

DATELINE:DOWNTOWN

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J. MAMAH
 2019

From the editor's desk

by Quintin Coleman

I've always wondered why do people make such a big deal about culture.

I don't intend to be dismissive of people appreciating their own culture(s) as it is a great thing for people to be proud of what they are. For the longest time, unless you fit into what mainstream society deemed as "normal" (the definition of which is changing almost by the day), you were seen as an outsider, or at the very least viewed differently compared to the "normals." Now, we're pretty much at the point, though we still have a little progress to make in that regard, where people can be who they want to be without judgement.

Social media fuels the idea of being yourself even further by being able to communicate with like-minded people in a simultaneous effort of being supported in being what you want to be and reinforcing the norms of a given culture. This is all well and good until people start to internalize the traits of a particular culture as if it's a requirement to be part of that culture.

To my knowledge, there are two types of cultures: cultures you're born in and cultures that you choose to be in. Cultures of both varieties have been championed as ways to express what you are as a person. However, culture doesn't really make you who you are as a person.

One of the issues with culture as it's currently conceived is that a person's personality and culture are

seen to be inextricably linked. This view of culture manifests itself into many different areas, including studies of specific cultures themselves that boil down to mostly looking at the stereotypical behaviors and tendencies of a culture. Though this can be a useful tool to get a broad understanding of someone who belongs to a different culture (as long as that desire to understand a culture doesn't come from a bad place), it isn't a complete picture of who someone is.

Something that inspired me to have an issue about culture was the idea of breaking down the conceptions behind particular cultures, as well as understanding the people who are part of said culture. For example, UHD's eSports organization had their first video game tournament on campus. As a gamer myself, it is pretty amazing to see something that was relegated to the nerdiest of nerds for the longest time become mainstream to the point where hardcore gamers don't have to hide their interest in competitive gaming. UHD Fandom celebrated women in nerd culture, a culture that has been predominantly male up until recently. There was also a film festival hosted on campus that focused on only international films, one of which was about a woman who works to conquer her fears despite the trauma that she's dealt with.

Aside from a prime and not that subtle opportunity to go over what's in the current issue of the paper, I used some of those examples to show that what you are on the outside doesn't dictate who you

are on the inside. It's far too easy to get wrapped up in thinking that you have to be something because you're a part of a certain culture. However, that's far from the truth. We're in a time and place where we can be just about whoever we want to be. It's okay to be part of a culture and even celebrate it when you can, but we should also work toward not being constrained by whatever limitations are placed upon us by a given culture and focus on being who we truly are, regardless of what others within that culture may say.

Quintin Coleman is a graduate student at UHD in the Master's of Rhetoric and Composition (MARC) program. His ultimate goal is to teach writing at the college level. When he's not tutoring at a community college part-time or doing homework, he's deciding on whether he should spend a little too much money at Target on houseware items, what books to put on his new bookshelves, and how to best arrange his video game collection.

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Email submissions to editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com. Letters to the Editor and reader submissions may be edited for space, content, spelling, grammar and malicious, vulgar, or hateful statements. Submissions must be the original work of the writer and must be signed. All submissions become property of Dateline: Downtown and will not be returned.

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UHD-events

By Fabian Ramirez

email ramirezfl@gator.uhd.edu for event postings

April 2

The Gator SUPPORT Group event is organized by student counseling services. Every Tuesday for the month of April between the hours of 1 p.m. and 2 p.m., students can learn how to strengthen their relationships by learning how to connect with others and identify communication patterns. It will be held room S445 of the One Main Building.

The UHD health and fitness workshop for the day deals with foods that support brain health. The event will also offer information about minerals and nutrients that are depleted during times of stress. Register for the class so that you can learn how to develop a personal stress reduction diet. The event begins at 1 p.m., ends at 2 p.m., and will be in room N602.

The Gator Bowl Paint Party will be kicking off at 1 p.m. and will last two hours. The Student Life Center encourages students to come out and relieve some stress while helping Houston's hungry. The party is for UHD students, faculty, and staff members. Participants will help create a unique bowl that will be donated to the Houston Food Bank for a June charity event. The painting will take place at the coffee house. Please remember that all of UHD health and fitness workshops require registration. Please find forms at the Sports and Fitness office or on-line at www.uhd.edu/sportsandfitness

The American Red Cross CPR/First Aid Certification begins at 9 a.m. The event ends at 1:30 pm and costs \$25. Registration is required. It will be at the Student Life Center.

Citgo and the UHD's Scholars Academy are presenting the **18th annual Student Research Conference**. It will be held in the Cullen Auditorium and Special Events Center (A300). Please stop by between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to take a glimpse at all the hard work these students have accomplished.

April 3

'Coffee Chats with Coach Cooper' is a new event organized by the Career Development Center. He will be helping the UHD student community with career questions every Wednesday. The sessions are held between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. and are easy to join. Simply download the Zoom application on your device and join meeting ID 713-221-8980.

The **UHD Gators Baseball Club** travels to Austin to face the Houston-Tillotson University Rams. The game begins at 4 p.m.

April 6

At 9 a.m. **the UHD Men's Soccer Club** plays Prairie View A&M. The game will be in the southwest side of town at Bayland Park #L-2.

The UHD woman's volleyball team will be playing in their home turf while competing in the Houston Club Sports Conference Playoffs. Come show them some support at 10 a.m. Location: UHD Student Life Center.

Come out to Finnigan Park to support the **UHD's Men's Baseball Team**. Today's games will be against Lone Star College Cy-Fair. The first game begins at 2 p.m. followed by another at 5 p.m.

April 10

The UHD baseball team will travel to Marshall, Texas and compete against the Wiley College Wildcats. The game begins at 4 p.m.

The Health and Fitness workshop 'Best Foot Forward' will start at 2 p.m. in room N602. This interactive workshop is focused on addressing and preventing the most common types of foot pain. The event ends at 3 p.m. and requires registration.

April 16

'Tasting the Mediterranean Diet' is the workshop topic that will be discussed by the Sports and Fitness health instructors. Join them in room N602 between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. to learn more about these types of healthy eating options.

April 22

Qualified health and fitness instructors will be hosting a **Drug Jeopardy workshop** in N602. You must register in the office of Sports & Fitness or on-line at www.uhd.edu/sportsandfitness. The event will last one hour and begins at 12 p.m.

April 4

The 12th annual Gender Conference is coming courtesy of UHD College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In case you do not attend the conference, make sure you stop by to check out the art work submitted. It will be on display between April 3 and 18.

April 8

Beginning today until April 11, SGA will host the **2019 Walk to Voter Registration week**. They will be in the third-floor hallway.

April 12

The Student Life Center is offering two workshops this day. The first is a **rape aggression defense workshop**. The event begins at 9 a.m. and lasts until 12 p.m. It is free but requires registration

April 26

The Student Life Center team is offering one last **workshop for rape aggression defense**. The class begins at 9 a.m. and lasts until 12 p.m. It is free but registration is required.

April 9

Room N420 is where the UHD SGA has organized a **meet and greet with candidates** for upcoming elections. The event is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

4

eSports has strong turnout for first tournament

By Christina Loos

On March 7, UHD eSports held its first video game tournament and broadcasted it over Twitch, a popular streaming site. The game was “Super Smash Bros. Ultimate” and the tournament was the result of a coordinated effort between Fandom UHD and UHD eSports. During roll call, the eSports Center was packed with over fifty participants whose enthusiastic chatter filled the air. This enthusiasm lasted late into the night.

“Super Smash Bros. Ultimate” is a fighting game with a roster of characters from different Nintendo properties and several games made by other developers. Like any good fighting game, each character has a unique skill set. After “Smash Ultimate” was released on December 7, 2018, it quickly became the third best-selling game on the Nintendo Switch console.

