

DATELINE:



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DOWNTOWN



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NIGHTMARE

From the Editor

When you think of Houston, the immediate association would not be with hauntings. In fact, we don't even retain much of our historic architecture, which makes it difficult to keep track of the people and places that have been here before us. However, all has not been lost to time, and there are indeed a few places notorious for their ghostly visitors. The University of Houston-Downtown even has its share of history that might lead one to ponder its paranormal likelihood. The Merchants & Manufacturing Building has a long history within the story of Houston, but the land it sits on has an intriguing history of its own.

Before the construction of the M & M Building in 1930, Samuel L. Allen and Louis Pless had warehouses functioning on the land that later fell into disrepair and had become a blight on the city. The land itself had previously seen Indian Tribes camping, a Confederate Prison that housed some 350 Union Soldiers, and the sinking of a Confederate Supply ship in the nearby waterway near the intersection of Commerce and Travis. It does not go unnoticed that the nearby Spaghetti Warehouse is also presumed haunted.

One of the most popular urban legends revolves around the Elder Street Lofts, formerly the Jefferson Davis Hospital, located in Historic First Ward of the city. The hospital, built in 1924, remained in operation until 1938. It was the city's first municipal hospital. While the history of being a hospital may inspire thoughts of the paranormal, it is the fact that the land was formerly a municipal cemetery for the city, which drives the belief that the land is haunted. When the cemetery that once housed the remains of Confederate soldiers, former slaves, and city officials fell into disrepair, the city repurposed the land rather than restore the cemetery. However, instead of moving the location of the graves, officials chose to build on top of the graves.

After the hospital was moved, shortly after opening, the building was used for miscellaneous purposes until it sat empty for twenty years, from 1985 until 2005. It was during this period that much of its haunted history came to life. There are still several stories and photographs online, posted by citizens who wandered on the property while it was abandoned, confirming the frightening tales to be true. Tales of wanderers claiming to have seen, felt or heard things that could not be explained.

Today, the building has been revitalized into the Elder Street Lofts, which offers subsidized housing to local artists. Current residents do not seem to be encountering the unpleasant effects of such a dark history.

In fact, a recent article by the Houston Chronicle states that residents have not seen or heard anything to make them believe that there are any ghosts in the building. Regardless, some of the bodies remain on the site of the lofts, and as more bones are accidentally dug up or uncovered, there may still be a chance for a paranormal encounter.

While Houston may be well-known for its changing landscape, the Bayou City is steeped in its share of history. If you know where to look, you can still see remnants of the past peeking around a corner or out of a window, so as you enjoy the lovely fall weather and the impending doom of Halloween, be careful not to make friends with the haunted history of Houston.



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2nd Annual Gator Homecoming Celebrations

by Karen Reyes

The second annual UHD Homecoming is almost here and is promising to bring exciting new events. It's all set to start on Oct. 19th, with office decorations and two volleyball games. Homecoming is always a great opportunity to bring the entire Gator community together for fun and activities that promote campus pride.

This year, the homecoming theme will be "Gator Strong." The special meaning behind this theme is to celebrate the connections we make with faculty, staff and students every day. In the years that we are a part of the UHD community, we find strength in the relationships we make with our fellow Gators. We give and receive advice to and from each other during hard times.

Homecoming is not only a celebration for current UHD students but also past Gators as well. One of the first volleyball games will feature alumni in a best-of-five match. Prizes will be given at this event, as well as refreshments. Don't forget to attend and support our Gators volleyball team!

The fun events don't end there. The main features of the 2015 Homecoming events are the UHD Pep Rally, the P3 Block Party, homecoming games against HCC-Southwest and Texas A&M and the UHD open house.

Julius Caesar will be performed by our own talented Gators, and finally there will be Tail-Gatoring.

For those who don't know what Tail-Gatoring is: it's students, university departments, and UHD Alumni in a festive gathering, which collaborates with Saint Arnold Brewing Company. The groups who participate in this event will cook their favorite foods for the attendees to enjoy. Be prepared to eat delicious plates of food cooked by your fellow Gators! If you are interested in participating in Tail-Gatoring, visit the UHD website for rules and instructions. If you decide to enter in some of the contests, you will be able to win prizes in various categories. Make sure to bring your family for there will be a special place for little Gators to also enjoy this event. A Gator Kids Zone will be reserved just for them to join in the fun and participate in games.

Homecoming week takes place from October 19th to October 24th, participating in each event will enter you for a chance to win tickets to the Julius Caesar theater performance. For a full list of the homecoming events and volunteering, visit the UHD Sports and Fitness main page. Don't miss out on this opportunity to showcase your Gator Pride!

HOMECOMING 2015



GATOR STRONG!

University of Houston-Downtown



Pictures courtesy of the UHD facebook page:
(above) UHD mascot,
(TOp Center) Tail"gatoring"



Pictures courtesy of UHD facebook page:
(above) "Mum"my Mania
(left) UHD Gatoettes



Friends, Gators, countrymen,

something new from the

O'Kane Theatre!

The O'Kane production of Julius Caesar will be performed *outdoors* and for free for the UHD public, on

Wednesday, November 4 at 7 PM!

The performance will take place on the North Deck and will serve as a final tune up for the cast and crew before they take the stage at the 18th annual Theatre Forum at Festival Hill in Round Top, TX, the following weekend.

Don't miss Shaespeare *al fresco*, in such beautiful fall weather!

UHD Gator Women's Volleyball Team

by Christopher Jospeh

The Gators Women's Volleyball Team is tearing down the competition and making sure that they remain ahead of the fray in this year's Lone Star Sport Club Conference (LSSCC). These girls dominated last year and they are determined to make sure they are a force to be reckoned with this year. With Coach Alicia Nava leading the Gators, they are sure to put the slam on their opponents.

Alicia Nava is no novice when it comes to coaching volleyball. She has fifteen years of coaching experience as a head coach at the high-school level, and seven years coaching Club Volleyball. Nava has only been coaching the Gators for a short time but has proven to everyone that she is the right person for the job. Leading the women's volleyball team to take the Houston Club Conference (HCSC) Championship earlier this year, Nava has clearly shown aptitude to bring home the championship trophy. As an all-around player, Alicia has the know-how to make sure each player works at their full potential.

