bulgaria. The El Paso Police are portrayed to be highly corrupt, willing to work for and with criminals.

Campbell is known for making well received movies like the 007 series entries "Goldeneye" (1995) and "Casino Royal" (2006) while also being responsible for the historically reviled "Green Lantern" (2011). "Memory" is one of his good ones.

The extreme action, mystery, and performance of Neeson all contribute to the film's quality and is worth the watch.

Movie Review

'The Northman' showcases historically accurate vikings

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

Robert Eggers delivers another well-crafted film in "The Northman," a 2022 historical action saga.

The film stars Alexander Skarsgard, Anya Taylor-Joy, Claes Bang, Nichole Kidman, Björk, Ethan Hawke, and Willem Dafoe.

The ancient Icelandic legend of Amleth was the source material for "The Northman."

Alexander Skarsgard leads the film as Amleth, a Norse prince who vows revenge for the death of his father, King Aurvandill (Ethan Hawke). Managing to escape, Amleth is found and raised as a Viking Berserker Warrior.

Berserkers sometimes wore predatory animal skins, working themselves up into a fury before battle. Skarsgard embodies this ritual multiple times, wearing a wolf skin, screaming, hyperventilating, and chest pounding, in preparation for ancient combat.

Amleth is determined and relentless in his calculated pursuit for vengeance as he

finds his father's killer. Amleth must navigate through premonitions from prophets, intentional enslavement and an ancient lacrosse-like sport celebrating extreme physical contact.

Anya Taylor-Joy complements the intense performance of Skarsgard as the self-proclaimed sorcerer Olga.

Amleth and Olga form a romantic relationship, hoping to one day overthrow the kingdom together. Nichole Kidman also delivers a nuanced performance for her role as Queen Gudrun, Amleth's mother.

Dream sequences dominate the film, as well as multiple supernatural elements. Undead warriors, psychic witches, howling wolves, enchanted blades, and even silly court jesters make an appearance in the richly prepared plot.

"We were working with the finest historians and archeologists in the field of Viking studies on this movie and this is the most historically accurate Viking movie ever made," Eggers said

during an interview with Vanity Fair.

Atmospheric would be an appropriate term for Eggers' films. His world-building and ability to inject genuine tension throughout the film keeps the audience on edge.

"Also, we were trying to fit a camera dolly onto a Viking longship which is not easy," continued Eggers.

One of the actors had to duck from the camera and throw his oar in the water to make the shot work.

"The Witch," (2015) "The Lighthouse," (2019) and "The Northman" were all written and directed by Eggers. The director co-wrote "The Northman" with Icelandic poet and writer Sjon, who also helped write the Oscar nominated Icelandic horror film "Lamb" (2021).

"The Northman" is an epic journey into the Norse lands and legends of the past and a 2022 must-see. With Eggers attention to detail, the audience is given an intricate and accurate representation of ancient Iceland.

Dateline Editor graduates, highlights Latina leadership

BY JESSE F RODRIGUEZ

Indira Zaldivar will graduate with a master's degree in technical communication and step down as the editor of The Dateline at the end of the semester. Zaldivar deserves recognition for her hard work, determination, dedication, and professionalism.

Zaldivar is one of kind, a strong young lady with leadership skills as well as emotional intelligence who was born in Honduras. She started writing articles for The Dateline in the fall of 2019. By the fall semester of 2020, she became a section editor, then an assistant editor, and the following summer, she became the editor, the highest-ranking position. Zaldivar led the newspaper to publish nine issues in spring 2022, the most editions The Dateline has published in a single semester.

"I got far more than I expected from study-

ing at UHD for five years," Zaldivar said. When Zaldivar was in the office, her presence was felt. Her positive energy, good vibes, and her enthusiasm to cover a story or an event at UHD were always at the top of her list.

If Zaldivar was not collaborating with others in the office about article ideas or preparing the layout of the next issue for the newspaper, I would sometimes catch her composting.

She was the first office worker I have ever seen cultivate her own compost station right outside of her office. Zaldivar is an advocate of going green and doing her part to reduce our carbon footprint as the Vice President of the Garden & Compost Club.

She will be missed, adored, and cherished for sharing all her experiences, spreading love and compassion, and adding her special

touch of Latin-American stories into the newspaper. Her work inspired countless students during her time.

Zaldivar did not only plant seeds to harvest fresh vegetables and other crops in the garden outside the Sciences and Technology Building, but she planted seeds of wisdom.

She offered UHD students the chance to earn an honest income by writing articles, while simultaneously "enriching her college experience and adding to her career goals," as she so powerfully stated, among other successes.