Amaris Sanchez, one of the tournament organizers and a student who

works in the eSports Center, said that part of the reason “Smash Ultimate” was chosen was because of its popularity. She noted that during her time working in the eSports Center, she encountered a lot of students coming in to play “Smash Ultimate.”

Richard Rodriguez, one of the students involved in UHD eSports, echoed this sentiment. He explained that another reason it was chosen was because the game was easy to access. Since the game was released last year, many people could get their hands on it.

The rules of the tournament were simple. Each set consisted of two players for a best-of-three games, except for the top four players whose sets were best-of-five. The sets were commentated on by a group of students whose infectious enthusiasm, informative play-by-plays, and friendly banter made the tournament even more enjoyable. The tournament proceeded smoothly for the most part besides a minor technical issue

that meant the commentators had to share a single microphone and some competitors not showing up.

The tournament ended around 9:45 p.m. with Golli (@beef__testosterone on Instagram) emerging victorious. The next “Super Smash Bros. Ultimate” tournament is scheduled on March 22, and it remains to be seen if Golli can come out on top again and if the enthusiasm will continue.

When asked what made tournaments so appealing to UHD students, Sanchez said that she was hesitant to say it was only because of the competitive aspect.

“A lot of these players who play competitively—they’re also really good sports. For a long time before the tournament started, I would catch them ... giving each other pointers, telling each other how they could prepare for the tournament,” she said.

Rodriguez credited the tournament’s appeal to its accessibility, citing

how the tournament was towards the end of the week and free to enter. He also added that the element of competition also played a role in its appeal.

Rodriguez said that when a group of friends at UHD hear about tournaments like this one they can meet new people.

“That group of people in the tournament, they go against other like minded people at the university they didn’t even know existed and they all become friends,” he explained.

Christina Loos is a Technical Communication major and an English minor. She is passionate about social justice, horror, writing, and learning about other cultures. In her free time, she enjoys listening to 80s goth rock and new wave, writing and reading, and watching other people play video games because she isn’t very good at them.

Cardi B delivers great performance at rodeo

By Naomi Cardwell

Cardi B performed at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo on March 1, 2019 to a record-breaking crowd of 75,580.

Cardi B is a Grammy award winning artist; her career started off as an Internet celebrity after her videos on

Vine and Instagram went viral. She got an opportunity to be on Love & Hip Hop: New York. This was just the beginning of her music career boost when she went on to create music with other talented artists such as Bruno Mars, 21 Savage, SZA, Chance the Rapper, Kehlani and of course, Offset, who is the father of her child, Kulture.

Cardi B wore an outfit designed by Bryan Hearn. He posted an image of Cardi B wearing it and described the outfit as, “My Selena ranchero cowgirl dreams came true.” This outfit was an amazing pink and blue cowgirl outfit which included a bejeweled hat, bra, jacket, chaps, and boots. She embraced the spirit of the Rodeo and performed her songs with a Texas sized love.

Cardi B stated that “The purpose of the Rodeo is to make money and to collect it to give scholarships out” and that “Whether being a doctor, a lawyer or being a f***ing stripper you are going to need some education.” Not many people could say it like this and get the response that she did. However, Cardi B is admired for her candor, her truth and her boldness.

It seemed as if Cardi B truly connected with the large audience when she took a break and said “I want to thank my fans, because of you guys I won a Grammy. Because of you guys I get a chance to give my daughter the life I’ve always wanted to give her.”

Cardi B stated in her thank you post on Instagram that, “I’m OD honored for all the love

Houston gave me! I remember the first time I came to Houston, I came out here to strip and people showed me maaaaaa love and Houston was the first place me and set went on a date.” This is the type of love and energy Cardi B brought to the stage when performing.

The singer closed the night with singing one of her biggest hits, “Bodak Yellow.” Once she was backstage, Cardi B received a proclamation from the City of Houston that declared March 1 is now officially Cardi B Day. The proclamation stated that Cardi B “unequivocally expressed her support by mobilizing into action to host the Hurricane Harvey Relief Drive on September, 16, 17.” The proclamation also stated that due to her show at the Rodeo the “Proceeds from her performance will impact the Houston Livestock Show and equate to more than \$50 million dollars.”

The proclamation was issued by Mayor Sylvester Turner and ended with, “The City of Houston commends and appreciates Cardi B for her compassion during a historic disaster and dedicated services to the community, as her many contributions are greatly appreciated by the many lives she has impacted through her music and philanthropy.”

Naomi Cardwell is a Technical Communications major. Her career interests are in social media and mass communications. She believes in the city of Houston and wants to use her degree to help Houstonians be better informed. In her free time she loves being with family, friends and binge watching above average television.



Cardi B performs at the 2019 Houston Rodeo
Photo credit: Naomi Cardwell

The history and purpose of Lent

By Janet Salas

In the Christian church, Lent refers to a period of penitential Easter preparation. The period lasts for 40 days during which the Christians are expected to fast. In Western Churches, Lent begins six and half weeks prior to Easter on Ash Wednesday. The primary purpose of Lent is usually to allow Christians to fast and pray in imitation of Jesus Christ's forty days wilderness fasting experience before he began his public ministries. As opposed to the Western Churches, the Eastern Churches begin Lent on Monday of the seventh week prior to Easter and ends nine days before Easter on a Friday.

Since Apostolic times, Christians have observed a period of fasting and preparation for the Easter Festival. However, the period was never formalized until the "First Council of Nicaea" in 325 CE. Notably, the preparation period was majorly known for being the time for penance for sinners and preparation of candidates for baptism. Like they are in the Eastern Churches today, fasting rules in the early centuries were strict. Butter, eggs, fish, meat were forbidden, and the Christians are taking part in the

practice were only allowed one meal a day in the evening. In addition, the Eastern churches restricted the use of dairy products, oil, and wine. Over the years, the Western Churches has seen the relaxation of the strict Lenten rules. Notably, the two events that the churches still put a lot of emphasis on include Good Friday and Ash Wednesday.

Lent was started to mark a period for preparation for the Easter Festival. Even though the Eastern and Western Churches have different periods for Lent, the purpose was the same- preparing for the Easter Festival through fasting. Usually, it was the time for penance for sinners and preparation for candidates for baptism.

Throughout Catholic history, Lent was usually marked with three important practices- almsgiving, fasting and praying. Today, Christians do not only give up something, but they also seek to add something during this occasion; they either reach out to help those in need or address personal habits they feel they need to work on. Notably, the two are considered optional practices since the Church does not mandate Christians to do something extra beyond abstinence

and fasting. In short, during Lent, the Church only requires Christians to abstain and fast.

During Lent, Catholics, among other Christians, are mandated by the Church to give up on various pleasures including social media, alcohol and sweets. The main reason for giving up these commodities is to allow Christians to demonstrate some levels of simplicity and foster a sense of self-control. Notably, many individuals choose whatever they want or prefer giving up on. In most cases, they give up on the things they enjoy the most. For example, if an individual's favorite dish is fish, they can choose to give up on it during Lent.

While there are no universal rules regarding what to eat and that which is prohibited, most Christians usually avoid chocolates, cakes, cookies, soda, luxury foods, cream or ice-cream, and alcohol. On Fridays no meat is allowed to be eaten either.

On all Fridays of Lent and Good Friday, all Christians, provided that they have celebrated their 14th birthday, are to abstain from meat. Secondly, every person from the ages of 18 and 59 is bound to fast on Good Friday and Ash

Wednesday. Moreover, the church prohibits the celebration of weddings during Holy Week, Ash Wednesday or Sundays of Lent.