I had the chance to interview another all-around player, UHD senior Dorthy Tran. This is Tran's third year playing for the Gators Women's Volleyball Team, and she seems to be enjoying it. "It has been very good so far; we have been working on the chemistry between each player and have been working hard on the fundamentals of volleyball," Tran said when asked about the team's performance in this year's conference. Before she dominates the court, Tran goes through a set of pre-game rituals, like "having my iPod Nano on jamming right when I get off work. As soon as I hit the gym I'll start off with two or three laps, stretch, then begin to pepper with a teammate until I'm warm." Volleyball isn't the only thing that Tran excels at: she was selected to team USA's Junior Women's Squad representing the United States at the International Powerlifting Federation (IPF).

The Women's volleyball team currently has a total of three wins and one loss in this year's LSSCC. Their games are always on Wednesday evenings, so go and give Dorthy, Alicia and all the other Gator girls some support on their road to victory.



UHD Womens Volleyball Team



courtesy of Sports & Fitness Center

The Pursuit Continues:

Will the Rockets Move Closer to their Elusive Championship?

by Jason J. Rivas

Houston has been enamored by the whimsical postseason run of the Houston Astros. But as "Hustle Town" continues to percolate through the air, Houston is also gearing up for the pursuit of a third Larry O'Brien Championship Trophy. As a new NBA season falls upon the city, one question will remain in the collective minds of fans, both die-hard and bandwagoners: do the Rockets have what it takes to win a title, as the previous team did?

It has been 20 years since the Rockets last won a championship, and, in that time, the team has seen major changes in both leadership and philosophy. In the 1994-95 championship runs, the unquestioned heart, soul, and leader of the team was the center, Hakeem Olajuwon. His finesse and skills anchored the team around the concept of a "big man" leading the team. Hardly an offensive drive occurred without Olajuwon either scoring from the post, grabbing offensive boards and/or facilitating offense by finding the open man for easy buckets. While the Rockets now have Dwight Howard as their all-star center, James Harden is the unquestioned leader of the team. The shooting guard had a run for the ages last season. Averaging 27 points, 7 assists, and nearly 6 rebounds a game, he led a high-powered offense that won 56 games and a trip to the Western Conference Finals.

A change in philosophy will also be put to the test this season. General Manager

Daryl Morey has been with the team since 2007. He initiated a novel way of acquiring talent based on "analytics." In short, it is the concept of using lesser-known statistics to decide which players would fit best into a given basketball system. In the past, raw talent and performance in basic categories such as scoring, rebounds, assists and blocks were used to determine a player's viability on a team.

Under Morey, the Rockets have relied more heavily on advanced statistical analysis and minutiae of non-traditional data, such as efficiency in creating open looks, prevention transition points, and shot-accuracy, to determine which players could best fit in their system. With the Rockets, the focus is on a high-paced offense that compliments a resilient defense, both of which are made up of productive and efficient players. The team works together in channeling their efforts in scoring and defending, with Harden and Howard anchoring both sides of the court. Analytics is a concept still unique in basketball, but it has shown a degree of success in other sports, such as baseball and hockey.

After a disappointing 4-1 loss in the Western Conference Finals to the Golden State Warriors, the Rockets look poised to make another deep run in the playoffs. Dwight Howard is coming off of a torn MCL injury that prevented him from playing 100% last postseason, and James Harden is anxious

to prove himself as the most valuable player in the league, having lost that distinction to Stephen Curry last season. The Rockets have added veteran forward Ty Lawson and drafted Sam Dekker to compliment 2014 NBA draftees Clint Capela and K.J. McDaniels. Patrick Beverly and Donatas Motiejunas are nearly 100% healthy and ready to produce as well.

Unfortunately, the Western Conference has also improved, with Golden State, San Antonio, the L.A. Clippers, and the Oklahoma City Thunder all showing signs of progress from last season. A 54-win season should be within reach, with at least a trip to the Western Conference Semifinals in store for the Rockets. If the team wishes to live up to their banner logo from last season, "Pursuit," nothing short of a trip to the NBA Finals will be deemed as successful. According to ESPN, the new season tips off October 28th against the Denver Nuggets and runs through April 13th.



Courtesy of Houston Rockets

6 Haunted Halloween



Spaghetti Warehouse Shrouded in Mystery

by Christopher Jospheh



Halloween is right around the corner and the kids are getting their costumes and preparing for a night of trick-or-treating. While children load up on candy, the adults look for a night of terror to get their blood flowing. One of the ways to get that “scare” that people are looking for is to go to a haunted house. Lucky for those seeking a night of fright, The Spaghetti Warehouse is a place to experience something paranormal.

Long ago, a woman was at home preparing dinner for her and her husband, like she did every evening. Upon finishing up his favorite dish, spaghetti with meatballs, she realized that it was getting very late and her husband had not yet come home. She began to worry, for it was not like her husband to be late. The woman began pacing through their home when, to her surprise, she heard what sounded like her husband walking through the front door. Through the corner of her eye, she saw a shadowy figure move through the house and down the hallway, not uttering a word. Concerned, she called out to him with no response. This troubled the woman, so she searched for her husband throughout the house with no luck. She returned to the front of their home, noticing that his hat and coat were not hanging on the mirrored coat-rack that he always used. She immediately got dressed, rushed out of their home, and ran through the streets to the warehouse where her husband worked, hoping to find him there. When she entered the building she discovered a mob of people standing, pointing and whispering about a tragic accident that had occurred. While making her way through the crowd she came to a clearing and looked into what seemed to be this bottomless pit. There, she saw the remains of her husband’s body--he had fallen down an open elevator shaft in the darkness, breaking his neck, and died instantly. After the man’s funeral the woman was rarely seen by anyone. Exactly one year later to the day after the death of her husband, the

woman was found dead in her home by a family member. Medical examiners could not find any evidence of foul play. Her family believes that she died of a broken heart, and it is said that she returns every so often to claim the soul of her lost love.

The Spaghetti Warehouse is one of Houston’s most popular tourist attractions because of the possible hauntings of the old building by the widow. The building served as a produce warehouse and storehouse for the Southern Pacific Railroad dating back to 1903. The building was purchased in the 1970s and renovated to become The Old Spaghetti Warehouse. Millions of dollars in antiques were added, including a huge hand-carved staircase from a castle in England, a Houston Avenue trolley car from the early 1900’s, an antique grandfather clock from Europe and a chandelier from New York’s Penn Station. The Spaghetti Warehouse opened in March 1974 and continues as one of Houston’s most popular family dining destinations.