Zaldivar encouraged her section editors and writers to cover a story at UHD to fuel The Dateline and keep the newspaper alive and in print. Truly, her leadership will be missed, but I am sure the next editor will not have much work to reform the newspaper, since she left the newspaper intact

and ready to hand over the reins.

"There's no limitation, diverse stories are accepted, the student interest drives the newspaper," Zaldivar said with a smile on her face. "Local content is a plus."

Notably, The Dateline is a student-run newspaper since Volume One, back in 1982.

In the end, Zaldivar said she loved and will miss her experience as the editor.

"I networked, met wonderful people, and gained real-world experience," Zaldivar said. "I'm going to miss working with my friends . . . such amazing and talented people who make you feel respected and who help you grow . . . the office, the memorable moments attached to it and UHD, an institution that has welcomed me and shaped me into a better citizen."

Zaldivar inspired and created a community



Indira Zaldivar, the boss of The Dateline from summer 2021 to spring 2022, graduates with a master's degree in technical communication. Courtesy: Indira Zaldivar

of writers, innovators, and future leaders. It has been said, one person can make a difference. Zaldivar has created a rippling effect that will continue to flow in motion like the waves in an ocean that never seize, that never move in the same way nor settle down.

I thank her, recognize her, and place her in the spotlight one last time at UHD, but I know she will return. In my eyes, she will always be a leader and continue to create positive change, innovate, and inspire greatness and success wherever she goes as UHD alumna.

The perception of sexual abuse against men needs to change

BY ANONYMOUS

Sexual assault has always been perceived differently for men than woman. Men are told to ignore it, if they're even believed. It is often seen as a joke.

The ongoing trial between Amber Heard

and Johnny Depp has reignited conversations of male abuse across the internet and how trivialized it sometimes feels.

Speaking as a young man who was sexually assaulted by woman twice. People don't believe you. I had a therapist literal-

ly say "men can't be [abused]." Another therapist said that I should not talk about it and "try to forget about it." My whole life, I've had to endure jokes about male abuse and just quietly sit through it.

Taking a look at the Wikipedia pages for

both "Violence against men" and "Violence against women" continues to tell the story about the double standard on gender abuse. For VAW the page refers to it as a hate crime whereas the VAM page says that it can sometimes be considered a crime and is not recognized by international law.

When googling both, the first thing women see is a help line and multiple sources for therapy and help. Men see a link to Wikipedia and links to articles talking about domestic abuse, with most of the articles being about abuse towards women.

On a reddit post discussing abuse against young men, a user expressed a situation I

fully agree with.

"I was 15 and she was a bit younger, and my sisters friend. She was very forward about wanting to 'do things' to me." Said the user. "She made me really uncomfortable, and I wasn't ready for whatever it was she wanted from me. I then get comments from my dad like 'sounds like you're in there,' and I start to question why I passed up on the opportunity to possibly have sex with a girl."

The user went on to say how he felt that guys of all ages are required to want sex with woman or they are somehow deficient and broken.

"I feel like girls are pretty well taught to be wary of boys, and to

understand that they can say no. Unfortunately the same is not true for boys."

According to The Center for Disease Control, 1 in 3 men have experienced some form of partner abuse in their life time. Nearly half, 56%, were victims of some form of abuse before the age of 25, with a significant portion being abused before they were 18.

A spokesperson for the National Suicide Prevention hotline said that, "Many of the young men that call about being abused tell the same story, that they don't feel comfortable telling anyone because it's 'not possible' and they are left to figure things out on their own."

HELP IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE

The Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men" is the only service dedicated to violence against men

CALL 1-888-7HELPLINE (1-888-743-5754)

National Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-SAFE (7233)



Credit: Edward Saenz

The Dateline graduates thank UHD for rewarding college experience

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

As The Dateline’s spring 2022 graduates anticipate the date that will mark the culmination of our student years and the realization of our professional beginning, we thank and recognize the UHD faculty and administration and The Dateline for yielding a remarkable college experience.

As beautiful as commencement’s symbol of a new beginning is, graduates such as The Dateline’s Opinions Section Editor Jordynn Godfrey feels bitter-sweet about the conclusion of the experience as a UHD student and her depart from the faculty she met.

“I’m proud of my hard work and excited to graduate,” Godfrey said. “But, I’ll miss the wonderful faculty at UHD.”

Godfrey, an English major, said Professors Giuliana Lund, Katherine Jaeger, and Johanna Schertz were “very influential.” She enjoyed taking two classes from each professor.

Godfrey joined The Dateline after Professor Joe Sample posted an open position advertisement in one of Sample’s technical communication classes. She has since blossomed into a dependable writer and section editor covering any topic that was assigned to her in a compelling way.

Just like Godfrey, I also joined The Dateline through one of Sample’s technical communication classes.

