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Faculty Spotlight Tremaine Kwasikpui, Student Activities Director

By Jennifer Ayala

Tremaine Kwasikpui makes a difference and changes the lives of UHD students, as well community members. As Director of Student Activities, he has worked for UHD since July 3, 2016, only three days after packing up his bags and moving to Houston from his hometown in North Carolina, which was a long two-day drive.

Although Kwasikpui began his career at a community college in North Carolina after graduating in 2008, he fell in

love with UHD and stated that it is the reason that he is in Texas altogether. If there was anyone that he owed his inspiration to, is his grandfather, Stephen Kwasikpui, who came to America on a program to get his education. Though he had many obstacles, he persevered.

Tremaine Kwasikpui recalled all that his grandfather endured and all that he accomplished is the reason he continues to push through, as well as his children endless-

ly watching and being directly influenced by himself and his wife.

As the director of Student Activities, he stated that his main focus is to “connect people with people.”

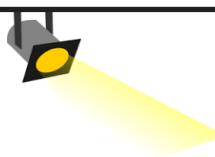
Bridging the gap between students and businesses or partners where students can thrive is extremely important, said Kwasikpui. He is passionate about the connection of people whether they are meeting someone who will one day be a potential em-

ployer, or the person who will one day be the love of their lives through SGA.

“My life work, my ministry, is people,” Kwasikpui stated.

As far as accomplishments for the Gators or activities that he is most proud of, Kwasikpui stated that one of the first things that comes to mind is the UHD Food Market, which was opened up after the devastating Hurricane Harvey that ravaged Houston.

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Local Business Spotlight Day 6 Coffee

By Jennifer Ayala

Only a 13-minute walk from the UHD campus, Day 6 Coffee at 910 Prairie St. showcases local artwork in a cozy environment that makes visitors feel right at home.

Joining the local coffee scene in the middle of a pandemic may have raised quite a few eyebrows, but with the drive and never give up attitude exhibited by the Wilson brothers, there was nothing that was going to stand in the way of fulfilling their dream.

“Everyone is going to think you are crazy, until they start thinking you are a genius,” RJ Wilson said.

The Wilson broth-

ers have created a platform for local artists to display their work, as well as a space for creatives to sell all their most beloved creations in their coffee shop. According to the brothers, they believe that entrepreneurship is an art, and that Houston is full of creatives that need to be seen. Their hope in displaying so much art and creativity is that it will provide local artists with a place for them to get the recognition they deserve.

“This is our art, our masterpiece if you will,” RJ Wilson said.

RJ Wilson, who fell in love with coffee studying abroad in Spain, said he may have got the

inspiration for displaying art from Barcelona.

“Every morning I would wake up, my host mom would make coffee, and we would talk on the balcony and watch the sunrise. It was like a social, spiritual, and meditative thing that I fell in love with,” RJ Wilson said.

Though Ian Wilson’s love for cooking came at a very young age, after the tragic passing of his brother, he was able to use the art of cooking and making cheesecakes to essentially feel connected to him. Today, Ian Wilson uses his persistence and skill to create some of the most mouthwatering

cheesecakes around and he stated that in order to get to where he is now, it was all about persistence and a just do it attitude.

The Wilson brothers also explained why they opened a coffee shop rather than going into the family’s plumbing business.

“We realized a lot of our clients were in the hotel and restaurant business. Hotels and restaurants were closing down and struggling, so they thought that maybe it was a good idea to hop into the hospitality market because competition was weak right now.”

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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 editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com.

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UHD **DATELINE** Now hiring!
Student Run Since Volume One

Deadline to apply:
March 10, 2021

Editor Position

This paid position begins summer 2021 (\$425/issue; start date flexible), and the applicants must commit to fill the position for the entire 2021-22 academic year. Duties include responsibility for the overall operation of the paper. Editors assemble and manage a team of student writers and sub-editors and assign them to cover news and events. Position requires some familiarity with the use of Adobe InDesign page-making software.

The paper runs stories anticipating cam-

pus events as well as reviewing them, including student activities and organizations, academics, athletics and lifestyle, university administration, and student government; also cultural coverage of activities in the theatre, film, music, sports and arts communities, particularly as they are of interest to UHD students.

Qualifications include at least sophomore standing, at least one semester in residence at UHD, successful completion of basic writing and communications courses,

and a current 3.0 cumulative GPA (3.5 preferred). Applications accepted until position is filled.

To apply, please send a letter of application indicting your reasons and qualifications for applying for the position. Include as well your resume as well as an unofficial copy of your UHD transcript. Send these documents to The Dateline faculty advisor, Joe Sample, Associate Professor, at samplej@uhd.edu. Applications are sought immediately and will be accepted until position is filled.

Business Manager Position

This paid position begins fall 2021 (start date flexible), and applicants must commit to the position for the full 2021-22 academic year. The job involves both advertising sales and managing the business and financial operations of the newspaper.

The successful candidate will have a strong orientation toward personal selling and developing advertising revenue as well as effective budgeting and management skills. Duties include managing business and financial matters for

the paper, in cooperation with the student editor and faculty adviser, and expanding the sales of advertising space in the paper, including to businesses in the campus neighborhoods of NoDo and Washington St. Typical commitment is 20 hours per week; salary is \$800 per month, plus 15% commission on ad sales.

Minimum qualifications include at least sophomore standing or higher, the completion of at least one semester at UHD, successful com-

pletion of basic business courses, and a 2.5 GPA.

To apply, please send a letter of application indicting your reasons and qualifications for applying for the position. Include as well your resume as well as an unofficial copy of your UHD transcript. Send these documents to The Dateline faculty advisor, Joe Sample, Associate Professor, at samplej@uhd.edu. Applications are sought immediately and will be accepted until position is filled.

Faculty Senate meeting

By Sheryl Sellers

Godwin Agboka, Ph.D., associate professor of technical and professional communication, opened discussions of the Feb. 2 Faculty Senate meeting. Agboka updated about the goal of creating a task force to explore the opportunities of future doctoral programs at UHD.

Following Dr. Agboka's narrative, Nell Sullivan, professor of English, stated that a draft letter to Interim President Antonio D. Tillis has been sent to the senators regarding Dr. Tillis' response to the Student Government Association's proposed resolution for a no-instruction day on federal election days.

Ron Beebe, Faculty Senate president and professor of educational research, offered feedback on the Omsbud policy. The Omsbud term will begin on Aug. 15 of each year to coincide with the opening term of the Faculty Senate. The policy now also reflects that the Omsbud can be reappointed.

Next on the Agenda was Said Fatouh, director of User Support Services, to explain that Microsoft, UHD's provider for Office 365, will turn off all legacy protocols for security and other reasons. Because of this, UHD turned off all legacy protocols on Feb. 16. If an individual is using a web browser to connect to UHD email, there will be no change. POP, IMAP, and ActiveSync are

three of the affected protocols. Turning off ActiveSync will come later as there are more users connected to that protocol.

UHD computers are installed with Microsoft Outlook software and version 2016 does not use POP or IMAP. Students can download and install Microsoft Outlook for PC or for Mac on up to five of their home computers or personal devices. There are so many versions of the operating systems that they are recommending using the Microsoft Outlook app similar to the desktop version.

The mobile app also guarantees the modern authentication method. You will know whether your device is using a legacy protocol, because you will not receive new messages, and the messages you create will not be sent. The message will remain in your outbox. Some apps will send a message that you are not connected.

Provost Eric Carl Link was next on the agenda giving another thumbs up on the great enrollment numbers at UHD.

He also discussed grant submission, the writing of which slowed down during the pandemic. Year-to-date saw a 156% uptick in submissions based on amount of dollars, up 10% in awards, and 6% up in number of submissions awarded.

The market study has been

launched. The study for a compensation analysis was built into the budget, and CBIZ, Inc., has been chosen to conduct the analysis. The study was launched the week of Jan. 18.

Two categories were identified. The faculty study will be implemented first, and a study of staff compensation will launch a couple weeks following completion of the faculty study. The staff study will take longer as it will require more deliverables.

The faculty study should be completed by CBIZ by the first or second week of March. It will then be turned over to the provost and the university president. Following that it will be presented to the president's cabinet, followed by one or two faculty forums.

The budget was built with approximately \$650,000 that the president can use unless needed for some other reason.

There will be transparency on methodology. CBIZ is very transparent.

Forward class scheduling is "not fully baked," according to Provost Link. Dr. Tillis will provide more information regarding expectations for the remaining spring semester later in February. Summer sessions will principally be online. It was communicated to department deans to make decisions on any strategic use of face-to-face instruction.



Senate Updates



UHD explores task force to create doctoral programs at UHD



Faculty Senate prepares to respond to Dr. Tillis' denial of non-instructional day for federal elections



UHD launches analysis of staff compensation



Tuition may rise 2.5% in 2022 depending on enrollment numbers



Faculty Senate approves S/U option for spring and summer 2021



Faculty Senate approves the creation of a faculty/staff/student council to foster sustainability and student opportunities and growth

"Fall is the one we are really wringing hands over," provost stated. The biggest question is whether we will social distance classrooms in the fall.

"That answer has a significant impact on everything building the fall schedule." He asked that schedules be built such that if things change mid-summer, faculty and staff can pivot.

The provost is hopeful that the university will use the approximate 20 flex classrooms that have been installed. There will be a need to be

creative with hybrid scheduling. Some courses may need to have a lower student count. Another option may be to have half of the class present one day and the other half present another day.

With relative certainty all classes will be open in the fall semester but could have a decreased enrollment cap. There is relative certainty that all classes will be open, and a full schedule should be built based on the ability to use all classrooms for fall.

The General Counsel has not ruled on whether a vaccine

will be required.

David Bradley, MBA, vice president of Administration and Finance, spoke briefly on budget matters. Additional faculty positions have been added to the budget. Also, in the budget is a 2.5% tuition fee increase, and faculty and staff compensation uplifts. However, 2022 enrollment drives all of this.

Following all the speakers of the day, discussion returned this week to the S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) grading.

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By Jennifer Ayala

Both mental and physical blocks can easily materialize in any student's life. No matter how much one loves their life, career, and the life they are creating, sometimes the spirit can become congested by the devastatingly, volatile environment it resides in. Likely, millions of people have been increasingly bothered by the nuisance of the COVID-19 pandemic, and rightfully so.

As the year 2020 began, the pandemic came crashing into the world like an unhinged freight train on a path of colossal destruction. But if anything has been learned from history, it is that the human race is one of the most resilient beings.

Whatever thought it is that is whispering sweet

lullabies upon one's ear – they should do just that. Here are just a few more ideas to clear out auras and keep motivated even when the world seems to be dwindling into an abyss

Say for instance, running has always been a goal in mind. Start off by downloading an app from a phone and getting the motivation needed to get up and in the words of Nike, "Just do it!"

Apps such as Runkeeper or the Nike app on any phone, will keep track of runs and immensely help with giving drive in order to go the distance. Next up, commence a running challenge, join a social distancing running group, or for all avid runners, try picking a new path or trail to run on.

Houston is full of exquisitely,

Gator Support



Overcoming odds

remarkable trails with breathtaking views. Need a park to start at? Stude Park bears a newly paved trail that has stunning sunflowers located from midway to the ending and is perfect for all those Instagram-worthy naturalistic photos.

Need an extra incentive of running?

It's free, can help your cardiovascular system and regulate your weight, and even decrease stress. That is what is called a win/ win situation on our hands - or feet.

