



# KRISTOPHER SHARP: A PROFILE ON OVERCOMING HOMELESSNESS

by Ted Shull  
Editor-In-Chief

Senior Kristopher Sharp is sometimes known as the “best dressed” man on campus.

Last year, as the student-body Vice President, Sharp showed up to classes in three-piece suits, always looking like a man with somewhere to go. Kris’ story was not always this bright and illustrates major life struggles he had to be overcome.

While Sharp is on an incredible trajectory of success, he shared openly of his precarious upbringing and periods of homelessness to illustrate the plight of many college students who go completely unnoticed but are among us daily.

Sharp says “I’ve lived in 24 different foster and residential homes and went to 25 different schools. I moved to Houston at the age of 16 and it was great, I was finally placed in a home for over a year which gave me some stability and allowed me to make some friends, which is rare in the foster care system. I aged-out of the system when I turned 18 and there weren’t any transitional living facilities, they simply kick

you out because the money stops flowing in.”

Sharp was offered the chance to go back to the Texas panhandle to a shelter, where his foster care journey began, but made the decision to stay in Houston because he had recently identified himself as a member of the LGBT community and had made some friends that accepted him for that.

He lived on top of a north-side Houston shopping strip for nearly six months. He bluntly states there are three ways to survive in the street economy: become a violent criminal, participate in the drug trade or practice survival sex, which is what Sharp “naturally gravitated to.”

Sharp had a unique admissions experience to

the University of Houston-Downtown. He wandered on campus in search of a restroom during an admissions fair where they offered him food if he signed up for classes.

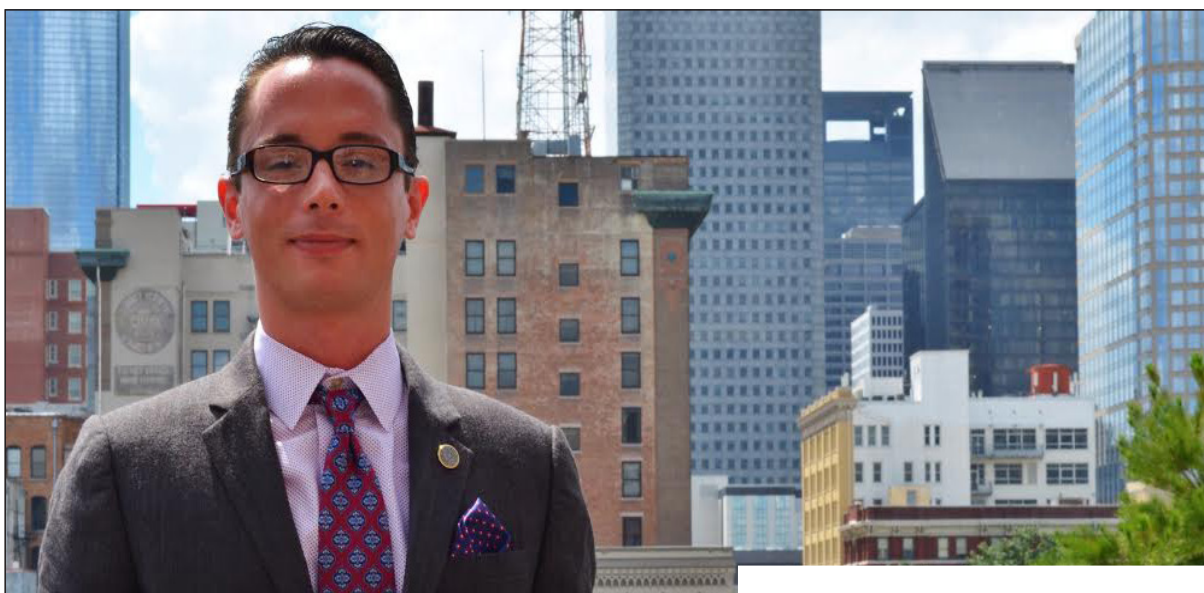
After receiving his financial aid refund, he began the process of transitioning into an apartment. “I spent the majority of my first semester homeless because it’s hard to get your first apartment without understanding the process”, he says, adding that he had no one to call to get advice on what kind of apartments he should apply for.

Once adjusting to college life, he decided to major in social work, or “the family business” as he calls it. “About 80 percent of former foster care kids decide to

major in social work, because of their life experiences that make them feel like they are especially suited to make an impact.”

Upon graduation, Sharp plans to attend law school to work specifically on public policy and legislation surrounding homelessness; increasing the public’s awareness and access to social programs.

“If you’re in college but have uncertain living conditions, don’t give up hope. It’s hard to work yourself out of these situations but it will ultimately be worth it. I don’t regret any of my past experiences because they have all combined to make me the man I am today and have given me the character and worldview I have now.”



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## SGA SETS UP FOR

by Jason J. Rivas  
Staff Reporter

University of Houston - Downtown's Student Government Association is working to maintain UHD's reputation of having a high number of registered voters by hosting events such as Eat to Pledge and Walk to Vote.

Although there isn't a presidential election in 2014, voter registration drives at UHD would make one think otherwise. The number of registered voters at UHD has caught the attention of local, state, and national institutions. SGA has spearheaded voter awareness growth since 2012 and is on course to maintain that tradition this year with its organization of Walk to Vote.

"This event should be SGA's largest to date, attracting students from all over the city to join us," said SGA President John Locke. "We invite leaders of today to walk in hopes of a brighter tomorrow."

The effort to boost voter registration and participation at UHD began in 2012 when then UHD student body President Ivan Sanchez envisioned a "major opportunity." As a Political Science major and Latino community activist, Sanchez understood the typical student's thoughts on voting, and created an initiative to increase voter registration in our minority-serving institution.

"Students think voting is lame and boring, so let's make it fun," said Sanchez.

A series of engaging events on campus led to the creation of Walk to Vote, held in joint cooperation by UHD, SGA, and the city of Houston at city hall. This event resulted in 2,500 students registering to vote. 800 students participated in Walk to Vote, and 300 students marched straight to the 1001 Preston Street ballot box. The night of the election, President Obama won Harris County by 12 votes.

