

DATELINE

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In-person commencement celebrates resilient UHD 2020, 2021 graduates

BY CHRIS KEMP

UHD Gators came together with friends, family, and faculty at NRG stadium on Saturday, Aug. 14 for two in-person commencement ceremonies celebrating the graduates of 2020's spring, summer and fall semesters; and spring 2021.

For many in attendance, this was the first time being around so many fellow Gators since the global pandemic caused UHD, and much of the rest of the world, to drastically change its operations in spring of 2020. The two ceremonies marked the first time since the pandemic that UHD returned to holding

in-person commencement ceremonies.

They were also more spread out than commencements of times past, streamlined to minimize the risks associated with being in close proximity to unfamiliar vectors, and accompanied by many hand sanitizer stations.

Beneath these surface level changes was a familiar spirit of celebration; a much-needed reprieve after the years of hard work that precede any graduate's coveted walk across the stage. Several speakers congratulated this season's graduates with uplifting remarks.

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Graduates from 2020 and 2021 kick off UHD's first in-person ceremony since the COVID-19 pandemic during the 70th commencement's first of two ceremonies on Aug. 14, 2021. PHOTO CREDIT: CHRIS KEMP



Associate Professor Eszter Trufan, Ph.D., layers the solutions. Screenshot courtesy of YouTube.

UHD's largest chemistry classes extend flexible lab curriculum, spark study

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit last spring, the UHD community was forced to move to a fully-online mode of instruction.

With chemistry classes fundamentally dependent on hands-on, face-to-face interaction, chemistry faculty members, had to be quick on their feet and devise engaging ways to teach students how to conduct at-home experiments that would deliver a level of learning experience close to an in-person environment.

Eszter Trufan, Ph.D., associate professor of chemistry; and Elene Bouhout-sos-Brown, Ph.D., chemistry lecturer, teamed up to develop an online laboratory curriculum for UHD's General Chemistry 1 and 11 (CHEM 1107 and 1108) courses.

The online laboratory curriculum debuted last summer implementing nonhazardous materials that are frequently used in a household and are free to affordable.

They co-taught the very first section of CHEM 1107 in the July semester of last

year just to see "if this was even going to work."

The flexibility offered by the online laboratory curriculum has extended to the current fall semester with the in-person and hybrid mode also available.

General Chemistry I lab is offered both in person and online with no cost resources; and General Chemistry II lab is offered in person and in hybrid modality, of which only the hybrid option uses no-cost resources.

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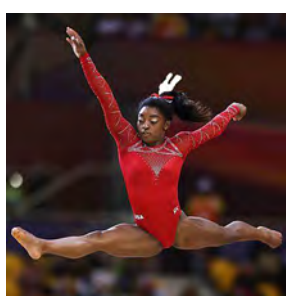
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Flexible lab curriculum CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Trufan and Bouhoutsos-Brown would like all UHD students to be aware that these options exist and have the opportunity to hear from their peers who completed these courses in the past year.

No-cost resources include equipment and chemicals that are provided to the students as a kit and a shopping list of approximately \$10 that includes things like baking soda, a liter of vinegar, a pack of food coloring, red cabbage, a can of seltzer water. In Trufan's words: "small items that you can pick up from any grocery store."

"The main reason why we were interested in incorporating these materials in our labs is to make the experience of doing chemistry relatable," she added.

Bouhoutsos-Brown came up with a list of ideas for the at-home, online experiments. Some of the list of at-home experiments include extracting calcium from eggshells, making a potato battery, growing crystals, and electrolyzing a red cabbage solution. Trufan

recorded the demonstrations. Soon, all their video-recordings will be Open Educational Resources and "freely available to everyone at UHD and beyond."

Together they designed the elaborate prompts that follow a lab. These prompts get students to perform a variety of calculations to document their own data collection, think about implications on both large and small scales, record observations, and think about what's happening to the elements within the compounds as they were transforming in the course of the experiments.

This online approach had never been implemented at UHD before.

General Chemistry I and II are UHD's largest chemistry courses with a combined average enrollment of 300 students per semester.

"If we had not done this, we could have compromised the education of over 600 students in the last year," Trufan said. "We didn't know what to expect, but the students

responded quite well, and they submitted some stellar work."

Riyasa Shrestha, a junior majoring in chemistry with a concentration in biochemistry, took general Chemistry I taught by Trufan and Bouhoutsos-Brown in summer 2020.

"The affordable experiment materials made my education a lot easier as I didn't have to stress over the cost of the materials," Shrestha said. "I also liked that I could do the experiment in my own time, and also be able to complete them on time. Sometimes in person labs don't have enough time to collect all the data."

Traditionally chemistry labs are confined to two hours and 45 minutes. At home, students could "let something sit for a couple of days" and "then observe it over time," Bouhoutsos-Brown said.

Online labs without group members also lead students to perform every step by themselves or if with their families, they become the expert who

"guides the community to perform every step," Trufan added.

"It led to a more meaningful, much deeper integration of everything that they were experiencing and studying," Trufan said.

Online labs also eliminate the commute to school and extend the opportunity to "reach students who normally would not be able to do the in-person courses."

Trufan and Bouhoutsos-Brown are performing a "fairly rigorous" pilot study to look and evaluate how well the students are performing in at home labs versus the in-person experiments. The outcome of that study will inform the department to decide if these more flexible modalities should be offered beyond next year.

"Implementing classes online should be an option," Shrestha said. She would want UHD to permanently implement chemistry courses both online and face-to-face.