As for contact sports, boxing, Jiu Jitsu, Krav Maga, Karate, the list could go on and on. If a contact sport is the sort of

thing that more aggressively piques interest, then start by enrolling in an introductory class or a free trial. Luckily, most places around Houston and the surrounding areas offer the first class or two free. So many times there have been people running around offices or

sitting over coffee conversating about how they needed to just take out some of their pent-up energy that this pandemic has cast upon them, and these contact sports are one of the many ways to fulfill that need.

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Past UHD presidents say, 'See you later, Gators'

By Argenis Nino

As the Gator community welcomes its seventh president on March 15, we remain grateful to the past presidents of UHD who have guided and developed our university for 45 years strong. Whether you are a currently enrolled student, alumnus or fellow Houstonian, you might want to learn about those who have led UHD into the 21st century institution that it is now.

William I. Dykes is probably the most familiar name, especially when it

comes to students of UHD. One could say Dykes is the father of UHD as he led the institution to its current home. He managed to bring about a large income for the school to allow for the space to be reformed into a more suitable place for learning. The UHD library was renamed in 1979 to carry his name.

Dykes held his position from 1974 to 1975 as chancellor but did much more for the school even before being appointed by the University of Houston.

Following Dykes came Jew Don Boney, Ph.D., who carried the official title of president of UHD.

Throughout his life Boney had been involved with people and education. It made sense why he would hold the position that he did at the university. He had previously served at Houston Independent School District and Houston Community College systems before transferring over to UHD. With his knowledge of the education system,

Boney was able to work with the university until his death in 1979.

Alexander F. Schilt, Ph.D., similar to Boney, had also an array of experience in the educational world by serving as president and chancellor across states. He became president of UHD in 1980 and went to fulfill his role for seven years. However, his most notable impact to the UHD was not when he was president of the university but when he became chancellor of the UH system. Schilt

had campaigned for nearly \$400 million to bring over to the UH system which allowed for a betterment of amenities and opportunities to universities that held the UH name. Schilt did not stop there as he later went on to become a professor and continue aiding students in a more direct way.

Manuel T. Pacheco, Ph.D., came in as the third president and served from 1988 to 1991. There is not much on Pacheco pertaining to UHD except for his recog-

inition in past leadership roles that led him to be the candidate of the third president.

After Pacheco's three-year tenure came Max Castillo, Ph.D. Castillo held the longest term at the university which was clearly put into the university with his accomplishments. During Castillo's 17-year leadership, UHD saw a physical expansion with the campus acquiring four new buildings. Of course, with more building it meant people had to fill in those spaces.

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Faculty Spotlight

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“The Food Market is a labor of love,” Kwasikpui said.

Colleague Courtney Lundgren and Kwasikpui took over the Food Market after both of their supervisors were unable to make it. The rest is history. Some of the highlights include an article in *The New York Times*, recognition from the Houston Food Bank as the higher education partner of the year, and the fact that they were able to secure a \$15,000 from Kroger.

Kwasikpui is also especially proud of the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center’s blood drive. Together they won education partner of the year. Other activities ran by Kwasikpui and student activities include, the UHD Maricahi “Los Caïmanes,” led by Di-

rector Jose Vazquez, the renovation of the student lounge (which had not been redone in 20 years), movie nights, E-sports program, and many, many more that are driving the creativity, leadership, and networking within UHD.

“We try to push the envelope on swag, we want people to be proud, you know, like I told you I’m biased to UHD because it’s the reason that I’m here in Houston, Texas, and I always have on something UHD. I love and live for UHD.”

As for festivities, the annual Bayou Bash will be returning this March with Crawfish and Zydeco music, Kwasikpui said. Although due to COVID-19, a large part will be conducted through drive-thru. In April, students can mark their calendars for the one main

event entitled the Gala Award Ceremony. This event will include awards for events and organizations, a ceremony that will be live streamed, and hopefully a spotting of UHD’s new president, Loren J. Blanchard, Ph.D.

Although Kwasikpui is consumed in his passionate work for the people and students, he stated that when he is not working at UHD, he is enjoying his free time as a licensed realtor and that he loves real estate.

Little bit of fun facts about UHD’s director of Student Activities: his favorite Taco place is Fusion Taco, enjoys traveling, and always seeks out new places to try the Mexican cuisines, seeing as how where he came from he was unable to get the authentic style of food. If he had to choose an eating spot in downtown Houston, hands down it

would be Treebeards, as they offer a wide range of homestyle cooking. If barbecue is in on your mind, he suggested Gatlins BBQ.

An avid sports fan, Kwasikpui stated that basketball is his favorite sport and of course, he roots for the Houston teams.

Although his loyalty in basketball teams lies within Houston, Kwasikpui supports Texas football teams.

“A lot of people in Houston are going to be mad at me, but I do root for the Dallas Cowboys.”

So, what advice does he have to give to UHD students trying to stick through it right now?

“You have to look at history. You have to go back into history. There have been times like this before, and so it’s giving us a precedent to say you have to push down and dig deep to push over the

hurdle.”

For those interested in getting involved in student affairs, he said the approach is very informal. The best way to contact him is through social media,

e-mail, or his phone number posted on the website. The door is always open, and he said he is ready to hear student ideas because no idea is too much.



Director of Student Activities, Tremaine Kwasikpui. Photo courtesy of Tremaine Kwasikpui.

Faculty Senate meeting

Continued from page 3

Mixed reaction continued on bringing the S/U option for spring and summer semesters of 2021. A vote was taken, and the option passed with 13 ayes, 9 nays and 1 abstain.

Rounding out the day, Natacha Poggio, M.F.A., Assistant Professor of graphic design and Co-Chair of the Sustainability Council, and 11 of the council’s members were present to discuss their submitted resolution for the council.

Katharine Jager, associate

professor of English, noted that the council’s goal is to be an interdisciplinary faculty council to include staff and students. The council would provide a space for faculty, staff and students to complete research, as well as volunteer opportunities and hopefully learn skills that will be marketable in a career.

They want to provide “a large umbrella where sustainability can exist.”

She noted that UHD and UH Victoria are the

only universities in Houston which do not have a public statement regarding sustainability. Having the support of the Faculty Senate would give them leverage of becoming a more formal entity at UHD and the opportunity to have a council website and a budget.

UHD would gain public recognition of its endeavors in sustainability.

The Faculty Senate voted on supporting the Sustainability Council’s resolution. The vote passed.

Gator Support

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So how about it? Is that gym that gets passed up on the way home from work every day the next stop?

Or perhaps staying home in a safe place and using self-expression is more of one’s forte. Well, what about taking up a new hobby that has never before given the chance? Pick up a paintbrush and allow each stroke of the brush to guide what is heavily weighing on one’s mind. Grab a new journal from the

store, and speak what cannot be said otherwise to the paper. Allow the pen to bleed from one’s heart.

If there is anything that has been absorbed from this COVID-19 pandemic, it is that everyone possesses some form of artistic expression in them. It just has to be given room to break free and blossom. Because in this day and age it seems to be easier and easier to go home and become more of a clam person, but that may be the cause of mental exhaustion.

Therefore today, tomorrow, and every day after, try to make it a point to do something different for mental health. Occasionally, just stepping outside barefoot with the earth beneath one’s feet and the sky above one’s head can revive a weary soul.

Just as CNN health writer Kristen Rogers stated, “Taking care of ourselves and each other should be everybody’s focus as we go into 2021.” This year and moving forward, let us all focus on that.

UHD past presidents *Continued from page 4*

During the Castillo run, UHD also saw a boom of enrollment and faculty growth. The currently held, federal recognition as Hispanic Serving Institution and Minority Serving Institution also was first designated during Castillo's tenure, which has shown its interest in the community around it.

In 2009 came Bill Flores, Ph.D., as UHD's fifth president. Flores' most notorious efforts are perhaps UHD's transition from an open-admissions

institution to one with freshman and transfer admission standards, increased online enrollment and degree offerings, new undergraduate and graduate degrees. UHD's MBA program became the largest AACSB-accredited MBA in the Greater Houston Region during Flores' tenure. He also branched out UHD to the satellite campus known as UHD Northwest. UHD received distinctive recognitions during Flores' leadership: the U.S. President's Honor Roll for Community Service and

designation as "Military Friendly School."

For the academic year 2016-2017, Michael A. Olivas, Ph.D., was selected to serve as interim president for UHD. Within that year, Olivas was able to gain the building now known as the Marilyn Davies College of Business and acres for future development of the university. Olivas also worked on an agreement with HCC and Lone Star College to allow for a smoother transition for students from a community college to a four-year

university.

At last Juan Sanchez Munoz, Ph.D., served as the latest president for UHD from 2017-2020. During the three years of his term, the sixth president of UHD saw the most enrollment turnout and graduation rates in the university's history. Not only was the success of UHD booming, but this was a bridge for Munoz to grow the degrees the university had to offer. By having more doors open and an all-time high student enrollment, UHD's reputation had

grown exponentially in the area. Under his leadership, UHD also saw the addition of the Sciences & Technology Building, which is the first gold-level, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certified building in the UH System.

Throughout the short and long terms, if not for the presidents that showed face for the institution they believed in, who knows where UHD would be at know or how different. All these people came from different walks of life

just as the majority of the UHD population which shows the great people it can produce and forge.

Current interim President Antonio Tillis, Ph.D., will be succeeded by UHD's newly selected, seventh president, Loren J. Blanchard, Ph.D. Blanchard will start officially on March 15.

Local Business Spotlight *Continued from page 1*

Seeing as how the brothers have always wanted to do coffee, and a coffee shop was one of the many ideas that dreamer RJ came to Ian with, they said they believed that COVID-19 presented an opportunity and that the building they are currently in kind

of found them, as if God was talking to them.

RJ said their business name is a Biblical reference to the creation story.

"On the sixth day, God created man, finished his creation, and then he gave us plants and animals, one of those plants

being coffee theoretically, so we just kind of ran with that," RJ said.

For those amateur business majors or anyone looking to breakthrough in the coffee market, RJ encouraged to stay persistent.

"You are going to get a bunch

of NO's but all you need is one yes, so keep at it," he said.

Exclusively shared with The Date-line, Ian discussed the new additions to the menu.

"We plan on rolling out new cheesecakes every month! The plan is to start in

March with bringing out the raved about Girl scout cookie cheesecake."

RJ also mentioned that Day 6 just got approved to sell beers and wines and now they "just need to get things squared away."

They are what we all hope to find in a local, family-owned business, they are

honest, genuine, full of drive, and willing to meet the locals for a chat and a good old cup of Joe. They are what we call true southern charm.

Whether you are a coffee connoisseur or a sucker for sweets, new local drip house, Day 6 in downtown Houston, has got you covered.



Bar and seating area of Day 6. The coffee joint also offers a small selection of couches, outdoor seating, books and board games. Photo credit: Jennifer Ayala



Front porch of Day 6 has no sign indicating its whereabouts, but look out for the checkerboard patio and the address, 910 Prarie St., on the door. Photo credit: Jaida Doll

Texas exceeds 2 million COVID-19 cases

By Shirley Bright

Jan. 14. marked a milestone in the fight against COVID-19 in Texas. The number of coronavirus cases exceeded 2 million cases almost one year after the state's first confirmed case of COVID-19 in San Antonio, Texas on Feb. 12, 2020.

These 2.5 million cases constitute only a fraction of Texas population of over 29 million citizens. Another 2.7 million individuals have received their first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, and over 1 million are fully vaccinated with both doses of the vaccine.

In this past year of quarantines, face masks and

gloves, the virus has claimed over 39 thousand lives in the Lone Star state. The first COVID-19-related death in Texas occurred in Bay City, Matagorda County, 80 miles south of Houston. On March 21, 2020, about a month since the first Texas case was confirmed. Eddie Roberts, 97, was the state's first victim of COVID-19.

