

DATELINE: DOWNTOWN

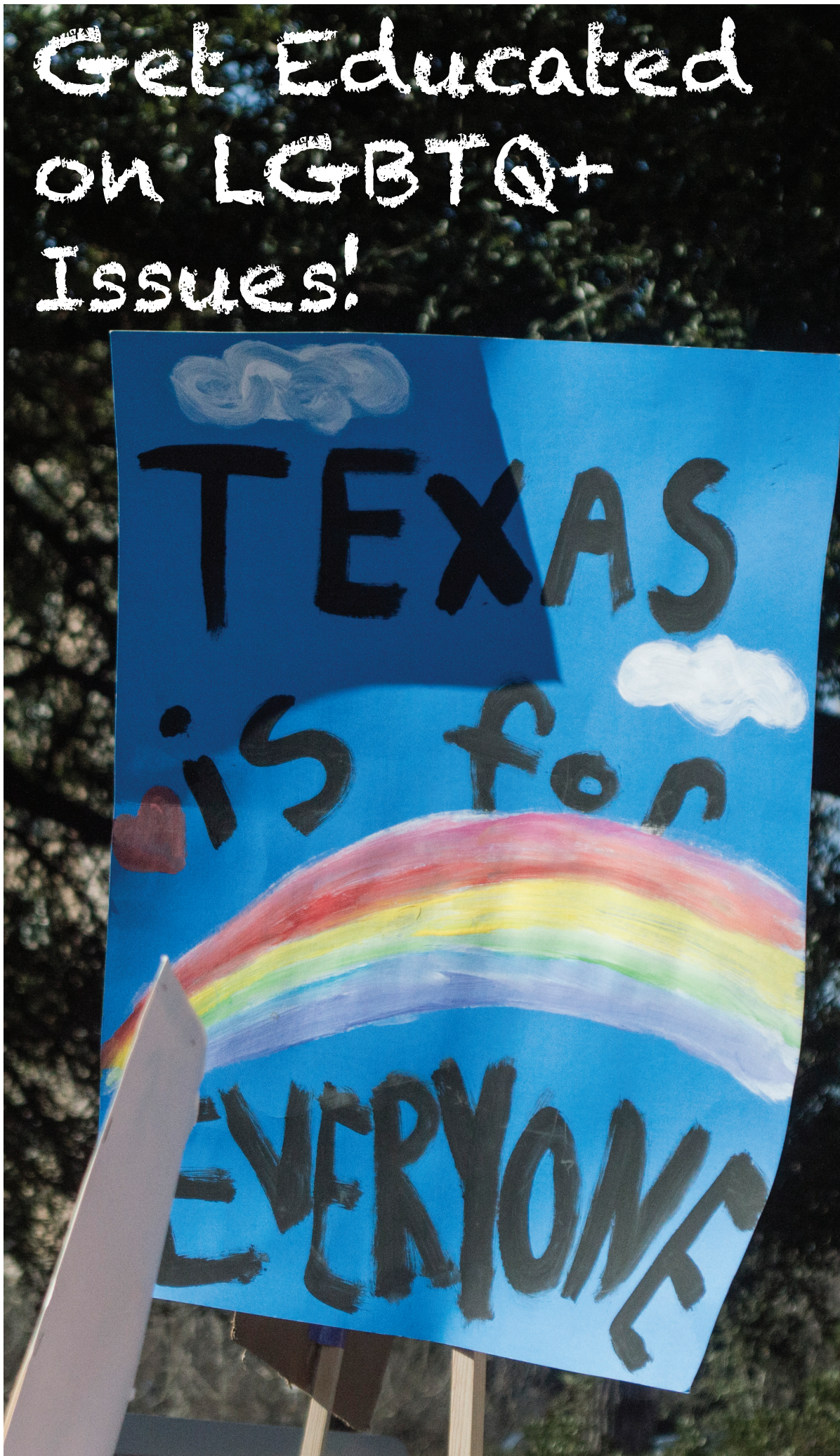


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Opinion: Shooting in Sutherland Springs is Indicative of a National Problem, but Which One?

by Kara Moore

“I’m going to run the truck through the house if you call the police” my father said to my mother, after which she promptly hung up and dialed 911. He drove off, thankfully, and was arrested the next day for violating the protective order she’d had placed on him early in the divorce proceedings. I wasn’t home that night. I wasn’t home a lot of nights, any excuse to get out of that house was taken and I had slept at a friend’s home miles away. My mother called me the next morning and told me what happened, reminding me to keep my location off social media and to ignore any phone calls I didn’t recognize. I wasn’t even shocked at the news anymore, I was only surprised he hadn’t done it.

The shooter in the Sutherland Springs Church case was on record as a domestic abuser. It was due to an error on the part of the military that he was not registered in a national database which would have prevented him from legally purchasing weapons. He was dishonorably discharged for “bad conduct” likely related to his recorded assault on his wife and child. His exes came forward to speak of him as an abuser. He most likely targeted the church because his wife’s mother-in-law attended services there.

These are two very different scenarios, one that ended up working out and one that took the lives of 26 people. Neither of them is really all that uncommon.

With 307 mass shootings in the U.S. so far in 2017, it’s fair to say something serious is going on. Domestic violence is an equally serious issue, as according to the Domestic Violence Hotline, every minute in the United States 24 people are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner. This doesn’t always have to be so physical, as nearly half of all women and men in the US experienced psychologically aggression from by their intimate partner in their lifetime. My mother got her protection order in the state of Maryland (which is like a restraining order) based mostly on the psychological and emotional abuse my father put us through.

After the shooting happened, the political commentary divided as it normally did. People heralded it as another example of why more restrictive gun laws are necessary, while others discussed the ball dropped by the military in making sure that his domestic violence charges were in the national database. Then, the President did something unsurprising; he called it a mental health issue and not a gun issue.