Janet Salas is currently a senior working towards her Bachelor's of English. She is a first-generation college student as well as a Navy veteran. Once she graduates she plans to pursue a career as a paralegal. When she is not in school she enjoys working out, volunteering, hiking, and kayaking.

Fandom celebrates women in nerd culture

By Kelsi Rios

In celebration of Women's History Month, Fandom hosted an event displaying some of the world's most famous voice actors, such as Jennifer Hale and Tara Strong, and even an all female manga company's named Clamp. They also acknowledged women in comics, manga, anime, and the video game characters themselves.

"All women are being celebrated here at our event today. It doesn't matter what their backgrounds are or exactly what they do. Each one of them is as important as the other," explained Alicia

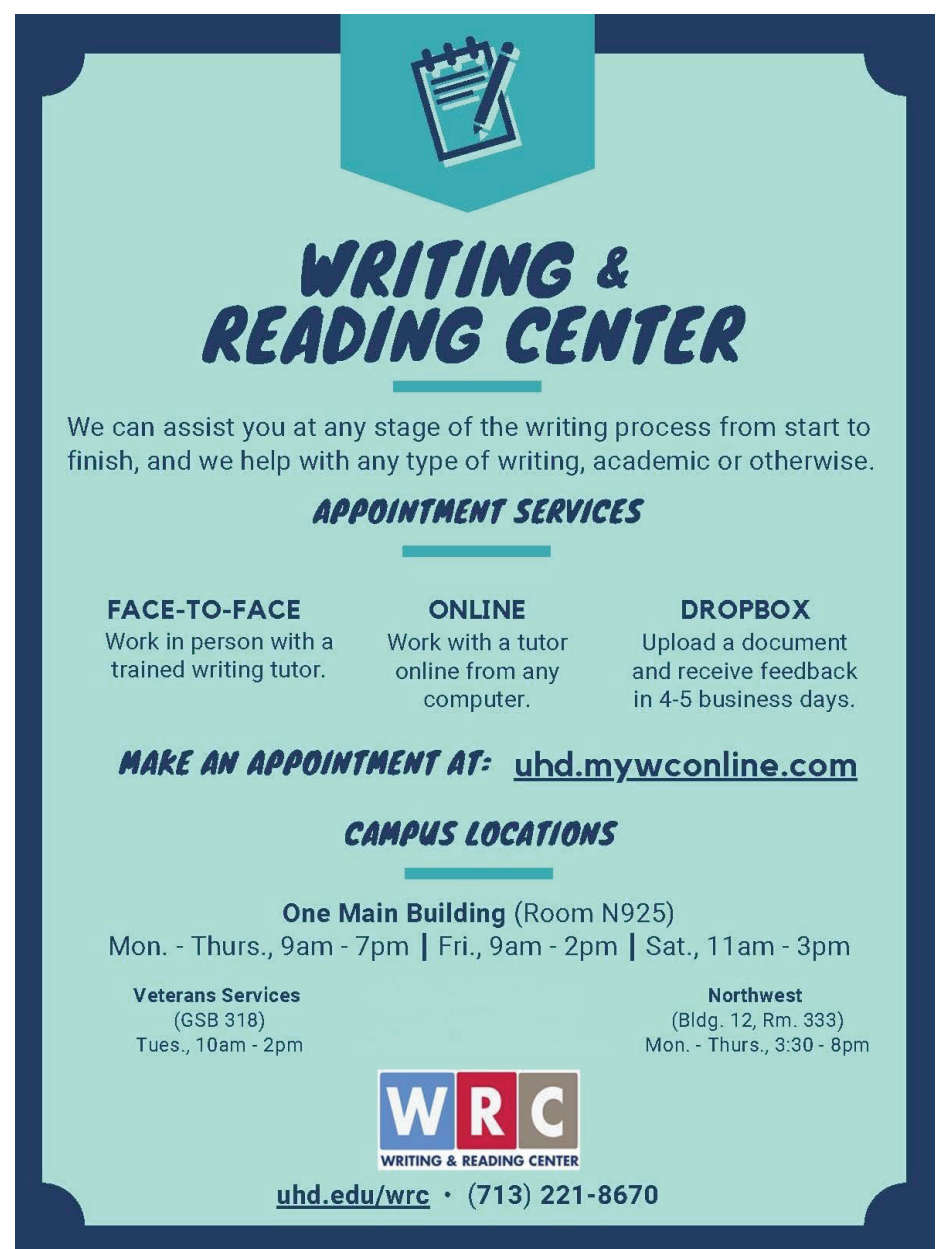
Ipina, the president of Fandom.

During the event, they sold hot dogs and popcorn that the students could enjoy during the double feature film, "Alien" starring Sigourney Weaver and "Mean Girls" with Lindsey Lohan. Fandom even had a free raffle to win great prizes. Ipina wanted the faculty, students, and Fandom members to know how much she appreciated all the help to organize the event. She also wanted to mention that their next event, Anime Fest, will be on April 15th from 11a.m.-5 p.m. and to follow them on Facebook and Instagram @FandomUHD.



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6

Sophia Simmons' larger than life headbands

By Lissette Perez

Self-expression can often be one of the most difficult things for people to be comfortable with. For many of us, the opinions of others may stop us from putting on that eccentric outfit or getting that bold hairstyle, but for UHD student Sophia Simmons, it is the bold and the eccentric that excites her the most. She adores all things unconventional and everything and anything that sets people apart from one another. Her strong connection with her own unmatched style is not only what makes her so unique, but also what keeps her motivated.

Simmons is a senior majoring in corporate communication and there is not one day that goes by where she is without one of her signature headbands. Simmons is so deeply fond of her headbands that she describes them as her morning coffee, meaning she could not go about her day without them. She can either be at work, in class, or at the store and she will always have a plethora of flowers and ornaments adorning her hair. Simmons takes pride in owning her personality and she does that through the use of her dozens of headbands that her and her mother create. Her exuberant hairbands are colorful and bright and are meant to catch the eyes of any passerby, giving them a shock at the pop of color.

Simmons started her headband journey quite a while before she entered college. In fact, she started her journey when she was in middle school. When Simmons was asked about what sparked her interest in headbands she said, "I saw this lady on TV with a very vibrant headband on and I just thought to myself 'why don't I do that?'" so I brought it to

my mom's attention and asked if she could make it, and she said to me, 'I'll try'." So, her mother tried it and that is how she her first headband was created. After that, they both began wearing headbands and could not see themselves without them. Simmons not only wears them, she also sells headbands alongside her mother.

