

UHD DATELINE

Student Run Since
Volume One

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UHD celebrates Green Mountain Energy's sustainability grant

By Indira Zaldivar

The UHD & Green Mountain Energy Sun Club Virtual Solar Celebration on Nov. 17 spotlighted Green Mountain Energy's sustainability grant towards a new 54-panel, ground mount, solar array with batteries on campus and research-grade photosynthesis equipment for student and faculty research.

The CST building is the first LEED gold-certified building in the University of Houston System. A previous gift from Green Mountain Energy funded the construction of two labs in the CST Building. This recent gift amounts to roughly \$250,000 and furthers green initiatives on campus. The solar array will be installed adjacent to the White Oak Bayou and the south side of the CST Building to optimize its visibility to people in the community. After the installation of the solar array, the Environmental lab and first floor biology lab will run on solar energy.

J. Akif Uzman, Ph.D., UHD professor of biology and biochemistry, and dean of the College of Sciences and Technology said that the array also serves as an educational resource for students and faculty. The data collected on energy capture, its conversion from light to electricity, and its usage will be available to stu-

dents and faculty in real time.

"This iconic piece of renewable energy along with several other engineering features of the Sciences and Technology Building prominently display and model sustainable energy and materials used to our local community," Azmin said. "It demonstrates UHD's commitment to pursue sustainability in urban spaces."

Michael Tobin, Ph.D., associate professor of natural sciences at UHD said during the celebration that the research-grade photosynthesis equipment will help engage the students in plant biology and research projects. Angelinda Maldonado is among the students at UHD who are already reaping the benefits of this equipment on campus. Maldonado said she has measured the photosynthetic rate of leaves amid variables such as light changes.

Other students shared during the celebration how this grant also perpetuates the legacy of the Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability in their lives and communities.

Marina Zafiris, data science student at UHD and Spring 2020 Support Undergraduate Sustainable Technology and Agricultural Needs Scholar recounted how she and her team of three other

students, designed and developed a mushroom incubator. Zafiris said the mushroom incubator could streamline and optimize food production of mushrooms.

"I was able to employ and expand my understanding of real time censored data management, interfaced design, and scientific visualization," Zafiris said. "In addition to scientific growth, the SUSTAIN program taught me vital skills and task orientation and collaboration, especially when we transitioned to an online format due to COVID-19."

Green Mountain Energy has summed to the list of UHD's grantors that are making a lasting impact in the legacy of sustainability in the lives of UHD students and thus, communities in Houston. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is also an important grantor that funded

the new curriculum of cross-disciplinary studies for the CUAS which is part of the CST.

Lisa Morano, Ph.D., professor of biology and microbiology, and director of CUAS said that the future of sustainability is cross-disciplinary. That is why it is important for UHD students from all majors to join programs offered by CST and CUAS to learn how to implement and lead green initiatives towards a more sustainable world.

"We can collect all the data we want, but that doesn't mean we're going to change people's minds," Morano said. "We need art; we need psychology; we need to think about the sustainability triangle which is economics, social stability, and the environment. If we just focus on one area, we will never make any progress."

For more information about the programs offered by CUAS such as SUSTAIN Scholars, Eco-Reps, and UHD's Gardening Project visit the Center for Urban Agriculture and

Sustainability and College of Sciences and Technology official websites.



College of Sciences & Technology pending the installation of a solar array made possible by the Green Mountain Energy Sun Club. Image credit: Indira Zaldivar.



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 the University of Houston-Downtown 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 the University of Houston-Downtown, 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 the University of Houston-Downtown.

Press releases, story ideas, news tips and suggestions are always welcomed. We encourage all students to contribute.

Any student interested in joining The Dateline staff may request more detailed information sending an email to the editors at editordateline@downtown@gmail.com.

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Retraction Notice

In the previous issue, Vol. 65 Iss. 6, published Nov. 13, The Dateline published a statement in "Faculty Senate Update" regarding Dr. Duncan's desire for the creation of a master's program in Technical Communication at UHD. The Dateline retracts this statement, as Dr. Duncan was referring to the desire for technical communication doctoral program to be created at UHD, not a master's program. In fact, a TCOM master's program already exists at UHD, and it was the first master's program at offered at the university.

In the same issue in "Did you know...?" The Dateline published a statement about the number of COVID-19 related deaths in Harris County, noting 19,000 deaths. The Dateline retracts this statement as this was the number of COVID-19 related deaths in the entire state of Texas, not only Harris County. The number of COVID-19 related deaths in Harris County is approximately 2,975, as of Nov. 25.



Local Business Spotlight

Axelrad Beer Garden



By Jeremy Barrientos

Patio weather is something every Houstonian looks forward to, and now that the temperature has dropped below 85 degrees, Axelrad Beer Garden offers one of the best patios in town. Located less than 10 minutes from the University of Houston-Downtown, on the corner of Alabama and Alameda Road, Axelrad opened in January 2016 as a neighborhood watering hole known for its variety of beers on tap. Since then, Axelrad has transformed into one of the most vibrant and entertaining establishments that mix Houston's culture and art scene.

Founded by Adam Brackman, Monte Large, and Jeff Kaplan, Axelrad occupies a historic 100 year-old building with an immense outdoor patio and seating area. Known for its abundance of hammocks, Axelrad is the perfect setting to relax, drink your favorite beverage, and listen to live music. The pet friendly beer garden offers more than a hundred drink options and shares the space with Luigi's Pizzeria and Retrospect Coffee.

Since Axelrad has grown in popularity, the owners teamed with

Wonky Power Records for event and concert management, which provides Houston's best musicians with a place to perform. Axelrad's outdoor patio has a large stage as well as two smaller indoor stages for bands and performers. They host musicians of all genres including jazz, soul, blues, Latinx, indie, electronic, experimental, world, ska, punk, pop, rock, and even classical. The event space also hosts video art pieces, film screenings, festivals, and even yard sales.

The recent pandemic forced the temporary closure of Axelrad for several months, but that did not stop the owners and management from thinking outside the box. Axelradio is a live virtual music series that offers streaming performances of the musicians, DJs, and other artists struggling during the pandemic. Axelradio both entertains bored citizens of the pandemic, while supporting struggling artists by streaming their music and accepting donations on their behalf. Axelrad Drive-In Rooftop Concerts were also hosted during the temporary closure. At Axelrad's Rooftop Concerts bands performed from the roof of the build-

ing, people watched (and social distanced) from the parking lot below. Axelrad has officially reopened for business with certain health and safety measures to combat the spread of COVID-19.

They are currently taking reservations for their indoor and outdoor seating areas, but walk-ins are more than welcome if the space is available. Axelrad's daily and weekly events, such as movie nights, local markets, and jazz Wednesdays, have also resumed. They will also continue to host monthly events like Latin night every third Sunday, Cumbia night every second Friday, and vinyl night every first Thursday.

To keep up to date with events, Axelrad has a social calendar on their website page and update their social media pages frequently.

For more information, follow Axelrad on Instagram @axelradhouston or swing by 1517 Alabama St., Houston, Texas 77004. Call ahead for reservations at 713.597.8800.