When I entered the warehouse, the lights were slightly dimmed, making the inside ominous. Once I sat down, the first thing I asked Roland, my server, was: “Is this place really haunted?” Without skipping a beat he nodded his head and pulled his phone out to show me evidence of a ghost he caught on the security cameras late at night. “One of my co-workers and I were looking at the security cameras making sure everything was in order, and as soon I looked at the

camera I saw an orb floating back and forth on the camera. I thought it was just a spider web and when I went to check it there was nothing on the lens.”

Once I started eating, I couldn’t stop thinking about the orb that Roland showed me. When he came back around he mentioned that people usually see the hauntings on the second floor. “A group of girls went upstairs to look around and they had took a selfie in one of the mirrors and in the photo was a ghostly figure behind them,” said Roland. As soon as he finished his story, I ventured up to the second floor to see if there is something paranormal in the Warehouse.

The second floor was dark and had an eerie atmosphere, completely dark with the only source of light coming from the sun outside. One thing that struck me as odd was that all of the ceiling fans were off except one. There was a train trolley in the middle of the room that led to the other half of the second floor. The bathrooms were located on this half of the building; the men’s room was cold but not as cold as the women’s bathroom. The women’s bathroom was dead silent and there were two doors that looked like they could be opened but the doors didn’t budge. When I walked away from the door, I heard a loud knock in the bathroom and quickly opened the door to the second floor. There was nobody there. I walked out of the bathroom, headed back to the second floor and did not look back.



Trick or Treat



Religious Hell House

By Christina Movaghar

Every Halloween, people anticipate all of the fun activities that go along with the festivities. Children are most excited about costumes and candy, while the older crowd anticipates the ghostly thrill this time of the year brings. Haunted houses and trails are all the rage in October, and that does not seem to be changing anytime soon. However, a different kind of haunted house, called a Hell House, is creating a buzz in church communities around the United States.

A Hell House is much like a Haunted House, as its purpose is to create fear in every patron’s experience. Unlike a Haunted House, a Hell House is designed, cast and played out by a church or religious organization. The acts that are featured in a Hell House depict scenes and experiences that are said to only be experienced by those living without God. According to the documentary Hell House, these scenes “expose the illusion of selfishness” that humans have in everyday life. Some of the scenes include date rape, suicide, murder, abuse, and drunkenness.

Trinity Church in Cedar Hills, Texas is thought to be the pioneer of the Hell House experience. However, several churches across the United States are starting their own versions of the Trinity example. While you may not have the opportunity to visit a Hell House in Houston, a simple Google search will lead you in the right direction to one in Texas or elsewhere.

These might be a good alternative to the Haunted House experience for those who do not celebrate Halloween. Although, a Hell House may be hard to get through because of the content in the scenes. There are graphic images and scenes that are acted out in Hell Houses that some may find uncomfortable and hard to bear. Not that they’re incredibly dissimilar from scenes at normal haunted houses, but the message is thought to be a positive one according to the founders. They want the experience to touch someone who might be going through a rough time in life; they want that person to know that they are not alone and that there are alternatives to living life in a downward spiral.

While the message is meant to be positive, Hell Houses do come with their share of controversy. Some walk away with a stronger desire to change their own lives, and some call it a scare tactic. It might not be for everyone, but it just might be for you. So if you are up for some travel and want a good scare this year, go find yourself a Hell House this Halloween season.



the kingwood ASYLUM

by Darci McFerran

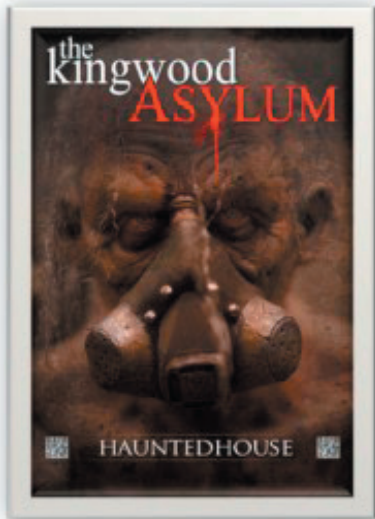
Halloween falls on a Saturday this year and that always makes for the best parties, attractions, and general mischief. Every year, hundreds of thousands of thrill-seekers venture off into haunted houses (attractions) around the nation, and Houston residents are no different. We have no shortage of venues to choose from either, but there was one in particular that seemed to rise above the rest in the eyes of this reporter. Kingwood Asylum, located in Kingwood, TX, offers four separate houses on one property.

Their website is an experience all on its own, filled with graphic images and high quality HD video that crosses between a Hollywood film and seemingly genuine newsreel footage. One clip that auto-plays on their site suggests that the field the attraction sits on is the former dumping ground for serial killers, perhaps the I-45 killer from the 70's and 80's. The theme of the attraction is centered around Dr. James Blackmon who, according to the website, was a psychologist for Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Blackmon began throwing patients out of his vacation home in Kingwood, until residents began mysteriously disappearing.

Shane Torrans and Kirk Fusion designed their attraction to be filled with horror that blurred the lines of reality and urban legend. The central theme, and its characters are intended to add to the realism and create an overall immersive experience at Kingwood Asylum. The four attractions, should you dare to attend, are Blackmon's Estate, Infrastructure, Hallowed Ground, and The Asylum. All of which add a new depth of depravity to the central theme of this haunted house attraction. There are additional options available, for those that want to experience all they have to offer, which include a hay-ride where guests are buried alive, and a fast "slasher" pass. Discounts of five dollars are offered to anyone that brings non-perishable food items to donate to a local charity.

Anyone crazy enough to check-in can purchase tickets on their website, kingwoodasylum.com, and learn more about what makes this haunt Houston's finest. They are located at 1963 North Park Dr., Kingwood, TX 77339, open from October 1, 2015 - November 7, 2015. I will leave you with a mantra that they have posted as a warning:

*More terrifying than your mom's hair in the morning
More terrifying than having to scrape the bunions off of your Grandfather's feet.
More terrifying than the scariest (beep) ghost from every horror movie ever!
More terrifying than terrifying! That's terrifying-ing!!!*



Houston's Haunted Houses

by Kara Moore

Halloween is right around the corner, and if you're looking for something to frighten you, then you're in the right city. Houston has a rather large number of spooky attractions. Some are very real haunted houses that are open for four year-round, while others are haunted houses where actors dress up and scenes are created just to get you covering and crying for your mother. Here's a list of the most interesting haunted houses in Houston.