"Personally, I'd like to take online classes because I find that I can manage time better."



At-home experiment of General Chemistry 1 in the summer of 2020, displays late stage of decomposing baking soda to grow stalactite and stalagmite.

PHOTO CREDIT: RIYASA SHRESTHA

Trufan and Bouhoutsos-Brown will share the data from their study with the department, UHD community, and the American Chemical Society. Before the pandemic hit, the ACS said only face-to-face courses could be used to teach chemistry.

"We want to challenge that a little bit... whether that is true or not," Trufan said. "We want to contribute

something to make that decision just a little bit nuance not just 'it's always been done this way, so let's keep it this way.'"

"I am super excited that students will be able to participate in the study that we are doing because they are going to make a difference," Bouhoutsos-Brown said. "They're going to have an impact, and I think it's really cool."



At-home experiment displays the early stage of decomposing baking soda to grow stalactite and stalagmite. The liquid (sodium carbonate solution) was made by decomposing sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) at home. PHOTO CREDIT: RIYASA SHRESTHA



Late stage of decomposing baking soda to grow stalactite and stalagmite at home. PHOTO CREDIT: RIYASA SHRESTHA

Gators On-Campus Experience welcomes new students

BY SHAHERYAR KHAN

On July 22, UHD hosted “Gators On-Campus Experience,” one of the first live, in-person, campus events since the COVID-19 predicament limited on-campus activity. Director of Student Life Eugene Bernard and Interim Director of Student Transition Programs Jordan Greene hosted the event.

As this was one of the first events hosted in person and on campus, it was proper to acknowledge COVID-19 safety precautions. With the rise of permissible individuals granted access to vaccines, many public spaces in Texas do not require face masks. UHD has decided to have face coverings optional on campus. The triumphant duo of Bernard and Greene then introduced the first speaker, none other than the Vice President of Enrollment Management Daniel Villanueva, Ph.D.

Villanueva welcomed the room and introduced himself as a mirror reflection of the audience, full of first-year students and transfer students. He shared his personal story from how he started “dirt poor” and his build-up in education. He enlightened the audience with a couple of pieces of advice for success.

“First thing no one will tell you is that earning a college degree is difficult, but I am here to tell you that what you are about to do is really difficult.”

Villanueva emphasizes that the route the first-year students and transfer students are taking is by no means a walk in the park. UHD is known to be a university consisting of first-generation college students, so this was a remark many of the individuals in the audience needed to hear.

“The second thing you need to know is that there are a lot of resources on campus.”

Many students have the routine of simply going to class and then going home until they graduate. Vil-

lanueva states that the campus is packed with resources and clubs, and organizations that students can partake in. His convincing remark was when he said that the college tuition was being used for all these resources, so essentially, students are already paying for it, so they might as well utilize them.

The second person to speak was Dean of Students Meritza Tamez, Ph.D. She shared her story of being a first-generation college student, stating that “it took an entire village,” to get her to complete her bachelor’s degree. Her story aims at individuals who often do not seek assistance when times are tough.

She described her time at college as a “pingpong ball,” and when she had enough, she sought out help. Tamez emphasized that UHD is here to help in any way possible and encourages everyone to seek assistance so that their college experience can go smoothly as hers did eventually. Bernard then welcomed UHD’s “celebrities,” the next pair of speakers.

Student Government Association President Shamika Jefferson and SGA Vice President Michelle Duvall emphasized that there are so many ways to get involved with the Gator community. They expressed the importance of building relationships and networking within



the world of social media. Duvall is also the station manager for UHD’s radio station, iRadio, where this assembly was broadcasted.

The following speaker engaged with the audience was UHD alumni Eric Contreras, Professional and University Banking Consultant for Truist Bank. Contreras introduced Truist Bank, a new bank that will be the sixth largest in the nation.

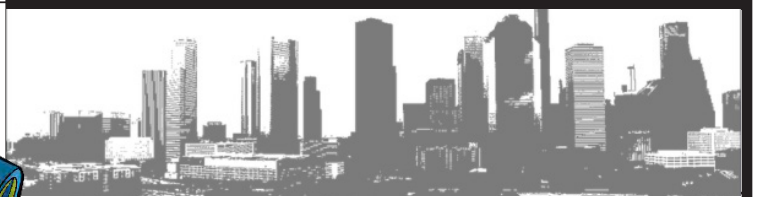
His following remarks were made to emphasize monetary responsibility for university students. One major thing to take away from Contreras’s presentation was his appeal to students to graduate with the least amount of debt possible.

The Gators On-Campus Experience was near its end, as the assembly concluded with the introduction of a few campus organizations and clubs, as well as a group interaction of the famous “Gator Chant.” The event ended with a campus tour, as well as closing remarks at the gym.

To view the entire broadcast of the live event, visit iRadio’s Instagram account @uhdiradio, for more information.



Illustrations on this page are BY GEAN GARCIA



THE DATELINE

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Submission Policy

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

The Dateline reserves the right to edit or modify submissions for the sake of clarity, content, grammar, or space limitations. All submissions become property of The Dateline and may not be returned.

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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 editor Indira Zaldivar at editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com.

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Faculty, Staff senates want flexible work policy, course modality

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

As COVID-19 cases in Harris County have spiked over the past month, the UHD Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Staff Senate Executive Committee raised concerns of the risks of returning to in-person classes for the fall 2021 semester in an open joint-letter addressed to the UHD community on Aug. 9.

The letter came just days after Harris County raised its COVID-19 threat level from orange to red “severe” on Aug.