That invitation extended into my three years of contributing to the newspaper with stories about the people who make UHD and Houston so great and diverse.

I’ve also witnessed how The Dateline has enabled dedicated students to grow through new roles and challenges. The Dateline’s Assistant Editor Edward Saenz said that for most of his college experience, he came to class and went straight home. Saenz didn’t interact with anyone or go to school events until his

work with The Dateline required him to be on campus more.

“Being a part of the Dateline...taught me skills I could never learn in a classroom,” Saenz said. “It taught me how to work with other people, and how to handle interpersonal relationships.”

The newspaper is a hands-on learning experience that has equipped us with storytelling, design, communication, and leadership skills.

Personally, leading the newspaper team as the fall 2021-spring 2022 Editor and socializing with the team in the office has been my favorite, out of the many beneficial experiences I have cherished

at UHD.

I’ve met talented and kind people through the newspaper.

For example, in fall 2021, The Dateline had the privilege to welcome writer Anita Goolcharan who has put her knowledge as a history major to the test through her insightful articles.

“Joining The Dateline was hands down the best decision I made at UHD,” Goolcharan said. “I have gained lifelong skills and made amazing friends here. I’m really going to miss it.”

We give credit where it is due, and we thank UHD and The Dateline for supporting this launchpad for

students interested in careers in writing, editing, and media.

“I am leaving UHD with so much gratitude and joy,” Arts & Entertainment Section Editor Carolina Valdez said about her experience. “I have found confidence in my work that I never thought possible, and I hope to feed into that as I move forward.

Valdez graduates with a bachelor’s degree in English and earned the title of “most over-worked yet excellent section editor” for fall 2021 and spring 2022.

“Congratulations to the class of 2022!” Valdez said. “May we all find success in our lives, whatever that may be.”

CLASS OF 2022

The Dateline Staff Graduates



INDIRA ZALDIVAR
Editor



EDWARD SAENZ
Assistant Editor



CAROLINA VALDEZ
A&E Editor



JORDYNN GODFREY
Opinions Editor



ANITA GOOLCHARAN
Writer



TAYLOR ENOCHS
Writer

Credit: Edward Saenz

Evil Geniuses wins 1st LCS title in Houston, showcases young North American talent

BY EDWARD SAENZ

The new North American League of Legends champions have been crowned, and in an astonishing way.

Evil Geniuses swept through almost every previous LCS champion en route to their historic victory in Houston.

They had to beat four-time LCS champions Cloud 9, four-time LCS champions Team Liquid, and finally, the reigning LCS champions, 100 Thieves, in the 2022 LCS Spring Finals.

By doing so Evil Geniuses have successfully earned their first LCS championship title and an invite to the Mid-Season Invitational.

In doing so, EG also became the first team to win the LCS with a majority North American roster since Team Solomid won in Summer 2017.

The victory came as somewhat of a shock to fans and experts alike. EG were never in the conversation as a title contender.

They spent most of the season as a middle of the pack team, beating the teams under them in the standings, but struggling with the league's top teams to the point that the team drew heavy criticism from fans and experts.

The criticism centered around the team's two rookies, Joseph "JojoPyun" Pyun and Kyle "Danny" Sakamaki. Both are young native talents from North America.

In a league dominated by European and Korean imported players, signing young North American talent is admitting you do not want to win.

"I don't wanna hear another [explicit] excuse from NA teams that say that they cannot bring

up their academy [players]. I'm so frustrated whenever teams don't actually bother to scout the talent they have," said LCS analyst Emily Rand about the lack of North American players in the league following EG's historic win.

"If there's one thing I really want to give EG absolute credit for, it's putting the faith and their trust behind these players that they brought up through their own system."

Despite the middling season, EG managed to qualify for the playoffs, and after a close 2-3 loss to Team Liquid, the team began their war path. The team would shock the world and show the true potential of North American teams and players.

Through their back-to-back-to-back 3-0 performances, Evil Geniuses shut down all the doubts surrounding

their team and swept through the entire lower bracket.

Riot Games made it a point in all the promotional content to highlight the fan aspect of the event, and how important it was to have an event in front of a live audience.

The 2022 LCS Spring Finals was the first finals done with a live audience since the 2019 LCS Summer Finals in Detroit, Michigan. As such, this event boasted a couple records. The event drew the highest viewership since the 2019 finals, with about 387,000 peak viewers. Second, in raw game time, this was the fastest finals ever in LCS history, at just over one hour.

"I always watch these events at home, so to see it in person was incredible," said a fellow League of Legends fan, Cassandra. "I got to watch the



Sold out crowd at NRG Stadium watches LCS Finals on April 24. Credit: Edward Saenz

game I love, in person, with thousands of other people.