I’ve always held this belief, that gun violence and mass shootings are so common because there isn’t enough done to address the mental and emotional issues of American citizens. In fact, I would go so far as to state that there is culture in the US which regards mental health as non-issue. People struggling with mental illness are told they are being over-emotional and to just “get over it”. Many people don’t have the proper coping strategies to deal with problems in their lives, and this is especially relevant with men. Men are not only more likely to commit mass shootings, they also commit suicide at 3.5 times the rate of women. What’s the best way to address mental illness though? To take it seriously by guaranteeing comprehensive mental healthcare to American citizens. Considering the President is trying to decrease access to healthcare, you can imagine I found his statement quite ironic.

So, which is it? Is it too much access to guns or not enough access to mental healthcare? I think it’s a little bit of both. I grew up in Maryland, and I don’t remember ever seeing guns in the Walmart’s or, in the case of the Sutherland Springs shooter, Academy Sporting Goods. This is because Maryland requires a background check and seven day waiting period for the purchase of handguns, as well as completing a safety class. And, you can only buy one gun a month. I don’t remember growing up with guns in the house, and while my father probably could have gotten one if he wanted, it wasn’t as easy as strolling into the local Walmart and choosing a weapon. At the same time, if insurances had provided more coverage to treat drug and alcohol dependency, maybe he wouldn’t have become the type of man who threatens to kill his wife and child. I don’t think anything is as simple as “Get rid of guns!” or “Provide mental healthcare!” It must be a combination of good policy and a dedication to change American culture. We need better gun policies, just like we need better healthcare, just like we need to take the mental health issues men are currently facing seriously.

What SGA Does For Students

by Naomi Cardwell

SGA is often a mystery to most students. They are not sure what SGA does or even who they are. SGA stands for Student Government Association and according to the Vice President, Armita Tajadod, their “goal here is to represent the student body and to increase the quality of student life on campus.” Some of SGA’s main focuses are internal reformation, student involvement and engagement, addressing parking problems through advocating for commuter alternative programs, initiating a dialogue to improve food problems [options] on campus, community involvement through civic engagement, campus safety, establishing closer relations with U-H system campuses, and promoting student success by making sure that students advocate. SGA can work with administration to make large decisions that effects the everyday life of students.

They are a Fee funded organization which is taken from tuition, and creates a budget for student benefits. For example, the charging stations that will be placed all over campus. SGA had a huge impact when it came to the decision making and purchasing of these charging stations. Another example, would be the safety walks that have been taking place, that identified a need for improved call boxes, cameras, lighting and overall safety of the campus. This falls under one of SGA prime focuses, safety. SGA throws events that encourage school pride and community. They also are motivated to tend to the everyday life of students, such as the idea of that we need more water dispensers located around campus. They also are starting a dialogue about the hours of the cafeteria and making the hours more available to students who take night classes. Some bills that SGA has passed this year was the DACA Resolution which was “Weas SGA letting the students affected by Governmental Decisions know that we are in solidarity

with them”. Along with the \$350.00 HPV Awareness Bill that informed students om Human Papillomavirus and the \$150.00 Blood Drive Bill which encouraged students, staff, and facility to donate blood. These bills were all signed off by the both the senate and the president of SGA. Except the HPV Awareness Bill which was passed by the Senate, but was not signed off by our SGA President due to concerns over a scheduled health fair for next semester.

SGA has three committees in the constitution currently. They are University Affairs, University Advancement, and Student Affairs. However, there was three more committees that were established by our now former Speaker Elizabeth Bosquez, which was Constitutional Committee, Diversity and Equity, and Campus Safety. According to the SGA constitution “once the Speaker steps down from their position all committees created by said Speaker are expunged if an amendment (to include in our constitution) was not passed to make them standing committees prior to the Speaker stepping down. Once a pro-temp is chosen by the Senate and then a New speaker is chosen by the Senate the person who is chosen will be tasked with creating those committees again if they see fit.”

SGA needs more student voices to help advocate for the people attending UHD. There are many ways to become involved, and making the place you chose for an education better. Vice President Armita Tajadod suggest that she “highly encourages students to get involved whether it’s becoming an officer in SGA, volunteering or even when the next election cycle comes around in April voting for people that you think will make good representatives for you and your college”. SGA has a ton of open positions and anyone interested should swing by the SGA office on the second floor.

A Risk of the Oil Industry

by Taylor Scott

Houston, Texas, the 4th most populated city in the United States, is known for a wide variety of things. Some of these things include Beyoncé’s hometown, the home of the 2017 World Series Champions, or the city that somehow survived that gigantic flood a few months ago. Houston is also known as the Energy Capital of the World. The city has a huge market in the oil and gas industry with the U.S. International Trade Administration reporting exports from \$10.2 billion in 2016 in oil and gas alone. Naturally, one of the biggest concerns for Houston regarding the industry is the jobs because when the market starts to fall then jobs start disappearing. That’s just one of the risks that comes along with the industry. Another risk is explosions in the oilfields which can be and have been fatal. In 2014, the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics reported that 14.3% of deaths related to the U.S. Oil and Gas Extraction Industry were caused by fires/explosions.

There have been several oilfield explosions reported in the U.S. since October. On October 15th, there was an oil and gas platform explosion in New Orleans, Louisiana. Seven people were injured in the explosion, five in critical condition, and one man from Katy, TX, Timothy Morrison, went missing and was eventually found dead due to the explosion. The blast from the explosion was so large that residents said they felt their houses shake.

Another reported incident was in Dilley, TX, about 70 miles away from San Antonio. On October 17th, two people were injured when an oil storage tank exploded. Then on November 14th, three people were injured in an oilfield explosion in Crossville, Illinois. One of the

workers was critically injured in the explosion, receiving burns over much of his body. He was airlifted to a burn unit in Kentucky while the other two workers received minor injuries that did not require hospitalization.