Faculty Spotlight

Professor Natacha Poggio

By Indira Zaldivar

A social impact design strategist, Assistant Professor Natacha Poggio, M.F.A., teaches courses in graphic design at UHD. Through her Graphic Design II course, Gators designed a voter engagement flyer for the 2020 presidential election.

The students' designs were displayed on the official Instagram account of Voter Engagement in the Classroom, a nationwide collaboration among professors and lectures which shares the celebration of student work.

"Regardless of citizenship status, this voting engagement project allows students to contribute their voices and leads to a greater sense of social responsibility," Poggio told the Voter Engagement in the Classroom.

Poggio is a proud Latina, born in Argentina. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina. She also holds a Master of Fine Arts in Experience Design from the University of Texas at Austin.

While Poggio believes that the core right of citizenship is the ability to vote and elect our leaders, she was denied this right when she moved to the U.S. Poggio said she had to wait 17 years to become a U.S. naturalized citizen and be able to vote again. Sarah Ramirez, fine arts student at UHD, is currently enrolled in Graphic Design II taught by Poggio. Ramirez said this was her first voter-engagement design and that Poggio's course has opened graphic design skills she had no

idea she had. Voter Engagement in the Classroom featured her design on Instagram. Ramirez actively shares social-advocacy content on Instagram.

She said she can't wait to use the lessons learned in Poggio's classroom in the future. Ramirez also explained the reason behind "Your Vote Counts Always" on her flyer.

"It came from an individual I talked to who said that it didn't matter if they voted or not because things were always going to be bad," Ramirez said. "I took that skepticism and switched it around a bit. I know things are not always going to be amazing, but voting is just a step further into the right direction. Things will always take time."

Ramirez shared she wanted to illustrate people of color in her design because she comes from a family of Latinx roots; Nicaraguan mother and Mexican father. She also said she grew up in a diverse area in Houston "I literally grew up in many walks of life," Ramirez said. "It only made sense to show that everyone needs to contribute to voting."

In this COVID-19 area, civic-engagement organizations and activists like Poggio have recognized the importance of sharing voter-engagement material through social media to mobilize civic duty.

"I try to inspire students to become more socially responsible citizens in the world," Poggio told Voter Engagement in the classroom. "Some decisions are out of our control, but long-term decisions we can affect if we invest in our communities."

Outside of the virtual classroom, Poggio actively participates in virtual panels and lectures as the founder of Design for Global Change, TEDx Speaker, and the design advocacy director for AIGA Houston. Poggio is a two-time recipient of the Ideas that Matter grant (2010 and 2014). The second project spanned from 2012-2015 where she collaborated with cross disciplinary experts to produce education materials of low-knee amputees. Those educational materials have been distributed in Latin America and Africa.

Professor Natacha Poggio contributes to design-advocacy content on the following Instagram accounts: @natachapoggio @aigahouston



Social-advocate design strategist, Assistant Professor Natacha Poggio, teaches courses in Graphic Design at UHD. Image courtesy of Voter Engagement in the Classroom's official Instagram account: @designingthevote.

Faculty Senate Update

By Sheryl Sellers

On Nov. 17, following acceptance of the Nov. 3 Faculty Senate Meeting minutes, Faculty Senate President, Ron Beebe, Ph.D., Professor of Educational Research, welcomed guest presenter Pat Ensor, Executive Director W. I. Dykes Library.

Ms. Ensor's discussion centered around UHD's association with "Elsevier" and its electronic journals system, "Scencedirect".

Elsevier collects millions of dollars each year from universities to access scholarly journals through their system and to access the most recent data. These are substantial sums particularly if a party is only interested in "highest use" journals, or previous texts.

The largest publisher of scholarly content, Elsevier also holds a large part of the market. Furthermore, if an individual publishes a paper through Elsevier, they give up their rights to their work.

Ms. Ensor presented this information to the senate to ascertain whether the faculty wants to consider not renewing the contract with the service. She will reconnect with the senate as discussions with Elsevier move forward.

Next on the agenda, there were some follow-ups from teams that met with Provost Dr. Eric Carl Link on several issues.

Regarding course releases, Dr. Beebe stated that it was "not a hard sell to the Provost," whose response was, "If you send me a resolution, I will sign off on it."

After some discussion, it was decided that

Dr. Beebe would work up a short and direct resolution requesting a course release in each long semester for shared governance committee chairs of the Faculty Affairs Committee, the Academic Policy Committee and University Curriculum Committee. Also, the Executive Committee met with the Provost the previous week, and Dr. Beebe called upon Ed Cueva, Ph.D. to give an update from that meeting.

During the meeting, Provost Link stated that there was an initiative to have a formal program review process, and that each department would undergo a self-study using external reviewers. The State of Texas dictates that such a study should be accomplished every ten years, some universities do so every five, and UHD typically takes on assessments every seven years.

Dr. Cueva addressed the Provost with the question, "What is the motivation, the reason, for UHD to engage in the development of this policy?"

Responding that the process would not launch until 2022, Dr. Link thought it would be a good time to undergo the planning process which would bring UHD into line with other universities.

The Executive Committee discussed this further following the meeting with Dr. Link. One concern was how the faculty would be engaged in a way that they would "buy into the process" considering there is already some issues surrounding assessments at UHD. Another concern centered around the number of faculty, the hours required as well as the additional resources.

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Faculty Senate Update

Continued on Gator Life, Page 4

Dr. Beebe commented that he is not against a review, but in the middle of a pandemic may not be the best time. Nell Sullivan, Ph.D., commented that such a study could be very disruptive and “maybe we should have a few guinea pigs to go first.”

This comment did find some agreement. Further discussion revolved around why it is important, why it is being required and how it can benefit a program.

Dr. Sullivan also brought up the current issues that she has with the assessments at UHD, insomuch as it feels like the “tail is wagging the dog.”

For instance, there are essays she is required to have students write, dictated by a requirement outside of the course; a task she would not ordinarily assign. Considering this, she continued that there could be a lot of resentment being told to conform to someone outside the particular program determining what the program should require. Another concern is the expense of hiring an additional 15 external individuals. Additionally, there would need to be an evaluation process confirming that the steps recommended are put into place.

Continuing, Dr. Beebe mentioned that he became aware of courses for which instructors receive additional pay. Amy Baird, Assistant Chair and Associate Professor, Biology, offered insight. Some of the freshman biology classes offer an additional hour of support for students via Zoom. This has been beneficial for student success but hard on faculty. They do receive additional remuneration for the additional hour tacked on creating a four-hour course,

rather than three hours.

On the subject of student support, it was recommended that someone take on the task of working with General Education for a resolution to support ESL (English as a Second Language) students. Dr. Franklin Allaire and Dr. Rupak Rauniar PMP picked up this task.

As for the remaining issues, the following individuals were suggested to assist:

Dr. Cueva suggested that Jerry Johnson, Ph.D. be involved in discussions surrounding Teacher Load and Anti-Racism. As Vice President of Program Curriculum, Michelle Moosally, Ph.D. should be kept in the loop on the process of Graduate/Doctoral Programs.

Sandra Dahlberg, Ph.D., as the university Omsbud, will be drawn into the Omsbud policy which is already being discussed in the Faculty Affairs Committee.