First, let's start with Creepy Hollow, which is described as a compound of horrors and as the "scariest haunted house in Texas." It boasts three attractions: the 288 Scare Factory, the Haunted Woods, and Pitch Black. The 288 Scare Factory is described as the start of the zombie apocalypse, the Haunted Woods has an interesting backstory of contaminated soil which created mutated beings, and Pitch Black features human experiments that either act insane or become killing machines based on the light they are exposed to. Will these three spooky and story-driven attractions be enough to draw you in or freak you out? Take a drive over to 12872 Valley Vista Drive, Rosharon, TX, 77583 to find out!

Next, we have Phobia Haunted House, which opened at a new location at 5250 S. Sam Houston Parkway for this Halloween and promises to be bigger and scarier than ever before. It has 4 featured freestanding haunted attractions. One is a cyber haunt called "Dawn of the Machine," which features "ultra modern industrial horror silhouetted by mechanical despair." Contagion is

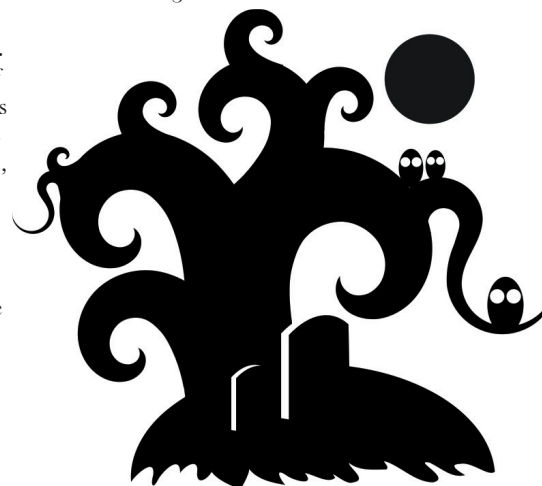
an attraction that "spews viral anguish." "Darke World" is your cannibal paradise, where you are what you eat. Finally, "Genetic Nightmare" creates a world displaying the "horror of misguided science and genetic manipulation,"—interesting themes for a park trying to make its way at a new location!

Next, we have Nightmare on the Bayou, which, instead of boasting its created scenes and terrifying fictional stories, focuses in on the fact it is "Houston's only Haunted House with REAL GHOSTS!" Located at 1515 Studemont St., it is directly next to Houston's oldest graveyard. It is consistently voted as an awesome haunt by hauntworld.com and has 15,000 square feet of truly haunted attraction to check out.

Following that, we have the place voted the "#1 Haunt in Houston" by the Houston Chronicle and the Houston Press: Scream World. Scream World features the most attractions out of any singular haunted house: 5 in total, each with its own unique theme. There's the swamp, which has high tech animatronics, and Jake's Slaughterhouse, which is an old butcher's place but with a little more than animal meat. Edge of Society features rooms like the Hospital Room, Boiler Room, Death Row, and Morgue. The Clown Asylum Maze is an outdoor attraction which utilizes strobe lights and corridors to have clowns "systematically hunt you down." Finally, the Zombie Graveyard, which is also outdoors, is in the "hollow of a forgotten bog." Located at 2225 N Sam Houston Parkway West, it promises to be a scream.

Finally, if you're the type of person who hates lines and wants to be scared while still having a good time enjoying music and paintball, you should check out the month-long Houston Scream Fest located at 1500 Elton St. Featuring zombie paintball, concerts, freak shows, sideshows, and horror film viewings; it's a place where you don't have to wait in line to enjoy the fun. Toting the title "Voted #1 in Houston by the People of Houston," it promises to be the festival of fright you always desired.

If you need a good scare this Halloween, or maybe if you are just looking for a way to get into the haunting spirits, then you don't have to go far. All you need for a spooktacular night is right here in Houston, but it's up to you whether you can survive the fright.



7 Haunted Halloween



Manning the Fire: Dr. Cornel West to Speak at UHD

by Joshua Burgman

The University of Houston - Downtown often plays host to intellectuals from all around the world, but none have been as controversial as Dr. Cornel West—a Harvard scholar and well-known black activist. West is set to visit the university November 6th. His celebrity alone increases the anticipation of his arrival.

If you are still trying to get tickets to this event, don't hold your breath, because they're all sold out. Tickets went fast once the ticket vendor, EventBrite, opened the registration period on Oct 6th. A frequent guest on CNN, The Colbert Report, Bill Maher, and many more, West will take the stage in the Cullen Auditorium at 7 p.m. the night of Nov. 6th; seating for the event will begin at 6 p.m.

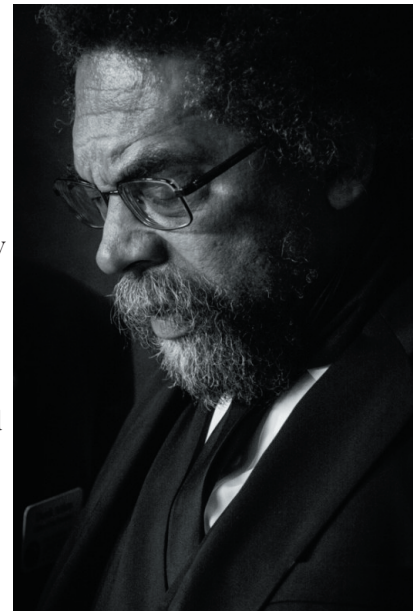
Dr. West will be a guest of the University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences. It's not yet clear what he will be discussing, but his work as a black activist is well-known, and he'll, no doubt, enlighten students and faculty; making use of his oratory prowess. It's fitting that a public figure of West's magnitude would address students at UHD. Our school's diverse makeup and relation to the City of Houston demands that attention be paid to the message that someone like West will bring.

Houston is no stranger to the #BlackLivesMatter movement, and neither is Dr. West. In fact, it can be argued that he lies right at the center of it. Going so far as to put his freedom on the line, West has been arrested for protesting many times, each representing a symbolic "fire" that he so carefully tends with each blow he strikes in the fight for equality.