5 as the delta variant increased hospitalizations in Harris County. Statewide, COVID-19 cases have skyrocketed primarily affecting the unvaccinated, as they make up a significant majority of hospitalized patients from COVID-19.

Since July 12, UHD has operated at a “green” status from UHD’s COVID-19 threat level matrix with faculty and staff expected to “resume their pre-COVID on-campus work schedules.”

A message from

UHD President Loren Blanchard on July 8 mentioned that for the fall semester, “approximately 60% of classes at UHD will be offered face-to-face, with the remaining 40% offered in various hybrid, on-line and online interactive modalities.”

In response to the new policies attached to the green status, the Faculty Senate sent a resolution on July 27 to UHD Administration “asking that UHD faculty be allowed to choose the form that their courses take in the

fall semester.”

The recent letter asks that UHD allows faculty to change their course modality for fall and authorize and finalize expeditely a “flexible workplace policy.”

According to the letter, UHD should reconsider the “ongoing refusal” of implementing a work-from home policy. The letter states working from home would “reduce traffic on campus and accommodate faculty and staff who are caretakers of children/elderly.”

The letter also

cites how other Texas universities have implemented a work from home policy as allowed by Texas Government Code 658.010 through a written authorization by the “administrative head of the employing state agency.”

“The continued rigid push to return UHD to pre-covid operations restricts the ability of UHD staff to take their health and safety into their own hands, despite the university being squarely located in a county that is currently at its highest COVID

threat level,” the letter reads.

At the time of this writing, UHD remains in green status but will start the semester with a “soft opening” announced by UHD President Loren Blanchard Ph.D on Aug. 12. Fall semester classes scheduled for hybrid and in-person modalities will continue to be offered with students expected to meet at least once for the first two weeks of the semester.

Resilient Graduates CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Derek Delgado, a member of the University of Houston System Board of Regents served as one of the guest speakers.

Delgado reminded graduates that the recent roadblocks the global pandemic had presented would ultimately be “setups for future success.” Delgado’s comments were followed by words of encouragement from UHD President Loren Blanchard, Ph.D., who commended graduates for the impressive feat of balancing scholarship with the many other challenges the last year had presented.

Blanchard touched on how proud he was of how students had adapted to a corrosive environment that threat-

ened their physical and mental health before presenting former UHD interim President Antonio Tillis, Ph.D., with the UHD Presidential Medallion of Honor.

Upon receiving his award, Tillis took some time to acknowledge how he is eternally grateful for the time he spent as a member of the UHD community. He also noted how he had witnessed the community overcome challenge after challenge during his tenure at UHD.

Tillis, who now serves as the Chancellor of Rutgers University-Camden, reminded graduates how many of them had overcome Hurricane Harvey at the start of their college journey, the recent

deadly freeze, as well as the ongoing pandemic.

“One thing I’ve learned about Gators... is that they will always emerge from the waters to keep swimming,” Tillis said in his speech.

“Gators are not afraid to put in the hard work necessary to achieve their goals and serve their communities.”

Throughout each speaker’s remarks was a palpable sense of pride in UHD. This pride was directed at the students who have persevered as well as the faculty and staff who have supported them.

Following the commencement ceremony, I caught up with some of the graduates who were being celebrated. Stephanie Arteaga, a graduate of UHD’s College of Public Service was especially appreciative of the care that went into the ceremony that took place that morning.

Arteaga shared that she had felt disappointed by the virtual commencement ceremony that took place on Dec. 19, 2020. She is one of



Gator graduates’ families, friends, and other invitees to UHD’s 70th commencement, enter NRG Stadium on Aug. 14, 2021.

PHOTO CREDIT: CHRIS KEMP

many Gators that felt the 68th Commencement left a lot to be desired.

“Today was much better,” Arteaga remarked on Saturday morning.

Outside of a few smiles hidden beneath

masks, this most recent commencement ceremony had it all. Bullhorns, matching t-shirts, celebratory dances, that one unfortunate Gator who took a spill while crossing the stage, and even a mariachi band to boot.



Plushies dressed up in graduation regalia. PHOTO CREDIT: CHRIS KEMP



CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF 2020
& 2021!

- The Dateline

Technology Needs Survey returns, qualifies Gators for technology equipment



ILLUSTRATION CREDIT: GISELE OVIEDO

UHD ranks No. 5 for best alumni salary outcomes in Texas

ONLINEU
MOST AFFORDABLE ONLINE COLLEGES
 Texas
 ★ 2021 ★

UHD's affordable tuition rates and competitive OnlineU's Salary Score, placed UHD both among Texas's most affordable online colleges and among Texas's online schools with the highest alumni salaries!

These rankings highlight UHD as one of the top five most financially accessible schools in Texas where a prospective student can earn a quality education "without breaking the bank," OnlineU Representative Sarah Glass said.

ONLINEU
BEST ONLINE COLLEGES BY SALARY
 Texas
 ★ 2021 ★

Harris County raises COVID-19 threat level to severe

BY AANSA USMANI

On August 5, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo raised the COVID-19 level to “severe” in light of growing cases amid the delta and the lambda variants.

“We find ourselves retracing our steps toward the edge of a cliff,” Hidalgo said at a press conference. “It’s very conceivable that we can once again be heading toward a public health catastrophe.”

According to The Houston Chronicle, Harris County has remained at the “red” (severe) threat level for most of the pandemic, lowering its threshold this past May to “orange” (significant) as more people got vaccinated.



Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo informs on the spike of COVID-19 hospitalizations, delta variant, and announces that Harris County’s COVID-19 threat level is moved to “severe” at a press conference on Aug. 5, 2020. Photo courtesy of ABC13.

The new advisory comes amid growing cases of COVID-19—predominantly amongst the unvaccinated crowd. Other causes for concern include the

lambda variant. Originating from Chile, the delta variant was first detected at Houston Methodist this past June. Since then, it has emerged as a “vac-

cine-resistant” variant, prompting further viral concern.

According to Houston Public Media, Hidalgo has dubbed the current situation to be a

“perfect storm” from having “strained staff, a more transmissible virus, and the limited ability for local leaders to implement public health policies after

Gov. Greg Abbott issued orders preventing such measures.”

With these factors in mind, it is now more important to get vaccinated.

Hidalgo has continued expressing urgency in getting vaccinations, otherwise avoid “all but the most essential interactions.”

“If you’re in the minority who has not gotten the shot, you’re the reason we’re here today,” Hidalgo said.

Additionally, she advised that both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals to continue wearing masks and to use emergency rooms “for life-threatening emergencies only.”

Senate passes bipartisan \$1 trillion infrastructure bill

BY SERGIO PRESA

The Senate passed a bipartisan infrastructure bill on Aug. 11 aimed at upgrading various parts of infrastructure across the U.S.

Democrats are also hoping to pass a \$3.5 trillion budget plan.

Having support from both Democrats and Republicans, the \$1-trillion bill infrastructure bill includes \$550 billion for spending on utilities, broadband, and transportation, such as roads, bridges, railways, waterways, public transit and other areas of transportation.

Both parties have said the bill is overdue and will modernize transportation as well as help get the U.S. economy back on track after the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bill is one of two legislative targets Democrats wanted to



Cars stop at a red light as Metropolitan Transit Authority’s RedLine METROrail moves north on Main Street in downtown Houston on July 19, 2021. PHOTO CREDIT: INDIRA ZALDIVAR

get through the Senate. The other target is the budget resolution. In a letter to colleagues, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the Senate will work towards passing the budget resolution. If the budget resolution passes, it would allow

Democrats \$3.5 trillion to spend on childcare, tuition-free community college, healthcare, and climate change policy, without needing a vote from Republicans.

Schumer wants the measure approved before the Senate’s August recess. The bill

was called “the most consequential piece of legislation for working people, the elderly, the sick, and the poor since FDR and the New Deal of the 1930s” by Sen. Bernie Sanders who is also the Senate Budget Committee Chairman.

While passing the

infrastructure bill is a priority for Democrats, their biggest priority is the \$3.5 trillion budget plan.

Democrats want to enact corporate and individual tax reforms to pay for the spending plan. Sens. Angus King and Elizabeth Warren

are planning to propose a 7% tax for corporate profits over \$100 million.

King defended the measure saying, “it’s not socialism, it’s an attempt to have a fair tax at a pretty low level for companies that would otherwise pay zero.”

Democrats have also considered raising the corporate tax rate up to 28% and increasing the top individual tax bracket to 39.6%.

Democrats must keep the support of all their members in the Senate and from most Democratic members in the House if they want to get the spending plan passed. Losing support from just a few Democratic lawmakers in the House or in the Senate could jeopardize getting the spending plan passed.

Houston federal judge denies new DACA applicants



DACA supporters rally outside the U.S. Supreme Court on June 18, in Washington, DC on the day the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, rejected the Trump administration's attempt to end DACA. Photo courtesy of Drew Angerer via Getty Images.

BY ANN M. LUMMUS

In July, South District of Texas Judge Andrew Hanen ruled the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, as illegal.

According to Hanen, the Obama administration who instated DACA did not use the right legal procedure to create the program, making it illegal.

On Jan. 20, President Joe Biden issued an executive order reinstating DACA after the 2017 Trump administration planned to phase out the program.

Through a series of events between 2017-2018, DACA recipients' deferrals and employment authorizations under DACA were valid until the date of expiration.

Pending applications and renewals are considered by a case-by-case basis under the current rules.

DACA is a program that allows eligible immigrants to temporarily avoid deportation and receive renewable work permits or education.

These recipients are people who were brought to the U.S. as children. Hanen

ruled the program was "created in violation of the law" and "illegally implemented." As a result, the ruling barred the government from accepting new applications to the program.

Although this cancelled Biden's executive order in the meantime, Hanen did not pull DACA recipients their status.

"These rulings do not resolve the issue of the hundreds of thousands of DACA recipients and others who have relied upon this program for almost a decade," Hanen stated.

Prior, on June 18, the Supreme Court ruled that the DACA program could continue. The Court explicitly states: "The dispute is instead primarily about the procedure the agency, Department of Homeland Security, followed in, rescinding DACA."

National Immigration Law Center explained that although DHS was bound by the attorney general's legal conclusion that DACA was illegal, the agency failed to offer sufficient reasoning for rescinding DACA by failing to exercise its discretion in

policy matters.

DHS failed to distinguish between the protections from deportation and the benefits (such as work and education authorization) that came with DACA.

DHS did not consider whether to retain the protections from deportation, even if the benefits were terminated.

The Greater Houston area which Hanen resides over, has the fourth largest number of DACA recipients in the country.

Over 33,000 individuals in Houston are supported by DACA.

Houston Immigration Legal Services state DACA recipi-

ents have contributed immensely to the Houston community as educators, business owners, doctors and nurses. Including lawyers, fashion designers, musicians, athletes, and military servicemen and women.