This year presents a more arduous task in maintaining voter interest in the absence of choosing a Commander-in-Chief. A new challenge taken on by current UHD student body President John Locke. Continuing the savviness and intrigue used before, Locke and the SGA seek to lock down the vast number of student and minority eligible voters. A series of enthralling events throughout the semester will lead up to their final push, Eat to Pledge, on Oct. 7, the final day to register to vote.

Minorities tend to vote at a lower rate, yet UHD, a minority-serving institution, has caught local, state, and national attention because of its highly successful voter registration campaigns. 55% of UHD's student body is registered to vote, compared to 5-15% at similar universities. Locke and the SGA seek to surpass 2012 with the second bi-annual Walk to Vote, with an expected attendance of 1,000, and 500 expected to march to the polls.

Walk to Vote will take place on Oct. 23 at city hall. Mayor Annise Parker, along with other local celebrities and dignitaries, will be in attendance to engage with students on political issues and the excitement of rising up and using their power to make their voices heard, one vote at a time.



FOR MORE INFO: VISIT THE SGA OFFICE IN N210





Mohammed Zain/Dateline

After an unexpectedly infamous set at Walter's on 9/26, we had a minute to cool off and sit down with front-man Barry Johnson and band member Matt Ebert to discuss artistic changes on their latest record *Never Hungover Again* and coming-of-age in punk.

- Mohammed Zain (Dateline Downtown): You guys are pushing your horizons on the new record with a new production style; things sound a lot cleaner and brighter. You accentuate for content, lyrics and emotional resonance; not so interested in pleasing a certain punk aesthetic.

What inspired this change in the pattern of your discography?

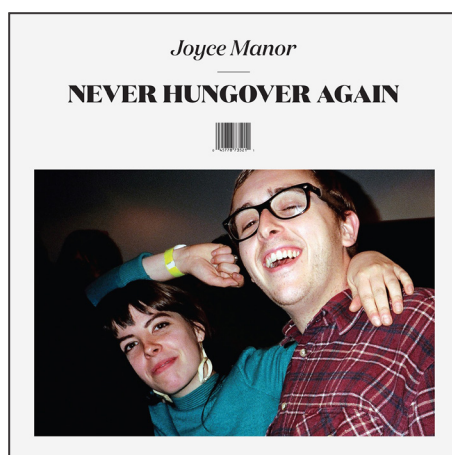
- Joyce Manor: Experience. When you first start recording, you know literally nothing about it. Whether you're at practice or at a house show, you can thrive on a sound you're comfortable with.

There's a certain comfort zone in punk where no one can say it's 'bad' because it's just a bunch of young kids going crazy. But you also adore records that are cleaner or more emotive. But we know how to achieve certain things in the studio more.

You capture things with certain tones, where you're not that confident starting off. I don't think our record sounds 'slick', but we wanted things to sparkle in a certain way. This was the first record we were comfortable enough in the studio to do things more deliberately.

- DD: Bands in respective genres become iconic for a certain production style. Was this latest change in style one you're leaning towards establishing as your own?

- JM: Production-wise, the song "Falling in Love Again" will foreshadow what our next record will sound like. That was the one we were all so happy with how that came out. I couldn't believe that we wrote that song. That's our favorite from the record.



Courtesy of Flickr

- DD: *Never Hungover Again* stands a 19 minute run-time. While reviewing it, I loved how each track never wanted to out-stay its welcome. With a sort-of 'wham bam-thank-you-ma'am' pacing, songs just go right at it, do its thing and get out without growing cold. Was this a conscious choice? Were you catering towards a younger audience by staying sharp or just for your sake to keep things fresh?

- JM: It's weird; I think it's a problem with us. We went to great lengths to make songs longer. We added parts to many songs. The fact that it's 19 minutes was an achievement for us. The more I write songs, they seem to keep getting shorter. I can't attest to why, but that's just how I write. I only keep the 'cream of the cream' in each song. Sometimes I feel like I can edit to a fault. I'm way too self-aware to how I want things to be and not wanting to indulge myself. I'd rather our records be too short than too long.

- DD: After multiple listens, you realize the short length of it works with the idea that the moments of adolescence sang about on the album are also brief and fleeting.

- JM: But I don't spend my whole life feeling that way. I have great days where I don't feel like the way I'm in these songs.

- DD: Would it be fair to call this a coming-of-age record?

- JM: Definitely. One thing I've noticed in music journalism is our music gets called 'angsty', which I find condescending; I don't believe that it is. I'm that kind of person that'll always feel this way. I don't think it's fair to dismiss our record for being 'teenage' or even that we're pandering towards a teenage audience. The world can be a disgusting place and it's not 'teenage' to have dissonance with it.

- DD: You guys are in the right to demand a level of intelligence to sit with the music and enjoy what is a bright, fun album.

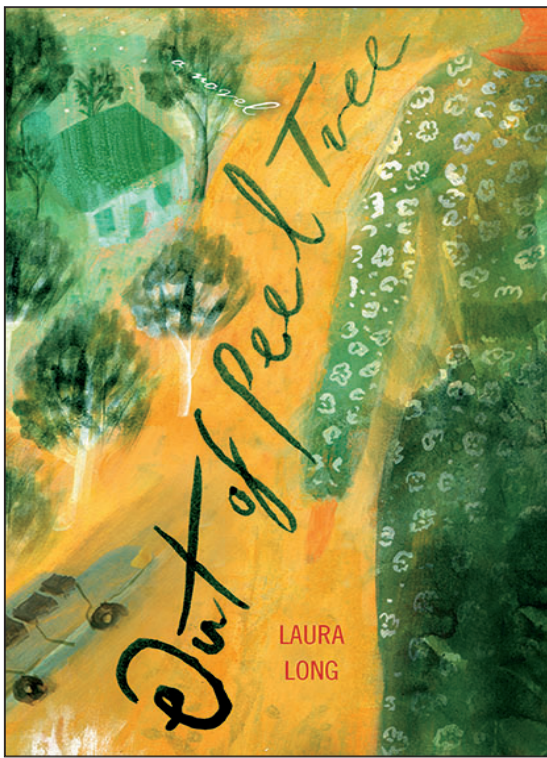
- JM: It's also very sensitive. Being sensitive doesn't make you 'teenage'. Just like being calloused to the world doesn't make you an adult. Those are separate things.