COVID-19 has fatally affected individuals of all age groups. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention shows as many as 75 deaths from age 15-24.

There is the possibility of younger victims, but the confidentiality standard does not allow reporting. The highest rates of active

cases are the age 20-29 and followed closely by 30-39 years old.

Healthcare workers are also at high-risk for contracting COVID-19. Texas Medical Center has lost front-line doctors, nurses and staff members. Pulmonologist Dr. Carlos Araujo-Preza had been a front-line doctor from the beginning of the pandemic until succumbing to the deadly virus in Dec. 20, 2020.

One of the latest prominent victims was Texas Republican, U. S. Congressman Ron Wright, the first sitting congressman to die of COVID-19.

Although the cumulative number of cases

have reached over 2.5 million in Texas, the preventive measures seem to be effective, as only 8% of the state's population has been affected by the virus. Even those who are infected have a high recovery rate as Texas has seen more than 2.3 million recover from the virus. Statewide, the survival rate after contracting COVID-19 is about 98%.

There are some disparities according to the region or county in which individuals are infected. Harris County's 4.76 million population has cumulated 333,000 confirmed cases and 3,122 deaths. But El Paso county which is one fifth of the popula-

tion of Harris County's population, has suffered 2,220 deaths, which is two thirds of Harris County's death toll.

Due to the lack of a cure, the death toll will continue to rise. But the diligence of social distancing, washing of hands, and vaccinating, the active cases rate have seen a decline of 31%. The hospitalization rate across the state is also declining. It fell below 10,000 on Feb. 8 and has held steady at 9,400. The Texas Medical Center reported 1,440 ICU beds occupied but only 455 of those are COVID-19 patients.

With 39,000 deaths in Texas and 2.7 million vaccines

administered, individuals must remain vigilant to prevent the spread of the virus. The death toll is improving from ABC13's Nov. 13, 2020 news report that stated that some dies from COVID-19 every two hours in Harris County.

Texas may be nearing 300 million cases, but with vaccines and miles of plexiglass, the COVID-19 threat level may eventually move from 1-Severe to 3-Moderate. We do not even know what 4-Minimal "Resume Normal Contact" would look like again. Perhaps UHD would at that time return to some face-to-face courses in the real classroom.

Coronavirus variant detected in US

By Riyasa Shrestha

A new variant of the coronavirus identified in South Africa emerged in the United States for the first time, with two cases diagnosed in South Carolina. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control stated that the two cases do not appear to be connected, and the two patients do not have a history of recent travel.

Public health officials said it is almost certain that there are more infections that have not been identified yet. There is concern that this variant spreads more easily and that the current vaccines could be less effective against it.

Although viruses constantly mutate, COVID-19 variants are

circulating around the globe. Scientists are concerned about the three variants that they believe spread easily, such as the United Kingdom and Brazil variants, both previously confirmed in the U.S.

Dr. Anthony Fauci stated that the South African variant appears to be more resistant to existing approved vaccines, prompting scientists to start developing booster shots.

President Biden reinstated COVID-19 travel restrictions on most non-U.S. travelers from Brazil, United Kingdom, and South Africa. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that Americans do not travel.

TX teachers are not priority for COVID-19 vaccinations

By Shaheryar Khan

Texas is one of the states that chose not to prioritize teachers for COVID-19 vaccinations, even though officials order schools to reopen, amid this pandemic.

In late December 2020, the Food and Drug Administration gave the green light for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to be distributed to Americans aged 16 and up. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that the first supplies of the COVID-19 vaccines be distributed to healthcare workers, frontline and other essential workers, as well as people age 65+.

Twenty-four states and Washington D.C. have agreed to provide vaccines for K-12 teachers, but the

decision to deem eligible for the vaccine differs by county.

According to The New York Times, Texas has reported to have over 2.5 million cases and has 5 of the 10 metro areas with the highest coronavirus cases. With the continuous spread, Governor Greg Abbott ordered schools to reopen in August of 2020, consequently making teachers part of the high-exposure category.

The Texas State Teachers Association urges state officials to prioritize educators or allow classes to continue virtually. Additionally, the TSTA suggests handing over deciding whether to prioritize teachers getting the vaccine to local gov-

ernments.

"We believe in this case at least when it comes to the health of local communities that those local communities should be able to call the shots," stated Clay Robinson, a representative of the Texas State Teachers Association.

Dr. David Lakey, the chief medical officer for the University of Texas System, suggests that the vaccine rollout for teachers will be r to phase 1c or 2a, which would most likely occur after the school year ends in May.

For now, if eligible teachers seek to get vaccinated, they must sign up and wait.

Johnson & Johnson vaccine glimmers with hope

By Savannah Mims

On Jan. 21, Johnson & Johnson announced that it had created a single shot COVID-19 vaccine and is gathering its data to send to the Federal Food and Drug Administration for approval. This vaccine, a collaboration between J&J's Belgium-based vaccine division, Janssen Pharmaceutical and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, works differently than the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

The J&J vaccine was deter-

mined 66% effective in its global. Phase 3 trial for preventing moderate and severe infection. Data also showed that the vaccine is 85% effective overall at preventing hospitalization and death in all regions where it was tested. No deaths or hospitalizations were reported by individuals who received the vaccine during the phase 3 trial.

The vaccine, a non-viral vector replicator, uses a common cold virus called adenovirus 26.

Scientists utilized genetic material that codes for a piece of the novel coronavirus and combined it with a weakened version of adenovirus 26. J&J scientists claim that this combination can enter cells, but it cannot replicate so it cannot infect its users.

The adenovirus transmits the genetic material from the coronavirus into human cells, making the cells make pieces of the coronavirus spike protein. The immune system then reacts against these

pieces of the coronavirus.

A single shot dose, like J&J's, would make the vaccine easier to administer and allow for more people to receive the vaccine since a second one is not required. On the contrary, with the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, each person needs two of the vaccines resulting in delays getting these vaccines out to all people.

Another benefit of the J&J COVID-19 vaccine is

that it can be stored in a regulator refrigerator temperature. The vaccine is durable for up to three months at 36-46 degrees Fahrenheit. This eliminates the need to purchase new freezers for hospital and medical centers which both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require special freezers.

J&J is now awaiting Emergency Use Approval by the FDA. Approval could come by the end of this month. When the EUA is approved, J&J plans to have

their vaccine ready. The U.S. has ordered 100 million doses of the vaccine, and the company is already manufacturing them in its own facility in the Netherlands, a medical subcontractor in India and at Emergent BioSolutions in Maryland.

Johnson & Johnson stated that they are on pace to meet the 1 million doses promised to the United States by June 1.

National Guard vaccinates Texans in rural areas

By Priscila Batres

Since Jan. 28, the Texas National Guard has distributed COVID-19 vaccines in five rural areas for qualified residents. These counties include Marion, Real, Dewitt, Starr, and Sherman.

According to the Texas Division of Emergency Man-

agement, the goal is to vaccinate people over the age of 65, as well as lower income communities in need. In particular, Starr County is the fifteenth most-affected county in the state, with cases spiking massively in the recent weeks.

Dewitt, Marion, Sherman, and

Real counties have not had many more COVID-19 cases since vaccinating a handful of people. Their rate of infections is one of the lowest compared to other counties in the state. Only Dewitt and Starr counties have mobile vaccination processes which

will benefit those counties' populations who cannot afford to travel for the vaccine.

Texas has vaccinated over 1 million people ever since the vaccine has become available. Still, in most rural areas, the distribution has slowed due to budgeting and organization

issues.

President Joe Biden has ordered to distribute National Guard reimbursements to states after a rollback. These efforts advance the vaccination process to reach the distribution of 100 million doses in 100 hundred days.

This process

will take some time, but it is a step towards getting people in rural areas vaccinated as soon as possible, so the pandemic can get under control as soon as possible.

Houston Rodeo cancels 2021 season due to COVID-19

By Jeremy Barrientos

On Feb. 3, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo made the decision to cancel the 2021 season due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally postponed, then rescheduled from March to May, the HLSR had hoped the pandemic would subside and more Texans would be vaccinated by the new proposed date, but the difficult decision was made for a second year in a row.

Rodeo Houston CEO Chris Boleman stated that the decision was made when concerns of attendance and financial pressures arose.

"You look inside the stadium where six-foot distancing would be in play, and you end up in a situation similar to the Texans, where, basically, you can get to 20% capacity," Boleman said.

"As you might expect, when you start looking at the

numbers, it becomes very difficult to financially move forward."

Though main attractions like concerts, carnival, attractions and activities are canceled, the private junior livestock event and horse show competitions will continue in March while the junior market auctions and Champion Wine Auction will be held in May. Negotiations were held for musical performers to try and fill the 20-night event, but officials could not

guarantee the HLSR would not be canceled halfway through due to city or state orders.

Last year, the City of Houston and the Houston Health Department ordered the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo to close.

"We certainly don't want to experience ever again what happened in 2020, where you get set up and you have to tear down," Boleman said.

"That's even

more cost on everybody involved."

The HLSR annual revenue was \$84 million last year which was a 50% drop from 2019. More than \$55 million was refunded to vendors and ticket holders leading to an \$11 million loss. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner applauded the rodeo and its commitment to award \$21 million in student scholarships this year despite its cancellation.

"The Rodeo and our volunteers are committed to continuing to provide fans with a community event that all can be proud of," Boleman said.

"We look forward to welcoming Rodeo fans back to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo in 2022 for our 90th anniversary celebration."

For more up to date information visit www.rodeohouston.com

Juveniles arrested for murder of Uber Eats driver

By Emily Saldivar

On Jan. 23, Haltom City Police arrested two 14-year-old males involved in the fatal stabbing of an Uber Eats delivery driver.

At 9:35 p.m., Haltom City Police responded to a call reporting a person lying in the breezeway of Northern Cross Apartments. Once on the scene, Haltom Police found a woman with

signs of trauma lying in front of the caller's apartment.

The victim, 31-year-old Ryan Munsie Graham, was fatally stabbed in the neck after being attacked and was pronounced dead at the scene. She had been delivering food on that Thursday but never completed the delivery.

Haltom Police

released a statement in which they said, "Robbery appears to be motive in this case."

Haltom City Detectives and Officers had been working since Saturday to "develop leads and identify any suspects in this case."

After reviewing surveillance videos and talking to residents, evidence

found by detectives linked the two juvenile males to the murder. The evidence was not disclosed by police, and both males' identities are being withheld, as they are minors.

The suspects were taken into custody by SWAT on Jan. 27 at the apartment complex in the 3600 block of Tanacross Drive, located in Fort

Worth. They are now being held in Tarrant County Juvenile Justice Center. Both males face capital murder charges.

Haltom City PD Sergeant Eric Peters told Fox News, "It ended up being a random thing where these two juveniles went out looking for someone to rob and just ran into her."

He continued,

"The only thing that they took we know of during the robbery was her cell phone," which was later recovered in a dumpster where the suspects lived.

Graham leaves behind a husband and three children. A GoFundMe has been set up to pay for the funeral charges and has raised \$37,500 since Jan. 27.

GameStock shares spike in historic market euphoria

By Rachel Ann Preston

GameStop, the American video game retailer, garnered nationwide attention after its shares skyrocketed this month. This sudden increase was caused by financial institutions irresponsibly withdrawing massive naked short positions and the frenzy of euphoric retail buying.

Financial institutions sold short in the hopes that the price of GameStop stock, GME, would fall, resulting in short

interest that was well above 100%. Reddit, a popular social media forum, hosts a thread called r/WallStreetBets. Members on that thread bought the GME stock at any cost in an attempt to drive the price of the stock up and "squeeze" big investors out of money.