HILS also notes during Harvey, DACA recipients risked their lives and in one case, giving it to keep Houstonians safe.

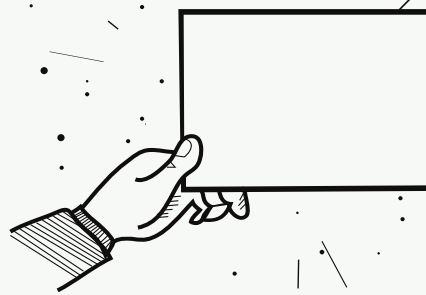
The July 16 order from the Southern District of Texas instituted by Hanen, stated that the DHS is prohibited from granting initial DACA requests and accompanying requests for employment autho-

rization. Also consistent with that order, DHS will continue to grant or deny renewal DACA requests.

Universities like UHD have worked with DACA students during these uncertainties in recent years.

For assistance, please visit the DACA page on UHD's official website at uhd.edu/student-affairs/daca/Pages/default.aspx.

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Military coup threatens Myanmar women



May Sabe Phyu (right) protests in front of Indonesia Embassy on Feb. 24, 2021. Photo courtesy of @maysabephyu; on Instagram.

BY JEMA PANTOJA

In the midst of the military coup happening in Myanmar since Feb. 1, the women of Myanmar have taken a stand and are leading protests.

Myanmar's coup has been deadly to peaceful protestors who are marching the streets in need of democracy and to stand up to the military. However, the coup has been especially devastating for the country's women.

Due to the coup, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi was forced out of office, this now threatens to reverse the progress made over the past few years that brought about more equal opportunities in society to women in Myanmar.

Over the past 10 years, the number of women in power has been steadily increasing and in the November 2020 elections, 17% elected parliaments of the government were women. This progress is remarkable considering how Myanmar has culturally ingrained sexism and discrimination against women. Reversing

the progress made by women before the coup threatens their rights, gender equality, and safety, as a result revitalizing Myanmar's long history of patriarchal oppression.

Before the coup, women's rights advocates started to pave the way for gender equality and to empower women concerning the political, economic, and cultural ideology of society. Women's rights organizations such as Gender Equality Network, Karen Women's organization, Burmese Women's Union, and Women's League of Burma were beginning to take apart traditional societal norms and stereotypes that delayed gender equality in Myanmar.

Despite the threats brought about due to the coup, women are taking a stand and protesting on the frontlines to secure what they have worked to gain.

May Sabe Phyu of GEN is taking action and speaking out against the injustices women have faced in the past and what they could face in the future due to the coup. Many women are angry and saddened by the reality

that they once again have to fight for democracy in their country. GEN is a collation of more than 100 organizations across the country that advocates for gender equality and women's rights.

"Over the past ten years we have worked tirelessly to expose the many forms of gender-based discrimination and violence," Phyu stated in a piece published by Open Democracy.

Phyu has been pressuring the international community since the coup for their support and to raise awareness and importance of women's rights.

"Women's rights have never been part of the military agenda. They may pretend they care, but it's all lies. In their view, the role of women is to preserve culture and religion," she added.

Activists worldwide call for people to get involved and care about the Myanmar women's equal rights in a country overtaken by patriarchy.

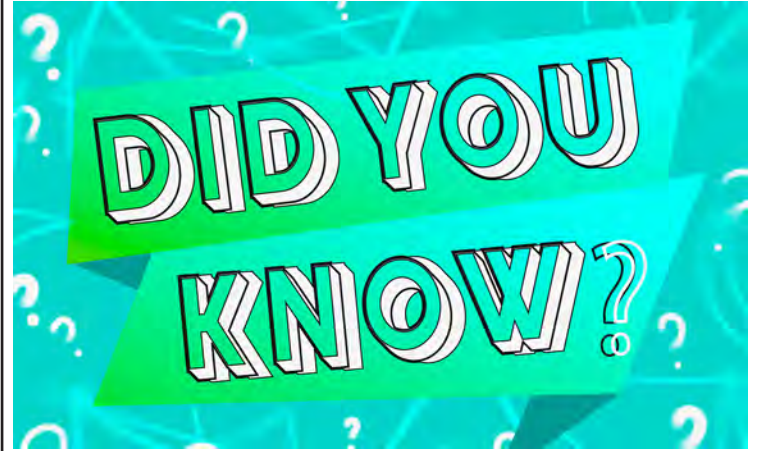


ILLUSTRATION CREDIT: SARAH RAMIREZ

Lights out protects nighttime migratory birds

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR

Bird fall migration has started and ongoing through November.

With the migration approaching its peak on Sept. 5 through Oct. 9, it is important that city folks be aware that exterior artificial lights on structures may distract migratory birds flying at night and cause them to fatally collide against buildings. Bird conservation societies are calling bird-friendly Houstonians to turn out exterior nonessential lights from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. every night through Nov. 30 to help make a safe passage for these important feathered friends.

An estimated 1 billion U.S. birds die each year from colliding with buildings. Houston ranks No. 2 among U.S. cities for exposing night-time migratory birds to light pollution. Almost 2 billion birds fly through Texas. The Houston-Galveston area, specifically, is important for birds flying on the Central Flyway migratory path.

The "Lights Out" initia-

tive is a partnership among Houston Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Texan by Nature and more bird conservation organizations to monitor these collisions and learn how to prevent them.