Oilfields can be a dangerous place for workers so there are many standards set in place and procedures to follow if an incident does occur. For the state of Texas, the Railroad Commission oversees the regulating the oil and gas industry which includes things like pipeline safety and when dealing with liquified petroleum. While the Railroad Commission oversees safety, many companies take their own precautions as well. Before people are permitted to work out in the oilfields they are required to go through an extensive set of training and classes to ensure they can do their job safely and efficiently. Aside from those who work in the oilfields every day, many of the employees that work in the corporate offices make regular field visits as well. These field visits usually just include a tour and/or a run-down of what is happening at the facility at the time of the visit. During these visits, all employees are required to wear protective gear such as hard hats, safety glasses, and close-toed shoes while some are required to wear steel-toe shoes. Another thing that some companies require is that the employees that do not work out in the oilfields every day are required to take a class with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) before they can go out into the fields. Working in the oilfields can be a very dangerous job so government agencies as well as oil and gas companies do everything they can to ensure the safety of the oilfield workers.

A Look at UHD's O'Kane Gallery

by Helen Martinez

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Hurrying to class. Rushing for a bite to eat. Late for another meeting or event or panel. Whatever it is. No time. No time. No time. Taking a short cut through the Welcome Center. Stalking down the long hallway.



Photo by Helen Martinez

Shoes clicking on the tile floor. Eyes forward. Air conditioning cooling your fevered face and mind. Thinking of the next thing. What's the next thing? Speeding along to the next thing. End of the hall. A window on the right, monarch butterflies fluttering in the breeze. Wait. You stop, mid-step. Butterflies? Inside the building? You turn. Through the glass, there is a dark room with the only illumination highlighting the pieces of art on the walls. Brightest of all, in the corner, a spotlight on a white dress... surrounded by floating butterflies. You stand there, mesmerized.

Amidst the busy flow of students and staff, you stand outside the O'Kane Gallery, staring at that tiny bit of color and life, and you decide to take 5 minutes to step inside. The simple white dress, adorned by colorful flowers, is part of the current exhibit by the O'Kane Gallery. The exhibit, *Aspire / Aspire*, showcases the work of artist, Natalia Anciso, and this particular piece is called *In Remembrance of the Innocent* (2013). Anciso's art in this exhibit is influenced by her life growing up close to the Mexican Border in Texas. She translates both the beauty and dangers of living so close to the border into her work. Her work is best described by her own website: "Juxtaposing beautifully colored, watercolor-drawn images of flowers indigenous to Texas against stark, monochromatic media images, meticulously rendered in pen, Anciso offers the beauty of home against grisly depictions of the Mexican Drug War. Using these tools on domestic textiles such as handkerchiefs, pillowcases, and bed sheets, Anciso's work examines psycho-political struggles of life along La Frontera." The artwork from the white dress to the drawings to the recreation of her mother's bedroom, Anciso's haven as a child, in the O'Kane Gallery certainly shows the precarious balance between family and peril that Anciso felt.

However, this is just the current exhibit that is held in the O'Kane Gallery, and will run until December 7, 2017. The O'Kane Gallery typically has 4 exhibits per year by professional artists and 1 exhibit in May with artwork by UHD students. Director Mark Cervenka makes a conscious effort to bring diverse exhibits with a variety of mediums and themes to UHD from the current exhibit with Anciso's work to the next exhibit Cervenka is currently

working on to premier February 8, 2018, which is a dedication to UHD's professor Floyd Newsum, who will be retiring as a professor of art for U H D . W h e n c r e a t i n g

art, each artist puts a part of their heart and soul, blood, sweat, and tears into each and every piece. As such, the exhibit will showcase not only the evolution of the artist's work and style but also in a way tell the artist's life story. Director Cervenka is constantly aware of this and so puts in countless hours reviewing the artwork and arranging the pieces according to various themes for the best experience start to finish of the exhibit. In fact, Cervenka explains that exhibits can take years to put together, but it is that time and effort that truly does justice to each artist. In the case of Professor Newsum a beloved professor of UHD and renowned artist with pieces in the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture, Director Cervenka is taking extra care to give him the appreciation he deserves.

For those interested in visiting the O'Kane Gallery, it is in the Welcome Center on the third floor and is open Monday-Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m.



Photo by Helen Martinez

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StandOUT Hosts Panel on Asexuality

by Paula Cano

Asexuality is defined as someone who does not experience any type of sexual attraction. Under Asexuality there is also two components important to define: gray-a and demi-sexual, gray-a is a person that lingers between both sexuality and asexuality, and demi-sexual describes a person who does not experience arousal until they form an emotional bond with the respective partner. Asexuality is not celibacy, celibacy is a life choice to abstain from sex. Asexuality is a sexual orientation and they are nowhere near each other in the aspect that celibate driven people experience arousal while asexuals simply do not. The asexual community is often left in the shadows and this is due to the common mistake that

individuals make when sex and romance is paired up as if they go naturally together in a relationship.

This identity is often perceived as counterintuitive, and horribly declared as just a “phase” and that it might change once they’ve experienced satisfying acts of sex. Asexual people will tell you that one can experience romantic feelings without engaging in sex, but to assume that this is just a phase is extremely damaging to the individual who identifies as asexual. UHD recently held an open panel, where UHD alum Rachel MacDonald shared her own experience as a member of the asexual community.

Rachel identifies as panromantic asexual, which means she doesn’t experience sexual arousal but can experience romantic feelings for people of all different genders. She also shared that the journey to identify herself as a member of the asexual community sometimes caused her to feel “broken, and confused” because of heteronormativity. She fell into a trap, pressured to fit a societal mold to find “the right one” to try to correct this feeling of non-arousal. MacDonald asserts that “her body functions as a sexual being but doesn’t experience sexual attraction”.

STAND OUT UHD PRESENTS...