Institutions were then forced to cover or roll forward short positions by buying shares at a higher price, which caused a meteoric

rise in the cost of GameStop's shares.

Short selling is when a trader will borrow stock they do not own and sell it, hoping the price will decrease and they can buy it back later for a profit. For example, an equity sold short at \$10 a share hopes that it decreases and falls to \$2, resulting in the short seller buying back for an \$8 profit. On the other hand, if a stock climbs to \$20 and if investors are asked to cover short

positions, it results in loss.

Popular stock trading and brokerage app, Robinhood, is under scrutiny surrounding the GameStop situation. With the easy operational mechanics of the app, anyone can trade and buy stocks on their phone, allowing larger populations of retail investors access to equities.

At the peak of this historic rise, retail traders were faced with restrictions sur-

rounding their ability to purchase GME stock, only allowing for selling of shares. Robinhood quoted this as due to "liquidity problems" but ultimately it decreased the stock's price since there was no ability for purchase by people at home. The result is a historic financial event.

A clever at-home investor would have had the potential to turn \$1,200, the amount of the first stimulus check, into

just shy of a million. Hedge funds like Melvin Capital and Citron research are speculated to have suffered major losses due to this retail frenzy. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission is currently investigating both sides, looking for signs of potential market manipulation. Robinhood and regulators will be testifying on Feb. 18, in regards to their controversial GME stock decision.

Tatmadaw seizes power, claims fraudulent election

By Riyasa Shrestha

On Feb. 1, Myanmar's military, known as the Tatmadaw, seized power of the Asian nation after detaining Aung San Suu Kyi and other democratically elected leaders from Myanmar's ruling party, the National League for Democracy. After arresting civilian leaders and proclaiming a year-long state of emergency, the military declared that official power is assigned

to the commander-in-chief of Defense Services Min Aung Hlaing.

The coup occurred the day before the Parliament of Myanmar was to swear in elected members from the 2020 election. The new government was expected to endorse the election results and approve the next government. Tatmadaw alleged that the recent landslide election won by Kyi's party was fraudulent

and demanded a rerun of the vote. Before the coup, the military had threatened to "take action" and surrounded the Houses of Parliament with soldiers.

The previous commander-in-chief, Min Aung Hlaing, received international condemnation and sanctions for his alleged role in the military's attacks on ethnic minorities. After the coup, he commented that the military would form a

"true and disciplined democracy" and hold a "free and fair" election once the state of emergency is over.

Kyi urged the supporters to "protests against the coup" after the military accused fraud. In a letter written in preparation for her impending detention, she said the military's actions would put the country back under a dictatorship.

It is not clear where the leaders of the National League

for Democracy are being held. No major violence has been reported. The soldiers blocked roads to the capital, Nay Pyi Taw, and the main city, Yangon. Internet, phone services, international and domestic TV channels were shut off. Banks had been forced to close. A curfew is reportedly in effect.

The United Nations demanded the release of the at least 45 people who had been detained

and called the army's move a "serious blow to democratic reforms." President Biden also released a statement saying, "force should never seek to overrule the will of the people or attempt to erase the outcome of a credible election."

He added, "The United States will stand up for democracy wherever it is under attack."

United Airlines offers air taxis By Salvador Hernandez

On Feb. 10, United Airlines Holdings Inc. announced their plans to purchase around 200 aircrafts from electric aircraft startup company, Archer. This strategical move hopes to implement United Airlines' goal of reducing their carbon footprint and

provide a way for people in urban areas to arrive at airports safely and comfortably.

Congestion, especially in urban areas, can be hectic and troublesome for passengers driving on highways and main roads, and can be even more stressful

when trying to reach the airport to catch flights. United Airlines wants to mitigate the problem that urbanites experience by providing "air taxis."

United Airlines hopes to aid Archer in their goal of constructing an aircraft entitled

"eVTOL" acronym, which stands for their electric vertical takeoff and landing vehicle. The aircraft has been reported to navigate a distance of 60 miles on battery power, at a speed of 160 miles per hour. The airline company's purchase has been estimated to be worth

\$1 billion dollars with the addition of an extra \$500 million more aircraft from Archer.

Archer CEO Scott Kirby said the aircrafts have the "clear potential to change how people commute within major metropolitan cities all over the world."

United Air-

lines has pledged to offset its carbon emission in its totality by 2050. In addition, the airline has invested in other ways to reduce its carbon emission such as recently investing in biofuel.

Congresswoman withdrawn, suspected involvement in insurrection By Ann Margaret Lummus

The House of Representatives withdrew Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) from her committees on budget and education due to encouragement of the Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6. The incidents at question are social media posts by Greene, particularly the one posted before Jan. 6.

"Tomorrow is a very important day in America's history, we can't allow the integrity of our elections to be stolen. We must object

to this vote, so let's get ready to fight for America tomorrow."

Other evidence contributing to Greene's removal are her comments claiming the 2018 Parkland shooting was staged, along with the conspiracy that 9/11 did not actually occur. Greene also made a blog post in which she suggests murdering her colleagues, Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi and Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY)

On Jan. 7

Greene stated, "I fully condemn ALL violence. The Antifa/BLM terrorism funded on ActBlue rests with Democrat accomplices like @CoriBush @Ilhan @KamalaHarris @AOC @timkaine & many more... Those who stoke insurrection & spread conspiracies have blood on their hands. They must be expelled."

Greene shared on her Facebook misinformation specifically about QAnon conspiracy theories. Greene claims her

interest in QAnon began with distrust of the government.

"When we elected President Trump, and then I started seeing things in the news that didn't make sense to me like Russian collusion, which are conspiracy theories also, and have been proven so, these things bothered me deeply, and I realized just watching CNN or Fox news, I may not find the truth," Greene said.

Greene revealed that in her upmost despair while

trying to find trust in her workplace Greene stated at the trial, "I was allowed to believe things that weren't true."

That will not be the case anymore since the House voted to expel Greene after evaluating her behavior and actions.

As of now Greene refutes her role with QAnon and has left the platform. Greene still advocates former President Trump and voices major concerns for the way in which the information is spread

about her.

"Big media companies can take teeny tiny pieces of words that I've said, that you have said, any of us and can portray us and to someone that we're not, and that is wrong. Cancel culture is a real thing," Greene said.

After her assignments removed, Greene responded that she will utilize this newfound free time to continue with her personal agenda – fighting cancel culture, encouraging pro-life laws, and raising funds to complete the building of the border wall along Mexico.

Texas legislative chamber introduces eco-bills By Priscila Batres

Two new bills were introduced in the 2021 Texas legislative session. If passed, they would curb the use of natural gas flaring and venting, both of which are common in oil and gas drilling.

Texas is the number one state that leads the oil and gas industry but has yet been regulated. Some

laws are supposed to control oil and gas, but they haven't been adequately administered for years.

The first bill, HB 896, would allow Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to implement state standards to limit flaring and venting. The second bill, HB 897, would make TCEQ and the Texas

Railroad commission find places to reduce pollution.

But what is Flaring? Flaring is controlled by excess gas, causing further venting of the greenhouse gas, methane, which gets released into the atmosphere. If these bills are passed, it would be a victory for the fight against climate

change.

The first bill is receiving positive attention, but there is some opposition from The Texas Oil and Gas Association. TXOGA represents the interest of this industry.

"Oil and natural gas is projected to be an essential part of a cleaner energy future, and we must

ensure Texans do not suffer the consequences of misguided policies and mandates, such as brownouts and sky-high electricity prices in states like California."

TXOGA argue that the oil and gas industry has already taken the lead in committing to lowering methane emissions.

However, this claim is yet to be proven. Flaring will be one of the main topics in the 2021 Texas Legislative session, and there will be a lot of proponents and opponents for and against reducing these gas emissions, so it will be some time before there are updates on the status of these bills.

BLM calls on Houston council member to resign

By Madiha Hussain

The Black Lives Matter Houston division has asked Councilman Greg Travis of District G, to resign after an inflammatory post about Michelle Obama on his Facebook page on Dec. 21.

On his personal page, Travis reposted a meme

of Michelle Obama sitting with her legs uncrossed and Melania Trump sitting with her legs crossed. He commented alongside the picture, “Yep. Just saying.”

After another Facebook user defended former First Lady Obama under Travis’s comments, Travis once again took a dig against

Michelle Obama by saying that she benefited from affirmative action and that she “was born with her qualifications.”

In an interview with KPRC, Travis defended his post. Travis replied to the backlash by saying that he likes Black women, with Candice Owens being one of his favorite Black

women. He denied any claims of misogyny or racism. Travis commented that calls for his resignation are inappropriate due to free speech and thought.

Ashton P. Woods, the founder of Black Lives Matter Houston, said that Travis’ post was misogynistic and racist. Woods further com-

mented that the post was “representative of the racism toward Black women.”

Other council members have found Travis’s comments to be offensive. Council members Tiffany Thomas, Dr. Letitia Plummer, and Abbie Kamin have all publicly spoken out against Greg Travis, according to ABC13.

Travis has made no official apology and said, “I’m not going to apologize for having an opinion or having free speech or free thought.”

The post from his Facebook has since been deleted at the behest of Mayor Sylvester Turner.

CNN special report details QAnon Conspiracy

By Aansa Usmani

On Feb. 6, CNN first aired “CNN Special Report: Inside the QAnon Conspiracy,” chronicling the events leading to the Capitol insurrection. Narrated by CNN News Anchor Anderson Cooper, the documentary dives into the QAnon world—both on the internet and real life.

The Special Report begins with QAnon supporters at the Capitol, with one man exclaiming how his presence at the riots was due to Q (short-hand for QAnon). More Trump-supporting paraphernalia and supporters emerged from the scene declaring that the 2020 Election was fraudulent and that then-President Trump was the actual winner.

During these events, Ashli Babbitt, a retired Air Force veteran and California-based QAnon supporter, was shot by Capitol police after illegally trespassing and vandalizing Congressional halls. These gruesome images began to emerge more questions for Cooper, wondering

how fringe conspiracy led to mainstream violence and disdain for democratic norms.

The origins of QAnon stem from October 2017 when Trump made the infamous remark of how staffers lined up behind him were “the calm before the storm.” Trump’s comments were taken in regard to tensions with Iran regarding the 2015 Iranian Nuclear Deal. However, that comment led to a growing awareness of “Q” and further adopters of its wild conspiracies.

After that remark, a figure known as “Q” or “Q clearance” began posting cryptic messages on 4chan, a site widely known for anonymous posts. On its first post, the “Q” user wrote how they had “Q clearance”—a high-level of intelligence clearance and knowledge—from the Department of Energy. The post further detailed how former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton would be arrested and that the National Guard would be deployed to “quell mass riots.”

Additionally, the post touched on how “global elites, high-level Democratic leaders and celebrities were all working to sex traffic children.” Based on a known anti-semitic theory, these claims believed that those individuals’ successes stem from child sex trafficking and Satanic rituals.

Followers of Q also promoted Trump as a messianic figure, believing that his role was to defeat the “deep state” operatives and child-trafficking Democratic pedophiles. Known as “The Storm,” this phrase became synonymous within the conspiracy-led cult. Despite being viewed as a “baseless narrative,” QAnon’s growing traction would result in real-life consequences.

In June 2018, Q followers engaged in a standoff at the Hoover Dam demanding that the government release its reports on Secretary Clinton’s emails. In March 2019, a man shot a known mafia member in New York City, believing that they were associat-

ed with the “deep state.” Additionally, the assailant flashed a drawn Q symbol on his hand and pled not guilty.

Cooper interviewed Jitharth Jadeja, a former QAnon supporter from Australia. Until June 2019, Jadeja regularly participated in Q forums and believed that Democratic-leaning celebrities, such as Cooper himself, worshiped Satan and drank children’s blood.