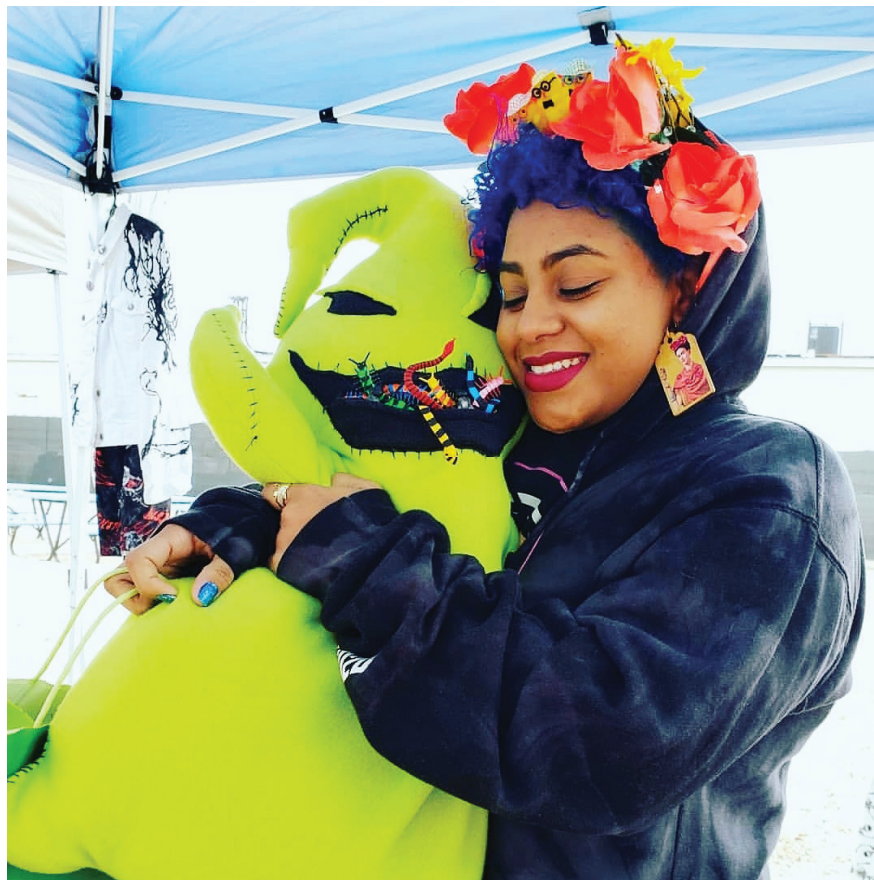
Simmons and her mom try to keep their eyes open to appealing to different communities when selling headbands, but she admits that it can be difficult to cater to the general public

since the style of headbands is different than anything anyone has ever seen. They sell their unique headbands at flea markets and other market centers where they show off their items and hope to attract buyers with a refreshing sense of style.

Simmons has a variety of headbands for any season and holiday. She has a purple and green Mardi Gras headband with a mini masquerade mask on it, an Easter one decorated with baby chicks, a Halloween one with glittery jack-o lanterns, and a wintery Christmas

one with Christmas presents and mistletoes. She also has headbands made with some of her favorite singers in mind, such as Prince and Lady Gaga. Simmons' favorite headband, however, is one with a variety of roses packed together, ranging from soft pink, hot pink, to bold yellows and oranges, finished with little pops of white Baby's Breath. The headband once belonged to her grandmother; it was made for a Dia de los Muertos party. Her ideal headband would "touch the sky if possible, it would definitely make a statement" much like her other ones.

It is important to Simmons not to lose the vision that motivated her to start wearing her headbands in the first place. Her headbands have changed her view on life, "they make me feel like I'm my own person. They help me show people that I'm not going to change just because they want me to." Furthermore, Simmons closes with a piece of advice she has for those struggling with freely expressing themselves is to "don't ever second-guess yourself... roll with the punches, don't let anybody's comments or behaviors keep you from being who you are."



UHD student and headband maker and connoisseur Sophie Simmons wears one of her colorful creations
Photo credit: Lissette Perez

Lissette Perez is a senior majoring in English-Creative writing. After graduation, she hopes to become an English teacher and continue writing. She has been a Staff Reporter for Dateline for two semesters and is also a Student Supervisor at UHD Sports & Fitness. During her free time, she enjoys drawing, playing video games, watching movies or documentaries, and reading comics.

Chili cook-off brings UHD together for good food

By Fabian Ramirez

Friday March 1 on the UHD South deck was the place to be if you were on campus, especially if you admire a good cup of chili. The temperature outside was comfortable, the downtown view was clear and there was good music playing. There was even a rowdy mechanical bull that seemed to be feeling the evening vibe. It was my first time attending a UHD Chili Cook-Off, so I took the time to walk around and get to know some of the UHD organizations that posted up a tent that day. I figured a good way to catch up with the history of the event and the sense of culture behind it would be by getting to know the some of the people that help make it happen.

2019 was a record-breaking year for the event. UHD's Staff Council expressed to Dateline Downtown that the event's momentum is increasing yearly.

continued on page 8



People's choice for best tent Décor was awarded to the Chili Chili Bang Bang team (Employment Services & Operations Department).
Photo credit: Fabian Ramirez

Female achievement

By Aansa Usmani

March—also known as Women’s History Month—celebrates women’s achievements throughout history and their contribution to society. Without some of the contributions made by these women, life could be different for most (or all) of us.

This piece chronicles the achievements of several interesting women and how they have helped modernize society through advancements in science, politics, and history. There are also modern women who have smashed the “glass ceiling” and have shown that regardless of gender (or age), women are as equal as men.

“Always stay true to yourself and never let what somebody else says distract you from your goals”- Michelle Obama

Marie Curie:

In 1898, she discovered the radioactive elements of Polonium—named after her native homeland of Poland—and Radium alongside her



Marie Curie
Photo Credit: www.theguardian.com

husband, Pierre Curie. The couple were later jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics, making Marie the first woman to attain such an achievement. Nearly a decade later, she received an additional Nobel Prize for Chemistry. This second award also made her the first woman to receive two awards in separate fields. Her contributions towards science have created medical breakthroughs in treating

cancer, performing x-rays and surgical procedures.

Suffragettes:

Since the late 1800s, women such as Susan B. Anthony have been advocating for equal suffrage and equal participation in government. This movement, later on dubbed the “Suffragette Movement”, was comprised of women

who believed that, like their male counterparts, they should be allowed the right to vote. Often times, women were arrested and subjected to torture by being force fed and other heinous acts. In 1920, their dedication paid off when Congress enacted the Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote and advocate their political/communal voices.

“Nevertheless she persisted”- Mitch McConnell

Amelia Earhart:

After being captivated by an airplane at a State Fair, Earhart decided that she too would like to pursue such a career. At the time, women usually had domestic roles such as being a dutiful housewife and mother. She challenged those ideals and became a pilot at a young age of 25, making her the sixteenth woman to attain an aviation license. Her flights caught the attention of the media, flying solo across the Atlantic, reaching the South of Wales. Another trip caught the attention of the world, yet it is still unknown what had happened

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“Anastasia” stellar combo of music, costumes



Photo courtesy Evan Zimmerman, MurphyMade

By Syneetra Williams

Everyone knows that UHD’s faculty, staff, and students are passionate about art. It matters not if it comes in the form of music, paintings, sculptures, dance or theatre. The UHD family and Houstonians are convinced that artisans of every sort have roots in the Bayou City.

Just in case you missed it, “Anastasia: The New Broadway Musical”, was at The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts at 800 Bagby in the heart of the Theatre District during the first week in March. For those who enjoy musicals and get carried away when the orchestra plays and melodious voices fill the atmosphere, visit hobbycenter.org to sign up for the announcement list for this

Broadway show season.

I had the opportunity to see this spectacle called “Anastasia.” If you crave mysteries, then this is the show for you. It is about a young Russian heiress who finds herself lost and unsure as to who she is. This dazzling show transports us from the twilight of the Russian Empire to the euphoria of Paris in the 1920s, as a brave young woman sets out to discover the mystery of her past. Pursued by a ruthless Soviet officer determined to silence her, Anya, played by Lila Coogan, enlists the aid of a dashing conman and a lovable ex-aristocrat. Together, they embark on an epic adventure to help her find home, love, and family.

Meanwhile, her aging grandmother and aristocratic queen, has been searching for her granddaughter since she was a child. If she does not find Anastasia or Anya as she is also called, her evil, drunken nephew will take the throne. The queen’s stress level continues to rise as she receives letters from young women all over the world claiming to be her precious, long-lost granddaughter. When Anya finally makes it back home, she chooses the man she loves over the

throne even though she disappoints her grandmother gravely.