West explained the origins of his "fire" with the New York Times' George Yancy, in an interview entitled "The Fire of a New Generation." West, when describing the meaning of the title of his book *Black Prophetic Fire*, said, "Black prophetic fire is the hypersensitivity of the suffering of others that generates a righteous indignation that results in the willingness to live and die for freedom." His use of the word "fire" has several meanings, one of them representing a biblical approach, an approach that binds a destructive force, like fire, to bounty and fruits of labor.

According to West, the war against injustice and inequality that the current generation finds themselves in requires a fire that manifests itself in the passion exhibited from the fight for the cause. "Fire really means a certain kind of burning in the soul that one can no longer tolerate when one is pushed against a wall," he said. "Fire is very much about fruits as opposed to foliage."

West often speaks to audiences all around the country. His visit to UHD will merely be a stoking of the fires in the souls of students on campus. Electric though he may be, controversy never fails to follow him. Some students have vowed to boycott his visit, afraid that their presence will promote, what they feel is, a constant exacerbation of racially charged issues by West. Whatever happens when he comes, the anticipation of his visit has ignited the atmosphere with excitement. His words are sure to capture all that will be in attendance, friends and foes alike.



West prepares to speak at California State University regarding the Black Lives Matter Movement - courtesy of thepioneeronline.com

Mass Shooting at Umpqua Community College in Oregon

by Darci McFerran

Parents in Roseburg, Oregon, gathered anxiously at a nearby fairground awaiting any information regarding the status of their children. Many, no doubt, replaying horrific scenes from Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, and Columbine in their minds; assuming the worst, but praying for the best. In the end, 10 people lost their lives, seven more were injured at Umpqua College on October 1st, in what many called a "scene of carnage." The lasting effects on the students, faculty, and their families from the events of that day are immeasurable. Newsweek reports Umpqua as the 45th school shooting in 2015, which brings the death toll to 30, with an additional 53 injured.

In the days following the tragedy, there was the predictable uproar over gun laws with supporters demanding that the United States government strengthen laws, and opponents defending their second amendment rights. Both sides using the tragedy as some form of evidence that their views are being supported by the steadily rising death toll.

As information became available, there was a strong message being sent to the community, that they do not ask the identity of the killer and the media not report on him. The New York Times quoted Sheriff Hanlin as saying, "Let me be very clear, I will not name the shooter," he said. "I will not give him the credit he probably sought prior to this horrific and cowardly act." Unlike previous mass shootings in the US, many were making a noted effort not to contribute to the notoriety of the 26 year-old shooter, Chris Harper-Mercer.

Inevitably, the details did become available to the public, and the portrait of this killer was not unlike the many others we have seen. A lonely man, bitter over an unsatisfying life, who left a long string of identifiable clues to foreshadow his actions, Harper-Mercer targeted religious individuals, especially Christians, as he murdered students. Interviews with his family immediately following the shootings, painted a picture of shock and dismay, but the signs were there. Harper-Mercer was a textbook example of every mass shooting killer and still not one person took any action to prevent a weak man from executing his classmates. There was even a manifesto left at the crime scene, a premeditated "claim to fame" meant to feed the interminable lust for gore that is our modern-day media.

However, some efforts were successful, and we heard, not of the pathetic killer, but of a selfless hero that charged him in an attempt to curtail his plans. Chris Mintz was shot five times by Harper-Mercer, but the gunman was unsuccessful at killing him. Mintz was a student at UCC and an Army veteran who had been previously deployed, returning to be injured, ironically, at home in America.

While efforts to slant the media in the aftermath have been somewhat successful, people are still wondering why prevention is not the primary focus. Harsher punishments, stricter gun laws and outreach programs that educate how to identify the warning signs are all valid arguments heard repetitiously in the current political debates over the increasing mass violence. In his June 18, 2015, remarks from the White House regarding the mass killing of worshippers at the Emanuel A.M.E Church in South Carolina,

President Barack Obama said, "Now is the time for mourning and healing. But let's be clear: At some point, we as a country will have to reckon with the fact that this type of mass violence does not happen in other advanced countries. It doesn't happen in other places with this kind of frequency. And it is in our power to do something about it."

Globally, the US has a higher frequency of mass killings, which results in higher number of fatalities, in comparison to other countries. The Wall Street Journal ranks the US as number one in gun ownership as well as the number of mass shootings. Regardless, U.S. citizens cling to their second amendment right, the right to bear arms. Maintaining that the country was built on the premise that its citizens would forever fight against the threat of tyranny from those in power. Unfortunately, it appears that a new form of tyranny is corrupting our governing politics and laws: a culture of violence.



students gather at a makeshift vigil for those killed during the fatal shooting. courtesy of syracuse.com

The Late Show: A Tale of Two Parties

by Terrence Turner

9

The second Republican debate for president was held on Sept. 16th. The first Democratic debate took place on Oct. 13th. During both, there was a great deal of commentary on a wide variety of issues; to address all of them comprehensively is extraordinarily difficult, in part because of the debates' length. The GOP debate, in particular, stretched to nearly three hours - an hour longer than its Democratic counterpart. In fact, leading candidates Donald Trump and Dr. Ben Carson have threatened to boycott the next CNN debate if it goes beyond 120 minutes. The differences between the two parties are numerous and often stark.

Both proceedings opened with introductions, in which the candidates presented themselves to the American people. Immediately, a major cosmetic difference was shown. The Republican debate, held in the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in California, featured Reagan's presidential plane as a backdrop; in front of that backdrop were the eleven candidates: Sen. Rand Paul, former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, Carson, Trump, former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina, former Florida governor Jeb Bush, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, Ohio Gov. John Kasich, and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. By contrast, the Democratic debate, held in Las Vegas, featured only five prospects: Hillary Clinton, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, former Senator Jim Webb, former Rhode Island governor Lincoln Chafee, and former Maryland governor Martin O'Malley. Several of the presidential hopefuls in both cases spoke about their spouses and families, but others merely emphasized their credentials.