Featuring Guest Speaker
Rachel MacDonald

UHD BSIS ALUMNI
MASTER CANDIDATE FOR
HUMAN SEXUALITY AND EDUCATION
AT WIDENER UNIVERSITY



NOVEMBER 8TH
12PM TO 1PM IN MILAMROOM



STANDOUTUHD@GMAIL.COM

Photo Courtesy of UHD's StandOUT

only knew of the asexual community during her graduate studies. One of the most important takeaways from this UHD panel happens to be that academic research on asexuals “falls short”; that is why Rachel made it her missions to bring the asexual community out of the online shadows. She claims that currently, the only way to find asexuals is through online mediums, like Tumblr and internet forums.

When asked what were the chances of someone with a low level of education to be able to identify as asexual, Rachel claims that this is one of the biggest problems she comes across, and the resources that are available for people who do have access to education don’t include asexuality. She states that the concept of asexuality isn’t even accepted as a sexual orientation in some communities. Asexuals are misrepresented and repressed, often not considered at all as a valid sexual orientation. The overarching message of the panel is how important it is to bring asexuality out of the dark and create a space of awareness to bring relief to those people who have long endured confusion and frustration to identify themselves.

While looking for signs of early asexuality, she found a journal from middle school describing her crush on a boy, and summarizing this feeling as “liking him, but also not liking him at all”. Being able to identify as asexual ended those feelings of brokenness, and confusion for Rachel. She highlighted that because of the little information about asexuality, this makes it an arduous task to find a partner that’s knowledgeable on this matter.

MacDonald emphasizes that one percent of the population is asexual, but that number could be higher due to limited information that’s accessible to them as Rachel recounts that she

Picture by Angel Lopez

Two StandOUT members raise money for The Montrose Center and spread information about Transgender Day of Remembrance



Delegate Danica Roem Makes History

by Chris Joseph

November 7th, 2017 will be a day that will go down in American history, as everyone will remember how the state of Virginia elected Danica Roem, making her the first openly trans person to ever become a state legislator. The 33-year-old democrat and former journalist's win was a big upset; Roem, who ran against 13-term incumbent Robert G. Marshall, won by 10 percent of the votes. Roem gained victory over Marshall because she did not focus her campaign on her gender identity, but instead focused her campaign on the local issues such as schools, funding, and zoning.

"Yeah, I am a trans-woman, and I have ideas on how to deal with our public policy issues, I have ideas on building up our infrastructure. Because I believe in building up our infrastructure instead of tearing down each other," said Danica Roem in her victory speech.

Roem's opponent Robert Marshall, who is infamously known for the failed Virginia "bathroom bill" that tried banning transgender men and women from using the bathroom of the gender they identify, did not let up on Roem. Marshall and his supporters produced an attack ad that slandered and mis-gendered Roem, and stated that Roem was running a "campaign issue out of transitioning to female." Even during the actual debate, it was reported that Marshall refused to debate Roem, and continued to use the wrong pronouns when addressing Roem "Virginia has changed so rapidly over the past 20 years. It's gone from a state where no politician would dare to condemn the Confederacy to a state where a suburban district would elect a transgender candidate," said Stephen J. Farnsworth, a political science professor at the University of Mary

Washington in Fredericksburg to the Washington Post. The humongous victory for the Trans community doesn't stop with Roem's win. Along with Roem, Representative Andrea Jenkins has just been elected to Minneapolis City Council and is the first openly black transgender woman elected to a public office in the U.S., and the second openly trans woman to win behind Danica Roem.

Jenkins believes that she and Roem's victories are proof that many of the nation's communities will not succumb to hatred, bigotry, and transphobia. Jenkins, along with many others, are ready and willing to fight for social justice and equality of all minority groups. "I am really proud to have achieved that status, and I look forward to more trans people joining me in elected office, and all other kinds of leadership roles in our society," Andrea Jenkins told the Washington Post after her win.

Although this is an historic day for Roem, she was not the first transwoman to serve in state legislature as that title is held by a woman named Althea Garrison. Althea Garrison served as Massachusetts House of Representatives sometime in the early 1990's. The Boston media outed her as a transwoman, and Garrison was only able to serve one term and never to be elected again. The 77-year-old Harvard graduate has spent twenty-some odd years trying to reclaim her time, after being outed against her wishes. Although Althea Garrison's legacy has been mostly forgotten by many, some know of her efforts and hardships she had to endure to pave the way for Danica Roem and Andrea Jenkins to come out as they are in positions of political power, changing the world one state at a time.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

by Angel Lopez

In the year 2017 alone, more than 25 transgender individuals in the U.S. have been brutally murdered, most people of color and under 30 years old, purely out of hate. November 20th marks National Transgender Day of Remembrance, a day dedicated to commemorating the lives of those innocent people who fell victim to the violence brought upon by people who, to put it bluntly, do not agree with their existence. This day serves as a reminder that transgender individuals are too often targeted and are given little to no attention when it comes down to fixing this issue and it is time to stop dismissing the obvious rising number of deaths.

In the United States 1.4 million people identify as transgender. 78% of transgender children in grades K-12 experience harassment and 35% of them experience physical assault while only 12% report sexual violence. It is safe to say that they are not safe and most importantly, do not feel safe as much of our society continues to stand against them.

Trans people are 3.7 times more likely to experience police violence and 90% of them have experienced harassment at work. These individuals experience an overall rejection from much of society when they feel as though they cannot seek help for fear of even more discriminatory and violent oppression. Trans people are 4 times more likely to live in poverty and they experience homelessness at twice the national average as it is more difficult for them to find employment and housing considering many states do not have laws specifically limiting this form of discrimination. These statistics show not only the persistence of hate crimes against innocent people, but that this is their dark reality. This information also displays that because of societies ignorance to the rising number of brutal attacks against transgender people and the ignorance to the adversity they

might face at home for being who they are, it is crucial that we as a humanity open our eyes to this issue. It has existed for years but has not been given enough attention simply because it does not affect most people directly.