It was suggested that David Bradley, Vice President of Administration and Finance, and Mary Torres, MBA, University Business Services assist Candace TenBrink, Ph.D. with the parking issue. It was queried about whether the new wellness building would have a parking garage. Dr. Link spoke up stating that there would not be a garage, but a parking lot adjacent to the building will have approximately 30-40 spaces.

And finally, due to a conflict with the next senate meeting occurring at the same time as the upcoming Open Forum with Interim President Antonio D. Tillis, Ph.D. the next Faculty Senate Meeting has been moved to Dec. 8.

UHD's Mariachi Los Caimanes amplifies Latinx culture

By Indira Zaldivar

Despite the pandemic, UHD's mariachi band, Los Caimanes, have been in demand in Houston, representing the talent of UHD Gators and roots of Latinx culture. Los Caimanes debuted last December for a performance in honor of Day of the Dead. Flash forward to today, they once again commemorated this important celebration in the Latinx community worldwide by joining Grupo de Teatro Indigo (Indigo Theatre Group) at Miller Outdoor Theatre on Oct. 30 for their annual Day of the Dead play, “Calavera con Calavera” (Skulls). This year's performance made history by being the first local theater group with Latinx immigrant members to present an all-Spanish play (with English subtitles).

Los Caimanes accompanied the performance with traditional Mexican songs, such as “Nadie Es Eterno” (Nobody Is Eternal). Litzzy Rodriguez, trumpeter with Los Caimanes and UHD student, has played since the group's first informational session in September 2019. She said she resonated with the story of “Calavera Con Calavera” because “it's not always the same saying goodbye to family members from over here.”

Rodriguez added that this performance was a good experience on what it is to be backstage and be a part of a cast such as GTI and Fundacion Latino Americana de Accion Social.

“It felt like the

real deal not just as a Latina but as an immigrant,” Rodriguez said. “It was truly an honor to be a part of this and representing our culture and showing people what these traditions mean to us.”

Director and Arranger of Los Caimanes, Jose Manuel Vasquez, also said that the Miller Outdoor Theater performance was special for him because it was watched in Mexico. Vasquez told The Dateline that Miller Outdoor Theater has requested another stellar appearance in the future (stay tuned for details).

Los Caimanes continued the Day of the Dead celebration on Nov. 1 with another performance, this time at Talento Bilingue. However, those were only two of the many hit appearances. From amplifying the Latinx culture to mobilizing voters, Los Caimanes

have been in demand despite the pandemic.

Their live performances at H-Town Votes Live on Oct. 23 and 24 are available through the official Facebook page and YouTube channel of Soalz Media. FOX26 also featured their performance of the classic mariachi song “Mariachi Loco” from the Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Auditorium early in November. Jeffrey Tijerina, violinist for Los Caimanes and UHD student, shared with FOX26 Broadcaster Isiah Carey that the mariachi band has brought them together even in isolation.

“We started this as an exercise in our passion and what we love, and it turned into something much bigger,” he added. “It's been real good for the Hispanic community as well as celebrating our culture within the United States.”

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“Los Caimanes,” UHD's mariachi band, performs live for a feature broadcasted by FOX26. Image courtesy of Jose Manuel Vasquez, director of Los Caimanes.



Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza National Vocalist Competition Finalist, Jimmy Arredondo of “Los Caimanes.” Image courtesy of Jose Manuel Vasquez.

New BLS report sheds light on the job search

By Keven Balderas

Although the number of people collecting unemployment benefits has steadily fallen since the spring, non-farm employment in October was below its February level by 10.1 million, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Meanwhile, the number of job openings in September 2020 was 566,000 less, compared to September 2019 (not seasonally adjusted).

More people entering the labor market, amid fewer positions available overall, and against the backdrop of a shaky global economy because of the ongoing pandemic, suggests tough, bewildering times for the job seeker.

“It’s just that uncertainty that makes you wonder, and it kind of makes your nervous,” expressed Faiza Yusuf, a second-year MBA candidate at UHD, about the job search.

Job seekers may then greet with glee the latest BLS report by research

economists Michael Dalton and Jeffrey Groen, who have examined 2018 data to extract insight on the job search. The economists have clarified several matters. First, it remains a numbers’ game for job seekers.

“There is a clear pattern that more applications lead to more interviews,” they write. For instance, 38% of those who submitted 1 to 10 job applications did not achieve a single interview. Meanwhile, half of that, 19%, arrived at the same result after submitting 21 to 80 applications.

Yet, no specific number of submitted applications ever guaranteed the job seeker an interview. About 15 percent of those who submitted 81 or more applications never reached the interview stage. Odds in the job seeker’s favor only improve, the more applications sent in, not vanish.

There is a caveat, however. It appears job seekers’

odds of being offered a job were 10 percentage points higher when submitting 21 to 80 applications, than when submitting 81 or more applications. The economists cite being less targeted as one of the reasons for why that happened. Less is sometimes more.

The BLS report also offers insight for employers. To delay filling open positions is known to be expensive in every sense of the word, so few firms would be pleased to finally offer a job to a candidate, only for that candidate to turn them down.

In 2018, 23% of job seekers turned down offers because of low wages, 12% did so because of inconvenient hours, and 7% did too because of an inflexible schedule. That amounts to 4 out of every 10 candidates turning down job offers on issues that are to some extent negotiable. Hence, in order to save time and money, employers could think twice about

Job Search Statistics

More job applications leads to more interviews

- 62% of those who submitted 1 - 10 job applications secured at least one job interview.
- 81% of those who submitted 20-80 applications secured at least one job interview
- 85% of those who submitted 81 or more applications secured at least one job interview.

However, more job applications does not guarantee more job offers

81%

Odds of being offered a job were 10% higher when submitting 21-80 applications as compared to submitting 81 or more applications

Quantity of applications is important, but quality of job applications is also important

When searching for jobs, apply, apply, apply. But target your applications at those companies and industries in which your specific skills and talents will be best recognized and most beneficial.

By Whitney Barrett

being rigid.

The data available to the economists was not exhaustive, so the report leaves certain considerations unaddressed, such as what additional steps (i.e. cold outreach, insider references, etc.) may matter. Nonetheless,

the report is in line with the advice that career coaches have traditionally professed.

All the same, given that the data was a result of job seekers waiting no less than two months for a call back, there is at least one con-

stant between 2018 and 2020: few jobs are filled speedily. “What’s the guarantee, after six months from graduating, I would find something?” commented Yusuf. “So yeah, it is stressful mentally.”

Mariachi Los Caimanes

Continued from Gator Life, Page 4

Not only have they earned local acclaim but also national. Vocalist Jimmy Arredondo, senior at UHD, is recognized nationwide as a finalist for the 26th Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza National Vocalist Competition. Arredondo made it in the top 10 in the country and solely represents the Houston metropolitan area.

Vazquez said that details on the awards show broadcast will be posted soon on Instagram and Facebook. He added that he is proud of the current group and that he anticipates high profile gigs for Los Caimanes in the future. Vazquez told the Dateline that a scholarship opportunity is coming soon. Stay tuned for mer-

it-based scholarship opportunities.