Turning lights out, keeping cats indoors, and growing native plants in one's garden are all initiatives that help nurture migratory birds and the abundant wildlife in Houston. Nurturing a bird-friendly environment are a win-win situation for all, according to Houston Audubon's director of conservation, Richard Gibbons, Ph.D. Not only do birds benefit ecology, but also contribute to the economy. Bird watching, for example, attracts tourists and stimulates economy.

"Anyone and everyone in our community...intersect with the endeavor of having a community that is in tune with nature," Gibbons said. "If we have a community where birds can thrive, people are also going to do better in that environment."



Illustration courtesy of @houstonaubon on Instagram.

To BE or NOT to be vaccinated

BY ANN M. LUMMUS

As the 2021-2022 school year moves forth the pandemic still exists in Texas and has reached another peak in coronavirus cases.

As of right now, our communities are debating over this overtly overdramatic sense of a vaccine which is no different from other vaccines, including the fact that our nation is designing health mandates.

To note, in a public institution kids and young adults are required to have an immunization record.

In other cases, regarding health regulations, kids are to quarantine 24 hours for head lice and the flu. Also, in general people were to go home for high fevers.

What is at stake right now to even ask a question about not following a safe and proper guide with this virus?

Texas is not privy to immunization nor is this the first-time Texas communities have been affected by a virus.

Parents and health professionals are worried that their kids face illness with no support right now.

But there is hope, history shows vaccines and mask do work even when there are no mandates but there are regulations.

According to Public Health Reports, Texas has a school immunization law that provides no penalties for noncompliance and, as with all such laws, it could cause pre-school immunizations to show the record of morbidity that led to its enactment.

From 1967 to 1970, Texas had reported a disproportionate share of the nation's morbidity in the vaccine preventable diseases.

In 1970, an outbreak of diphtheria occurred in a Texas city, the third such out-break in three years.

Twenty-two cases of

paralytic poliomyelitis were also reported in Texas in 1970, about two-thirds of the national total.

The diphtheria outbreaks, particularly, caused some public alarm.

In spring 1971, with the support of the Texas Medical Association, the Texas State Department of Health, and other groups, the Texas Legislature enacted a mandatory immunization law for school children.

The Texas school immunization law requires protection against small-pox, diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, rubeola, and rubella.

Exemption may be granted for religious reasons or medical contraindication, but "religious exemptions may be set aside in time of emergency or epidemic by the State commissioner of health."

The Texas State Board of Health is authorized by law to modify or delete requirements for immunization, and under that authorization the board eliminated smallpox requirements in 1971 and established regulations.

All immunizations should be completed by the time of enrollment.

However, the law also allows an unimmunized child to enter school as soon as he has received the first dose of vaccine, provided he continues to receive the remaining immunizations as rapidly as is medically feasible.

Finally, the law requires the Texas State Department of Health to provide the required immunizations to children in areas where no local provision exists to provide these services.

This is particularly important in Texas, where only 77 of the 254 counties are served by a State-associated local health department.

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COVID-19 VACCINATIONS AVAILABLE FOR THE UHD COMMUNITY

Brought to you by The Dateline

On-campus Vaccination event with HEB

Dates and time:

1st dose Thursday 8/26

11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

2nd dose: Friday 9/17

11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Where:

UHD Welcome Center

Vaccinations available with UTHealth

Date and time:

UTHealth is administering the Pfizer Vaccine every everyday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: UTHealth Cooley

University Life Center at 7440 Cambridge St., 77054 (recommended)

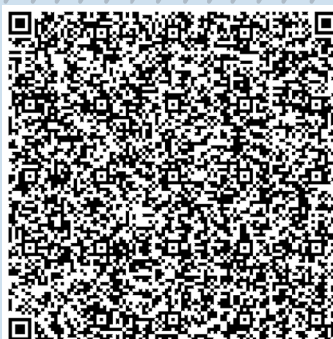
If this place is not within your reach, there are more places you can visit by scanning the QR code below

Cost: Free (insurance will pay for the fee)

What to bring: Insurance cards or Social Security Number card (if you have no insurance card)

Important: Don't take any over-the-counter medicine prior to the appointment (ex. Tylenol or Motrin/ibuprofen)

Scan to schedule an appointment



It's okay to enjoy the Olympics

BY VARAH THORNTON

The delta variant is surging, people are still fighting facts, and Tokyo can't seem to get their COVID-19 outbreak under control. But wasn't that opening ceremony great? Did you secretly whisper "Yeah!" in your own head despite being alone and knowing no one can read your thoughts? Did you feel that twinge of guilt as you thought it? If so, you're not alone.

No matter how you feel about the Olympics, the pandemic, or just sports in general, there's something about the Olympics that just gets to people. Whether it's seeing the majesty of the opening ceremony or getting to watch a variety of sports played by athletes at the top of their field, people go nuts.

Some chalk it up to patriotism, but it's something deeper. It's a collective awe at an annual worldwide event that most people can be on the same page about. I'd even go so far as to say that the Olympics gets more traction than the FIFA World Cup. There's just no beating the scale of both participation as well as viewership.

There's also an endless amount of sharing. In the age of social media, we're more prone to watch more, learn more, and absorb more of what global events have to offer. For many, this is the first time they get to not only see people from other cultures competing on the world stage, but it might be the first time they get to see someone who looks like them excel.

The Parade of Nations

Viewers also get to witness one of the biggest fashion shows the world will ever see. The fashions range from the traditional to the basic and sometimes outright bizarre. Each participating country is introduced by the host nation along with a delegation of their participating athletes. Various companies vie to style participating delegations, sometimes gathering multiple.