- DD: Would you say the album has those sentiments to it?

- JM: Absolutely. It's what I deal with every day. Almost everybody that I encounter is awful. While there are so many people in my life whom I adore and cherish. But that's my life, it's on the album. I think what we made was an adult record.



# POET LAURA LONG READS FROM LATEST BOOK



by Shannon Wright  
Staff Reporter

UHD had the honor of hosting poet, novelist and teacher Dr. Laura Long on

Oct. 8 in the Robertson Auditorium.

An intimate crowd gathered to hear the author read excerpts from her novel "Out of Peel Tree."

Her gentle voice transported us into the world of two lonely souls yearning for something more than their circumstances.

Dr. Long poetically described their extraordinary normal lives in such a way that left us yearning for more.

For example, the author paints an image of a woman sitting next to a vase of wild roses: although there wasn't a breeze, two petals fell off. Corina picked them up and rolled them between her fingers. They felt like newly washed skin. Just when the roses were beginning to die, they had the sweetest smell, delicate and dense, the trace of longing that remains after hope disappears.

"Out of Peel Tree" is a collection of stories about an Appalachian family. The stories are a reminder that we open our eyes to a new beginning each day and this

is a world of vast risks and rewards; even the small choices that we make will mold the person we will become.

After the reading, Dr. Long offered insight into her writing process, and gave some valuable advice to aspiring creative writers.

When asked how she created her characters, Dr. Long said, "I imagined people from an extended family trying to figure out what to do, so I kept writing in order to see what they would do." To all writers she added, "Get your voice out there in whatever way you can."

Dr. Laura Long lives in Virginia and teaches in the B.A. English program at Lynchburg College. She has been awarded a James Michener Fellowship, the James River Writers Award, and many other awards.

She is the author of two books of poems: "The Eye of Caroline Herschel: A Life in Poems" and "Imagine a Door: Poems." Dr. Long's novel "Out of Peel Tree" is available in the campus bookstore.

## LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS & ONE ACTS DEBUT AT O'KANE

by Jason J. Rivas  
Staff Reporter

Fall is upon the University of Houston - Downtown, and with it comes Dr. Tom Lyttle's newest musical production, Little Shop of Horrors, followed by a slew of one act plays, starting Halloween night and continuing into November at the O'Kane Theatre.

Entering his 39th year at UHD, O'Kane Theatre's Director of Theatre Dr. Tom Lyttle continues to produce captivating plays with the exceptional talents of his students, along with new faces discovered during auditions.

Dr. Lyttle, Musical Director Phillip Hall, Director/Choreographer Tony Glover, and Technical Director/Assistant Professor Frank Vela are spearheading the production of Little Shop of Horrors at the O'Kane Theatre. The quartet will produce an adaptation of the original 1960 film, directed by Roger Corman, and the Off-Broadway adaptation by Howard Ashman



and Alan Menken. The story centers around a group of characters working at a struggling flower shop, in a dilapidated part of town known as Skid Row. One day, Seymour, the down on his luck lead protagonist, discovers an odd looking plant and puts it on display at the shop. Attracting the curious eyes of many, the mysterious plant revives the fortunes of the shop and people working within. But success comes a bloody price.

Lydia Jackson co-stars as the lead female protagonist, Audrey Jackson, a Spanish major, was drawn to the production in part because of the musical numbers arranged by Alan Menken.

Menken later composed music for Disney's The Little Mermaid, Aladdin, and Tangled. "I've always wanted to be in a musical and my dream is to be the voice a Disney princess," Jackson said. "I think that would be amazing!"

In addition to the play, Dr. Lyttle's talented roster will be performing 16 individual one act plays throughout November. Unlike the main play, the one acts will be directed solely by the drama students looking to expand their theatrical horizons.

One acts are new to the O'Kane Theater and this year has proven to be the most ambitious yet with the introduction of Spanish-spoken one acts.

"We've waited a long time to have student one acts and to see that we have Spanish one acts as well is marvelous," Dr. Lyttle gleaned. "That's why I love these kids."

Little Shop of Horrors debuts Halloween night and runs through Nov. 8. The one act plays are tentatively scheduled for late November.

Tickets can be purchased in advance or the day of showings at the O'Kane Theatre box office.



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# SAPPHIRE DANCE TEAM STRETCH FOR HIGH AMBITIONS



by *Sonia Sanchez*  
Staff Reporter

This semester marks the beginning of University of Houston-Downtown's inaugural Sapphires Dance Team, which falls on the university's 40th Year Anniversary.

This new dance team was created this past summer, and it started with UHD professor Dr. Marquette Dansby. During the summer, Professor Dansby proposed a dance team as a new club sport to UHD's Sports & Fitness Department at the Student Life Center; upon approval of the proposal, Dansby held auditions for the inaugural team.

On the eve of the fall semester, the new officers and members were inducted into the team. The Sapphires held another team audition in September, and finalized their roster in which they officially obtained a team of thirteen young women. However,

even though this is an all female team, men can, and are encouraged to, audition to be a Sapphire.

This group of young dancers are all students at UHD, but the Sapphires are more than just college dancers. "A lot of our students are working full time jobs and also attending classes," said the team advisor Marquette Dansby. "I think students can understand that these leaders are able to meet their goals and still be able to enjoy their college experience."

The Sapphires are also philanthropists who volunteer for organizations such as the Houston Food Bank and The Boys and Girls Club. They are also community leaders who represent UHD by promoting not only themselves, but also the City of Houston and all it has to offer.

This team is already off to a great start, and their first performance in UHD took place this year on Sept. 26 during half-time

at a UHD basketball game. The ladies had the crowd cheering as they performed a pom routine to Where Have You Been by Rihanna.

