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UHD plans to keep returning students safe amid pandemic

By Sheryl Sellers

Returning to the fall semester under the pandemic that disrupted the spring semester can feel overwhelming. Students are coming back to a semester like never before. The virus contamination between spring and fall turned for the worse rather than for the better. Students check and double check their classes and the mode of instruction they will receive and make any necessary changes. Experience in adaptability and flexibility abounds. We must learn the steps to continue to be flexible.

UHD is operating under the same Response Steps put in place via executive orders of Texas Governor Gregg Abbott (see Figure 1 below). The campus will begin the fall semester at Step 1 RED. Although UHD can move into Step 2 ORANGE on August 24, the decision was made to operate the campus at Step 1 RED to make an easier transition to Step 2 ORANGE on Sept. 8.

What exactly does all this mean for the student, and even more so, what does this mean for the first-time student navigating what is already unfamiliar territo-

ry? The list below includes some concise but important information regarding which students can enter campus and when. This is up to date as of Aug. 26.

Step 1 RED: Aug. 24 - Sept. 7

Classes will be held online or online interactive, i.e. class held via Zoom at the stated class time. Classes that can be held on campus, face-to-face and social distanced, will be approved by Provost Eric Carl Link, Ph.D. This small selection of classes includes those with critical instructional needs or resources like classes with lab portions. Students are only allowed in the building for their face-to-face class or to connect with a specific student service during its available hours of operation.

Students may be able to enter the campus by appointment with a specific service, for instance, to pick up supplies or textbooks. Face-to-face award ceremonies, student conferences or activities are not permitted.

UHD will begin the semester in Step 1 RED and will continue in this phase

until Sept. 8.

Step 2 ORANGE: Sept. 8 - TBA

The difference in classroom instruction modes between Step 1 RED and Step 2 ORANGE regards population density. It is anticipated that hybrid, face-to-face and online interactive will operate as scheduled if population density is controlled. The Provost will prioritize courses that need to meet face-to-face based on content and floor to floor balancing of population if density becomes an issue. Students will be allowed on campus during the time surrounding their face-to-face class(es).

Student access is allowed to visit with student support services or by appointment with Student Affairs or Enrollment Management. Students are not allowed to study or gather on campus.

Step 3 YELLOW: TBA

If a change from Step 2 ORANGE to Step 3 YELLOW occurs during mid-semester, classes will

continue as noted in Step 2 ORANGE. If the change to Step 3 YELLOW occurs while planning the spring semester and the previous semester (fall) was at Step 1 RED or Step 2 ORANGE, additional hybrid, online interactive and low capacity face-to-face classes will be scheduled for that coming semester.

During Step 3 YELLOW, students will be allowed on campus for classes or to use services based on availability. Students will be allowed to drop in at Student Affairs and Enrollment Management.

Step 4 GREEN: TBA

If the situation changes from Step 3 YELLOW to Step 4 GREEN during mid-semester, classes will continue as noted in Step 3 YELLOW. If the change from Step 3 YELLOW to Step 4 GREEN occurs while planning the next semester (spring) then normal course planning will resume with all available modes of instruction. Normal activities will resume.

In this sense, “going green” takes on a whole new connotation. Though the safest route may seem the longest, here’s to “going green” in the fall semester... or sometime soon after.

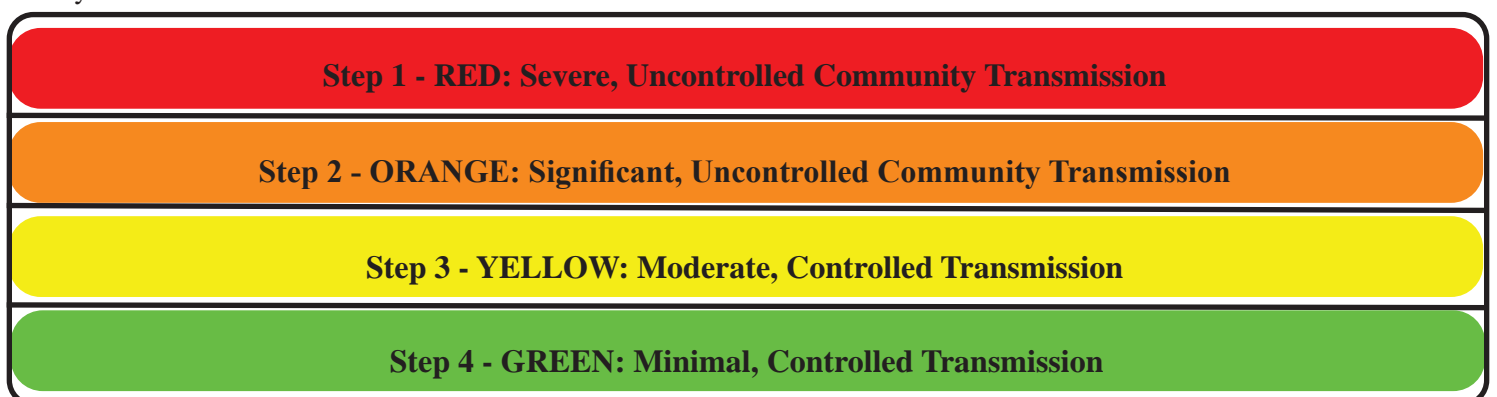


Figure 1 - Phases of the spread of COVID-19, used to gauge the safety of returning to campus.



THE DATELINE

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The Dateline is the official student newspaper of the University of Houston-Downtown. Since its first issue in 1982, The Dateline is proud to be "Student Run since Volume One." We strive to meet the needs of a growing university as well as the growing metropolitan city that surrounds us.