One of the standouts of the past three opening



Tennis star Naomi Osaka lights the delayed 2020 Olympics' cauldron. Photo courtesy of Laurence Griffiths/Getty Images

ceremonies have been Taekwondo athlete Pita Taufatofua, the oiled-up flag bearer representing Tonga. He has stood out not only for sporting his country's traditional costume, but also for his impressive musculature. Despite the current conditions, Taufatofua pulls it off with a smile and this year was accompanied by Malia Paseka as the International Olympic Committee enacted gender parity rules for every country.

But what about the Pandemic?

As individuals, we cannot control what our governments enact, good or bad. Like many others, I don't believe the Olympics should have proceeded. Tokyo in particular is still experiencing a severe outbreak with less than 40% of the population vaccinated. Regardless, the games proceeded, and it appeared that both athletes and Tokyo officials took precautions seriously.

Those athletes who chose not to get vaccinated were quarantined under questionable conditions. The United States was not alone in athletes who voiced opposition to getting vaccinated.

Come Together

When the Olympics concluded, there was no great fanfare except that of a pesky moth stealing the show during the concluding speech. All of the major athletes had already returned home or were waiting for final results.

One of the most united stories to come from the games this year wasn't the pandemic or a feat of great strength, but one of caution.

Epitomized by Simone Biles' withdrawal from several competitions, mental health was at the forefront. For the first time, athletes' mental condition was put forward as equally important as their physical.

Before the games began, Japanese native and tennis superstar Naomi Osaka drew international acclaim and controversy for choosing her mental health over the requirements of the French

Open a month before the Olympics began. Despite the outpouring of support she received, Osaka was nevertheless maligned and criticized for her decision to not participate in the required post-match press releases.

After a tete-a-tete with the Big Four Tournaments, Osaka withdrew altogether to focus on the upcoming Olympics where she would represent Japan. It was a delightful surprise when she appeared as the final torch bearer and lit the Olympic Cauldron.

Osaka and Biles were two of many Olympic athletes who were front and center with their mental health struggles. Because of this, the conversation across social media platforms evolved to better understand the pressures athletes and their families were under.

Amid a pandemic where mental health has been pushed to the limits, it was refreshing for many to see athletes advocate for their well-being instead of allowing themselves to be pressured to give it all for the sake of a medal.

Regardless of the individual accomplishments of participants, it felt like the world as a whole won by the display of camaraderie on this alone.

To BE OR NOT to be vaccinated

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

"Successful implementation of the Texas compulsory school immunization law is attributed to public concern, a good law, and excellent cooperation from all agencies in the State concerned with health and education," Gon Lee 1975 Texas State Department of Health said. "The provision of money and support by the Texas legislature is also cited as one of the most important factors."

To be or not to be vaccinated is within itself a question of public concern. It is in the best interest of Texans to encourage immunization against COVID-19 just as we have against previous outbreaks. The American image of morality and community is being tested. Immunity cannot be better as kept broken, while in the past the regulations put in place improved people's quality of life.

Gymnast Simone Biles withdraws from Olympic competitions, challenges mental health stigmas



Superstar Simone Biles of the United States Gymnastics bounces back to win bronze-medal after mental health break and celebrates on the podium on Aug. 3, 2021. Photo courtesy of Mike Blake via Reuters.

BY SASHA SMITH

On July 27, 32-time Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles decided to back out of the Tokyo Olympic Games 2021 uneven bars and individual vault sections to prioritize mental health.

Though Biles has never shied away from the topic of mental health, this same respect was not met by others when she announced her mental health withdrawal from the games.

Commentator Charlie Kirk went as far as to say Biles was a “selfish socio-path” and a “shame to this country.”

“We are raising a generation of weak people like Simone Biles,” Kirk added.

However, Biles has endured many challenges for the love of hersport. Biles has competed through a broken rib, a shattered toe, and a calf muscle that has been torn two to three times already, amongst other things yet, she has pushed herself despite the extremities of her injuries.

Biles has not only fought through external wounds but the internal ones caused by former USA Gymnastics physician, Dr. Lawrence Gerard Nasar, as well.

The strength and unwavering dedication of Biles are respected amongst many

communities, where she has allowed fellow athletes, such as Michel Phelps and other USA Olympic gymnasts to delve into their own recollections of their struggles competing or prioritizing their own mental health.

Teammates Sunisa Lee and Jordan Chiles took to Instagram to show their support not only for Bile.

“You will forever be loved. We can’t thank you enough. You have such a huge inspiration on all of us. We wouldn’t have done it without you...” voiced Chiles.

“love you so much. thank you for inspiring me every single day. you are not only an amazing gymnast but you are also an amazing person,” commented Lee.

Celebrities such as Michelle Obama, Adam Rippon, Justin Bieber, Meghan McCain, Andy Cohen, Kerry Washington, and many more, took to Twitter to give an outpour of support to Biles and the decision she consciously made. Biles not only shook the stands but many hearts when she let the media into her headspace.

“With gymnasts, when you get injured, your heal time is four to six weeks, but then something so traumatic that happens like this... there is no four to six weeks, so

it’s hard for us to process that,” Biles commented.

She proceeded to give her much-anticipated answer in response to the negativity.

“For anyone saying I quit, I didn’t quit. My mind and body are simply not in sync... I don’t think you realize how dangerous this is on [a] hard competition surface.”