"It's been almost three years since I last stepped out on the dance floor to perform," said team Captain Joann Chagolla. "Our last performance was exciting, and I look forward to many more. These ladies practice and train twice a week as a team, and also make time to train on their own outside of practice."

In addition to dancing and being active in the community, the Sapphires are also involved on campus. During Welcome Week, the ladies recruited new dancers for their team, and welcomed students back for a new school year. The Sapphires have partnered with the Student Government Association in ensuring students are registered and pledged to vote by October 23rd for UHD's Walk to Vote event. Students can expect to see the new Sapphires Dance Team perform during Homecoming.

The purpose of having a dance team at UHD is about more than just dance. It is about leadership growth, community involvement, campus involvement, and the positive impact the team has on its members.

"Being involved pushes me to get out of my comfort zone and be open to new ideas and new people," said team member Jazmin Camacho. She believes having this team benefits students involved and improves campus life.

If this is the first time you have heard about the Sapphires, it won't be the last time. They're just getting started.

## FROM RIFLES TO TEXTBOOKS, HELPING VETERANS TRANSITION

by *Victoria Desselle*  
Staff Reporter

Located in Suite 244S is UHD's Veterans Services Office. Though students may be unaware, this office offers an array of services to our UHD veteran students, as well as warm and delicious coffee from a fancy Keurig at \$1 a cup.

Another veteran affiliated service available on campus is the Student Veterans Organization. The Veterans Services Office is home to many SVO members such as Rogaciano Villalobos Jr. (President of SVO) and Darnea Olson (SVO Liaison.) Many troops return home and find it difficult to acclimate back to civilian life.

"One of the biggest problems we try to help with is transitioning from military to civilian life," explains Olson.

Returning home from a disciplined and structured lifestyle is extremely difficult and often seems like an impossible feat.

Upon returning home, many veterans experience a host of issues, says Olson, such as PTSD—Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—and depression, both leading to suicidal ideations and attempts.

The UHD Veterans Services offers a place where veteran students can connect with other veterans on the same level. It offers a place where students can share their experience with other students who are experiencing these same things. "To have an office where veterans can come in and speak the lingo helps a lot,

it helps to create a safe environment," says Olson.

In an effort to foster a safe and supportive environment for our veteran students, UHD Veterans Services has recently partnered with Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor and Certified Sex Addictions Therapist, Delphi Medina.

Her services are independent of the VA, Veterans Affairs, which is enticing to most veterans because seeking VA services carries a certain stigma in the military world, according to Olson.

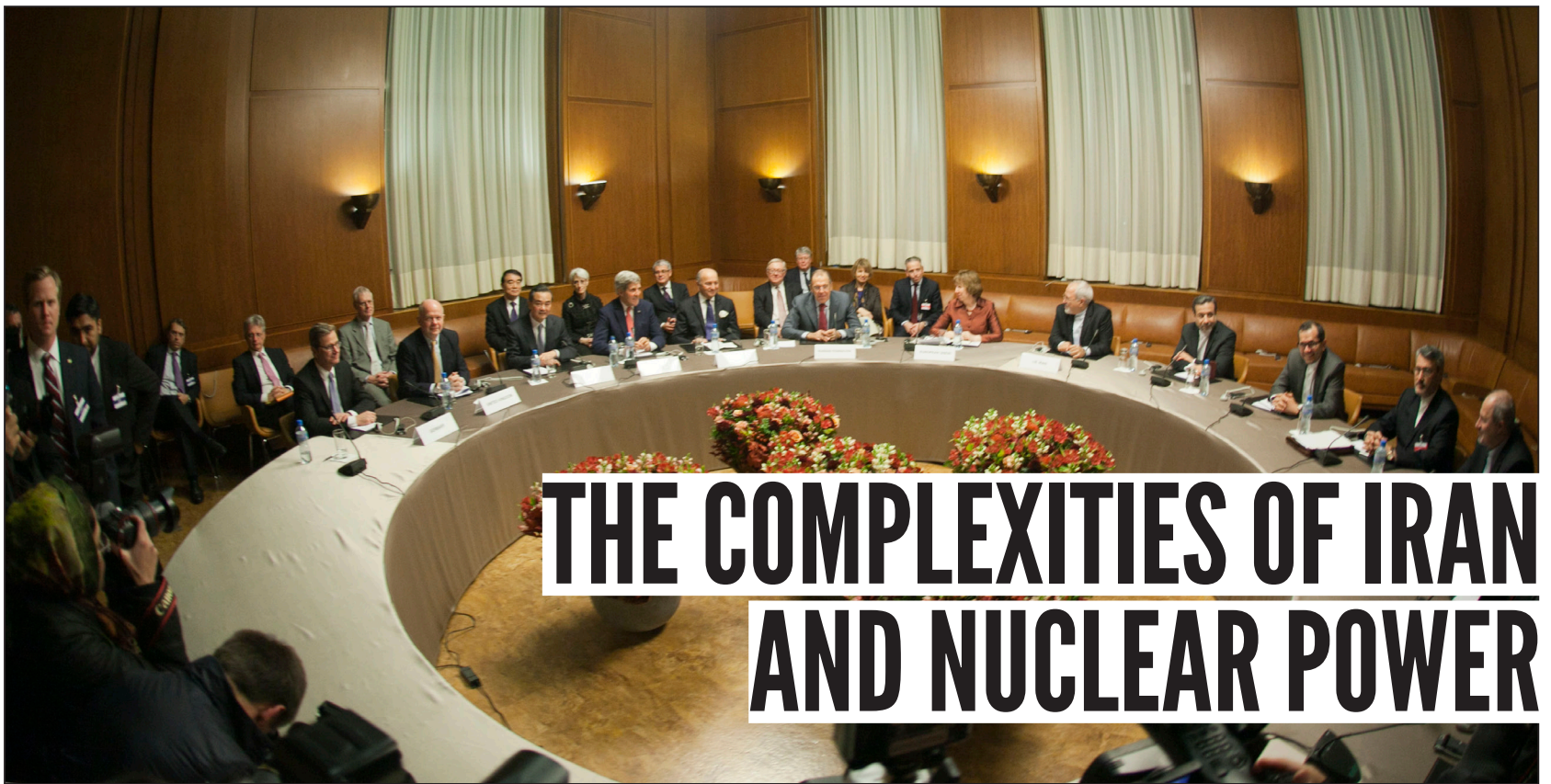
Medina's services are funded by Student Services and are covered for any student attending UHD, not just veteran students, and she encourages all students to utilize this resource.