In honor of this day and considering these continuous acts of hate, UHD's StandOUT organization put together flyers with pictures of the victims and descriptions of how they were killed. As grim as these flyers were, they were meant to emphasize the importance of not dismissing this issue and turning our backs to a group of people who live fearful lives due to the violence that target them. StandOUT President Kara Moore and her team put together buttons that read "I support trans people" as well as rainbow ribbons to raise money that would be sent to the Montrose Center. Director of the Center for Diversity Inclusion, Dr. Hudson put together a wall full of names of people who were killed around the world. This wall, much like the pamphlets, serve the purpose of allowing people to take the time to stop and look at how many transgender people were murdered and understand how serious this issue is. Society does not need to be constantly reminded that transgender individuals are human too and want to feel safe under the law. There are many ways in which you can become educated and more aware of how to properly address these individuals and make clear your support for trans rights. StandOUT is meant to educate anyone who is willing to learn about the LGBTQ+ community as a whole and the many different aspects that exist within it.

National Transgender Day of Remembrance is a day to commemorate the innocent lives lost to violence and hate but it is also a call to action and an opportunity for our society to stop invalidating trans rights as well as the issues they constantly face in their everyday lives.



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Exploring Islam: A Cultural 'A-fair'

by Jesse Uppal

Islam. The association of the word in the United States is regularly misconstrued with extremism. Factions within the United States will make efforts to convince their follower-base to believe that all Muslims are evil regardless of their origin or beliefs. Many people would forget that the #1 victims to extremism world-wide are Muslims. The same people would forget that the world's largest Islamic population centers are in Indonesia and Pakistan, while only 20% of the world's Muslims reside in the one of the 22 Arabic Nations. American media in regard to US-Muslim relations make every effort to mention ISIS or Afghanistan which creates a stigma of fear for a culture in which they may not be knowledgeable of.

Dr. Poonam Gulati, the Director of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and a professor of microbiology established an event in hopes to combat much of this ignorance. The Cultural Explorations: Islam event was generated as the first of many in a series of 'Explorations' she wishes to carry out. The event featured a Mufti, or a scholar specialized in Islam, a panel of two students and a faculty member with diverse stories about their experiences with Islam, as well as food, art and dancing from the countries across the Atlantic. The art consisted of books, crafts, sculptures, paintings and rugs from the Middle East, while the dancing was carried out by an experienced and enthusiastic quartet of Turkish dancers.

Dr. Pasha-Zaidi, a lecturer in psychology sat as one of the panellists and spoke of the misconceptions about Islam and specifically the rules concerning women. She asserts that much of the "laws of Islam concerning women are significantly progressive and that women are regularly treated as equals in many Islamic countries such as Pakistan and Iran." Many countries may decide not to follow the Qur'an regarding women's rights resulting in a culture clash but that does not obscure the specifications delineated to women within the holy book. She speaks of having been born in Pakistan but was raised in the United States and experienced first hand the ignorance and potential for misunderstandings amongst American culture. She states that the women in most Islamic countries have nearly as many rights and privileges as they do here in the US.

Ignasio Hernandez and Isbah Khan panelled

as students for the event, both having significantly different experiences with Islam. Khan was born to a Pakistani-Muslim household much like Dr. Pasha-Zaidi and experienced the freedom associated with American Culture while still being raised in a foreign one at home. Khan states that while her parents were traditionalist Muslims they incorporated much of the American freedom at home and not forcing their children to take any paths that they would not personally want to take. Hernandez is a convert to Islam, having only recently said his Shahada, or oath in August. Hernandez spoke of his introduction to Islam by a professor on campus and his newly found, deep connection with the religion. Hernandez speaks of how his conceptions for the religion changed as he learned more about it and that many still confuse real Islam with what they learn from watching the news.

Islam is an Abrahamic faith, which indicates that many of the stories involved in the Qur'an are either similar or the exact same as the stories portrayed in the Torah or the Bible. Many of the same prophets and names are in all three books such as Job, Noah and Mary who is known as Maryam in the Qur'an. Islam shares other significant features with Christianity and Judaism as they all share their homeland of Palestine/Israel. All three religions find this land to be holy, while Muslims center their faith around Mecca and some Christians center theirs around the Vatican. Islam shares another familiar ground with Christianity in the country of Turkey, where Orthodox Christianity brought forth by Justinian and the Byzantine Empire paved the way for the Islamic Ottoman Empire that spanned the greater part of the nation's recent history.

Dr. Gulati will continue to host these Cultural Explorations considering the sheer success of the first one with the intentions of having the next one in the Spring 2018 semester. She believes that by opening the UHD community (students, staff, faculty, family) to the various cultures and religions of the world she can highlight the diversity of the campus while simultaneously educate people of the various cultures the world has to offer. Her ambition is that students and faculty will participate in the future explorations as they did in this one, making it a fun and interactive event.

Friendsgiving at UHD

by Paula Cano

When student organizations come together especially during the holidays you get a true perspective of how diverse our student body campus really is. This practice of unity called "Friendsgiving" was planned out by Kelly Kruzman, president of the Urban Educators Literacy Society, and they invited multiple campus clubs to come together bring food, drinks, board games and their club members to create an environment of the community. With many student clubs in sight, starting with UELS, Be a Teacher Club, BESO (Bilingual Educators Student Organization), Kappa Delta Pi, UHD Vegan Club, Asian Student Association, Council of Orgs and the Professional Society of Criminal Justice students. Organizations gathered around played board games as they ate. The most intense game of the event was Cards Against Humanity which fielded the most crowded table of the event. There were delicious refreshments to enjoy

such as pizza, cheesecake, cookies, popcorn, hotdogs, and nachos. In a conversation with the host of this activity Kelly Kruzman, president of Urban Educators Literacy Society "The goal of this event was to bring



Photo by Paula Cano

together different organizations of the university and come together as a student community and unite UHD student majors together." Kelly Kruzman herself was surprised when the turnout turned out to be higher than expected; it was almost a full house and an abundant amount of food. Kelly exclaims that she "didn't expect this turnout, it made me happy to see people come out

and participate, it's a good thanksgiving feeling". This event turned out to be a successful way to bring student organizations together, Kelly Kruzman did an excellent job bringing the gator organizations together to represent the student diversity that we so proudly embrace.