The score will move anyone to tears. The costumes, set, and colors were breathtaking. “Anastasia” is directed by Darko Tresnjak, the music is by Stephen Flaherty, and lyrics are by Lynn Ahrens. Whether a show is at our O’Kane Theatre or The Hobby Center matters not. The arts give Houstonians one more reason to be proud of the Bayou City and all its eclectic and cultural entertainment.

Syneetra A. Williams is a native New Englander and now a Houston resident who read the dictionary for pleasure while growing up. With Gator Pride, she is a candidate for the Master of Science in Technical Communication at The University of Houston-Downtown. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Professional Writing at UHD, and an Associate of Applied Science, AAS, in Digital Communications with a graphic design specialization at Houston Community College. As a graduate writing tutor at the Writing & Reading Center at UHD, she is passionate about teaching. She is convinced that when you educate others, you give a special gift that keeps giving throughout generations.

When life goes from right to left

By Syneetra Williams

Do you remember your senior year in high school? Many young, vibrant teenagers are preparing for their senior proms, various activities, graduation, and then college. Life for anyone at this stage is exciting. It is great to be a teenager as you embark upon adulthood. The world is your oyster, and now, you are about to take the driver's seat. All is well; what could go wrong?

At age 17, life for Houston native, Alton G. Cooper took an abrupt left-turn when he had an unexplained stroke during his senior year. As a result, the entire right side of his face was paralyzed along with the same side of his body temporarily. He asked: "What went wrong? Why me? Why now?" He pondered these questions as he attempted to pick up the pieces, restart, and graduate.

In 1999, his hero, king, best friend, and the head of the family, his father, Alton Cooper, passed away. Three

years later in 2002, out of nowhere, a second stroke ensued. How could this happen to a man in the prime of his life? Just blinking his eye sent excruciating pains throughout his entire body. "I couldn't cry if I wanted," said Cooper. The healing process took more than a year. For him, his life was marginalized by a stroke. "Your body is never the same after two strokes. Your perspective on life changes forever" said Cooper.

For Cooper, his family and friends were his backbones that brought him to a healing place after the first episode. Now, with the loss of his father and a second stroke, life was almost too painful to bear.

Although unlikely, it happened again. At the age of 43, he developed an aneurysm and had another stroke that nearly razed his body and life because it was worse than its predecessors. It brought him to his knees on Father's Day June 17, 2007. As he laid on his apartment floor, unable to move or to call for

help, he cried out to God. "Lord, are you going to let me lay here and die after you brought me this far?" At that moment, emergency personnel entered his place and rushed him to Methodist Hospital and into surgery.

For more than three months, he slept in a hospital bed. The road back to lucidity and wholeness was grueling. "I was in ICU for at least four weeks," said Cooper. His 6'2" healthy, muscular frame started to look emaciated. "I weighed 210, and my weight dropped to 167 pounds dramatically, and then it increased to 187 slowly." His doctor did not expect him to live because of the severity of the stroke.

"His physician said that he was not going to make it and crossed him off," said Janise, one of Cooper's beloved sisters. "This incident was so bad that he was non-respondent. He could not open his eyes, move, or walk but he could hear. I whispered in his ear and told him what the doctor said. It was as if

the 'Cooper mentality' and determination took over in his mind and spirit; he started responding with finger gestures, eye blinks, then he started writing. His ability to speak clearly returned slowly."

"I had my third stroke because a blood vessel in my brain ruptured," said Cooper. According to the Mayo Clinic, an aneurysm is ballooning at a weak spot in an artery wall. An aneurysm's walls can be thin enough to burst. The third stroke relegated him left-neglected with a clutched hand which means that the entire left side of his body was inoperable, and his hand was virtually useless. "I experienced rage because I couldn't pick up two pounds. My temper had reached its peak" said Cooper. "I had no control over my bodily functions. Many times, I felt helpless because I didn't know if I would ever walk without assistance or speak in my natural cadence."

"My journey began when my

Continued on page 12

Chili cook off con't from page 6

Fifteen university organizations registered this Spring and the energy in the air reflected it. The deck was pleasantly crowded and everything from face-painting, mechanical bull rides, and photo booths were part of the entertainment.

The UHD Staff Council's aristocratic fundraising goal is to earn money for the Edge Award. This award is used for the continuing professional development of UHD staff and helps support campus events. I purchased my ticket at the cashier's office and used it to get my chili card. The card had one check box for every tent at the event, which would get you a small cup of chili and various types of fixings like freshly chopped onions or a handful of Fritos.

I attempted to try as many recipes as possible, but I ran out of time and hunger. I spent most of the evening conversing with the other guests and organization members. In fact, after speaking with several teams that night I realized how deep the sense of gator pride for this event was. Several of the team members were not only current UHD employees but also UHD alumni. Some of the UHD alumni that I met said to me that they felt the UHD culture has grown since they were students thanks to events like the Staff Council's Chili Cook-off. Based on these conversations, the steady annual event growth rate, and the required footprint for 15 tents, I would suspect that it won't be long before both North and South decks will be required to host the event.

One of the several tents I had a great time conversing with was posted up by the Computer Science & Engineering

Technology departments. Their chili recipe name was C_SET_Flavor and it earned them 1st place bragging rights and a \$100 gift card. Their sense of culture for the event was high and their tent was tastefully decorated with a cheerful mardi gras theme. The second place \$75 gift card winners were the Gator's Finest chili team, which was organized by both the Public Safety and Police Departments. The third-place chili award was a \$50 gift card and won by the Gator Bayou Cookers, which was organized by the Advancement & University Relations Department.

A handful of other awards were given out to teams that demonstrated their Gator spirit by preparing desserts and or helping make the event as lively as possible with creative tent decor. The Business Affairs Department won a \$25 gift card for preparing the best dessert and the Vaughn Construction team also won a prize for their chili recipe. Lastly but certainly not least, the Chili Chili Bang Bang team won the prize for best décor. The Chili Chili Bang Bang team is a collaboration between the Employment Services and Operations Departments. Their tent was by far the most colorful of all. The tent theme was that of a circus and team members cleverly contributed to the decorations by dressing the part of circus ring leaders and other circus personalities. So, if you didn't make it to the 2019 UHD Staff Council Chili Cook-Off, hopefully you will participate in this strong UHD tradition for 2020 and embrace the culture that makes UHD so special.

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“Amelie” a foreign film that tells human story

By Joshua Williams

A suicidal fish sprung out of its bowl, as if to say enough was enough.

This was just one of many moments which caught everyone in attendance at the Foreign Language Film Festival off guard. The festival was held by the department of History, Humanities, and Languages in celebration of national foreign language week. Films from France, China, Iran, and Mexico were shown to students for free inside the academic building. Among them was the 2001 French film “Amelie”.

Audrey Tautou stars as 23-year-old Amelie, a woman who after losing her mother goes on a journey of self-discovery. Receiving five Academy Award nominations, it encapsulates life with athazagoraphobia, or a fear of being forgotten or ignored.

But “Amelie” doesn’t drown underneath its own sorrowful weight. It allows itself to be a whimsical comedy set in the backdrop of Montmartre, France. Through the use of animation and color manipulation, director Jean-Pierre Jeunet entraps his audience in a unconventional narrative.

Amelie’s inadequacies are a crucial part to her development as a fearless woman. An extended montage shows her progression from child to adulthood. Her

mother’s unexpected death causes her father to withdraw from society, leaving her isolated and afraid.

She finds herself in a mundane world where windows surround her. So often she hides behind a window, peeking at the life of an elderly artist. It is here we understand her need to break away from own despair.

Loneliness threatens to drown her.

When Amelie finds a rusty old box in a bathroom, she decides enough is enough. Amelie races to find the owner of the box. By doing so, she hopes every sharp edge of loneliness which surrounds so much of her is gone, and in its place comes a renewed purpose.