According to Director of Veterans Services Richard Selvera, the Student Veterans Organization was founded in 1999 by Michael Records and now serves 675 veteran students at UHD; accounting for about 5 percent of our student population.

Villalobos, President of SVO explains, "We've come a long way in a few years, with the current influx of troops, we've also had an influx of troops being pulled," and returning home to civilian life.

These students wanting to utilize their education benefits and enroll in a university are plagued with the long process of paperwork and government loopholes they must jump through in order to receive such benefits. We are all too familiar with this sort of process.





Courtesy of Wikipedia

by Joshua Burgman  
Staff Reporter

No matter what happens in the Middle East concerning the so-called Islamic State (IS), the Islamic Republic of Iran stands to gain.

It comes as no surprise the Shiite-led government in Iran welcomes the destruction of the Sunni Islamic State.

It is still unclear what measures, extreme or otherwise, Iran and its supreme leader Ali Khamenei are willing to take.

President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry have sought the help of regional governments to destroy the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) since early September.

Notwithstanding the commitment by several Middle-Eastern governments to join in the efforts of the US led coalition to destroy IS, the one country that may matter most has stood fast in denouncing the actions of the multinational effort to take down IS.

In Iraq and recently Syria, the coalition has conducted airstrikes that have

only slowed the group down. It's feared ISIS will do as Hamas did in Palestine in the summer of 2014 during its incursion with Israel, and hide itself among ordinary citizenry, causing airstrikes conducted by the coalition to produce high civilian casualty rates.

The Middle East is a complex society made of various clans and tribes; groups that play a crucial role in trying to defeat IS and who'll have to be consulted if the coalition has any real intentions of degrading the terror organization.

CNN's Fareed Zakaria believes this objective can be achieved by a joint US/Iran effort. In an article titled, "We Need Iran in Order to Get to ISIS," Zakaria outlined steps he believes the Obama administration should take when dealing with ISIS.

"If the goal is to get the Iraqi government to share more power with the Sunnis," he wrote, "Iran's help would be invaluable, perhaps vital." Zakaria is referring to the newly invested, Shiite-led government out of Baghdad.

Despite a new Baghdad government formed under Prime Minister Haider

al-Abadi with hopes of Iraq having a more inclusive government than that of former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, the situation on the ground in Iraq remains the same, The Sunni population within the country is still jockeying for stronger government representation.

If Zakaria is right about needing nuclear power to significantly degrade ISIS, US-Iranian relations will have to undergo a major overhaul in a very short period of time.

Since the latter half of 2013, newly elected Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his government have participated in talks with the Obama administration with the hopes that the two powers can reach a nuclear agreement.

So far emissaries from both parties have met on several occasions concerning the matter, but they have made no concessions. With ongoing talks between the two nations, it is unclear whether or not Iran will ever join in any efforts to take down ISIS. According to Fareed Zakaria, "all of this waits on a nuclear deal."

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# TIGHTENING THE REIGNS ON STUDENT DEBT

by Joshua Burgman  
Staff Reporter

University of Houston-Downtown held a student debt forum with the goal of arming students with the necessary tools to mitigate the effects of student debt following graduation.

The diversity within the crowd and panel highlighted the fact that student debt is an equal opportunity stressor, affecting students from many different backgrounds and ethnicities.

The forum was chaired by UHD faculty member and Adjunct Professor of English Amy Larsen.

Professor Larsen is also an active member of the Texas State Employees Union - one of the organizations responsible for sponsoring the event along with Students Before Profit.

The panel consisted of six members representing various organizations and schools throughout the Houston area.

The first to speak was a graphic design student from Houston Community College. He spoke about his experiences with financial aid and how it barely helped him cover the cost of college tuition.

Myko Gedutis, a panelist and Texas State Employees Union coordinator, cited laws that have been implemented to the detriment of students, while enriching lending institutions and creditors.

He urged providing “accessible and affordable higher education should be a priority for all elected officials.”

Gedutis opined that, “if the [student body] are upset about rising cost in tuition, then it’s up to them to do something about it. The students are the customer, and the customer is always right. The university needs to hear from the students.”

Gedutis’ remarks about dreams of a less apathetic student body were a great segue for the last and probably most colorful panelist of the bunch.

Poppy Northcut is the President of the Houston chapter of the National Organization for Women, and the theme of her presentation was very clear during her speech.

Although she is a representative of NOW, her presentation focused on the student body’s right to vote.

Poppy echoed the themes of the preceding speaker, and contended that the power of

the student to tighten the reins on student debt lies in their right to vote.