“[Jadeja] Anderson, I thought you did that. And I would like to apologize for that right now... thinking that you ate babies...[Cooper]: But you actually believed that I was drinking the blood of children? [Jadeja]: Yes, I did. [Cooper]: Was it something about me that made you think that? [Jadeja]...Q specifically mentioned you... very early on...by name...” Like Jadeja, many other Q followers wanted to be a part of a movement, something that would bring meaning to their lives.

“I would say that Q is kind of like

Jesus, and Trump is kind of like the god figure, right?. The part that was really appealing was that this... gave me some joy. I was looking at the world and it was just so chaotic...the idea that we could somehow make the world a better place for all of humanity just really gave me a sense of optimism. The irony of the situation that my life was so sad. I was so sad that I was looking to Q for joy, as well as a sense of belonging, just like any cult, you know? They prey on the vulnerable and disaffected. That’s exactly what happened.”

QAnon’s successful recruitment tool became #Savethechildren, stemming from the theory of sex trafficking young children. Rallies across the nation were held as Q supporters demanded that children be saved and returned safely to their parents. These theories, among others, continued stoking fearmongering and bigotry among QAnon-leaning Trump supporters.

Numerous

attempts from FBI intel briefings of how the Proud Boys and other QAnon factions categorized as potential domestic violence threats were met with silence from the Trump administration. The lack of response led to the violent insurrection earlier this year.

The CNN Special Report effectively detailed the history of the QAnon group. Although it does diverge into other non-related “Q” conspiracies, it shows how these correlations attract like-minded conspiratorial individuals. CNN continuously updates the documentary with the latest news of arrests related to the insurrection and the impeachment trial.

Documentaries like this should be taken as clear examples of how misinformation can corrupt and stoke violence. There have been countless historical instances, whether it be the Jim Crow era of the 1900s, blatant Islamophobia in the early 2000s, or other examples.

Black History Month Spotlight, Tarana Burke founds #MeToo Movement

By Madiha Hussain

In 2017, actress Alyssa Milano tweeted, “If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘me too’ as a reply to this tweet.” Milano attached a picture of a quote alongside her post that stated, “If all the women have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote ‘Me Too’ as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem.”

Within days, the #MeToo movement took over social media. Although the movement reached millions in 2017, its origins began decades earlier in 1996.

Tarana Burke, a native of the Bronx, was working at a youth camp in Alabama. There was a 13-year-old Black girl at the camp, who Burke now refers to

as “Heaven.” The two became close, and Heaven privately revealed to Burke the sexual violence she had experienced. Taken aback by this information and unsure of what to say, Burke directed Heaven to speak to someone else.

The two never saw or spoke to each other again. Burke remains unaware of Heaven’s whereabouts or what even happened to her after their conversation.

Burke experienced sexual violence as a young girl herself, which led to her feeling guilty after the conversation with Heaven.

“I didn’t have a response or a way to help her in that moment, and I couldn’t even say ‘me too,’” Burke lamented decades later in a Chicago

Tribune article. She asked herself, “Why couldn’t I just say ‘me too’?”

About ten years after the heart-breaking conversation with Heaven, Tarana created a MySpace page dedicated to helping others navigate life after sexual assault. A website, metoomvmt.org, was created, as well. The movement went as viral as it could during its MySpace days, with teenagers and adults alike reaching out to the page for guidance.

Another ten years passed, and the movement went viral on Twitter and Facebook. Controversy surrounded the movement, however, as Milano initially received most of the credit for a campaign that a Black woman created. It seemed

that another woman of color’s voice was stamped out in place of a white woman.

“Initially I panicked,” Burke said to The New York Times regarding the viral nature of the #MeToo movement in 2017.

“I felt a sense of dread, because something that was part of my life’s work was going to be co-opted and taken from me and used for a purpose that I hadn’t originally intended.”

Burke commented in the same article that Milano did reach out to her to give her credit for founding the movement. She also mentions that she believes the #MeToo movement is about survivors of sexual assault, not about a specific person like herself or

Milano. Burke admits that she hopes that all women, regardless of race, are given the resources, respect, and attention they deserve when they speak out about their sexual assaults.

According to the metoomvmt.org website, the purpose of the #MeToo movement is to establish healing for those that experienced sexual assault while simultaneously empowering survivors to overcome the challenges they have faced.

Burke employs a specific philosophy: empowerment through empathy. Her intention with her organization is to create a safe space for survivors, especially. In an interview with Elle magazine, Burke revealed that what helped her the most with her

personal experience with sexual assault was connecting with other survivors. Letting other survivors know that they are not alone is one of the main purposes of the #MeToo movement, hence the moniker.

Time magazine named the “Silence Breakers” as their Person of the Year, referring to those who opened up about sexual assault. Burke was one of the individuals that was credited. Burke was also included in Time’s 2018 “100 Most Influential People in the World.”

Burke currently is the director of Girls for Gender Equity, a non-profit dedicated to helping teenagers and adults develop overall life skills. She also attends various speaking engagements and continues to advocate for sexual assault survivors.

Trump advisor posts daughters’ nude photo

By Karina Rodarte Alvarez

Former Trump Advisor Kellyanne Conway is under investigation for posting underage daughter’s nude photos.

The controversy surrounding Claudia Conway, 16, and her high-profile politician mother Kellyanne Conway, 54, began in June of 2019. Claudia gained a following on TikTok for her political content supporting the BLM movement and encouraging followers to boycott Trump businesses. A few weeks later, she began posting more

content concerning her mother, Kellyanne Conway. Kellyanne served as senior counselor in the Trump administration during Trumps’ presidential term. Claudia made a public statement that her social media content was her way of distancing herself from her conservative family.

In June of 2019, Claudia stated that she would consistently argue with her family over politics but still had a good relationship with her mother. She also mentioned that she

respectfully refused her mother’s request to delete controversial content.

In July 2019, Claudia’s father, George Conway, discouraged the press from interviewing his daughter.

Claudia responded in the form of a tweet, stating, “You’re just mad that I’m finally getting my voice heard. Sorry your marriage failed,” which was later deleted.

Claudia posted more tweets mentioning that her parents were shutting

off her phone. On July 13, 2020, Claudia’s parents forced her to delete her social media platforms. Three days prior, her father had attempted to delete her Twitter account.

This absence was short-lived, however, when Claudia posted on TikTok two days later sarcastically supporting Trump. A week after, Claudia tweeted that her phone had been returned but would probably be taken away soon. Claudia went on to subtweet several controversial

politicians and Trump himself, publicly showing her dissatisfaction and anger at their policies.

In August 2020, Conway alleged that her family had been abusive towards her, and she was seeking a lawyer. She posted a TikTok with a compilation of her struggles which included being sexually abused, getting arrested after her mother called the police on her. She was diagnosed with multiple mental disorders and attempted to take her own life several

times.

Later that month, Conway was devastated that her mother would be speaking at the Republican National Convention, and made a post stating “...that’s it. I’m out. Running away Phase 1 starts tomorrow at 7 a.m.”

Claudia also tweeted that she would be seeking emancipation from her parents.

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Trump advisor posts daughters' nude photo Continued from page 12

Claudia clarified that she wanted emancipation because of childhood abuse and trauma, not because of her mother's choice in career.

On Aug. 23, of 2019, George and Kellyanne Conway resigned from their respective political positions. Kellyanne claimed that this was entirely her choice, but Claudia posted a few days later dis-

cussing her parents' resignations.

"Look what I did. Look. At. What. I. Did, ladies and gentlemen," she said in a video while a screenshot of her father's tweet publicly announcing his resignation was in the background.

In October of 2019, the teen posted several videos about her suspicions that her mother had

contracted COVID-19 after coming into contact with Trump.

Trump tested positive, and Kellyanne also tested positive a few days later, confirming it on her Twitter account. A few days later, Claudia tweeted that she had contracted COVID-19 from her mother. Her father denied it, saying that they had not been in contact with her mother long enough

and had not received their test results.

After the violent Capitol Hill siege on Jan. 6, Claudia called out her mother for her hypocrisy for not supporting the BLM protests in the summer of 2019. Later that month, Claudia posted videos that captured snippets of Kellyanne screaming at her and even swiping at her. Claudia claims she cannot

get a good lawyer and that Child Protective Services failed her.

On Jan. 25, Kellyanne's Twitter account posted a nude photograph of underage Claudia. Claudia took to TikTok immediately after, stating "Kellyanne, you're going to f*cking jail."

It has since been taken down and Claudia is now saying she believes her mother acci-

dentally posted it or that her phone had been hacked. As of now, there have been police investigations and Alphine police were seen leaving Kellyanne's property. Claudia also removed herself from social media of her own accord and is hoping to mend her relationship with her family.

VP Harris' step-daughter secures modeling gig By Emily Saldivar

New beginnings in more ways than one as Ella Emhoff, step-daughter of Vice President Kamala Harris, signs with IGM Models.

The Inauguration is more than just swearing-in the new president. It also introduces the first and second families. It is the first time we get a glimpse of the people standing behind the new leaders. Not only did Vice President Harris make history

as the first woman in her position, but her step-daughter, Ella Emhoff, made quite the first impression, as well.

Emhoff, daughter of Second Gentleman Doug and Kerstin Emhoff, is a 21-year-old student at Parsons School of Design. She is currently in her senior year and majoring in fine arts with a concentration in apparel and textiles.

Emhoff was

dubbed a fashion star after arriving to the Inauguration wearing a crystal embellished Miu Miu houndstooth jacket and oversized collar over a Batsheva burgundy dress with puffed sleeves. Her style caught the attention not only of Twitter but also of Ivan Bart, president of IGM Models.

In regards to the company's decision to sign her, Bart told *The New York Times*, "Ella commu-

nicates this moment in time. There is a cheekiness and joy she exudes."

But this is not the first time the second daughter has gotten in front of the cameras. Emhoff is no stranger to modeling. In April 2020, she posed for artsy mini-magazine, "Buffalo Zone," as showcased on her Instagram.

She is also an avid social media user and documents all of

her creations from painting to knitting, which she sells via Instagram. She also shows off her unique style in various selfies, often donning her own created knitwear and style, truly befitting of her status as a fashion star.

Expecting anticipation around her family's debut, Emhoff prepared her outfit with a mood board. "I was going for something girly-er, to embrace my

feminine side," she told *Vogue* magazine. "Because, like, how many times do you prepare yourself to attend an inauguration? This momentous of an event deserves a momentous outfit."

First impressions are very important, and it is safe to say Emhoff made her mark.

Wipeout contestant's death revealed almost three months after incident By Lauren Anderson

In November 2020, TBS revealed that Michael Paredes, a contestant of the show "Wipeout," died after completing two of the three obstacle courses during filming.

Nearly three months after the initial incident, it was announced on Jan. 29 by the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office that Paredes died of a heart attack.

Paredes was participating in the

third obstacle course when he fell into a body of water and was unable to get out of the water himself and others had to help pull him out. He was then placed into a wheelchair and fell into cardiac arrest.

The coroner's report stated that Paredes was resuscitated through CPR and was taken to Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital but died the next day.

Although the terms "cardiac arrest"

and "heart attack" are two separate concepts, they can be related to one another.

The American Heart Association states, "A heart attack is when blood flow to the heart is blocked, and sudden cardiac arrest is when the heart malfunctions and suddenly stops beating."

Heart attacks can increase the risk for sudden cardiac arrest, which means that cardiac arrest

can happen after a heart attack or during recovery.

The report also stated that Paredes did not have any alcohol or drugs in his system at his death. His fiancée also participated in the show and told NBC News that Paredes exercised five days a week for two hours a day, and they both sold wellness products.