On the issues, the debates were frequently and, often wildly, divergent. At the Democratic debate, questions were asked about the "Black Lives Matter" movement and outreach for African Americans. There was also discussion about the NSA surveillance program and how to handle the legal saga of whistleblower Edward Snowden. Both topics were absent from the Republican debate. Similarly, GOP candidates devoted time to pondering how to handle Kentucky clerk Kim Davis, who attracted national attention after refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. She received virtually no attention from the Democrats. Climate change, which Sanders said was the number one national security threat to the United States, was barely mentioned by the GOP, except for Rubio's and Christie's arguments that measures to prevent it would hurt the economy.

A notable example of the gulf between parties happened while discussing Planned Parenthood: Christie and Walker (who has since withdrawn from the race) reminded the audience that they had defunded the organization during their time in office, while Cruz and Kasich debated forcing a government shutdown in order to cut off funding. Fiorina went so far as to claim that a video exists of "a fully formed fetus on the table, its heart beating, its legs kicking, while someone says 'we have to keep it alive to harvest its brain.'"

(The Washington Post, however - whose debate transcripts were an immeasurably valuable source material - noted on Sept. 23 that none of the videos referenced actually show this. The Los Angeles Times reported the day before that defunding would result in up to 650,000 women losing at least partial access to healthcare, along with increases in federal spending by \$130 million over ten years.) "Hillary Clinton believes in the systematic murder of children in the womb," Christie charged. The only mention of Planned Parenthood by the Democrats, interestingly, was by Clinton herself, who mocked the GOP's longstanding opposition to large-scale government programs. "They don't mind having big government to interfere with a woman's right to choose and to take down Planned Parenthood," she said to raucous applause. "I'm sick of it."

On immigration, too, the parties clashed. Trump vowed to deport every undocumented immigrant. Christie questioned if that was feasible: "The fact is, though, that for 15,000 people a day to be deported every day for two years is an undertaking that almost none of us could accomplish." He favored securing the border with electronics, drones, and fingerprinted visas. Marco Rubio wanted an entry-exit tracking system along with an electronic verification system. Carson advocated sealing the border, but allowing immigrants with "a pristine record" to become "guest workers, primarily in the agricultural sector since that's the place where Americans don't seem to want to work." Ted Cruz is the only GOP candidate that has never supported amnesty for illegal immigrants.

Significantly, four of the five Democratic candidates (minus Lincoln Chafee, who was not asked for his opinion) voiced support for comprehensive immigration reform. Sanders advocated a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country; so did Webb. Sanders and O'Malley both supported providing in-state college tuition to the undocumented, as did Clinton, pending approval by the states. She also spoke of wanting to allow immigrants to buy into the exchanges of the Affordable Care Act, an area in which O'Malley vowed to go even further by involving them in subsidies.

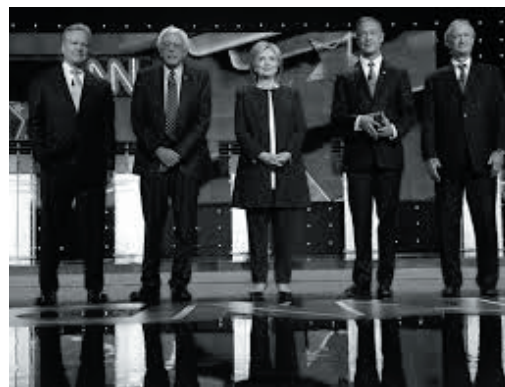
When Clinton was asked if she was ready to take a position on legalizing recreational marijuana, she answered, "No." But that wasn't all: "I do support the use of medical marijuana...I agree completely with the idea that we have got to stop imprisoning people who use marijuana." When asked about an upcoming Nevada measure to legalize recreational use in that state, Sanders replied, "I suspect I would vote yes." He objected to imprisonment of pot users as well: "I am seeing in this country too many lives being destroyed for non-violent offenses."

Shockingly, most of the GOP agreed, at least on some aspects. Rand Paul correctly stated that "the War on Drugs has had a racial outcome," invoking the 10th Amendment to make

his point that legalization should be left up to the states. Bush, who admitted to having smoked pot decades ago, would also leave marijuana to the states. Christie, who called the War on Drugs a failure, claims that marijuana is "a gateway drug:" "I'm not against the use of medical marijuana; we do it in New Jersey. But I am against the recreational use of marijuana." Carly Fiorina, who spoke somberly of losing a child to drug addiction, did not offer an official position but stated that 2/3 of those in U.S. prisons are there for non-violent offenses, mostly drugs. She also called for criminal justice reform.

Regarding guns, Bush said that if family members allege mental illness of a relative, there should be a legal hearing before that person's weapon is taken from them.

Rubio was more expansive, saying: "First of all, the only people that follow the law are law-abiding people. Criminals by definition ignore the law, so you can pass all the gun laws in the world...The criminals are going to ignore it because they're criminals." On the other side, Sanders spoke of a need to strengthen and expand background checks, eliminate gun show loopholes, and address mental health issues. Webb said the country needed background checks as well. O'Malley favored comprehensive gun safety legislation, as did Chafee. But he pleaded for legislators and gun lobbyists, including the NRA, to "find common ground." For the Republican and Democratic candidates, however, common ground has been hard to find.



pictured above: Democratic Candidates at Debate
images courtesy of cnn.com
pictured below: Republican Candidates at Debate



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@UHD, Oct. 29, Noon #Walk2Vote

POC: AaronBurgess95@gmail.com Ph: 713-221-8551

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Hosted by SGA
October 29, 2015
12 pm - 3 pm
UHD South Deck

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including an introduction by Mayor Annise Parker, keynote speakers
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American Reality

by Jason Rivas

The United States has always prided itself in the philosophy of “The American Dream.” Many young Americans are conditioned to accept the notion that “America is number 1” and is “the land of opportunity,” through media outlets, cultural ideologies, and education. But behind the visages of these proclamations lies an inconvenient truth: “The American Reality.”

According to the PEW Research Center, the U.S. ranks 35th in Math, 27th in Science, and 24th in Reading among 64 developed and developing nations. They based these results off of cross-national tests known as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which tests 15 year-old students’ abilities in reading, mathematics, and science. The nations that scored better typically came from Scandinavian, Western and Eastern European, and Far Eastern nations, as well as Canada, where federal governments play a more prominent role in education. The 65 nations that take part in the PISA exams make up 80% of the global economy.