But it does not. Even once the box is returned to its owner, Amelie draws closer to death. A news report documents her impending death in one scene. Just when we think Amelie has found something meaningful, Jeunet snatches it away.

However, Amelie does not give up. She seeks a man named Nino to be her one last chance for a meaningful life. Amelie only has brief interactions with Nino, all the while keeping her distance from him.

During one particular sequence, Amelie intentionally places clues in

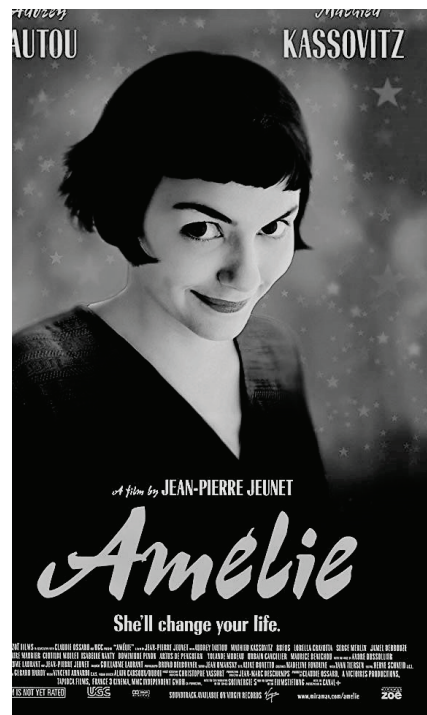


Photo courtesy of IMDB

the park for Nino to find. Nino follows Amelie’s clues and arrives at her place of work. Too terrified to speak with him, Amelie avoids Nino at all cost, even when Nino recognizes her from a photo she sent him.

Amelie’s hesitancy almost costs her again. Once returning home, she regrets her indecisions and daydreams

about Nino finding her apartment. Jeunet uses superimposition to show what she is dreaming about on screen.

Just when we think Amelie lost her final chance to finally find a sense of meaning, Nino arrives at her apartment and they share an intimate night together. We last see them driving along the streets of France as Amelie smiles.

Amelie had sprung free from her mundane world, as if to say enough was enough.

Athazagoraphobia is such a poignant feeling humans sometimes have. “Amelie” tackles this real phobia by telling a human story everyone can understand. Even with subtitles, Amelie’s story was just as important as any other film made in America. “Amelie” transports audiences into a unconventional and yet recognizable narrative made special by its amazing character arc. Those interested in film would enjoy this incredible journey.

Joshua Williams is a current UHD senior expecting to graduate in the fall of 2019. His passions include playing video games and spending time with his family. He’s also a huge fan of online movie talk shows on YouTube.

Why Greenland is looking attractive these days

By Mike Duncan

Sometimes, I wonder what it would be like to be part of a decent culture.

Culture’s Latin root is colere – to grow, to nurture, to tend to something. Perhaps a plant, or a child, or a languid yet furious disappointment with the non-existent “Star Wars” prequels – in any case, one develops something, moving it from a germinal, mundane state to a mature, more impressive one.

American “culture” doesn’t really have that aspect, though. Culture means, rather, in my first sentence, to most as a set of habits that are largely unchanging – the customs of a group.

For example, “Americans” supposedly like hamburgers (unless they are vegetarians), movies (unless they are Amish), fast cars (unless they are Texan, in which case they have a V8 truck that has most likely never carried so much as a 2x4), and guns (unless they are schoolchildren staring down the barrel of one).

“Americans” are also typically Christian (unless they are Muslim, Jewish, Mormon, agnostic, atheistic, Satanist, etc.), don’t like taxes (but want everything that taxes always pay for), are chronically underpaid (but make far more per capita than the rest of the world save Luxembourg, Iceland, and Switzerland). They also have strong feelings about some wedge issue (abortion,

immigration, race relations, labor, gay marriage) that may require you to subscribe to their Thanksgiving newsletter if related by blood.

Most Americans celebrate Easter (what chocolate, bunnies, and plastic eggs have to do with the risen Christ is another column), Valentine’s (chocolate again, with the cards and flower industry close behind), Labor Day (on which an alarming amount of people have to work), Halloween (where everyone gets to see who you really are – someone even more tacky), Thanksgiving (which only truly kicks in after the food coma), and of course, Christmas. Not going to touch that one.

The defining characteristic of “American culture,” to me, is a diversity of subcultures chained to commercialized hypocrisy. Hypocrite is one of my favorite Greek words – roughly “one who judges from underneath.” It’s what an ancient Greek actor was called, because they typically wore large masks while they “interpreted” (the crite/critic part) a role in a play. This rapidly transformed into a “two-faced” meaning: someone who says one thing while doing another, or criticizes someone for something that they do themselves.

In other words, if you wed inconsistency with a wide variety of people – there is no standard-issue American, as much as white supremacist idiots

would like you to think – and then mix in unbridled capitalism, there it is. We don’t rightly know what we want, stand for, or need, because we can’t consistently align our beliefs with our actions. But we know our neighbors, co-workers, friends, and anyone else who looks or acts vaguely different than ourselves are all wrong. Google, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook and the like have carefully kept us informed of such affairs while filling bank vaults with cash, and having their CEOs swim in them like Scrooge McDuck periodically to keep them focused on the real monotheistic god of America.

I’m not alone in feeling alienated from this supposed culture, even though I am hopelessly embedded. Occasionally I feel the urge to join a cult, perhaps Scientology, which would, hopefully, replace the uneasy mental sensation of being trapped in a barren belief system with the actual physical horror of being trapped in an isolated compound with fanatics. That’s the core of the ongoing zombie apocalypse obsession – to strip this problematic cultural construct away and replace it with something simpler, where good and evil would be more easily detectable. Good luck with that one, morons. That reminds me – I need to learn how to skin a deer. No reason.

I grudgingly admit, then, that there is an “American culture.” Maybe

the democracy, when it works, excuses some parts. But the powerful gravitational pull that it exerts reminds me of my willful helplessness every time I find myself eating BBQ despite liking pigs or buying tons of plastic products when I want to recycle, or when I vote for the slightly less evil. No rugged independence, no guts to walk away from Omeletas, or better yet, to take the painful risks to reform the perpetual broken system – which is always the fault of people, not the rules.

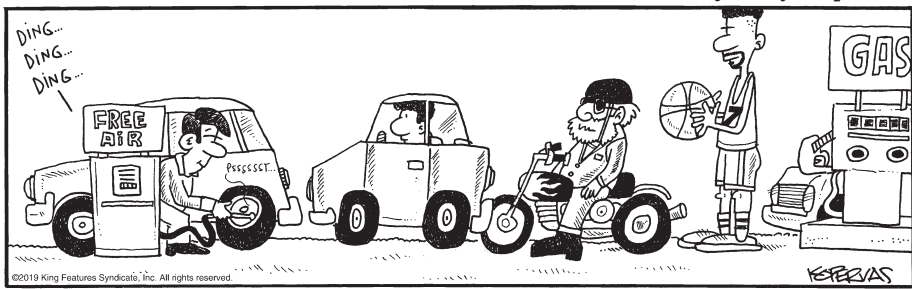
Perhaps UHD will open a branch campus in Greenland and I can just transfer. Surely Thule needs a rhetorician. I could take the two things I unquestionably enjoy, my job and my family, and transplant them to an icy exile – my three-year-old does like “Frozen” an awful lot – where we can nurture a different kind of culture. Dog sledding, ice fishing, seal hunting. We can let it go... no, they have the Internet there, too. Nope.

Perhaps the moon is available.

Mike Duncan is an Associate Professor in the English Department and has worked at UHD since 2009. He teaches courses in technical communication, rhetoric, research methods, and other subjects related to writing instruction.