Los Caimanes is currently looking for violin players. For more information email Director Jose Vazquez at vazquezj@uhd.edu. For more information and “Los Caimanes” latest posts follow @uhdmariachi on Instagram and official Facebook page.



“Los Caimanes” violinist, Jeffrey Tijerina, speaks to FOX26 Broadcaster Isiah Carey on Nov. 5 at Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Auditorium. Image Courtesy of Jose Manuel Vasquez, director and arranger of Los Caimanes.



COVID-19 UPDATES

US surpasses 250,000 COVID-19 related deaths

By Keven Balderas

On Nov. 18, the United States' COVID-19 death toll surpassed 250,000. This occurred only nine months after the first death on American soil.

It was originally believed that the first death due to COVID-19 occurred on Mar. 9, but in April, officials in Santa Clara County, California learned that two individuals had died of COVID-19 at least as early as Feb. 6. That means it has only taken COVID-19 about nine and a half

months to claim the lives of a quarter of a million people in the U.S. alone.

To put that number in perspective, the death toll represents 86% of the American lives lost in combat during the three and a half years of the U.S. involvement in WWII. It also represents one out of every 10 people living in the City of Houston.

The day before the grim milestone was reached, Harris County residents received a text

alert, asking them to "stop gatherings, get tested, and wear a mask" in response to growing cases of COVID-19 within the county. Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo expressed concern over the growing number of cases at a press conference earlier that.

"Since the start of the fall, late September, the number of average daily new cases we report in Harris County has increased 250%, from 253 to 635," Hidalgo said.

Cases in Harris County have not risen to the levels seen within other parts of the country, such as the Midwest. On the week of Nov. 19, every county in Wyoming had seen average new daily cases per 100,000 exceed 70, whereas Harris County hovers around 20, according to data compiled by The Johns Hopkins University.

In a similar situation as Wyoming is North Dakota. Its most populous county, Cass County, has

seen average new daily cases per 100,000 of 149.1 in the same week.

On the whole, more people across the country are falling ill with COVID-19, and that trend prompted the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to update its website and hold a press briefing on Nov. 19, urging Americans not to travel for Thanksgiving.

"COVID-19 is turning out to be a formidable foe. We must unite in our efforts against this

virus, and now more than ever, not let down our guard," said Dr. Henry Walke, the incident manager for the CDC's COVID-19 response.

The CDC's briefing comes on the heels of the Harris County Public Health Department's own press release, published on Nov. 16, warning residents against large indoor gatherings, and providing a list of testing sites.

Stocks are not dropping in ongoing pandemic

By Shirley Bright

COVID-19 deaths toll climbed to 250,000 in America. The stocks of pharmaceutical company Pfizer dropped, but BioNTech went up. The pandemic continues without a real end in sight which has rocked the stock market.

Whizy Kim explained, "Financial experts often say that the stock market hates uncertainty." Kim used this statement to reference the uncertainty surrounding the most recent presidential election, in which Joe Biden has been declared the expected winner. But that statement of uncertainty is true for the stock market at all times. Uncertainty is a large of a factor during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The heartbeat of the stock faced several pulsating forces in the last month of October and November. The decision of the presidential election loomed over the stock market. The concern of the leadership that would either continue with the known state of President Trump or would change the course of direction to uncertainty of the new administration of Biden.

The matter of the two senate seats in the state of Georgia, lead to questions of the power of the legislative forces in Washington D.C. Then the question of the pandemic lingers on due to uncertainty - when will a vaccine become available and how effective will this vaccine be whenever

it is released on the market?

On the weekend prior to the Nov. 3 Presidential Election, most of all major financial indexes did a "stop, drop and wait-to-see" before the election. There had been an unprecedented number of early voting across the country for this election. This uncertainty only lasted a few days after the election. The day after the election, the stock market took another pause to consider the undefined president, and then again, it began to move upward.

In late September, Pfizer Pharmaceutical CEO, Albert Bourla, said the company expected to have a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus tested and approved

by the end of November and ready for the market by the end of the year. Pfizer teamed up with BioNTech a German drug manufacturer to produce a vaccine for COVID-19. Pfizer invested \$1.5 billion in producing the vaccine. Pfizer's stocks are down by a small percentage point 0.28% like other pharmaceutical companies such as AstraZeneca down by 0.17% points, \$36.60 - \$39.80 and \$54.06 - \$64.94 the current market price and their 52-week high respectively. Half of the pharmaceutical companies engaged in creating a vaccine are up, while the others are down all based upon their stage of formulation of a vaccine.

The overall state of the market conditions is based upon concerns of when this pandemic will cease.

Federal Reserve Chairman Powell said in a meeting on Nov. 12, "The next few months could be challenging." Once again was the uncertainty of the new death tolls on the economy or the effectiveness of the vaccine.

As late as Nov. 18, Pfizer had reported a 95% effective rate for the shot in its studies and is believed to be safe. Pfizer expects the vaccine to be ready for distribution by the end of 2020, but the Federal Reserve has not changed any of its policies. Powell said the economy grew

faster than expected, but he cautiously stated that the rebound has been uneven and was incomplete.

Chairman Powell has assured the markets that the Federal Reserve will continue to use all of its tools necessary to keep the economy stable. The pandemic will continue to rock the market as the death tolls continue to rise. But as Motley Fool said on Oct. 26, "We think all investors should invest for the long term - the clear course of history is 'up,' and a stock market is continuously marching higher." Hold steady and the market will be on the rise again.

Georgia's Senate elections explained

By Aansa Usmani

On Nov. 3, this year's Election Day, individuals across the country were glued to their television and phone screens, anxiously awaiting the results of the presidential race. Other elective offices were on the ballot, from federal, state, and local, with candidates allying themselves with established political parties (Democrats and Republicans) or third-party factions (Libertarians, Green Party, etc.) As the night dragged on, Senate elections were being called, with some losing their

seats and others either retaining or flipping a seat to an opposing political party.

One state may determine the Senate Chamber's majority party, with both Senate elections having run-off elections in January 2021. On Election Day, Georgia had expected one run-off election; Democrats Reverend Raphael Warnock and Matt Liebermann ran against Republicans, Incumbent Senator Kellie Loeffler and former House of Representative Member Doug Collins. Warnock and Loeffler have advanced

to the run-off, and the winner will hold this Senate seat until 2022.

Collins conceded to Loeffler on Election night and endorsed her for the Senate, tweeting, "I just called @kloeffler and congratulated her on making the run-off. She has my support and endorsement. I look forward to all Republicans coming together. Raphael Warnock would be a disaster for Georgia and America." Collins' endorsement of Loeffler unifies Georgia's Republican party, setting aside a bitter rivalry in

proving their loyalty to Trump and the conservative values. Liebermann has not endorsed Warnock nor has given any statement at the time of this writing.

The other Senate race is between Democrat community-organizer Jon Ossoff and Republican Incumbent Senator David Purdue, also warranted a run-off election. Neither candidate attained 50% elective support (49.73% for Purdue and 47.95% for Ossoff).

Ossoff's campaign and policies resonated with many

millennials and Gen Z's, as his campaign had made massive outreach operations to college students and first-time voters by participating in phone banking, texting, and other virtual campaign measures to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

Purdue has continued traditional campaigning, hosting physical rallies and enlisting volunteers to reach voters door-to-door. These activities are more prone to spread of COVID-19 but has been beneficial towards his campaign and overall message.