So how do mediocre students affect the U.S.’s higher education institutes? According to the World University Rankings, the effect is incredibly strong. Although 28 of the top 50 world universities are found on American soil, a measurement of American students attaining college degrees paints a different picture. The U.S. ranked 16th among 36 developed nations ranked by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. They noted that the United States has a bachelor’s degree attainment rate of 41% among adults 25-34.

A poignant reason that has led to these mediocre results is the globalization of the workforce. As transnational corporations continue to expand internationally, they no longer hire solely American workers, but the best workers available in the global community. In fact, many European and Asian universities are seeing an influx in student admissions, as well as less emphasis on four-year college degrees, in favor of two-year professional credentials. This shift elsewhere has made international students more readily available to enter the workplace quickly. An estimated 37 million Americans have no degree to show for their college work.

What about our healthcare system? It has been the subject of debate among politicians and pundits for decades with no agreeable measure in sight; which is bad news for the American people. When compared among the 11 most industrialized countries in the world, the U.S. ranked dead last. The U.S. ranked number 1 in cost, but last in equity, efficiency, and outcomes. And with high levels of costs, particularly in insurance coverage, Americans are increasingly unsatisfied with the quality of service in healthcare.

What’s more alarming is that in veterans’ health services, the U.S. government has failed to adequately provide care for their former servicemen and women. Long lines, under-staffed clinics, overworked doctors and nurses, and growing discontent among veterans plague the VA. Even more alarming, is that Congress, which at one point allocated daily spending for the Iraq War to \$720 million, cannot agree on provisions that would provide additional funds and support for those afflicted by the war. If the U.S. is so willing to spend for a war, why are they not as enthusiastic to spend

on care for those who served?

As for life expectancy and infant mortality, the U.S. is in the middle of the pack with rankings of 37th and 34th respectively. Why is it that a highly industrialized society is mediocre in health? It’s no secret that the American diet, concentrated on high calories/fat intake, has had an effect on the American waistline. According to the CDC, 69% of Americans are either overweight or obese, with 35 % considered obese. Obesity is a leading cause of heart-related diseases, which is a primary cause of healthcare related expenses, with costs expanding faster than the American waistline. Unless a major shift happens, in which the American diet changes to a more balanced one, the health care system will continue to be weighed down with high costs and minimal results.

The United States has also suffered from a stagnation of wages that has negatively affected the American worker. Former Secretary of Interior, and well-known economist, Robert Reich recently spoke of this issue in his documentary, “Inequality for All.” Reich noted that the average male salary from 1970 to 2010 not only has not changed (\$50,622 to \$48,262), but has decreased. As well, rising costs in rent, health and child care, college education, and increased inflation have caused their spending power to be nearly cut in half. And with female workers earning 75 cents for every dollar a male earns, overall household income has lessened.

The middle class is most affected by stagnation, with Americans working longer hours just to make ends meet. Going back to Reich’s analysis, a shrinking middle class has led to more income inequality between the rich and poor, the highest in fact, since 1928. Spending power is what helps an economy to thrive, and with income among the mid and lower classes stagnated; the U.S. economy has struggled to regain its momentum to pre-2008 recession levels, allowing China to overtake the U.S. as the largest economy, in terms of GDP.

The aforementioned are just a snapshot of “The American Reality.” There’s also massive racial, gender, sexual, and social inequality that has created an “American Caste System,” in which being a white male elite can be seen as “winning the genetic lottery.” Only time will tell whether America can wake up from their “American Dream” and see the national reality. And only then can America reinvent this nightmare into an ideal reality.



courtesy of ohscurrent.org

McGraw-Hill and Their Textbook Revisions

by Terrence Turner

In late September, Coby Burren, a freshman at Pearland High School – 20 miles south of downtown Houston – discovered a small but glaring error in his World Geography textbook. According to the New York Times, page 126 of the textbook featured a caption that said, “The Atlantic Slave Trade between the 1500s and 1800s brought millions of workers from Africa to the southern United States to work on agricultural plantations.” The fact that the book failed to mention either that the “workers” were actually slaves - or the fact that they were brought to America under deplorable conditions – was not lost on his mother, Roni Dean-Burren. She exposed the issue in an October 1st Facebook video

that, according to the Times, garnered nearly two million views.

The publisher, McGraw Hill, said through its spokeswoman Catherine Mathis on Oct. 6 that it was correcting the language and sending out “stickers” with a corrected caption to schools that want them. The Houston Chronicle reported that if schools requested new copies, the publisher would re-print the books and issue them to schools. While HISD itself does not use the textbook, the Texas Education Agency said that the book has been purchased by almost 400 state districts, including Katy ISD, Conroe ISD and Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.

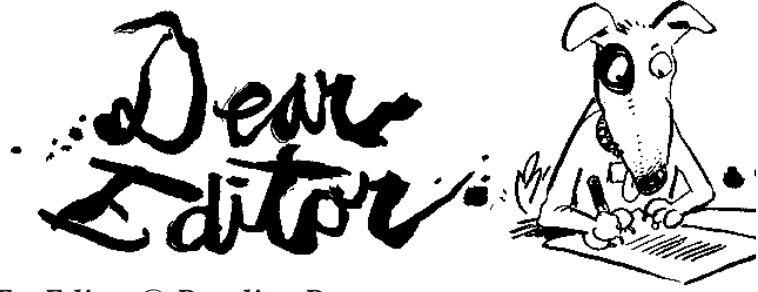
But the Texas textbook

controversy doesn’t end there. A July 9th article by the Houston Press also scrutinized social studies textbooks that were based on guidelines of the Texas State Board of Education. The Press alleges that the textbooks make no mention of the Ku Klux Klan or of the Jim Crow laws that segregated all public facilities from Reconstruction until 1965. This means that an entire century of history has been inadequately presented. In its mission to remove the “liberal bias” from the books, the Board also argued that slavery was “a side issue” to the Civil War. The Press quoted the Confederacy’s vice president Alexander Stephens, who said: “Our new Government [sic] is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas...

its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro [sic] is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition.”

Though McGraw-Hill Education’s President and CEO David Levin stated that he was “deeply sorry” about the misprint, it appears that others within the realm of Texas education have some apologizing to do as well.