A Cleaner Dream Act

by Angel Lopez

“Sin papeles, sin miedo!” the protestors shouted as they flooded the streets of University of Houston protesting the repeal of the Dream Act, which allows undocumented individuals the opportunity to pursue a career and education free of discrimination and harassment from the Trump administration. Dreamers under the Dream Act can live a normal life that those in power constantly fight to take away from them. Students marched all around the school, relentlessly, holding signs with empowering messages and shouting impassioned chants- “Undocumented, unafraid!”-

This protest gave these people the chance to share their stories and their anger; frustrated with the failure of the law to shed light on the persistent issue of oppressing people simply for not having control over where they come from. Many shared their fear of losing their ability to work, support their families, or even themselves if this act is repealed. Mariana Grijalva, an honors student at the University of Houston-Downtown, told her story on behalf of her friend who was unable to attend purely out of fear. “Some of us are forced to still hide in the shadows” Grijalva attempted to remain unemotional as the students formed a circle around her.

The crowd only grew larger as people marched around the school in unison. News reporters and film crews followed the movement as it grew and people gathered either to join or simply watch. This protest was meaningful and powerful in its entirety, amongst the many other protests all over the country fighting for the same thing. The protest was meant to urge congress to vote in favor of preserving the act and protecting those that are directly affected by the potential removal. To add to the overwhelming support, even students not directly affected by the potential removal of DACA took the time to make

clear their decision to join the fight against this decision.

It is important to also note that staying silent about the decision on DACA allows hopeful and determined students, workers, human beings to be knocked down by an irreversible blow. With all the overwhelming support for DACA came some opposition with some marching outside of the protest and shouting discouraging chants. “Go back to where you came from!” four students, two of them wearing ‘Make America Great Again’ caps, marched on the outskirts of the demonstration determined to invade the space. Despite the opposition, students involved in this powerful movement remained optimistic and hopeful and, most importantly, welcoming. Little attention was given to the small pack of students that was the opposing group and the movement stood its ground.

The leader of the protest creating the chants closed with a reminder to the students that they are welcome here no matter the outcome. “Their white supremacist agenda is slowly becoming history” the energy remained optimistic all throughout and to end the protest as powerfully as it started, despite the opposition, students clapped to the beat of a unified heart.

UHD is known for its diversity and representation of minority first generation students, therefore, it is important to reiterate that this is a safe place for DREAMERS and that though this oppression is persistent, the fight to win is just as persistent and they are not alone. Once again, voting and fighting in favor of DACA means you are not only fighting for people to simply live a normal life free of fear, but you are also allowing them to pursue careers and goals that are constantly hammered down by those in power, because they simply disagree with the idea of talented individuals who were not born here, should have the same opportunities as someone who was.

TFN Lies into Laws Panel

by Kara Moore

The Texas Freedom Network hosted a panel of four unique individuals at the University of Houston – Downtown on November 16 to discuss some of the laws that almost passed and those that did in the last Texas legislative session, with SB 4 and SB 6 being the primary focus.

SB 4 was going to effectively remove “sanctuary cities” by requiring local officials to accommodate the federal governments immigration laws and requests or be held criminally liable. It was blocked by a federal judge shortly after passing. SB 6, also known as Texas’ “Bathroom Bill”, would have required people to use the bathroom of their “biological sex” effectively criminalizing transgender people from being able to use public restrooms. It failed to pass in both the legislative session and a special summer session.

The panel consisted of UHD Student Paula Cano, UHD Political Science Professor Dr. Christina Hughes, TFN Organizer Andrea Segovia, and local activist Ashton P. Woods. These four provided a multi-dimensional perspective on these issues. Cano used her experience as a DACA student to discuss how the SB 4 and how the President’s order to end DACA has led to distrust of local officials and increasing anxiety about the future stability of immigrant communities. Woods provided perspective by stating that during Harvey he was helping many African and Caribbean immigrant communities who were too scared to seek out local government aid for fear of being targeted for deportation.

When it came to SB 6, Segovia used the experiences of her transgender partner to discuss how terrible it feels

to be targeted for a basic human necessity: going to the bathroom. She discussed how there is a lack of guaranteed safety and security for trans people to begin with and to make legislation specifically targeting the trans community is to further exploit an already vulnerable population. Dr. Hughes stated that both policies were degenerative, meaning that they were unnecessary and based on generating interest in a social issue. She stated that local officials already legally must cooperate with federal immigration agents. As well, most of the “Bathroom Bills” are based around fear-campaigns which state that “men dressed as women” will assault people in the restrooms. It is already illegal to assault anyone in any given situation, and having a law specifically about bathrooms is thus unnecessary.

When the panel opened to questions, it got quite emotional; one person asked about how to help transgender people as they had an acquaintance who killed themselves when the bathroom bill was initially going to pass. In response, Woods recalled finding a trans friend who was violently killed when going to the bathroom. Both him and Segovia expressed that trans people need to feel supported and more people need to be educated on how targeted the transgender community really is, so better advocacy can be done for them.

The hosts, TFN’s UHD Chapter President Magge Nunez and Vice President Wallace Wilson, wrapped up the panel by imploring everyone to get involved the Texas Freedom Network. To get involved with UHD’s TFN chapter, you can email them at uhdtxrising@gmail.com.