"For Houston to be picked as the first [in person] event back, I'm going to remember this forever."

Another fan, Tyler Erb, drove down from Albuquerque, New Mexico to see the games, and despite both series being quick he still expressed his love for the event.

"No event will ever come to my city, so when I saw the event in Texas, I knew it was my best opportunity to go, so I made time," Erb said.

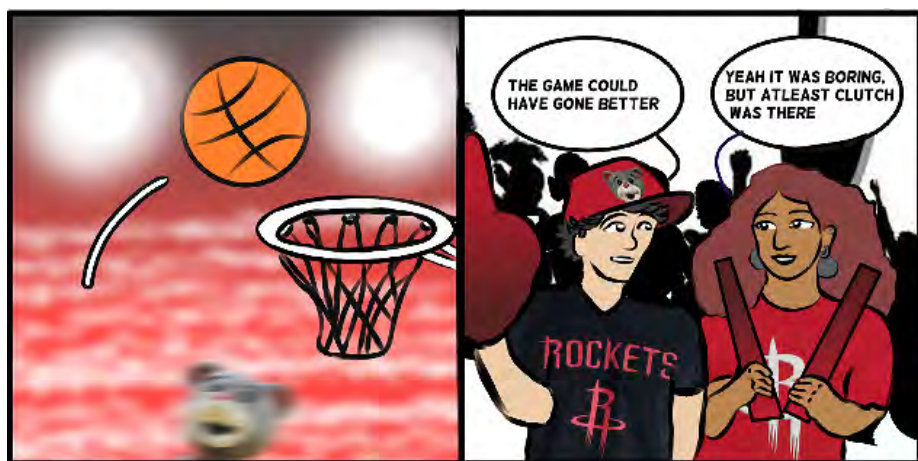
Following the events announcement 10 months ago, then commissioner of the LCS, Chris Greely, said it would be "the big-

gest esports road show in North America." However, due to factors outside of Riot Game's control the event did not live up to that expectation.

A security guard who wished to remain anonymous said that the production of the event was rushed from NRG's side as most weekend events are planned months in advance. However, NRG did not start preparing for the LCS finals until a week before.

Despite the minor hiccups for fans at NRG Stadium the event itself went off without a hitch. The stadium sold over 90% of the allotted tickets and the general fan reception was positive.

Houston Rockets finish a poor season, looking forward to next



Credit: Giselle Oviedo

BY ERIN HOUSTON

The Houston Rockets 2021-2022 season was a terrible yet entertaining thing to watch.

They went 20-62 the league's worst but watching rookie Jalen Green play is what made the games entertaining, especially towards the end of the season. He was a little

slow to start the season and did not play as well but he gave us a taste of how special that he can be.

Before the All-Star break, Green averaged 14.6 ppg, 3.1 rpg, and 2.3 apg in 43 games. After the All-Star break, Jaylen Green went on to average 20.3ppg 4.5rpg and 47% from the field in 23 games.

Having Eric Gordon as a mentor is great for the young team because they have a very bright future ahead of them.

Having John Wall as another mentor would be great but it seems that he isn't interested in his role coming off the bench. It's no lie John Wall could have helped win some games for the

Rockets, but he was not willing to accept anything less than a starting role.

Nobody, especially fans want to watch a 31-year-old injury-prone point guard running the offense. Wall being out on the floor as a starter would've ruined the development of the younger players.

Now granted the Rockets had a chance to trade Wall this year for Russell Westbrook but things probably would have gone from bad to worst. Considering how terrible Russell Westbrook has played for the Lakers it was best for the Rockets to not make that trade.

The Rockets are guaranteed a Top 5 pick in the 2022 Draft after all they did finish with the worst record in the

league. They have the potential to be a play-in team in the near future and here are some things they can do to get that point.

First, get rid of John Wall it will be hard because he's still owed \$47.37 million for the next season if he exercises his player option which he most definitely will.

A buyout may be the only way the rockets can get rid of John Wall. The second thing they could do is trade Christian Wood & Eric Gordon.

This can be tough loss for the team because both players are very valuable Wood is a great center and Gordon is a great mentor to have around the younger players however, if they are able to get some-

thing better in return then they should make a trade quickly. Finally, let all of the younger players develop and see who works with the team and who doesn't. "The Rockets definitely have a really good young core, they are honestly a superstar away from being a play-off team." said Andre Mathis, an avid fan of the Rockets and Basketball in general.

The Rockets have an insane amount of talent with a decent head coach, they could become a team that is a serious threat in the play-in and can eventually be a threat in the Western Conference, but they need to get all of the kinks out first. It will take some time but, it will be worth watching. them rise to greatness.