Out on a Limb

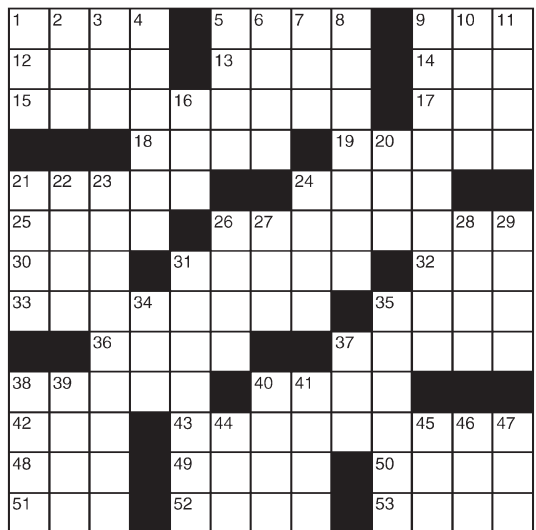
by Gary Kopervas



King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Hindu prince
- 5 Persian leader
- 9 Bigshot, for short
- 12 Verve
- 13 Horseback game
- 14 Tokyo's old name
- 15 Chamber of the heart
- 17 Born
- 18 Good-looking guy
- 19 Bandleader Xavier
- 21 Lucky roll of the dice
- 24 Arrived
- 25 Thing
- 26 Pots and pans and such
- 30 Chignon
- 31 Yours
- 32 Neither mate
- 33 Pavement
- 35 Cicatrix
- 36 Always
- 37 Swerves
- 38 "Monopoly" buy
- 40 Desert-like
- 42 Superlative ending
- 43 South American nation
- 48 Chicken — king



- 49 Cupid's alias
- 50 Family
- 51 — and don'ts
- 52 Transmitted
- 53 TV award

- 7 Every last bit
- 8 Cornmeal creation
- 9 With a — (forcefully)
- 10 Concept
- 11 Bard
- 16 Scoot
- 20 Coal diggers' org.
- 21 Bro and sis
- 22 Needle case
- 23 Feuds
- 24 Hit on the head
- 26 Burn somewhat
- 27 Lubricant

- 28 Bellow
- 29 Blunders
- 31 Dozens
- 34 First lady
- 35 Lead astray
- 37 Namely (Abbr.)
- 38 — over heels
- 39 Norway's capital
- 40 Unsigned (Abbr.)
- 41 Leftovers
- 44 Before
- 45 Shade tree
- 46 Felon's flight
- 47 Whatever number

DOWN

- 1 Cleric's address (Abbr.)
- 2 Brewery product
- 3 One of the Brady Bunch
- 4 Country song?
- 5 Rotate
- 6 Pawn

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GRIN and BEAR IT



"Does this mean you didn't get the job, dear?"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

5			1	2				4
	3		9					7 5
9		1			3	6		
	7			4				1 9
4			2	1				8
	2	3			7	5		
6		2			1			7
	8			7		4	9	
		4	5	3		8		

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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MAGIC MAZE ● ANDYS

T V S Q N K H E B Y W T R O L
 J E N I V E D G G E B S Y W U
 R P T A N K K A I R G R D G B
 Z W X T M C V R S O S E Q R O
 M A K I I F G C E O M M C E A
 Y R W D U T U I Y N A M S B Q
 P H D B N L T A J E I U H M F
 E O C B A R R E K Y L S N A V
 R L S I K R E S P Y L X V S U
 S Q P G U H T I F F I R G N M
 K J H M F E C B D Z W Y X V U

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally

- | | | | |
|----------|----------|---------|-----------|
| Devine | Kaufman | Roddick | Summers |
| Garcia | Murray | Rooney | Van Slyke |
| Gibb | Pettitte | Samberg | Williams |
| Griffith | Reid | Serkis | |

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Strange but true

by Samantha Weaver

It was 20th-century American author and futurist Robert Anton Wilson who made the following sage observation: "Only the madman is absolutely sure."

Lightning isn't solely a phenomenon of Earth: Astronomers have noted lightning bolts on Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Venus.

Historians say that Russia's Peter the Great was nearly 7 feet tall.

Athletes playing baseball on steroids have been in the news in recent years, but drugs are nothing new in America's national sport. During the late 1960s and '70s, Dock Ellis was a valued pitcher who played for several teams, including the Pittsburgh Pirates. On June 12, 1970, Ellis took LSD, thinking it was an off day for his team. By the time he realized that the Pirates were scheduled to play the San Diego Padres that evening, it was too late. The drug proved to have no ill effect on Ellis; in fact, he pitched a no-hitter. When he recounted the event to a

reporter 12 years later, he said he remembered only bits and pieces of the game, though he felt euphoric. Many years later, after being treated for addiction, Ellis became a coordinator for an anti-drug program in California.

A woman in Tennessee was once arrested for biking while intoxicated -- and she was on a stationary bike at the gym at the time.

A newspaper reporter once asked Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French Forces during World War II and later president of the French Fifth Republic, if he was happy. De Gaulle replied, "What do you take me for, an idiot?"

Thought for the Day: "Before you become a writer, you must first become a reader. Every hour spent reading is an hour spent learning how to write." -- Robert Macfarlane

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	-		x		21
÷		x		x	
	+		x		25
+		+		+	
	+		+		15
17		14			16

1 1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9

DIFFICULTY: ★

- ★ Moderate
- ★★ Difficult
- ★★★ GO FIGURE!

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Solutions to last issue's puzzles

King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

L	E	F	T	E	G	O	B	L	U	R
A	D	A	R	L	O	B	O	O	Z	E
U	G	L	I	V	P	S	S	O	I	L
D	E	L	U	G	E	C	O	O	K	
	M	A	S	T	E	R	M	I	N	D
S	L	I	P	S	O	N	E	N	O	R
E	A	C	H	A	X	E	S	T	O	A
A	V	E	W	I	L	M	O	O	N	Y
M	A	S	T	E	R	C	A	R	D	
	K	E	E	P	U	S	A	B	L	E
J	O	A	N	O	P	T	P	L	O	W
U	P	T	O	R	H	O	O	U	S	E
D	E	E	R	T	I	S	P	E	E	R

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

6	4	8	2	7	3	9	1	5
7	1	5	6	9	4	2	8	3
9	3	2	1	5	8	6	4	7
5	6	4	3	8	2	7	9	1
1	2	7	5	6	9	8	3	4
3	8	9	7	4	1	5	2	6
2	5	1	8	3	6	4	7	9
4	7	3	9	2	5	1	6	8
8	9	6	4	1	7	3	5	2

Go Figure!

answers

1	+	2	+	3	6
+		x		x	
7	-	6	x	5	5
÷		-		-	
4	x	6	-	8	16
2		6		7	

Insightful Awareness

By Aansa Usmani

As a mental health advocate, my mission is to educate others on mental disorders, helping to remove the stigma surrounding those suffering from these issues. The more we educate ourselves on these issues, the more likely we will be able to understand those suffering from them around us. DISCLAIMER: I am not a licensed psychologist, the facts and figures are from the internet. If there are any serious concerns, please visit your local therapist.

This month's edition of Insightful Awareness focuses on Multiple Personality Disorder—now known as Dissociative Identity Disorder—a disorder in which one has two or more distinctive personalities. According to "Psychology Today", the reason for its name change was to better understand the condition and how it affects one's identity, "rather than by a proliferation or growth of separate personalities." This disorder does not have proper statistics, as there are no current observations or scientific inquiries into this, yet it is speculated that around one percent of the population suffers from this.

According to "The Healthy Place", there are attributing factors that

can create potential in developing this disorder. Although these factors are not scientifically proven, an expert on this matter inserted her personal experiences into her disorder's development.