**Mc
Graw
Hill
Education**



To: Editor @ Dateline Downtown
 From: Wayne Lela

The movement to add “sexual orientation” and “gender identification” to the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance simply cannot be logically justified. Contrary to “politically correct” propaganda, it is pretty obvious that male minds in female bodies, female minds in male bodies, and homosexual minds in heterosexual bodies, are all sure signs that something went wrong somewhere (in nature and/or nurture), are all clearly mind/body mismatches—in other words, are all disorders (a commonsense position taken by the American Psychiatric Association for years before it became infected with political correctness).

And what is the rational thing to do with physical and psychological disorders? We try to fix them, if possible. But even if we can't fix certain disorders (e.g., we may not have enough knowledge yet) rational people do not deny reality and maintain they are NOT disorders, which is exactly what pro-homosexual and pro-transgender people are doing. The whole movement to normalize the abnormal, to define deviancy down, is a real threat to the psychological well-being of our nation.

You may not be aware, but some colleges like Harvard now fund student groups devoted to promoting the acceptance of BDSM—bondage, discipline, sadism, and masochism. That's right. If you are a, for example, psychologically disturbed student who gets sexual thrills from hurting people, some colleges like Harvard now have groups for you! That's the slippery slope the “logic” of the politically correct is taking us down.

Reality check for the left: normalizing sickness does not make a society less sick, and normalizing disorders does not make a society less disordered. The movement to add “sexual orientation” and “gender identification” to the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance is misguided, irrational. It should be opposed.

Tell us what you think...

Dateline Downtown encourages our readers to submit their thoughts and opinions on everything we print, or anything of general interest. This letter discusses a very important and somewhat controversial issue in Houston, Proposition 1 - the HERO ordinance. Dateline does not necessarily endorse or oppose this particular viewpoint; we felt that the letter is important for our readers to see, considering that voting day is near. We would love to know what you think about the letter & the HERO ordinance. The outcome of this vote will affect the lives of all Houstonians.

If you would like to reply to the letter, or just have your voice heard, email us at datelinedowntownhtx@gmail.com. We will print up to 3 replies from our readers, along with an official response from Dateline, in Issue 5.



written by Karen Reyes

In the midst of celebrating Hispanic Heritage month, UHD has made sure to recognize the presence of the Hispanic community on our diverse campus. Hispanics have a profound and positive influence throughout our country. They have enriched our nation by sharing their culture and teaching us their history. From September 15th to October 15th, events have taken place at the university from film viewings to discussions on important Hispanic topics/issues, all in celebration of Hispanic heritage and culture.

Some of the films that were shown during this month of celebrating heritage were *The Other Side of Immigration*, *Before God We're All Family*, *Hispanic Hollywood: Then and Now*, among others. One particular film that resonates with many Hispanic families is *The Harvest*. The movie tells the tale of three young children who sacrificed their childhoods working as farm workers to help their families. Writer Mario Bencastro also touched on this topic on his visit to our university.

Mario Bencastro is a Salvadorian writer, and author of the novel *La Mansion del Olvido*. He is also an award-winning novelist, playwright and painter. UHD had the honor of receiving the talented artist, and having him discuss his most recent novel, *Odyssey to the North*. It is a tale about an immigrant, Calixto, who has difficulty surviving in modern America.

This is a story many of us have often heard and experienced. Stories like these are shared during the Hispanic heritage month to recognize the strength and perseverance of immigrants when adapting to American society, while maintaining ties to their own culture. UHD's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month ended with a demonstration of Hispanic pride as students were given the opportunity to express their heritage publicly. On the third floor, Hispanic, Latino/a, and Chicano/a students were given the opportunity to express why they are proud to be part of a culture that not only influences UHD, but influences Texas and the whole of the USA.

Transgender Health at UH

by Kara Moore

With all that is going on in Houston concerning LGBTQ+ rights in relation to the HERO ordinance, it seems that maybe the rights of transgender college students have been overlooked. Of course, if the ordinance passes, then trans people can no longer be discriminated against in Houston because of their gender identity/expression. That is not all there is in relation to transgender rights, though.

Many transgender activists are fighting for the right to have their full medical transition to their gender identity covered by insurance companies. Transitioning is a costly process involving hormone replacement, breast removal or construction surgery, and gender reassignment surgery. Medicare/Medicaid, Blue Cross/Blue Shield in some states, and United Healthcare all provide at least some, if not all, coverage of medical processes that take place during someone's transition. What might come as a surprise, though, is that colleges are also providing transgender healthcare in their college healthcare packages. Major universities like NYU and Stanford provide full hormone replacement and gender reassignment

surgery in their health plans. A little bit closer to home, UH Main is providing both these services as well, plus a little extra.

At the LGBT resource center for UH Main, you can find a full list of what UH can do to help their transgender students make a comfortable medical transition into their gender identity. They can have their preferred name on their campus ID and put on class rosters. They can go to the voice and language clinic to work on voice feminization/masculinization, and they can participate on the teams that match their identity. Finally, the health plan covers mental health counseling, hormone

replacement, and gender reassignment surgery. It also covers outpatient expenses, prescription drugs, emergency room visits, and other surgery expenses like breast removal/construction surgery.

This, of course, is all with standard copays, but the fact of the matter is that UH Main is providing healthcare for transgender students in a city very worried about transgender individuals being in their public spaces. The main topic of controversy when talking about HERO is people worrying about “men dressed as women coming into the women's bathroom,” but for UH Main, they've leapt long past worrying about discrimination and bathroom usage.

Currently, UH-Downtown does not cover transgender health in its policies. Considering the movements inside the school in favor of HERO and the fact that UHD is an LGBTQ+ “safe zone,” it might seem strange not to cover these types of issues that might be affecting students at our campus. Maybe, in time, UHD will also come to cover comprehensive transgender healthcare in the same way that UH has.



example of breast binding performed by transgender males - courtesy of Kara Moore

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25	26 Breast Cancer Seminar 4-5pm N1099	27 Bra Pong 11-1pm North Ticket Booth	28 Hump Day Bake Sale 11-1pm North Ticket Booth	29 Night of the Living Dead at Sundown North Deck Zombie Prom 5:30-9pm Willow Pump Station	30	31 HALLOWEEN



OCTOBER

UHD 

HOME COMING WEEK!!!



To submit events for the next calendar contact Dateline at facebook.com/datelinedowntown or contact Kara Moore at kmmoore12@gmail.com