Before participating in the show,

Paredes and his fiancée both passed a drug screen, an EKG, and a COVID-19 test. Paredes also did not indicate any headaches or other ailments before falling from the obstacle course. The production team of the show has numerous medics and a safety producer on set during filming.

The show initially aired on ABC from 2008 to 2014 and was announced by TBS that

it would air once again in 2021.

In November 2020, a spokesperson for TBS said, "We are devastated to have learned of his passing and our deepest sympathy goes out to the family."

Endemol Shine North America added, "We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family and our thoughts are with them at this time."

Marilyn Manson accused of abuse

By Madiha Hussain

On Feb. 1, actress Evan Rachel Wood revealed through a post on Instagram that her ex, Marilyn Manson, abused her while they were in a relationship.

The post reads, “The name of my abuser is Brian Warner, also known to the world as Marilyn Manson. He started grooming me when I was a teenager and horrifically abused me for years. I was brainwashed and manipulated into submission. I am done living in fear of retaliation, slander, or blackmail. I am here to expose this danger-

ous man and call out the many industries that have enabled him before he ruins any more lives. I stand with the many victims who will no longer be silent.”

Manson is a singer-songwriter known for his controversial music and clown-like stage makeup. At the time he and Wood began dating, she was 19 and he was 38. They dated for three years between 2007 to 2010. They were engaged in January 2010 but broke up several months later.

In November 2016, Wood told

a reporter that an unnamed previous partner had raped her. So far, Wood has not revealed a specific instance of abuse from Manson, but others have.

At least five other women have publicly come forward with accounts of abuse from Manson, including actress, Esmé Bianco.

Bianco is best known for her portrayal of Ros, a prostitute in the HBO series, “Game of Thrones.” She said she “felt like a prisoner” while in a relationship with Manson.

Bianco dated and lived with Manson in 2011. In a Rolling Stones article, she revealed that she struggled during that time. Bianco said that after filming a sex scene for the “Game of Thrones” series, Manson would replay the scene multiple times in front of other guests to embarrass her. Bianco said that she escaped Manson while he was sleeping a few days after he had chased her with an ax. Manson’s former assistant sided with Bianco’s version of events.

Other women have spoken up

about their horrific experiences with Manson. Gabriella Accarino met Manson backstage at his concert and said in a post on her Instagram that he cut her hands after meeting only for the second time. Ashley Walters said that Manson used coercive tactics to try to control her. Sarah McNeilly, an ex-girlfriend, stated in an Instagram post that Manson tortured her. Ashley Lindsay Morgan also said in an Instagram post that Manson physically and sexually abused her. Morgan also noted that Manson asked

her to bring him Nazi memorabilia while she was in Asia.

Manson denied the allegations on his Instagram page and stated, “[Manson’s] intimate relationships have always been entirely consensual with like-minded partners. Regardless of how — and why — others are now choosing to misrepresent the past, that is the truth.”

He was dropped from his record label, Loma Vista Recordings, and his long-time manager, Tony Ciulla, in the wake of the abuse allegations.

Olivia Rodrigo tops charts with first song

By Sara Garcia

On Jan. 8, Olivia Rodrigo, 17, released her first song, “driver’s license” which debuted at #1 on Billboard’s Hot 100, making her the youngest American artist to hold that spot. After months of teasing her followers on social media, the star of “High School Musical: The Musical: The Series,”

broke Spotify records with the most single-day streams ever.

Not to be overshadowed by the recent drama of the song writer’s very public breakup, “driver license” takes flight in reminiscence of an early 2000s Taylor Swift classic. With straight-forward pop lyrics, Rodrigo’s voice carries the pain

and agony of love’s first heartbreak. Singing about real-life experiences, she calls out her ex-lover and his new girlfriend while proclaiming her unending love.

The subtle piano keys guide the song through the five stages of grief – first in denial, then anger and depression. The chorus is the attempt

to bargain, finding reason for the heartache, while the bridge leads into acceptance at last, as she sings, “You said forever, now I drive alone past your street.”

In an interview with ET Canada, Rodrigo talked about her experience stating, “When I came up with ‘driver’s license,’ I was going

through a heartbreak that was so confusing to me, so multifaceted... Putting all those feelings into a song made everything seem so much simpler and clearer — and at the end of the day, I think that’s really the whole purpose of songwriting.”

The young Rodrigo has already learned what most

adults struggle with, letting go and changing your paradigm from victim to survivor.

Listeners can appreciate Rodrigo’s song as one that has a story and reflects the real-life experience of heartbreak. Rodrigo bares her soul and we are here for it.

Dozing off during binges?

By Amber Williams

On Jan. 29, Netflix launched a worldwide test for Android devices that will allow subscribers to set a timer for their viewing period. The timer lets users choose four allocations – 15 minutes, 30 minutes, 45 minutes, or the end of the show or movie – that will stop the application and prevent Netflix from continu-

ing auto-play.

Currently, the testing is only on adult profiles – though it would be perfect on children profiles for busy parents. According to Netflix, they are willing to bring the function to other devices such as iOS, TV, Roku, and other streaming platforms depending on how widely the timer is

accepted and if subscribers seem to like it.

Currently, other platforms have means to enable sleep timer settings but only through third party applications that force the platform to close. Other sleep timer settings are only available on certain devices including Google Chromecast, Smart TVs, and gaming platforms.



Photo courtesy of Standford Art Reviews

Cloris Leachman gone but not forgotten

By Natalie Beauchemin

On Jan. 27, history lost one of its most accomplished actresses, Cloris Leachman, to natural causes at her home in Encinitas, California at the age of 94. Although she is now passed, she has more than made her mark in the entertainment industry. Cloris Leachman is the most nominated and one of the two most awarded actresses in Emmy history.

Her extensive award list includes, but is not limited to 8 Primetime Emmy Awards out of 22 nominations, 1 Academy Award, 1 British Academy

Film Award, 1 Golden Globe Award, and a Daytime Emmy Award. She was awarded a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1980 and was inducted into the Television Academy Hall of Fame in 2011. She ranked 23rd on the TV Guide Network special "Funniest Women on TV" in 2011 and received an honorary degree from her alma mater, Northwestern University in 2014. In 2017, Leachman also received PETA's Lifetime Achievement Award for her dedication to animal-rights advocacy, not to mention her laundry

list of an IMDB page with 287 acting credits.

"It's been my privilege to work with Cloris Leachman, one of the most fearless actresses of our time," Leachman's manager, Juliet Green, told PEOPLE magazine. "There was no one like Cloris. With a single look, she had the ability to break your heart or make you laugh till the tears ran down your face. You never knew what Cloris was going to say or do and that unpredictable quality was part of her unparalleled magic."

'Saved by the Bell' star dies at 44

By Brittney Dizzine

Dustin Diamond, best known for his on-screen performance as the lovable geek Samuel "Screech" Powers on the hit NBC sitcom "Saved by the Bell," passed on Feb. 1. His representative confirmed the news in a statement, saying that Diamond passed away at age 44 due to stage four small cell carcinoma. He was released from the hospital to go to a friend's house to undergo hospice care. He was found unresponsive soon after arriving and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Diamond was

only 11 when he started his career with the high school franchise "Saved by the Bell" in 1988. His loveable character "Screech" was played by Diamond for the next 12 years.

Diamond's death came as a shock to his fans as he was diagnosed with the disease only three weeks before his death.

Diamond's representative stated, "The actor's cancer after initial rounds of chemotherapy continued to spread... the only mercy [the cancer] exhibited was its sharp and swift execution. Dustin did

not suffer... for that, we are grateful."

Diamond spent his final days surrounded by his loved ones. Long-time girlfriend Tash Jules said, "He was the love of my life.

We planned on a future together and often spoke about having kids. I am heartbroken... Even though he was struggling to breathe... he gained the energy to say to me, 'I love you,' I told him that I loved him back. You had to experience Dustin. As a human being, one cannot describe him; he was pure fun."

Tom Brady leads Tampa Bay to Super Bowl victory

By James Jurewicz

Super Bowl LV, the first Super Bowl during the pandemic, took place at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa Bay, Florida on Feb. 7.

It was also the first Super Bowl to feature a team with true home field advantage. After beating the Green Bay Packers in the National Football Conference Championship, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers were lucky enough to play at home. During the 2020 season, luck played a factor for the Buccaneers and so did starting quarterback Tom Brady's leadership.

The Kansas City Chiefs were the visiting team representing the American

Football Conference, led by starting quarterback Patrick Mahomes. The Chiefs were world champions of the 2019 season, taking their first Lombardi Trophy to Missouri.

At 5:30 CT on CBS, kickoff commenced with play-by-play announcers, Jim Nantz and Tony Romo. The game had a slow start, but the action picked up by the second quarter. Kansas City scored the first on a field goal. It was a familiar connection on the Buccaneers' two second quarter touchdowns by Brady's former teammate from the New England Patriots, Tight End Rob Gronkowski, who came out of retirement to

join Brady in sunny Tampa Bay. The first touchdown came on a screen pass play, the next a second quarter dart from Brady to Gronk with 6:50 left to play in the first half. Even the announcers seemed disappointed with the way the game played out.

Jim Nantz sadly remarked "With a minute to go in the second quarter... Mahomes still hasn't found the end zone."

Brady was not done yet. After two pass interference calls against the Chiefs' Defense, the Buccaneers signal caller threw a touchdown pass to wide receiver Antonio Brown. At halftime it was 21-6, Buccaneers over Chiefs.

Protected by two replacements at the tackle position, Mahomes struggled to even make a pass in the second half. The Chiefs' offensive line was downright porous. Defensive tackles Vita Vea and Ndamokong Suh stuffed the Chiefs running game. Tenacious linebackers Jason Pierre Paul and Shaquil Barrett kept containment, continually harassing Mahomes, who was playing with turf toe. It was Mahomes' worst statistical game at the Pro Level.

Mahomes is the youngest starting Quarterback to appear in two consecutive Super Bowls. The Chiefs scored one more field goal in the second half for a

whopping nine points. The Buccaneers scored another touchdown and a field goal for the winning 31 points.

Viewers and attendees were treated to yet another Super Bowl stalker, Yuri Andrade. With 5:03 left in the 4th quarter, Andrade ran across the field while attempting to strip. Neither Mahomes nor Brady looked amused and CBS quickly cut to a commercial.

While the confetti fell after the clock expired, Tampa Bay celebrated its second Super Bowl after an 18-year hiatus. Tom Brady is the oldest player ever to play in a Super Bowl and took home his seventh Super Bowl Ring. Brady won six

titles previously with the New England Patriots.

The Pepsi Halftime Show was extravagant and kinetic. The Weeknd performed with tremendous energy. Instead of keeping to a center stage, The Weeknd delivered a mobile show in multiple locations of Raymond James Stadium. He also donated \$7 million dollars of his own funds to supplement the show's quality.

The Super Bowl boat parade went through the canals and channels of Tampa Bay, Florida on Feb. 10. All Buccaneers were in attendance, but it was Tom Brady who commanded all the attention and headlines.

JoJo Siwa comes out

By Karina Rodarte Alvarez

In late January, social media personality and former “Dance Moms” star, JoJo Siwa, 17, came out to her fans by posting a viral TikTok dancing to Lady Gaga’s “Born This Way.”

Later, on Jan. 22, the social media sensation posted a selfie on Twitter wearing a shirt with the words, “Best. Gay. Cousin. Ever.” written on the front. Siwa posted the photo with a simple caption, “My cousin got me a new shirt.” The tweet garnered a lot of public support from fans and even celebrities including Lil Nas X, Ellen DeGeneres, Paris Hilton, and more. As of Feb. 8, the tweet has an astounding 1.3 million likes.