Simone Biles has been a true testament of mind over matter. An example being the past Olympic Games in 2016, when she competed after the conviction of her former doctor. She has constantly paved the way for those in sports and allowed all to see that it only takes a little time, and work to make yourself great.

“Before you can achieve, you must believe in yourself. You are more capable than you think,” Biles said. Simone has seven Olympic medals including four gold, one silver, and two bronze.

The last bronze is the statement piece she took home from the delayed 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. “It means more than all of the golds because I pushed through so much the last five years and the last week while

The delayed
2020 Tokyo Olympics
Brought to you by The Dateline

205 COUNTRIES HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE DELAYED 2020 TOKYO OLYMPICS

39 41 33

Top 3 Sports of Team USA
Swimming: 30 medals
Track and field: 26 medals
Wrestling: 9 medals

USA TAKES HOME 113 MEDALS!

GENDER BALANCE

Experts have expressed that the postponed 2020 Tokyo Olympics had the most increase in Women athletes since the past Olympics.

MALE 60.5%* FEMALE 40.5%*

1st Timers of the Podium

Jagger Eaton
Momiji Nishiya
Lydia Jacoby
Italo Ferreira
Janja Gambret
Alberto Ginés López
Emma McKeown
Laurel Hubbard
Chelsea Wolfe
Allyson Felix
Hend Zaza
Kokoma Hiraki
Polina Guryeva
Jun Mizutani
Krysta Palmer

Chasse Karllisz
Anastasija Zolotic
Carissa Moore
Alana Smith
Lee Kiefer
Will Shaner
Hidilyn Diaz
Katie Ledecky
Sunisa Lee
Nathaniel Coleman
Edgar Cheung Ka-long
Flora Duffy

Tamyra Mensah-Stock
Jessica Parratto
Delaney Schnell
Laurel Hubbard
Quinn
Alana Smith
Anna Kiesenhofer
USA 3x3 Team for Basketball
Hifumi Abe Uta
Uta Abe
Mima Ito
Alessandra Perilli
Ryo Kiyona

ILLUSTRATION CREDIT: GISELLE OVIEDO

I’ve even been here.”

Biles not only gives herself grace but praise as she honors the fact she still placed and prioritized what matters most.

“At the end of the day, we’re not just athletes or entertainment; we’re human too. We have real emotions, and sometimes they don’t realize that we have things going on behind the scenes that affect us whenever we go out and compete.”

This was a facet duly noted once media outlets found out that Simone Biles’s aunt had suddenly passed two days before she decided to return to the Olympics. Simone has continued to grace the stage and blow us away with her world-renowned talent and skill.

“I’m not the next Usain Bolt or Michael Phelps. I’m the first Simone Biles.”



LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Barbarossa Coffee Shop



The Dateline's Shaheryar Khan enjoys a cup of coffee at Barbarossa Coffee Shop. Photo courtesy of Doğaç Özgün Arı.

BY SHAHERYAR KHAN

Houston is a heavily caffeinated city, with an enormous selection of coffee shops to choose from. One local coffee shop that is gradually climbing the ranks in the Houston coffee scene is Barbarossa Coffee Shop.

Barbarossa first served their coffee in 2017, when Ogu-zhan "Ozzy" Guragac opened the first location

in Spring. In four years, Barbarossa has grown to somewhat of a cult followed by several loyal customers.

Ozzy is from Turkey and always had a passion for coffee. Thanks to his duty in the Turkish Naval Forces, he had the opportunity of visiting over 1,000 coffee shops. After his service in the navy, he followed his dream and opened

his coffee shop in the Spring area. With the immense number of coffee shops in Houston, Barbarossa needed to do something to stand out, so they became one of the only coffee shops in Houston that roast their coffee beans.

Barbarossa has items on the menu for every coffee enthusiast. If you are a coffee connoisseur, then definitely

try one of the specialty brewing methods they offer. They have a Chemex, a Siphon, an AeroPress, a V60, and a traditional Turkish coffee. No matter what method of brew you choose, you will not be disappointed with your cup of coffee and the selection of 18+ single-origin coffee beans. If you are a casual drinker, then you should try Barbarossa's

famous Honey & Milk Latte. This drink is best to drink cold because instead of ice cubes, this coffee shop uses milk cubes for a creamier and delicious coffee, rather than a watery one.

If you are in the mood for a hot drink, the Honey & Milk Latte can be made as a hot one, as well. Another hot favorite is the Captain's Latte, a drink with maple syrup and cinnamon that will keep you warm.

A patron does not necessarily have to choose a drink on the menu, for the talented baristas can make any drink that a customer can come up with.

Serving delicious coffee is not the only way Barbarossa serves the community, for they are constantly engaging with customers and fans. They hold events such as coffee workshops, car meets, and they sponsor many community figures, like sponsoring sporting events for Klein Cain

High School. With the success and ever-growing customer base of Barbarossa, Ozzy was able to open a second location in Tomball. This was a very proud moment for him as his dream continues to grow.

Caner Hidir is the manager of the Tomball location, and the coffee shop holds a deep connection in his life.

"Barbarossa is a very important, historical person in my country [Turkey], so this place is more than a coffeeshop to me," Hidir said. "I feel like this is my home away from home."

Barbarossa continues to grow and gather new customers worldwide, for they ship their single-origin coffee beans all around the world, including their signature, Anchor Blend.



Barbarossa Coffee raises funds for a community cause.

PHOTO CREDIT: SHAHERYAR KHAN



In addition to coffee, Barbarossa serves other signature drinks.

PHOTO CREDIT: SHAHERYAR KHAN