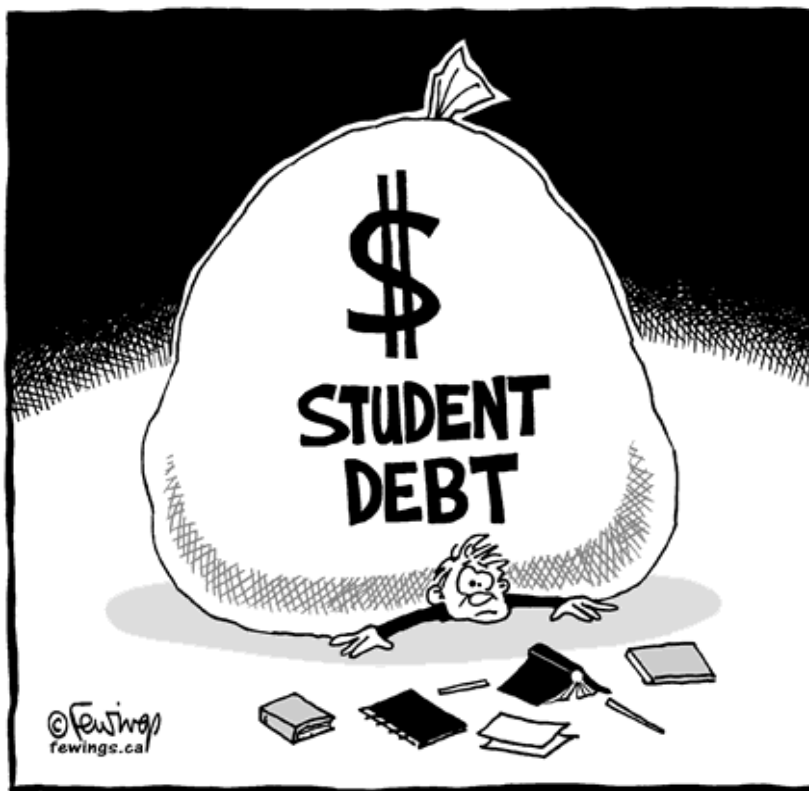
“Our lives depend on the people that are elected,” she said. “These people decide what kind of terms and interest rates are [attached] to loans, funding, insurance coverage, and things like how on-campus rape and sexual assault cases are prosecuted.”

College tuition is only rising, but it is doing so at the behest of legislators who are in turn catering to lobbyists, who definitely do not have the interests

of students on their agendas.

Poppy gave the most apt analysis of the problems students face with debt. She closed her presentation by reiterating earlier statements urging students to be more active in the political process, and then left the audience with one vexing question: “Why is it that the people who have the most at stake participate the least in the voting booth?”

Given the debt crisis facing many college students in the United States, her question is a valid one.



## DISTRICT ATTORNEY RACE SHIFTS ON MARIJUANA PENALTIES

by Chelsea Conaway  
Assistant Editor

The Harris County District Attorney’s race took a surprising turn when Republican incumbent Devon Anderson followed her Democratic competitor’s lead and announced plans to lessen penalties for first time marijuana offenses.

Anderson made the announcement in a speech on the first of this month. Starting Oct. 6, first time non-violent offenders caught with under two ounces of marijuana will be given the opportunity to avoid jail time by performing eight hours of community service or participating in a drug awareness program.

“We are targeting the people we believe are self-correcting and will be ‘scared straight’ by being handcuffed and transported,” she stated. “Our goal is to keep these individuals from entering the revolving door of the criminal justice system.”



Courtesy of Houston Chronicle

This announcement came after an increase in public support for Anderson’s competitor, Democrat Kim Ogg’s promises to decrease penalties for marijuana possession in Harris County.

Anderson and Ogg are both campaigning for the Harris County District Attorney’s seat, which will be up for election this coming November.

“Our tagline is ‘No jail, no bail, no permanent record, if you earn it,’” said Ogg during a news conference this past summer. The goal of the plan is not only to prevent individuals from going to jail, but also to save taxpayers money.

“We can save up to 10 million dollars a year, folks,” she said in the news conference. “We think that taxpayers deserve to have their money spent wisely.” Unlike the changes promised by Anderson, Ogg asserted that her plan would apply to all minor, nonviolent marijuana infractions, not just first time offenders.

Ogg stated that, under her authority, offenders suspected of misdemeanor possession of marijuana would be cited, given a court date, and penalized by being assigned community service. This way, offenders would avoid jail time (which would save taxpayers money), and police officers would be able to spend more time patrolling the streets.

Anderson, on the other hand, announced that her plan would still require offenders to be arrested and initially taken to jail; however, first time offenders with less than two ounces of marijuana will not be required to serve time in jail as a penalty for the offense. The goal of her plan is to discourage offenders from using the drugs in the future.

Regardless of which candidate is victorious in the upcoming November election, Harris County residents can expect to see changes in the way marijuana offenses are handled in the future.





# THE TIME WE HUNG OUT WITH MILO & CLIPPING

Fitzgerald's was recently graced with a dream team line-up of underground hip-hop artists, each poised with boundary-pushing creative voices in the genre.

Alongside Busdriver and Kenny Segal, I caught up with experimental hip-hop artists Milo and Clipping over their latest efforts, production choices and unforeseen challenges in their evolving presence.

- **Mohammed Zain (Dateline Downtown):** What do you ideally daydream of your music sound-tracking?

- **Milo:** I never think of groups listening to my music. It's always in a form of solitude, one person on their headphones. I tend to think I make headphone music. My music for the longest time doesn't make sense to me. But in Chicago, riding the L a lot, I realized I make music for train rides. Something that requires you to check out of your usual surroundings.

- **DD:** My favorite quality of your lyrical style is, in some way, it's a celebration of what it is to be alive in a post-modern, culture-driven society. Not just nerd culture or romanticizing niche interests, but what it is to be part of the whole cultural spectrum. Weaving in references of deep-cut philosophers, video games, wrestlers, love, loss, Dragon Ball Z, it's all there. One can get the idea you're a modern-day voyager, a point-of-view that strikes a chord with folks of a similar caliber.

Through all of this, who do you make the music for? Is it yourself, identifying with a specific generation or both?

- **Milo:** In the beginning, I thought I was making it for a crowd. My first mixtape, I made as a response to losing my friend. Initially, I thought of art as a community, which I still believe. But nowadays, I feel less enthused about the group. I find a lot of the people who listen to my music, I don't like them. They're callous and insensitive, a lot of white men who say ni\*\*er on Facebook.

I pride myself in taking the time to meet people, I'm pretty accessible as a rapper, but I'm kind of mad at myself for that. Because there's a lot who my music means something to them and I genuinely don't like them. That's why the last couple releases have been for an even more niche group. So there's the big group of people who listen to me, and it's not 'big', I'm still under-the-f\*cking-underground, but it's big to me. What I've noticed is what I want is an even smaller group within that group, I am lucky to have some truly sensitive, empathic, wonderful fans though. I like to write them songs.