Both of these elections are crucial in determining which party will have majority control under President-elect Biden. If the Republicans maintain their majority, it will impede legislative efforts made by House Democrats and the incoming Biden administration. Should Democrats attain a majority, it can allow a smoother transition for the next presidential administration and fulfill their campaign plans.



L: Incumbent Senator David Purdue (R-GA) R: Democratic challenger, Jon Ossoff. Image courtesy of WTOC.com



L: Incumbent Senator Kellie Loeffler (R-GA) R: Democratic Challenger, Rev. Raphael Warnock. Image courtesy of Macon Telegraph.

President Trump appeals to Hollywood to garner support for his COVID-19 response

By Alex Riley

In the weeks leading up to the election, the Department of Health and Human Services hired PR firms to vet the political views of hundreds of celebrities to create an ad campaign that casts President Donald Trump's response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic in a more positive light.

President Trump has been the target of much scru-

tiny from Hollywood celebrities. In turn, he often fires back, instating, and Trump has fired back, picking petty Twitter fights with many of them including renowned actress, Meryl Streep to model Chrissy Teigen.

The Trump campaign's attempt in persuading Hollywood celebrities does not discount from the fact that there is value in celebrity endorse-

ments; the weight of a celebrity endorsement can cause either mass support or distrust, depending on the figure and their status.

Documents released by the House Oversight and Reform Committee from one of the firms that contacted over 200 celebrities to feature a profile on each of their works and achievements, as well as their feelings towards the current

administration.

Pop singer, Christina Aguilera, was featured on the same report, her profile describing her as, "an Obama-supporting Democrat and a gay-rights supporting Liberal."

Director Judd Apatow's thoughts were summed up, "[Donald Trump] does not have the intellectual capacity to run as president."

This overt op-

eration was anticipated to cost an upward of \$250 million in swaying public perception of the president and his administration's handling of the coronavirus. All the while Americans are still in desperate need of another stimulus package, and the death toll is on the brink of surpassing 250,000.

Although the campaign failed to garner massive celeb-

rity support, it served as an example of what Trump has done his entire presidency—he has delivered a message that portrays him in a better light while simultaneously ignoring the bigger picture - in this case, the pandemic and its impacts on American citizens.

Texans may say farewell to J.J. Watt

By Sheryl Sellers

The Houston Texans football team is suffering through another nondescript season, chalking up a 2-7 record thus far. Wide receiver, J.J. Watt, has expressed dismay as to where the team is headed.

Following a 0-4 start, the Texans fired head coach and general manager, Bill O'Brien, placing former associate head coach Romeo Crennel at the helm.

O'Brien's trade of wide receiver and star player, De'Andre Hopkins, for injury prone running back David Johnson followed his

2019 trade of Jadeveon Clowney, defensive end and three-time Pro-Bowler. These transactions did nothing to bolster an already floundering team.

A team rebuilding exercise may well usher in an unfortunate lead foot on the Houston Texans. Wide receiver, J.J. Watt, is now rumored to consider a trade.

Watt, a first-round draft pick in 2011 has been named Defensive Player of the Year three times and has made the All-Pro team five times. With two non-guaranteed years left on his

six-year \$100 million contract, Watt is not looking for more money or a contract extension.

"I think if I went back and asked for an extension or more money right now, I think that would be the wrong move," Watt said.

"I'm not looking to rebuild. I'm looking to go after a championship, and that's what I want to do."

Finding a championship with the Houston Texans does not appear on the football scanner any time soon. And Watt is aware that, at 31, he does not have ten years left in the league, but he asserts that he does maintain many more good years of play.

J. J. Watt fans may see those good years and a championship ring on his finger, but it may not be on a Houston Texans #99 jersey.

Upcoming Rockets season may be clean-shaven

By Sheryl Sellers

The Houston Rockets may soon shave the Beard from their team, if the "Beard," otherwise known as James Harden gets his way.

As well as shooting extraordinary three pointers, and schmoozing through defense, Harden has been calling the shots in the Rockets organization for some time. Management gave into Harden's desire to trade Chris Paul; they restructured offense as he sought the MVP award; they shuffled the roster so the offensive players could watch him and the defensive team defend him; and he reigned king in the locker room, never challenged.

So, several questions abound. Why does Harden want to leave Houston; and why did he turn down a record-setting contract worth \$50 million?

One rumor asserts that Hard-

en rejected the deal because of owner Tilman Fertitta's support of President Donald Trump and the Republican party. Politics can be at play in every arena. Other rumors connect Harden's desire to leave the team with Rockets General Manager, Daryl Morey, stepping down in October, and head coach Mike D'Antoni turning down extension offers in September at the end of the 2020 season.

Harden has \$133 million over three years left on his contract with Houston, which equates to two more seasons with the Rockets. Time is on the Rocket's side, and they are "willing to get uncomfortable" with Harden as the team heads into spring training.

Also, outside of the regular basketball season, Harden has under-performed. In the past two seasons, the Rockets

could not get past the second round of play even with their pre-eminent player at the helm.

To fit in with another franchise many of the basketball talking heads believe that Harden will have to change not only his style of play but his character. He has not performed well under pressure; he is injury prone and is temperament is questionable. And he needs to learn to sacrifice to get into the NBA Finals. The only time Harden played in the Finals was as the sixth man with the Oklahoma City Thunder.

Meeting his goal of taking his offensive game to the Brooklyn Nets to team up with Kyrie Irving and former Thunder teammate, Kevin Durant, remains to be seen. This time Rockets management will have the final say.



Image courtesy of Texanswire.USAToday.com



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Iconic cover sparks controversy

By Priscila Batres

On Nov. 13 Vogue Magazine announced that Harry Styles would feature in the December issue, becoming the first solo male to be on the cover in the 127 years since Vogue was established. Styles was shot by Tyler Mitchell, styled by Camila Nickerson and interviewed by Hamish Bowles.

In the interview, Harry talked about his successful studio album "Fine Line" and working on new music while trying to capture the "same experimental spirit."

Harry mentioned that "Music... it's important to evolve and that extends to clothes and videos and all that stuff."

Styles said he looks forward to going back to touring once it is safe again for everyone. Touring is his favorite of working in music. His fans create an atmosphere for each other and him.

"When they

come to the show, they give so much that it makes this atmosphere that I've always found so loving and accepting."

Styles also mentioned that the social uprising that has occurred this year has provided him personal growth.

"I think it's for opening and listening and learning. I've been trying to read and educate myself so that in 20 years, I'm still doing the right things and taking the right steps."

Harry's striking image has always caught the eye of many. For him, however, clothes are something he does not take too seriously.

"I'll put on something that feels flamboyant, and I don't feel crazy wearing it. I think if you get something that you feel amazing in, it's like a superhero outfit. Clothes are there to have fun with and experiment with and play with."

Styles identifies as "unlabeled" and it is no secret that he is in touch with his

feminine side.

However, Harry's Vogue cover did not come without controversy. On the cover, Styles wore a long, gray gown paired with a black blazer.