Siwa shared her gratitude for her fans’ support and overwhelming amount of love she has received from other celebrities.

She said, “For the last 48 hours-72 hours, I have gotten the most endless

amount of love and support... I am really, really, I’m really happy.”

Siwa had a Live Q&A on Instagram for her fans wearing her signature ponytail and bow as well as a black hoodie sporting the line “100 Times,” a subtle nod to being voted one of Time’s 100 Most Influential People.

“Technically, that was a really big risk that I took,” Siwa stated in an interview with Jimmy Fallon, acknowledging just how risky coming out was for her career. “If I lost everything that I created because of being myself and because of loving who I love, I don’t want it.”

Siwa also said that the decision to come out was an impulsive decision spurred by a FaceTime call with her girlfriend. Only 10 minutes prior, Siwa had told her publicist that she would not be coming out publicly.

It is also important to note that while Siwa is a

proud member of the LGBTQ+ community, she has not labeled her sexuality just yet, and does not intend to.

“I always believed that my person was going to be my person and if that person happened to be a boy, great! And if that person happened to be a girl, great!” Siwa said.

On Monday, the “Dance Moms” alum made an Instagram post celebrating her relationship with her girlfriend, Kylie. The post included snapshots of piggyback rides, the pair hugging affectionately, and a clip of the two harmonizing to Justin Bieber’s “As Long as You Love Me.”

Siwa later posted on TikTok a video of the two cuddling, where she opened up a bit more about how their relationship started. The two had been best friends for over a year, and last month on Jan. 8, Kylie asked JoJo to be her girlfriend.

JoJo Siwa continues to be a shining beacon of positivity and acceptance to her fans. Siwa wants her audience to know that “no matter who you love that’s okay, and that it’s awesome, and the world is there for you!” She encourages her audience to love whom they choose to love, and she will remain an inspiration to LGBTQ+ youth for her confidence and acceptance of who she is at heart.

Halsey expects first child

By Emily Saldivar

On Jan. 27, the 26-year-old singer announced her pregnancy via Instagram with a three-picture post taken by photographer Sam Dameshek. The images depict Halsey topless and showing off her bared pregnant belly wearing only a pair of jeans and a Mona Lisa smile. She captioned her post with a simple, “Surprise,” followed by emojis, baby bottle, rainbow, and angel.

Screenwriter Alev Aydin was tagged in the post and commented, “Heart is so full, I love you, sweetness,” as well as posted it to his own Instagram story with two hearts. And he is not the only one celebrating - the singer’s post received 7.3 million likes, as well as 253K comments of congratulations from friends and fans alike.

While pregnancy is already a momentous milestone, Halsey’s is especially wonderful due to her history with endometriosis. Endometriosis is a female reproductive disorder that is lifelong and can cause not only chronic pain but infertility. Like many women, Halsey was not aware of her condition and had been misdiagnosed several times. Even after being correctly diagnosed, the then 20-year-old did not understand the true severity of her condition. It was not until shortly after, she suffered her first miscarriage during a performance at Vic Theater

in 2017 that she got aggressive about receiving treatment for her condition.

The singer went on to have multiple surgeries and decided to be as transparent as possible with her fans concerning her disease, which she did via social media in now deleted Instagram and Twitter posts. The posts described her journey to getting correctly diagnosed as well as the pain she endured through it all.

In 2018, she revealed in an interview on “The Doctors” that she decided to freeze her eggs so she would be able to get pregnant in the future without worrying about her disorder getting in the way. A year later she found out that freezing her eggs may not be necessary due to the success of her surgeries. While being a mom was important to the songwriter, her desire for a baby was made clear in her song “More” on

her 2020 album titled “Manic.” The lyrics read, “Lyin’ awake, and I stare at the door / I just can’t take it no more / They told me it’s useless, there’s no hope in store / But somehow I just want you more.”

In an Instagram story shared a day after her announcement, Halsey showed off a Polaroid of her baby bump with arrows pointing at her old laparoscopic and endometriosis ablation surgery scars. She proudly used the hashtag #EndoWarrior and wrote, “The scars that got me this angel.”

Halsey has come a long way from “feeling the most inadequate [she’s] ever felt,” as stated in her 2020 interview with The Guardian. Now, posting ultrasound pics on social media, Halsey is truly a strong individual who has just started a new and exciting chapter in her life.



JoJo Siwa comes out as LGBTQ+ member through iconic social media post. Photo courtesy of @itsjojosiwa on Twitter.



Halsey used social media to announce her first pregnancy, despite her struggle with endometriosis. Photo courtesy of @iamhalsey on Instagram.

'Rodgers and Hammerstein Cinderella' premieres on Disney+ during Black History Month

By Varah Thornton

On Feb. 4, Whoopi Goldberg and Brandy jointly announced that the classic "Rodgers and Hammerstein Cinderella" would premiere on Disney+ on Feb. 12. The film was a modern retelling of the classic 1950 Disney animation in live-action as part of the studio's "The Wonderful World of Disney" series.

On Nov. 2, 1997, it premiered as a made-for-TV movie. The debut marked a number of firsts not only for the studio but in television history. Brandy Norwood, who goes by the stage-name and is credited as Brandy, was the first Black woman to portray the character of Cinderella as part of the first multi-cultural cast musical portrayal of the film. According to

IMDB, the film broke viewership records and still holds the record for best-selling made-for-TV movie.

The film is colloquially known as "the Black Cinderella" or "the Brandy and Whitney Houston Cinderella" to ardent fans. When Disney+ announced its lineup of upcoming films, this "Cinderella" remake was one of the most requested along with dozens of Disney original classics. Unlike some popular requests, this one kept resurging across social media. In an interview with *Variety*, Brandy revealed that the ball got rolling after seeing the continuous requests and petitions saying that she had to hold onto the secret for a week before its announcement.

The televi-

sion classic holds a special place in the Black community as the first time many got the chance to see themselves in the Disney universe. With an all-star cast, everything about the special showed people of various races in leading roles that typically default to white actors. Whitney Houston produced the film and was initially set to star in it but felt that Brandy would be a better fit for the main role of Cinderella. Houston personally reached out to the still up-and-coming singer to offer her the role. Brandy said she only agreed if Houston promised to play her fairy godmother, a role for which Houston is now renowned.

Aside from the stellar performances, the soundtrack's choices

were lauded, many of which come from various Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals, hence the title. Not long after the announcement, Brandy partnered with singer and performer Todrick Hall to create a musical medley in which Brandy reprised her role as Cinderella and Hall acted alongside her as The Prince, the set decorated with various mementos from the release of the original specials.

Brandy even sported a recreation of the Cinderella ballgown for the film. Original cast members joined in for safe socially distanced cameos throughout with small tributes to late cast members Whitney Houston and Natalie Desselle Reid who passed away in 2012 and

2020 respectively. The compilation as well as a behind the scenes video can both be found on their respective YouTube channels.

The special is one of many Disney classics making its

way onto the streaming platform giving new generations the chance to experience the magic and a chance for fans of the original debut to relive it with family and friends anew.



Cover of the Rodgers and Hammerstein's adaptation of the Cinderella story. Photo courtesy of ShopDisney.com

Houston offers refreshing date spots

By Karina Rodarte Alvarez

Setting aside time to reconnect and spend quality time is vital to keeping any relationship alive. So here are four unusual, fun, and interesting date ideas to try!

Houston Board Game Café: Bored? Games! However, in all seriousness, having a date night at Tea + Victory will bring out a competitive streak that will have the hours flying by. The café has floor-to-ceiling shelves that hold hundreds of board games, from the classics like Monopoly to new hits

like Cards Against Humanity. They offer a selection of local craft beers, teas, locally roasted coffee, flatbread pizza, buffalo chicken wraps, grilled cheese, chocolate chip cookies, and more. Not to mention the all-day pass is only \$5 per person for entire rainy afternoon at Tea + Victory!

Looking to appreciate Asian History? Lucky Land is a scenic amusement park that covers over two acres of land. There is a replica of the famous Terracotta Army as well as

miniatures of traditional Chinese villages. They also have traditional Chinese garb on display, a collection of Kung Fu statues, and mascots walking around for photo-ops.

Lucky Land is so pretty for selfie posing next to every attraction, such as the beautiful cherry blossoms and painted umbrella walkway. There is also a stream and pond teaming with Koi fish that visitors can feed! Lucky Land also sells adorable stuffed panda bears as a keepsake

and with an affordable \$10 admission per adult, Lucky Land is a must-see for any Houstonian.

Horses on the Beach: Galveston Island Horse and Pony Rides" is exactly what it sounds like: riding horses on the beach at sunrise or sunset! Many visitors have reported seeing pods of dolphins frolicking along the ship-channel and other assorted wildlife. The trail is along the beach that does not allow vehicles or swimming because of the sea turtles that

lay eggs there, so there is no littering, and it is a very private trail ride. Prices are reasonable for horse riding, at \$50 per person for half an hour of riding and \$100 per person for a private sunset trail ride. Professional photoshoots are also provided at different rates. This is a very romantic gesture worthy of an anniversary.

Hot Air Balloon Ride: Riding in a hot air balloon with one's significant other is like a scene in a movie. Air Texas Balloon Adventures offers a gorgeous view of the Gulf Coast's

sunrise. The crew assembles the hot air balloon, which is also a great backdrop for a couple. Afterward, the sunrise hot air balloon ride is roughly an hour long. After landing on a large pond, the entire crew toasts with champagne. Pricing is incredibly expensive, so couples may want to save up for this one: \$290 per person for a shared balloon with four to eight others or \$900 per couple for a private session. The view and experience is breathtaking, and this memory will be a treasured one for years to come.

'The Computers' documentary features woman pioneers of computer programming

By Raksha Singh

Despite the gender gap in computing, women are making strides and have come a long way.

"The Computers" documentary brings to light the six young women who launched the ENIAC, the first all-electronic, programmable computer in 1946. Their contribution to the ENIAC, a secret World War II project run by the U.S. Army in Philadelphia, went acknowledged partly because computer science was not a rec-

ognized field at that time.

The founder of the ENIAC Programmers Project, Kathy Kleiman, teamed up with film producer Jon Palfreman and Kate Mc-Mohan to produce the award-winning documentary. NASA has said the six women were "never introduced" when the ENIAC was unveiled to the press and the public in 1946. "They became invisible."

Kleiman, executive producer of the documentary

and historian for the ENIAC Programmers Project, said the motivation is not just about its historical significance but how the programmers provided role models to really inspire women to believe that computer careers were within their reach.

The ENIAC Programmers Project has spanned over 20 years researching the lives of these six brilliant women: Frances Bilas Spence (1922 – 2013), Jean Jennings Bar-

tik (1924 – 2011), Marlyn Wescoff Meltzer (1922 – 2008), Kathleen "Kay" McNulty Mauchly Antonelli (1921 – 2006), Frances Elizabeth "Betty" Holberton (1917 – 2001), Ruth Lichterman Teitelbaum (1924 – 1986).

These brilliant women building the computer is testament to the fact that the pioneers of computer programming were not just men.

These were women that shook those stereotypes to the core.

Without prior knowledge of programming languages or compilers, they programmed and compiled the 80-foot tall by 88-foot long ENIAC.

In 1997, WITI – Women in Technology International inducted the ENIAC women into its Hall of Fame for their leadership in today's global economy. Lots of progress has been made in computing since.

Gators aspiring to expand networking opportunities in a future career in

computer science can join any of these five professional organizations for women in computer science: Association for Women in Computing (since 1978), ACM Committee on Women in Computing, Association for Women in Science, WICSE, (run by the University of California in Berkeley), Center for Women and Information Technology, (with a concentration in IT).