One of my Scallop's Hotel songs is dedicated to a man named

Jib, who I met on tour and he let me stay in his house and I made the beat in his kitchen and I wrote him that song because I loved him so much immediately. He's from North Carolina, had a rat-tail and a very thick accent; when I first met him, I thought "surely this man won't like me". We were able to bond and become very good friends through this music, be able to leap over certain social hurdles. So I want to say I write songs for Jib these days and people like him. I'm trying to cut the fat of this group; there's just too many people listening. I liked it when it was a smaller group, I liked when it felt like we were in this together.

- **DD:** That's heartwarming to hear for me. I see this shift in mood and frustration with a lot of hip-hop artists, I felt that when I listened to your latest album. Even on a mainstream level with acts like Kanye or Childish Gambino, who share the same feelings as you on their respective levels.

- **Milo:** It opens up a wider conversation as 'what do I owe the audience as the creator of this art? Should be giving them a rubric to assess it with? Should I also be providing context in which it makes sense in? Kanye leads this conversation as he's actively trying to subvert his audience. It's inspiring.

- **DD:** Being recently signed on Sub Pop records, an under-mentioned label for hip-hop despite hosting many forward-thinking acts like Shabazz Palaces, was working with them unique from a typical hip-hop label? Was there anything specific that pushed you to team up with them?

- **Clipping:** This was our first label, we went with them because they asked us, there weren't any demos sent out. Sub Pop made a really compelling offer and the experience has been utterly delightful. The most interesting thing was they exercised no control over our budget. That was the record that we wanted to make. We even went over-budget and asked for ridiculous and they kept giving them to us. I realized that if there's a bad record on Sub Pop, it's 100% the band's fault. They let bands do whatever they want, even if they're terrible ideas.

- **DD:** As a noise/experimental artist, you have certain sonic and technical hurdles to bear as live performers. Do you orient your work for the studio releases, live shows or keep both in mind?

- **Clipping:** We don't ever think about doing a live performance. Our songwriting, production and recording is one process. It's not like a guy with a guitar who can noodle out a tune, we do songs for the recordings.





# LADIES AND GERMS, THERE'S NO NEED FOR EBOLA PANIC



by Ted Shull  
Editor-in-Chief

Initial media coverage of Ebola in the U.S. was centered on medical science and the actions that the U.S. could take to slow the virus's spread in West Africa.

Even after Liberian national Thomas Eric Duncan tested positive for the virus in Dallas, public health officials and doctors were still poised and confident with informing us about the minimal chances for exposure to the disease.

However, once the first transmission occurred on U.S. soil with Nurse Nina Pham, the non-stop news cycle has been dominated by doomsday scenario predictions and finger pointing.

Unfortunately, news outlets have shifted from covering the Ebola catastrophe in West Africa to exclusively focus on

the three confirmed, but isolated cases in America.

The invisible hand behind the outbreak of "Ebola Mania" in this country is politics.

With November elections around the corner, and control of the U.S. Senate at stake, partisans and politicians alike have taken advantage of the circumstances to shape political messages.

Fox News anchor Shepard Smith said "the party in charge needs to appear to be effectively leading, the party out of power needs to show that there's a lack of leadership" on October 15th.

Smith also characterized the fear-mongering headlines and sound-bites as irresponsible journalism.

"The outlandish claims that Ebola has somehow mutated into an airborne pathogen or some other easily transferred bug is

absurd" said Michael Halpirn, a professor of Biotechnology, "and these claims are causing people to withdraw their children from school and invest in expensive personal protective equipment that is simply unwarranted."

Dr. Halpirn also said that there is absolutely no evidence that the general public should be worried about Ebola exposure at this time.

Unfortunately, real medical threats like the Flu and Enterovirus-68 have not been in the news but pose a much more serious threat to Americans.

There is a genuine outbreak of Ebola in West Africa and the news media should redirect attention to a constructive response by supporting the World Health Organization, Doctors without Borders and the U.S. boots on the ground in West Africa.

## AMBIVALENCE ON **TEXAS** ABORTION LAW GROWS AS **SUPREME COURT** VOTES NON-DECISION

by Ted Shull  
Editor-in-Chief

Texas has witnessed an abortion access crisis over the past year as the state's HB2 Abortion Bill has gone into effect, with over half of the state's legal providers forced to close.

On Oct. 16, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a surprising stay, an unsigned order representing the view of a majority of justices, which allowed the shuttered clinics to immediately reopen.

Many abortion rights activists praised the order "Tomorrow, 13 clinics across the state will be allowed to reopen and provide women with safe and legal abortion care in their own communities," said Nancy Northup, president of the Center for Reproductive Rights.

The Texas law had meant that almost 900,000 Texas women of reproductive age now live more than 150 miles from the nearest legal abortion provider. The Supreme Court's ruling temporarily overturned the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision to

uphold the Texas Law.

The 6-3 ruling by the high court has been termed a "monumental non-decision" because the justices decision was not accompanied with any information or reasoning. While the court has shown its desire to rule on the constitutionality of the Texas law, it is absolutely unclear on which way the court might rule.

What has not been said is that the Supreme Court's involvement in the Texas abortion debate could potentially have consequences that reach far beyond the lone star state.

National Abortion Rights groups like Planned Parenthood may see this willingness of the court as a bad omen for the future of abortion rights in the U.S.

If the Court rules on the Texas Law, it could "nationalize" abortion policy for the entire country and no one knows for certain which side justices could come down on.

This short-term victory for Texas abortion rights could end up placing more burdens and restrictions on women's reproductive rights all across America.



# TEXTBOOKS SHOULD BE OUR BIBLES, BUT SHOULD BIBLES BE OUR TEXTBOOKS?

by Victoria Desselle  
Staff Reporter

One of the most enticing, prominent factors of our great nation is our nation's foundation of free thinkers; value for knowledge and independent intelligence, bound together by ethical and moral principles supporting truth, individual liberty and freedom.

We've been taught these facts in every American History class since we learned how to read. Recently published Texas textbooks are infringing upon these basic values and truths.

Many companies have recently published textbooks with increasing Christian beliefs intertwined in American history, as well as a glaring right-wing agenda.