For days, people accused him of queer-baiting without really understanding the meaning behind that word. Queer-baiting is a term used for TV and films in the media that market their stories towards the LGBTQIA+ community with the promise of queer characters but fail to deliver, which Styles does not do.

Candace Owens, a republican commentator, commented on the cover tweeting "the steady feminization of our men at the same time of Marxism is being taught to our children is not a coincidence. Bring back manly man" sparking online backlash.

On the other hand, some conservatives also attacked Styles, and there were many homophobic

comments. A lot of it was a little absurd because all he did was wear a dress. Of course, many people outweighed the negativity by supporting the cover because clothes have no gender.

Author Alok-Vaid-Menon commented on Harry's cover that is important to mention.

Menon said, "Do I think this is a sign of progress of society's evolution away from binary gender? Yes. Do trans femmes of color receive praise for doing the same thing every day? No. We can both acknowledge this is an unprecedented moment while also remembering that it could only happen because of the resistance of trans femmes of color. We, who for decades, were imprisoned by cross-dressing legislation. Is that Harry's fault? No. It's the fault of systems of trans-misogyny and racism."

This is true. Society can acknowledge that Style's

Vogue cover is inspiring and progressive, and at the same time, be aware that there is a lot of work that needs to be done in the name of equality.

Overall, Harry's cover is historic and iconic. It will inspire many people who

struggle with their identity. It will encourage many to see a prominent artist like Harry embrace his femininity and just unapologetically be himself. After all, fashion is a form of self-expression.



Warner Bros. asks Depp to resign

By Varah Thornton

Warner Brother's Studios has asked Johnny Depp to resign from his role as Gelert Grindelwald in the Fantastic Beasts franchise.

Though no mention of the resignation can be found on the WB website, Depp took to social media to give an update. In an Instagram post, Depp stated, "I wish to let you know

that I have been asked to resign by Warner Bros. from my role as Grindelwald in Fantastic Beasts and I have respected and agreed to that request."

Despite the departure, Depp will still be paid his full eight figure salary. He had what is referred to as a 'pay-or-play' contract with no morality clause meaning that Depp would still

get his full agreed upon salary regardless of whether or not he was able to complete the trilogy.

The day before, Depp lost his libel case against British tabloid "The Sun" for calling him a "wife beater" when reporting about the domestic abuse between he and his wife Amber Heard. Though there have been no further state-

ments from any involved parties, Heard is currently still slated to appear in WB's Aquaman sequel film despite some calls for Heard to be fired as well.

The Fantastic Beasts trilogy has been plagued with issues since its original released from a number of cast and crew, including J.K. Rowling herself who

recently came under fire for a series of transphobic tweets that alienated many in the Harry Potter fandom. When Depp was originally cast, it came at the same time as news broke about the domestic abuse allegations from his wife Amber Heard, many calling on WB and Rowling to drop him from the film before release. But instead of doing such, Rowling herself

personally defended the choice of keeping Depp on and almost nothing was heard from the studio.

The only cast member to speak on the subject of Depp's dismissal is fellow co-star Jude Law who portrays a younger Albus Dumbledore. According to Insider Magazine, Law found Depp's dismissal unusual because Depp had already completed a day of filming.

TX dispensaries left high and dry

By Salvador Hernandez

There has been a growing interest in hemp and byproducts. It is most specifically in Houston, as the Bayou City Hemp Company, a CBD lab has recently opened for business in Houston.

On June 10, 2019, Governor Gregg Abbot signed House Bill 1325 which legalized hemp and hemp products. This was a win for those who sought to bring Texas law up to date with the federal government's new Farm Bill in 2018 legalizing hemp and its byproducts.

Texas has seen a surge in businesses and products which contain hemp and its byproduct, Cannabi-

diol, or CBD. Cannabidiol is a compound derived from the hemp plant. Hemp is distinct from marijuana because it contains this CBD cannabinoid, but is devoid of the THC cannabinoid, Tetrahydrocannabinol. Because hemp only contains about 0.3% THC, it does not impact any psychoactive effects on the user, so the "high" that is usually associated with marijuana is devoid from hemp.

Support has grown for CBD, as it is seen as a potentially profitable source of income for farmers who need an extra source of income. The legalization of hemp has also brought up an opportunity for investors to profit

from the production of crops. CBD comes in many forms from smokable flower to oil to gummy bears and other edible delights; it also often added to soaps, facial creams, teas, and even dog biscuits. All these products are distributed by smoke shops and dispensaries that are popping up all over Texas.

There has been a number of health claims which have been misleading at best and completely dubious at worst. Despite these claims, CBD is FDA approved to treat two rare kinds of epilepsy, Lennox-Gastaut syndrome and Dravet syndrome, through the prescription drug Epidiolex. In addi-

tion to epilepsy, hemp can be used to aid in treatment of inflammation and skin disorders among other medical complications.

Yasmin Hurd, Ph.D. of Mount Sinai's Addiction Institute commented on the possibility of hems use to alleviate health symptoms individuals experience.

"There is some evidence to suggest it could be beneficial for anxiety, psychosis and substance abuse." Hemp is even often sold as a supplement and thus a number of dispensaries and smoke shops have been advised against stating outlandish claims such as hemp being an antibiotic or

a cure for cancer.