Lawmakers propose \$50K student debt cancellation

By Jesse Fitzgerald Rodriguez Sr.

President Joe Biden wants to boost and save the nation's economy in his first 100 days in office. How? One way is by forgiving student loans up to \$50K, backed by Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, pressured by over 200 organizations, including the American Federation of Teachers.

"For too many people, debt is the anchor that weighs students down, and they rarely overcome it," Schumer reiterated on NBC News on Feb. 4.

Higher educa-

tion should be affordable, accessible, and tailored to prepare students for success in the 21st century, but many think otherwise.

As the nation grapples with this pandemic, our political leaders are confused about on how to reconstruct an already poverty-stricken nation suffering physically, mentally, and financially.

Biden claims that the cancellation of \$50K in student debt and raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour may help over 900,000

people living below the poverty line. The majority of those minorities, being Blacks and Latinos, stated Sen. Ayanna Pressley, a Democrat from Massachusetts who accompanied Schum-

Biden also added during a foreign policy address on a visit to the State Department in Washington on Feb. 4. that no one should be living below the poverty line and getting paid a minimum wage of \$7.25, which has not changed since 2008. Biden should help the economy, or more

importantly, help strengthen the foundation of the nation.

Regardless of financial status, data shows that by 2025, all universities will be driven by minorities. Intellectual individuals will be seeking more knowledge, skills, ideas, and networks to pursue their academic and professional careers, according to the 2020 College Student Guide to Minority Serving Institutions.

As of 2020, the college student guide of MSI also indicates that the majority of minori-

ties in Texas alone fuel a whopping 91% Hispanic community with an overall 41% graduation rate. So, should \$50K be canceled from student debt? Alternatively, is the current \$7.25 minimum wage killing Americans slowly overtime by assimilation incidentally rather than accidentally.

With the price of a higher education only rising every year, students will be rethinking a university degree's integrity in the near future. According to data from the U.S. Department of Education, UHD

has an acceptance rate of 89% with a 44% graduation rate.

In the end, the nation as a whole suffers financially. People are dying from an invisible virus. The nation's education system is broken, but reconstruction is possible. The infrastructure of the workforce is unstable but can be controlled and reevaluated. Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has failed Americans domestically and overseas, but the U.S. will prevail.

necessary.

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The C-word: Consent By Jennifer Ayala

Startling as it may be, there are a whole lot of people out there who still do not understand the definition of consent. So, let us dive right in and break it down in simple terms for those who still just do not get it. One act that falls under the umbrella of sexual assault is nonconsensual sex or rape. Sexual assault has become a terrifying epidemic that has long been around but rarely spoken of because of the shaming and backlash from which so many victims have suffered.

Face it, there are a whole lot of people who grew up barely talking about “the birds and the bees,” and some of which escaped it

altogether. Though the talk from parents will surely not always turn into the extensive C-word, consent lectures, that is, it should at least be a point of discussion.

So, time to get personal here and catch those who are still disturbingly clueless up to speed. Consent is permission for something to happen or an agreement to do something. The key term here would be permission. Okay, because without permission, one is simply continuing with an act in which both parties are not in agreement, and one is continuing without the other’s permission. Which can ultimately lead to, and this is the word nobody wants to hear,

rape.

One scenario would be a guy and a girl meet and decide to go on a date. They are clearly both into one another, and so they end up in bed together. Both people have been giving signs, green lights, and indicators (and these can change vastly from person to person) that they are into one another. However, right before the act of sex, one of them changes their mind.

Consent is no longer on the table if that was still a question. Therefore, the other party can no longer proceed with the act of sex. It is simple. There is no more if’s, and’s or but’s about it. If it

was not obvious from the above explanation, then this also goes for drinking alcohol or engaging in anything that inhibits their overall state of mind, making them inebriated. Be that someone who drinks way beyond their limit and passes out, because someone who is passed out can no longer consent to the act of sex. At this point, continuing with the act of sex is, again, sexual assault.

Ladies and gentlemen, if a situation arises in which the other party is, in fact, inebriated, then this is where it is highly advised to say no. Even if it is the belief that the other party is fine, handling their alcohol well, or they appear to be into the sexual act just

as much. It just so happens that people, male and female, will wake up the next morning and realize that they never really wanted to have sex or do not remember anything while intoxicated and that the other party took advantage of them.

Facts abundant, it is mind-boggling to find that many people truly believe they did not commit the act of sexual assault because the non-consenting party was into it before they passed out. Therefore, if there is even a slight feeling the other party may not remember the act, STOP, and do not continue with SEX.

Consent is that simple, and if ending up a suspect in

an investigation is not what someone seeks, read over this article one more time and show it to everyone.

Because the importance of making sure that everyone becomes more knowledgeable and empathetic towards victims of these heinous crimes is of utmost importance. We hear about victim-blaming too often. A term that blames the victim for their outfits or the way they present themselves as to why they were sexually assaulted. Essentially, victims become the ones having the finger pointed at them when in reality, the assailant should be the one ashamed of themselves, not the victim.

UHD should lower tuition and mandatory fees

By Jesse Fitzgerald Rodriguez Sr.

As of today, in America, drop a pin anywhere on a map, and the impact of strict restrictions, rules, and specific protocols, disrupt college institutions: its educators, staff, faculty, students, and leaders. Meanwhile, college students suffer from mental health issues, drug overdoses, and in-person higher education system vanishes on a need-to-know basis.

Since August 2020, most colleges transitioned to 100% remote, virtual, and online learning. Still, plenty of colleges continue to charge full tuition. Should UHD rethink its fixed rate for tuition and mandatory fees, which remains in ef-

fect until the summer of 2024?

“Why not take action and reduce fees as Southern Hampshire University did back in August 2020,” said a PBS news reporter. Paul Leblanc, president of SHU, stated that its institution lowered its tuition, added more online subjects to propel learning, and offered incoming first-year students a full-year scholarship for the first year. All while creating a structural change and plans not to raise tuition and fees indefinitely because of the pandemic.

UHD is noted nationally as a Minority Serving Institution with an average 53% Hispanic pres-

ence in 2019 alone: 19% Black, 15% white, and 9% Asian American.

“In fact, nearly all the growth in postsecondary education enrollment through 2025 is expected to come from minority students,” reads the December 2020 College Student Guide to Minority Serving Institutions.

Should UHD communicate with the Texas Legislature, the Board of Regents and rethink its online learning tactics and financial strategies as it tackles this pandemic and serves the student body better fairly, justly, and attentively?

Currently, UHD charges students’ mandatory fees

for these services: advising, center, computer use, extended, access & support, international education, library, record’s office, student service, and the Student Wellness & Success Center at an estimated \$651.00 plus a \$238.00 charge per semester credit hour.

In the end, I ask myself the same question I did four years ago: Are UHD’s tuition and mandatory fees reasonable, decent, and adequate for the 21st-century education it offers? In 2016, maybe. But right now, many students may question these fees given the circumstances, the learning environment, and the lack of services available to

them? Are these fees logical if thousands of students lack the necessary resources to succeed, network, and learn effectively?

Since March 2020, I and thousands of other students have not returned to the UHD campus. And as announced in January 2021 on UHD’s Blackboard by Interim President Antonio D. Tillis, Ph.D., “To ensure the UHD Community’s safety, all classes will remain 100% online until March 1. This restriction includes face-to-face, hybrid, and online interactive courses.”

The deadly coronavirus should not shadow the facts and the data. Someone should be held

accountable for these exceeding and mandatory fees during unsettling and chaotic times, which have vastly traumatized the student body, the faculty, staff, as well as, UHD leaders.

I remain optimistic about the future, about this country’s tenacity, UHD’s Gator pride, peoples’ appetite for success, and students’ undeniable persistence to overcome adversity. Because I know, together, the United States will prevail, succeed, push aside hardships and indifferences, and one day unite again.

Neither from here or there

Something that is not often talked about concerning immigration is the identity crisis one faces when moving from the country they were born to another.

This is something I have dealt with for more than half of my life.

I was born in El Salvador. At the age of six, my family decided to migrate to Houston, and I've been living here ever since. I always knew that I was not a born U.S. citizen, and that I'm technically not an American citizen, at all because I'm under DACA.

Things started to get complicated

when I entered my pre-teens because the question, "So where are you from?" was asked all through adolescence and now, into adulthood. But honestly, I don't know how to respond to that question anymore.

I don't feel Salvadoran enough because I wasn't raised in El Salvador. I just know what I know about my culture through my parents. I'm not ashamed of being born in El Salvador or of my culture. I've always embraced it, but not growing up over there and not visiting due to my DACA status, caused this confusion

within myself.

At the same time, I feel wrong to call myself "American." Growing up, I saw the way immigration is demonized – ICE raids appear often in the news (which is traumatic to see at such a young age), and xenophobic undertones from school administration were not uncommon.

On top of that, the last presidential administration tried to dismantle the DACA program, so I lived alongside thousands of others in a constant state of distress for over three years. We will live like this until there is a solution and pathway to residency

for the millions of undocumented immigrants living in the country now and for decades to come.

For me, home is the United States, but it is tough to feel "American" when the country you grew up in rejects you and does everything in its power to make your life a living nightmare, simply because you were not born on American soil.

I've tried to share this feeling of not knowing where I'm from, but nobody around me seems to understand, and I don't expect them to understand.

I've also tried to share this feeling

with other DACA recipients, and I've asked them if they feel like I do – like they don't know where they're from. And a lot of them look at me like I'm crazy, and at one point, I felt like I had gone mad for feeling this way.

There are thousands of stories online of people sharing a similar feeling like the one I have. It gives me some sort of comfort that I'm not alone in this and that there are strangers out there that go through this.

Immigrant children who have grown up in the U.S. struggle with their cultural identity

far more often than others may realize. It starts at the moment we enroll in school and can't speak English. Hence, we are forced to assimilate and to learn the language as quickly as possible, instigating the identity conflicts we will face for the remainder of our lives.

I am 23 years old now, and I think I will always have this identity crisis. I have made peace with that for myself. But who knows, maybe in the future, I won't feel like this after all. But as for right now, I'm neither from here or from there.

COVID-19 fuels drug overdoses in America

By Jesse Fitzgerald Rodriguez Sr.

In December 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 81,000 drug overdose deaths in the U.S. in the 12 months ending in May 2020. Should all educational systems worry, prepare, and put plans in place for their student

body? Drug overdoses have soared to an all-time high during the government's mandates, rules, and lockdowns. Americans' civil rights and freedoms continue to be pressed, silenced, pressured, and tested by political leaders, health officials, and the CDC, to name a few.

It's been "like pouring gasoline on a fire," as one law

enforcement official responded to Mississippi reporter Debbie Skipper on Jan. 25. Deaths by overdose spread like wildfire across communities, and Mississippi's Bureau of Narcotics released startling numbers, saying "overdoses have doubled."

If that's not enough, an imitation, powerful painkiller, 100 times more potent than morphine, disrupts Northern California, causing deaths, reported Mike Chapman in USA TODAY.

In another case in Springfield, Massachusetts, Mike Masciadrelli reported on Jan. 22 that synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, infest

the state and several people pronounced dead.

"Local experts in the field of substance use disorders point to social isolation for the rise in overdoses," Masciadrelli said.

From the east to the west coast, the data shows social distancing and isolation intensifies depression, mental disorders, fear, and new addictions to drugs including methamphetamine and cocaine, amongst others. This illustrates that we are no longer facing just an opioid crisis and a coronavirus pandemic, but also an epidemic in the record-breaking overdoses across America.



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