Factors: (Source: The Healthy Place)

- Denial- When one is experiencing something uncommon to them or to their peers, they begin denying it and believing that whatever is occurring (whether it be physically or emotionally) is not, rather it is a figment of one's imagination.
- Trauma- Traumatic stress can cause this through trying to cope through difficult situations in which one had not been exposed to previously.
- Age- In early childhood, a person's personality is forming forming, yet if something as repetitive as trauma occurs, dissociation may develop physically affecting their brain and enveloping its way into one's psych.
- Sensitivity- those with a lower tolerance for sensitive matters may envelop more traumatic stress or have a harder time dealing with difficult matters.
- Comfort- Through one's self-diagnosis, it can be both comforting and an impediment when dealing with negative situations.

Besides these factors, other stressors/circumstances can develop an alteration to one's personality; the "developed" identities stemming from trauma can either deny, be critical, or have conflicts with the other personalities engrained in one's cerebral cortex.

The DSM-5 has created criteria that must be demonstrated in order to be diagnosed with DID. These requirements have made it easier to detect DID in an individual along with recognizing the symptoms. Symptoms that cause significant distress or distraught in an individual, affecting them socially, or other cerebral functions is a predominant sign of DID. Alongside distress, an individual who experiences more than two distinctive personalities (personalities such as having different views on topics, or differences in perceptions, relations, etc) is also a harbinger of DID; when an individual is experiencing another identity, it is common for them to have frequent lapses of memory associated with other identities. These lapses can include forgetting people, places, events, or other significant recollection information (this is not to be confused with the typical "I forgot").

A common treatment option for this disorder is long-term psychotherapy. This intends to deconstruct the multiple

"personalities" and create one personality for an individual. Although there is no set medication to treat this disorder, antidepressants or tranquilizers may be prescribed to control the dissociative symptoms. The proper treatment attained can help individuals in both their personal and career lives.

If you or someone you know needs to talk to someone regarding mental health issues confidentially, here are some useful phone numbers to call/text:

Suicide Hotline: 1-800-784-8433
Depression Hotline: 1-630-482-9696
Grief Support: 1-650-321-5272

Aansa Usmani is a first-year college student attending the University of Houston-Downtown. She is a Political Science major with plans to run for political office. She identifies herself as a social justice warrior; advocating for women, LGBT, immigration, and other liberal causes. Alongside politics, her passions include photography, writing, and debate. Although relatively young, she has demonstrated literate competency, writing about topics ranging from mental health to current events

An ode to fly tape

When the seasons wane, and the temperature turns
Unwelcomed visitors appear in my home.
Despite their consistency of arrival, I have yet to learn how
They slide under doors and squeeze past window cases.
Diptira will spring forth from drains for the core of a Pome,
A swarm of iridescent bodies vibrating loudly on my shoe laces.

I suppress my primal urges, my desire to rampage;
A fly swatter erect in my hand while I yell and scream.
Hot feet pounding through a succession of rooms
A scene funny to envision, but for my heart I must engage
Methods of elimination which are hung from a beam
Casting long abstract shadows like a carnivorous bloom.

An ode to fly tape. The Diptirain intruders land unquestioningly,
Never contemplating the fatality of the gummy surface.
Celluloid window stripes entrapping the culprit indefinitely.
In the past each fly thought movement was a guarantee.
Tacky rolls of yellow paper, a simple

column on a lace.

They assume they will be released the same way they landed, freely.

An ode to fly tape, a proclamation that I agree sounds silly to decree.
Such a simple invention deserves our collective affections,
Believe me. I wish all could see the importance of such ingenuity,
It is the pinnacle of modern creations!
This invention should be celebrated yearly with libations,
And fireworks for all to see, at least that would please me.

Amanda Howard is a recent graduate of UHD earning a bachelor's degree of Natural Science with a minor in Biology. She currently teaches garden education to high school students with the Texas A&M Argilife 4H program and works in the campus student food market. Her passions include; organic food production, sustainable living and tackling food waste. When Amanda is not obsessing over perfecting her compost methods she can be found quilting, illustrating and writing either poetry, or short stories.

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When life goes left con't from page 8

doctor told me that my ability to walk unassisted was between God and me. Since I was home from the hospital, I started doing menial tasks to strengthen my arms, legs, and hands such as house cleaning, raking the yard, and sweeping. My concern was the ability to get from point A to B." During this time, Cooper's significant other and caregiver introduced him to painting by giving him paint brushes, and she insisted that he create something. "I took art classes through Memorial Hermann TIRR initiative," said Cooper. "I became inspired my things around me, and I painted for therapy and pleasure. I chewed large wads of bubble gum to rehabilitate my speech impediment. My hand remained clutched for six months. There is a six to nine-month window to get and remain active, or the damage from a stroke can be permanent. I never gave up because I wanted to use both hands equally to create vivid abstract paintings freely."

In 2017, after watching the news reports on ubiquitous political villainy and violent crimes perpetrated against society's most vulnerable, his emotional state led him to a creative mode. He picked up a palette knife, and acrylic paints in primary, secondary, and tertiary colors. Cooper conceived, crafted, and ultimately gave birth to his opus Chaos. "She is so named because she came out of a dark and a violent place yet created with love and passion for life," said Cooper. "My emotional state at the time is now displayed on the glass for the world to behold. She is my birth-child." Chaos was laid on glass, framed in gold-metal, and her dimensions are 34 X 58 X 1. Wherever she is, her splendor

exudes the room, and she captivates her viewers in perpetuity.

When he is not traveling and working on commissioned special projects, Cooper can be seen on Facebook and YouTube creating one-of-a-kind abstract designs on canvas, wood, metal, and glass. As he progressed from stroke victim to stroke victorious, so have his compositions. He believes his world is one big canvas just waiting to come to life, paint stroke by paint stroke. "Every time I open my eyes, art is all around me. My paintings are my children, they are a one-of-a-kind" said Cooper. "There are no duplications; each piece stands alone."

Through determination and self-therapy, Cooper became whole again. "I survived three strokes and three brain surgeries, and yet I thrive." He advises those who face insurmountable circumstances to "Never give up!"

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Chaos by Alton G. Cooper©2017

Artist Alton G. Cooper posing next to his piece, Chaos.
Photo credit: Syneetra Williams



Amelia Earhart
Photo credit: www.nbcnews.com

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to Earhart; she wanted to be the first woman to fly all around the globe. Her flight began in Miami and after taking a brief stop in Papua New Guinea, she flew toward Howard Island, yet never arrived. It is assumed that she may have crashed somewhere near there, but to this day her plane and body have never been recovered.

Rosa Parks:

In the late 1950s, Rosa Parks helped initiate a peaceful boycott, later leading to a desegregation of society. After a long of work, she sat down in the segregated section of the bus, hoping to reach home and unwind. When the bus driver demanded that she give up her seat to a white man, she refused. The police were called and she was arrested for violating a city's ordinance of segregation. This action led to a boycott of buses from the African American community, demonstrating that they were fed up with the Jim Crow Laws. This effect later on led to a desegregation of buses—and later on—a desegregation of society.

"Well-behaved women rarely make history"- Unknown

To conclude this piece, here is a motivation quote hoping to inspire other female individuals to continue pursuing higher education and become the person destined for success:

"Here's to strong women. May we know them. May we be them. May we raise them" - Unknown

Aansa Usmani is a first-year college student attending the University of Houston-Downtown. She is a Political Science major with plans to run for political office. She identifies herself as a social justice warrior, advocating for women, LGBT, immigration, and other liberal causes. Alongside politics, her passions include photography, writing, and debate. Although relatively young, she has demonstrated literate competency, writing about topics ranging from mental health to current events