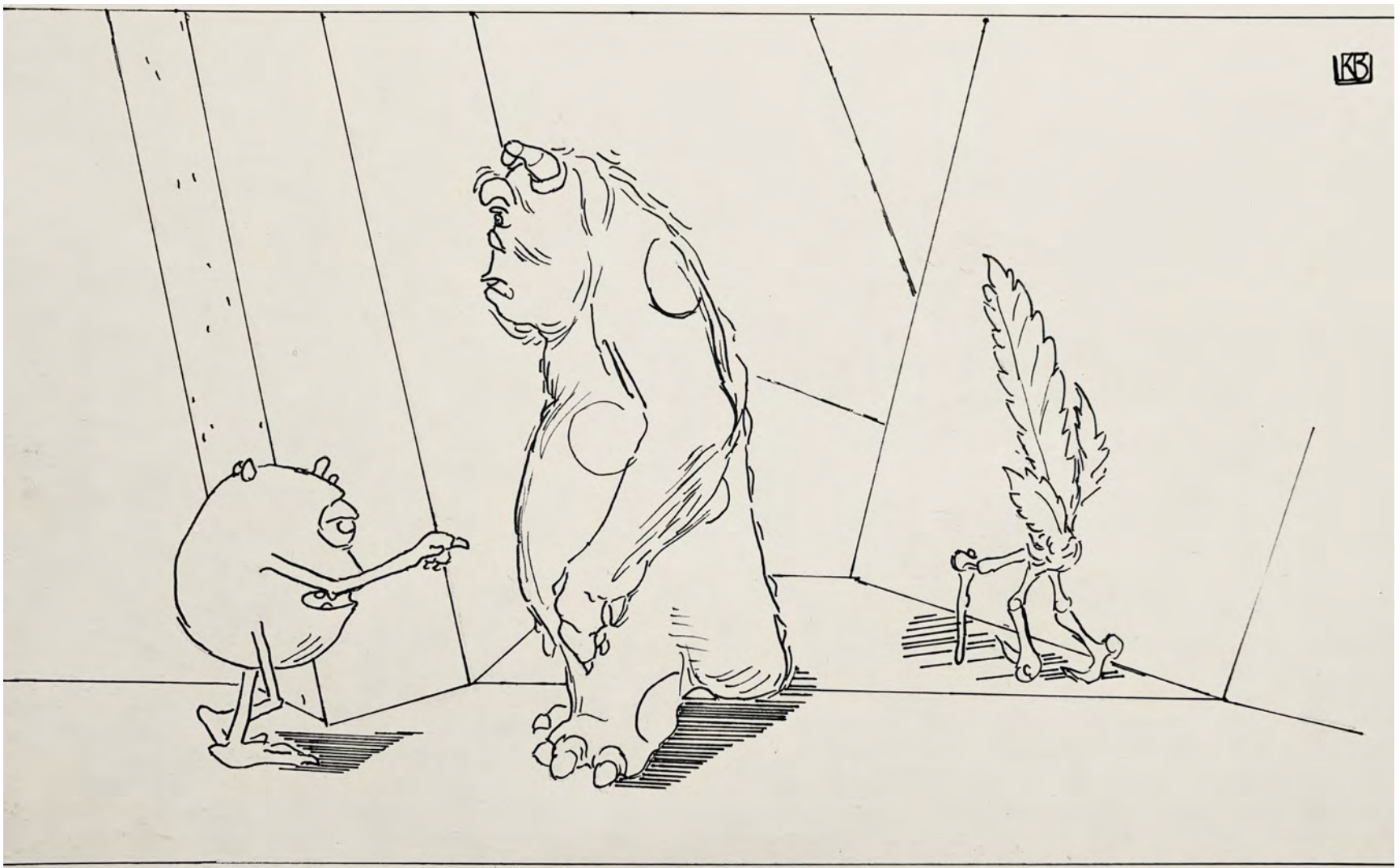
The FDA's regulation is understandable as it is looking over the consumer's wellbeing. Regulations regarding the quality of hems is also understandable because people want to make sure when they want hemp, they are actually getting hemp.

Recently, governmental regulation has sought to challenge the prosperity of local dispensaries and smoke shops. On Aug. 2, the state of Texas persuaded by both the Department of Agriculture and the Department of State Health Services issued regulations on the distribution of hemp which banned the sale of hemp flowers for smoking. A recently ruling by Judge Lora Living-

ston of the 261st court of Travis County has ruled to temporarily lift the ban on hemp flowers until Feb. 1, 2021, when the trials will continue.

Regardless of this temporary victory, the ban is just a way for the government to wrap the hemp industry with red tape and work against small businesses. Consumers who frequent smoke shops and dispensaries for CBD are those who have the most to lose. Government needs to bud out of the blooming flower that is sprouting for consumers and small business. It should be left to the individual to choose to use hemp flower as they wish without the government acting as a moral superior in this matter.

One afternoon at Monsters, Inc. By Keven Balderas



"One of these days, Sulley, we gotta get ourselves transferred to 'Federally Subsidized Fears.' Old man Chronic, there...85 years since 'Reefer Madness' came out, and he's still scaring folks. Talk about job security!"

The University of Houston-Downtown

GOP threatens ACA beneficiaries' healthcare

By Michael Kowis

On Nov. 18, the U.S. surpassed 250,000 deaths related to COVID-19. That is more than the combined deaths from suicide, strokes, and car accidents over the course of the last year. However, those numbers only represent a part of the story. The U.S. now has over 10 million cases, and there will likely be more to come. This is important because a good portion of patients will survive, but they may end up with long-term care needs similar to those of the disability community. That community now is the largest minority group that stands at 50 million people, and most in that community require long-term care for the management of their conditions.

In order to attain long-term care, individuals in this community do not have many options. The only option disabled individuals have is to apply for state-run healthcare programs like Medicaid. This is fine if the condition does not necessitate the frequent usage of hospital services. For example, I do not need to go to a hospital for my disability – all I need is a basic healthcare package that includes my neurologist appointments. However, some conditions require frequent hospitalizations or expensive outpatient care, and for that, individuals might choose to supplement Medicaid with ACA.

In short, an individual would want to utilize a

plan under the ACA because of benefits like the no lifetime limits in which insurance companies cannot deny treatment because yearly limit has not been reached. That fact is important because hospital stays are vital in caring for those with these types of conditions, and those same hospital stays are extremely expensive. Managing care without worrying about financial security of insurance plans allows people who need extensive hospitalizations to lead a more active lifestyle outside of their medical care.

Priscila Batres, scribe at Lone Star College's Disability Services, revealed that the scope of the ACA is much wider than many believe it to be. Many believe

that the ACA is only important for children and adolescents and teens – the most vulnerable of the 50 million peoples with disabilities. However, Batres explained that the individuals she works with at LSC are young adults who receive medically necessary support through ACA. Batres explained that without the ACA, many of the individuals she works with would be at an educational disadvantage compared to that of a regular college student.

College does not always need to be not necessarily easy, but it must be accessible. When access to healthcare is the barrier to higher education, the government needs to make healthcare accessible to those who need it.

The nationwide community of 50 million disabled people represents the largest minority group in the United States, and it is set to grow by about 10 million more people. After COVID-19 subsidies, most people will not have been in the state healthcare network; they will have to go through an arduous ordeal to start getting services rendered. If the GOP has their way, it will leave upwards of 60 million people without adequate healthcare options, and healthcare will remain severely overpriced. This idea is intensified by the fact that the disabled community faces one of the highest rates of underemployment. Although the disabled community constantly searches and applies

for jobs, it is difficult to find one. The disabled community is also in the poverty bracket (under \$12K for an individual), and because of these two things, the community cannot afford to be cut off from public healthcare options.

This issue must be remedied beginning on Jan. 20. This mess needs to be fixed so that every single one of these 60 million people has options. Even if the issue cannot be fixed for everyone, the effort must at least be attempted for those struggling college students with disabilities. College should be a challenge, yes, but healthcare should not be a barrier that prevents one from earning their degree. Let us make healthcare great for all, including those that will need long-term care for COVID-19.

I helped a COVID-19 positive voter

By Varah Thornton

For the Nov. 11 General and Special Election, I worked as an election worker for Harris County. Specifically, I worked as a Presiding Judge. I was one of a group of workers helping to roll out a new option for voters to cast their ballots: Drive-Thru Voting. Stationed at NRG Arena, DTV was hugely popular, but it did not come without complications.

On the last day of Early Voting, I was faced with a situation that I had been expecting since day one: a COVID-19

positive voter. The clerk in last tent walked up to me and told me that the voter didn't want to sign off during qualification because they had COVID-19. Unsure of what I'd just heard, I stopped walking and asked them to repeat what they'd just said. When he confirmed what he said was true, he told me that he didn't know what to do and didn't want to touch them. I told him to go wash his hands and go to another empty tent, so that I could handle this voter myself. My Deputy Clerk Specialist was

standing next to me and rightfully exclaimed unsureness of how to process a voter who told us they were COVID-19 positive.