Opinion: The Orange Sea

by Archie Gayle

On Wednesday, November 1st the Astros won. On Friday, two days after the victory, my girlfriend and I decided to get lunch at our favorite pizzeria. It was hell getting up the University of Houston-Downtown that day. The traffic extended through all entrances into Downtown. Countless cars invaded the campus parking lot for the cheap parking price. From the windows on campus, we could see dozens of citizens in orange shirts marching to where my girlfriend and I needed to go. At 1:45 pm we left the comfort of the campus on what should not have been a journey. The entire afternoon was the peak of Downtown's traffic. We joined the sea of orange shirts down the sidewalk of the hill. We sauntered through the streets amongst a satisfied revolution. Citizens in windows and cars in gridlock traffic sat and watched orange shirt after orange shirt cross the street. Once the walkway displayed a red hand, fans stopped at the edge sidewalk like a heard of sheep commanded by a Border Collie. The orange shirts came from north, east, and west directions, all headed to the same place. As each street we crossed became flooded with more orange, I lost hope in getting to Frank's in a timely, less-than-anxious manner.

I did not grasp the importance of the victory until I saw that crowd of Houstonians. That is not to say that I completely understand the infatuation with sports; but seeing that collective put a thousand faces to the interest. Growing up, I would see older members of my family crowd, hunched in front of a TV during the Super Bowl. It filled them with a sense of pride I could never understand. My Great-Uncle Herman, whose hobbies included gardening and drinking forties each day until the sun went down, always informed me about Texas football teams even though I showed absolutely no interest whatsoever. I never had the heart to tell him, however; every time he asked who I was rooting for in the upcoming game I replied with a vague, "Who do you think I'm rooting for? He chuckled pleased that he could relate to his great-nephew.

For all my indifference towards the victory, I cannot deny that the city needed the win. The fall season came with difficult times—particularly Hurricane Harvey. The 2017 hurricane flooded the city, put 40,000 people out of their homes, and brought a season of despair that drowned everyone's thoughts. If you don't know someone who was affected by Harvey, someone in your close circle probably does. After the hurricane, all labels were erased; neighbor helped neighbor with whatever resources they needed.

During the parade, all stigmas—doctor, convict, vegan, other—were hidden; all you could see was "Astros fan."

My girlfriend and I made it to Frank's and were greeted by an orange invasion. We ordered our pizzas to-go and I watched the Astros parade being broadcasted on the little TV hung in the corner of the restaurant. Fans waved to the camera as they marched through the street holding giant, cardboard signs with the heads of the Astros players on in the air. They won; and because they won, we won. Following the crowd was a car shaped like Jose Altuve's head. How did you make that so fast? They won two days ago! The screen cut to a reporter moving along the sidewalk where a wave of orange shirts cheered. He interviewed a man with ecstatic mannerisms, bleeding excitement. The TV was on mute, but the news caption below the orange shirt read, "I've been here since 6 am, but it's all worth it."

Going against the crowd up Main Street was just as difficult as one might expect. We walked on the edge of the concrete, to avoid maneuvering through the sidewalk-dominating orange sea. Passing fan after fan, I realized we were the minorities—not that my black



Photo by Michael Case

skin had ever helped me to think otherwise, but I felt eyes on me coming from many races wearing orange shirts. I'd like to think they gawked at us because we were simply humans passing by their peripheral, but we were going the other way and we didn't have on the same shirts. Even children we passed donned the orange shirts. They seemed absent and confused. I'm sure they learned how to say "Go Astros" before learning how to spell "Houston."

As we made our way to the hill my girlfriend pondered, "Why even go to the parade?" I still don't have a clear answer to that question, but in all of the commotion I did see firsthand the power of the collective: the power that every one person has with their presence to create—and be a part of—something bigger than themselves. The importance wasn't in the victory, it was in the people. If no one had shown up to the parade, if enough citizens did not call in absent on Friday to go to the parade, if no one bought the orange shirts then who cares who won the World Series? It was in that moment that I realized we were in the real parade—the orange marching collective. The power of the majority

The Houston Astros Shine With Diamonds

by Chris Joseph

When the Houston Astros won the World Series, no one thought that these players' smiles could shine brighter. Well, one man has risen to the challenge to give these hometown heroes a smile that can outshine the sun. Houston native and rapper Paul Wall has decided to give brand new sets of diamond encrusted grillz, jewelry worn on your teeth, to the entire Houston Astros roster for winning the World Series. Paul Wall is famously known around Houston for his million dollar smile and he appeared on Nelly's nominated hit song about mouth jewelry, Grillz.



Photo Courtesy of thebestbradley on Flickr.com

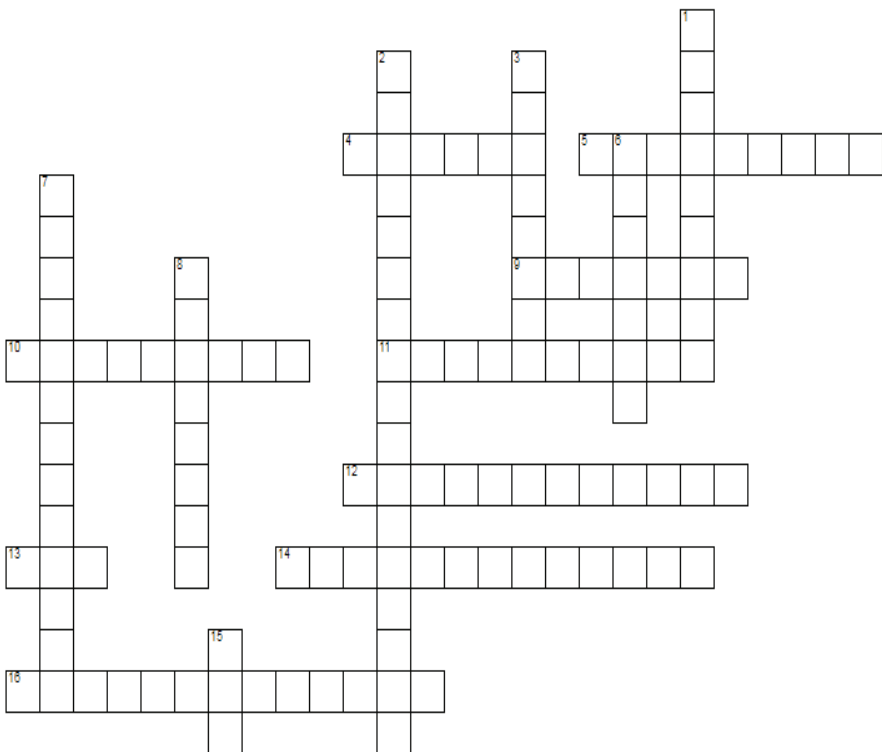
"U know we had to do it! In celebration of [the] Astros goin to the World Series we are offering free grillz for the entire team," Paul Wall said on Twitter. The idea to give the team a bunch of grillz started out as a joke, according to Paul Wall. When Wall ran into pitchers Justin Verlander, Dallas Keuchel, and Tyler Clippard at a restaurant before the American League Championship Series (ALSC) began, he told the pitchers if they make it to the World Series he would give them grillz, and the pitchers responded,