Some of these textbooks have gone so far as to re-write American history, omitting unfavorable events such as slavery. These changes include the notion states' rights and sovereignty caused the Civil War, "that segregated schools weren't all that bad and taxes imposed for programs like Social Security haven't measurably improved society," according to Stephanie Simon, writer for news agency Politico.

Another example is the Texas State Board of Education's suggestion to omit U.S Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall's existence from history.

Marshall was the NAACP lawyer in the 1954 U.S Supreme Court case, which led to the elimination of segregated schools. Marshall was an influential pioneer in integrating public schools.

The Texas State Board of Education, SBOE, argues to remove Marshall from textbooks "on the grounds that he is not an appropriate example as an historical figure of influence," according to Houston Chronicle's John-Henry Perera.

Textbook companies are not solely responsible for these changes. These companies have struggled to meet the Texas public school curriculum and standards as set by the SBOE, which is comprised of board appointed members. These board members are not voted on, but appointed by Texas Governor.

The real issue lies here within many board members aren't historians, professors, or anthropologists. They are, however, strong in their beliefs, leaving little room for a factual and unbiased account in public schools for future generations.

One of the most controversial issues in regards to the information being added to Texas textbooks is the addition of the role Christianity played establishing the 13 colonies, writing our constitution, and founding our nation all together. These textbooks suggest that our nation was founded on Christian doctrine.

While our nation does have Christian influence to an extent, the Christian faith was certainly not a prominent factor in building the framework of our nation, government and constitution.

Furthermore, and seemingly the most wildly preposterous changes of them all, is that Moses was a founding father of the United States. While this claim remains blatantly fictitious, it is also founded solely on personal belief rather than fact.

On the contrary, many of our founding fathers were followers of the Enlightenment movement, such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. They encouraged freethinking, valued individual intelligence and the separation of church and state. These values can be found deeply imbedded in American literature and history; however the information these textbooks are printing is the exact antithesis.

This issue is still undergoing hot debate. Many non-partisan groups, such as Texas Freedom Network, as well as scholars and historians are working hard to terminate these publications.



by Mohammed Zain  
Managing Editor

Is Hollywood still abundantly sexist? Absolutely. Are female artists still stuck answering the same questions about their gender instead of their work? Often. There are many stigmas which still need to erode away, but for now, we're blessed with tremendous voices on television.

The three comedies which spark the biggest cultural dialogue recently are all located in New York.

Lena Dunham's *Girls* (HBO) is a scathingly honest commentary on a hapless generation which it constantly admires, challenges and exposes.

Abbi Jacobson and Ilana Glazer's *Broad City* (Comedy Central) plays off the other side of the coin, relishing in a youth-

ful, sharp-witted yet slacker personality found in the same zeitgeist.

Louis C.K.'s *Louie* (FX) explores broader sub-cultures through the lens of past failures, current idiosyncrasies and darkly-comedic vignettes on an existential scale.

In a dense physical and psychological atmosphere, the three comedies which spark the biggest cultural dialogue share the same space of New York. Common to them and fleeting for others, each show offers a once lost currency: honesty.

Lena, Abbi, Ilana and Louis produce opportunities for both them and an audience to laugh at shared pains, self-evaluate and build a stronger mind-frame.

Whether it's about women artists struggling through harsh financial realities, two best friends in tune with a post-modern world who love every minute or it or an aging stand-up comic progressively learning to be a dad, we're invited to grow more comfortable with newfound, modern-day flaws and to evolve from knowing them better. TV has evolved into a capable medium from shots given to unique voices. In a profit-hungry industry, our generation demanded those voices.

Past the criticism these shows receive is a great deal of catharsis to be learned from. Pause your constant monologues and open up a cultural conversation instead with the folks behind your screen.





by Mohammed Zain  
Managing Editor

I'm thinking of the kid struggling through high school, being called a 'freak' for kooky doodles throughout their math notebook with an unquenchable love for creating things.

I'm thinking of the calligraphy nerd, who could weave any mundane or vulgar phrase into a piece of classical eye-candy.

I'm thinking of the creative writer turned journalist heading projects covering un-reported human interest stories, but to them there's a meaningful look at the idiosyncratic corners of the world.

You'll find them in high spirits standing beside their work

at Houston's Zine Fest, hosted by the Printing Museum on 10/4.

The art festival features an eclectic spectrum of content in various formats, mainly comics, art prints, pamphlets, books, pins and most importantly, zines.

Understanding the zine medium hardly insists on a crash course. In broad strokes, they're self-published, often hand-made, mini-magazines dedicated to a specific obsession.

Yet by design, the free-form nature of zines demand not to be labelled by umbrella terms, but to set their own limitations, interests and rules.

While zines can be pre-

scribed as an ideal platform to further develop an artistic voice and palette, this year's Zine Fest are well beyond the formative stages.

Making Houston proud with an impeccable standard, Texas publications and artists Blake Jones, Jessi Jordan, Vagina: The Zine, Sugar & Rice and Raspa Magazine among dozens of others graced the festival with their latest efforts.

For an audience rekindling with the intimacies of art, exploring booths and striking up conversations with artists proved soothing.

In a hyper-active, virtual milieu where art lives online and support is anonymously transferred via PayPal, Houston's Zine Fest stands as the latest step in bringing local communities back to the old-fashioned charms of an analog world.

Crack a joke with a smiling

artist, flip through a stranger's obsessively constructed passion project, learn about interests you didn't know existed until ten minutes ago.

There's a catharsis to be found in the once lost, now re-emerging perks of candid consumerism.

Growing interests in the festival made me think the Printing Museum's onto something.

As eclectic as Houston tends to be, the presence of Zine Fest's matches that with the hope, nay, the reality any forgeable artistic idea can be showcased through an undefinable medium.

It's touching in an 'American Dream actualized through quirky means' sort-of way, but

I'm sure folks at the festival were content with the charm of stickers of dogs with sunglasses on and drawings of dragons on post-it notes just the same.

All Photos - Mohammed Zain/Dateline





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