Instead of panicking, I called my DTV coordinator and informed them of the situation and let them know that I was still going to process the voter and would let them know how things went. I think hurried back to my judge's tent and fetched my personal large disinfectant spray bottle and handed it to my DCS. I then, quickly went to one of my clerks who regularly carried her own personal set

of gloves and asked if I could have 2 pairs. I donned them both and had my DCS follow me to the very last tent where the COVID-19 voter waited.

We arrived to find the voter still patiently waiting in her truck with the engine already off and a small crack in her window. I walked in and loudly introduced myself as the Presiding Judge and let her know that I would finish qualifying her to vote and that the person standing at the tent entrance will act as a witness to make sure I don't make a mistake and keep us both safe. She nodded and then proceeded to apologize that she wasn't able to get her

mail-ballot in time for the election. I assuaged her concerns and told her that it's alright, that's why we have backup plans.

I asked for a few minutes to disinfect our equipment and promptly sprayed down the tablet, voting machine and Booth controller. I then proceeded to finish qualifying the voter as a disabled voter since she made clear that she could not physically sign the tablet (which the county has a procedure for). Once I'd qualified her, I began the task of assisting her with her ballot. For those who are unaware, election workers are also sworn in as Voter Assistants. In this capacity, we

will read and assist a voter with their ballot without influencing their voter in any manner and confirming every action that we perform on their behalf. In this care, I held the voting machine (known as an eSLATE) so that the voter could clearly see all of her options and then proceeded to read every position/proposition and selection on her ballot. Though this process takes a quite some times with the length of our ballot, we managed to get through it without incident.

Continued on Opinions, Page 13

Clinton says Trump supporters are “basket of deplorables”

By Shirley Bright

In Sept. 2016, during a fundraiser for the LGBTQ+ community, Hillary Clinton referred to half of Trump supporters as a “basket of deplorables.” That fundraiser was 60 days before the 2016 Presidential Election, in which Trump triumphed. However, these strong statements against Trump supporters continued throughout the most recent presidential election. In 2020, Trump supporters are often referred to as “Trump’s maggots.”

This derogatory rhetoric began as a play on Trump’s “Make America great again (MAGA)” slogan, but it has been transformed the acronym into “MAGAts” (pronounced “maggots”) that illustrates the opposition’s strong dislike of Trump and his supporters.

In that 2016 fundraiser for the LGBTQ+ community, Clinton promised to pass the Equality Act. In guaranteeing full equality for LGBTQ+ peoples, she was preaching to the choir and singing their songs. In turn, the audience jumped at her promises of comprehensive quality, affordable healthcare like kids jump at the candy thrown from parade floats.

Clinton promised the Equality Act in an attempt to appeal to her LGBTQ+ audience. She tried to persuade the audience that she was to be the

savior of their community.

She stated, “I stand between you [the LGBTQ+ community] and the apocalypse.”

At that 2016 fundraiser concerning equality, Clinton stereotyped what she calls the “grossly generalistic” half of Trump supporters, stating that they could be put into a “basket of deplorables.”

In saying this, she implied that Trump supporters hold nothing but “racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic” views.

The racist Trump supporter could be a successful white male business owner, married to a white lady and living in a predominantly white neighborhood and enjoying his expensive sports car which he has earned.

The sexist Trump supporter could be a male of any color who used to think women were beautiful and gave compliments.

The homophobic Trump supporter could be anyone who is not of the LGBTQ+ community, yet who are not persuaded that the rights of LGBTQ+ should supersede the rights of others.

A xenophobic individual is one who is proud of this country and wants to keep it safe, similar to the ways Mexico and Canada protect their country by barring American entrance

during the COVID-19 pandemic.

An Islamophobic Trump supporter could be those who want to protect our great country from Islamic extremist groups who bombed the World Trade Center. Even so, the UHD Center for Diversity and Inclusion can teach all of them to be tolerant of others.

Clinton referred to the other half of Trump’s supporters as those who “feel that the government has let them down” and those who are “desperate for a change.” Maybe this other half of Trump supporters are those who are referred to as “Trump’s maggots.”

Conversation ensued with different individuals in reference to the volume of early voting. The expectation was that most of early voters were Democrats. The conversation led on to say that, “Trump had sent in the National Guard to intimidate voters,” implying that “Trump’s maggots” had been made visible to intimidate Democratic early voters.

Rose L. Thayer, a writer for the military newspaper, STARS AND STRIPES, reported on Oct. 29, that only three states had requested the National Guards’ assistance. Wisconsin, Kentucky, and Tennessee used the guards to assist the voting process or as poll workers, not to intimidate voters. The

guardsman worked in civilian clothing.

They are not there for any governmental or judicial work.

Army Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, adjutant general for TN guards, stated about 30 guardsmen would assist with opening and closing polling stations, but there are others working cybersecurity. Those individuals will work off-site locations and will be in uniform. This will be the same as the State of Washington, where all ballots are being cast by mail. The cybersecurity will be provided where requested. No one is there to intimidate the voters.

In 2016, Trump and the “Basket of Deplorables” won the Presidential Election and set out to Make America Great Again, while living peacefully with everyone. The personal tax rates were lowered, and the military was strongly rebuilt. Trump has since appointed 194 federal judges and 3 Supreme Court Justices, which are life-long positions. This will affect Generation X and Millennials in the years to come.

Now, here in 2020, Trump’s “maggots” are crawling to cast their votes and do their civic duty in the great democratic society. These so-called “maggots” are crawling to protect our country and the rights that most Texans love: to own

our guns and have personal accountability. The maggots are crawling around in attempts to Make America Great Again, and to be neighbors to those who have different ideologies.

As Clinton said in her speech in 2016, “We really do believe that we are stronger together. We really do believe that showing respect and appreciation for one another lifts us all up.”

COVID-19 voter

Continued from Opinions, Page 11

After we cast her ballot, I made sure she got her “I Voted” sticker, though she got more than the average voter as I tore off a rather long line of them and slipped through the thin crack in her window. Once she was gone, I once again sprayed down the three machines and then my DCS sprayed me down with disinfectant. Luckily, we had the convenience of a dumpster less than 20 feet from this particular tent. We walked over and he watched as I carefully doffed the first set of gloves into the dumpster. For the second pair, he actively sprayed down my hands as I doffed those. We then closed down that tent for the remainder of the night and immediately went to wash our hands at the front hand-washing station. Luckily, my Alternate Judge was able to handle some minor duties while I called

my DTV Coordinator with a follow up.

This was not the first reported case of such an incident. In fact, this was the sole reason for the creation of Drive-Thru Voting; to ensure that voters had the safest measures possible in which to cast their ballots during a pandemic. Even though some of the measures I took may have seemed redundant or even extreme, I wanted to make sure that both I and my location remained safe from exposure, regardless of whether or not I had physical contact. I wanted people to know how seriously Harris County took the pandemic and people’s health and safety. Though my nerves were a little rattled for a few hours, I was glad that I had a team and county who cared enough to make sure everyone could exercise their right in as safe a manner as possible.



A Harris county resident shows COVID-19 test ID number to Harris County Public Health's COVID-19 response staff at M.O. Campbell Center in Houston, TX on Oct. 19, 2020. Image credit: Indira Zaldivar