"Hell yeah we want some grillz" In an interview with the Associated Press Paul Wall said, "I'm a diehard Astros fan. For me and TV Johnny to make grillz for them and congratulate them with a grill it means something, and that they would even accept or want a grill means a lot to me."

In addition to outfitting the entire franchise with a set of new diamond teeth, Paul Wall released a new song called "World Series Grillz" along with other famous Houston rappers Lil' Keke and Missouri City's own Z-Ro, dropping some catchy bars about the players. This is not the first record Wall put out to commemorate the Houston Astros World Series trip, as in 2005 he made a tribute song to the franchise making it to the World Series for the first time. Paul Wall wasn't the only Houston rapper overcome with joy when it came to the Astros winning it all, the "Antidote" rapper Travis Scott also praised the Astros for their victory. Calling their win "the best thing to happen in Houston since Whataburger."

UHD Sights and Sounds

Locations around campus



ACROSS

- 4 Not a train
- 5 Synonym for SunDollars
- 9 What major facility is located on the fifth floor?
- 10 More for snacks than books
- 11 Not a lot of auditing happening here
- 12 Things take their time here
- 13 How many cameras are there in the Business Building?
- 14 Hopefully not an episode of cops
- 16 They'll help you with all your writing woes

DOWN

- 1 Core level (and some higher math) happens here
- 2 The lightning thief hosts his parties here
- 3 The newest parking addition
- 6 Actually is a train
- 7 Quite 'welcoming'
- 8 You just read through it, right?
- 15 Similar to actual government

- 1. SIProgram
- 2. StudentActivities
- 3. BayoutLot
- 4. Subway
- 5. Starbucks
- 6. TheRail
- 7. WelcomeCenter
- 8. Dateline
- 9. Library
- 10. BookStore
- 11. Auditorium
- 12. FinancialAid
- 13. One
- 14. PoliceStation
- 15. SGA
- 16. WritingCenter

Advice from Your Typical Student

“As a STEM student at UHD, I tend to feel intimidated by other students. I work hard and try to create a relationship with my professors, but sometimes I feel that it is not enough. How can I overcome this and “stand out” as a STEM student?”

Let me start with a disclaimer. I am not well versed in the STEM universe. I completed my two science courses for the common core and vowed to never look back. Despite my lack of knowledge on STEM specifics, I believe that the key is to be the best version of yourself that you can muster. We all have visions of what an ideal version of ourselves would look like, but ideal and best are not necessarily synonymous. Our best self can change because it leaves room for growth and honors our limitations as we work towards the results that we want to achieve. Our ideal self has already achieved the desired results. My ideal self gets eight hours of sleep and has time for three meals a day. That is definitely not me at this current point in time. My best self currently averages about six and a half and is getting better about breakfast. It's all about incremental change. In leaving room for growth, we naturally stand out because we are constantly improving our self. This might not be the quick solution that you were looking for, but it's a start.

“Do you know of any places to travel to inside the US that are affordable and exciting? I've always wanted to travel but I don't know how to start.”

Would it sound too promotional of me if I said that downtown Houston is a great place to start? I promise that this isn't a sponsored ad, but downtown is a pretty neat place once you get past the nightmarish traffic. A lot of the students that I've talked to on campus, especially freshmen, have said that they haven't adequately explored downtown. It always shocks me because, for

a university that has downtown in its name, you'd think that there would be more student engagement. There is an abundance of food options within reach for when the line in the cafeteria gets to be a bit much, a reliable rail system that can take you to different areas of town, and interesting sights as you near Central Station Main.


At first glance, downtown Houston can blend in with the hustle and bustle of student life. Buffalo Bayou and White Oak Bayou probably don't register as historical landmarks as you are running to class and the rail might seem like an inconvenience when you are trying to cross the street. However, if you give it a proper chance, then downtown can open a new dimension of entertainment. You can visit the Museum District, Theater District, and Houston Zoo all for the simple price of \$1.25 (is this starting to sound like an infomercial?). It gets even better when you factor in the discount that students receive, which brings the total to sixty cents (act now to receive this great offer folks). There is also the underground Houston tunnel system, popularly known as the tunnels, where if you can find an entrance then the world is yours. I'm talking all the food options you could want. Other perks include two parks that hold various outdoor events year-round, venues that musical artists frequent if you are into concerts, and free museum entry on Thursdays. Now that I am done subliminally implanting the idea that downtown is cool, I hope that you give it a chance.

Questions? Comments? Are you also planning an escape to the tunnels so that you can fall into a food coma? Let me know at typicalstudentadvice@gmail.com.

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