Submission Policy

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

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

All paid writers must be currently enrolled students at the University of Houston-Downtown.

Press releases, story ideas, news tips and suggestions are always welcomed. We encourage all students to contribute.

Any student interested in joining The Dateline staff may request more detailed information sending an email to the editors at editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com.

Follow us on Social Media!



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Editor's Note:

In the previous issue, Vol. 64 Iss. 0, published July 1, 2020, The Dateline printed a statement referring to student, Victoria Jackson as BSA President.

The Dateline retracts this statement, as Victoria Jackson is a BSA member, not BSA President.

The mistake has since been fixed in the online version of The Dateline.

The Dateline apologizes to Victoria Jackson, BSA member, as well as to the actual BSA President, Samantha Mosely.

SGA announces #MaskUpUHD and introduces new officers

By Indira Zaldivar

The Student Government Association (SGA) wants to see your selfies!

In support of the Mask-Up campaign, SGA has invited our Gators to submit selfies wearing a face mask.

Kassandra Aparicio, director of community outreach with SGA, invited Gators to post pictures of them wearing masks and attending online classes and to tag SGA in social media platforms using the #virtualgators hashtag. Similarly, SGA Vice President Leboriah Chavez, announced that gators could be featured in a social media campaign by UHD's Office of Student Affairs to "reinforce the importance of wearing masks." Students who wish to participate must post a photo wearing a mask and tag the social network accounts of the Office of Student Affairs and include the #MaskUpUHD hashtag in their posts.

In addition to announcing the campaign, the executive board confirmed the nominations of three senators at-large. Chief Justice Ameena Rasheed swore in Aamir Merchant, Samantha Mosley, and Zizi Kanyabire as

senators at-large. Mosley is also the new attorney general for SGA.

Members of the legislative board rejected four nominees running for senior senator positions for the Marilyn Davies College of Business, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the College of Science and Technology. These positions remain open as well as senior senator positions for the College of Public Service and University College. SGA also has 13 open senator-at-large positions and is accepting applications for assistant justice and student defender.

Mario Torres, current Pro-them Speaker of the House, and "Shay" Tatum, Chief of Staff, said that even if students are not accepted the first time, they can re-apply again to the same or a different position. Nominees can also ask the board to provide an explanatory report in case of a rejection.

Taiya Youngs, a nominee, said the reports are important so that students can learn what to improve on for future endeavors.

"The door is not closed forever," Torres said.

"Don't ever give

up on your career, your dreams, or goals that you have in mind. Keep pushing forward," Chavez added.

The director of health and wellness is a new position, and SGA said they welcome students to apply.

Also addressed were the plans for Welcome Week Fall 2020. The current pandemic forced the accommodation of most Welcome Week Events onto a virtual platform. Furthermore, due to Hurricane Laura, the only in-person event scheduled for Welcome Week, "Drive-in Movie at the Bayou Lot," has also been canceled.

The meeting concluded as Meghana Karra, senator for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, urged students to attend general assemblies to voice out concerns and obtain help.

"We're always here to provide support and give the best answers to your questions," Karra said. "Stay safe and take care of yourselves. We look forward to seeing everyone back on campus very soon."

Oh, the places you'll go... or not

By Sheryl Sellers

*Updated as of Aug. 25.

The what, where, when, and why of resources available and open or unavailable and closed on the UHD campus can be found in several places. It can be daunting to find particular information and in common student language.

Following is a list of available resources at the start of the fall semester and then as the university moves from Step 1 (Aug. 24) to Step 2 anticipated on Sept. 8.

Dining:

Initially, hours will be limited and only breakfast and coffee

will be available; mobile ordering is preferred. Starbucks will be open 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. beginning Aug. 24. At Step 2, lunch items will also be available. Burger 713 in the Cafeteria will be open from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Mobile ordering via Boost is in the planning stage. Grab 'n Go items will be available. Large combination vending machines are being installed for more substantial item choices, such as sandwiches and salads. There will also be vending machines for masks if needed.

Bookstore:

The bookstore is open for in-store pickup:

Mon. – Thurs., 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. It also offers curbside pickup: Mon. – Thurs., 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. and Fri., 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Library:

Initially, the library is only virtually available, but they will move to limited availability for document retrieval and computer lab by appointment only. Some weekend and evening times will be available at Step 2.

Math Lab and Writing Center:

Initially, these services are restricted to virtual availability, though there are plans to move to limited availability by ap-

pointment at Step 2.

IT Equipment:

Approved students must make an appointment to pickup or drop off equipment both in Step 1 and Step 2.

Registrar:

At Step 1, availability will be limited to, specific, pre-approved and essential issues of student support, such as drive by document delivery or pickup. At Step 2, in person appointments will be available.

Financial Aid:

At Step 1, availability will be limited to, specific, pre-approved and essential for student support only,

such as drive by document delivery or pickup. At Step 2, in person appointments will be available.

Career Counseling:

Counseling services will remain virtual at first, then they will move to limited availability by appointment only at Step 2.

Center for Disabilities:

This service will remain virtual at first, then will move to limited availability by appointment only at Step 2.

Sports and Fitness:

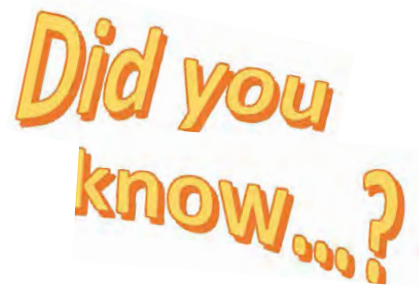
Initially, only virtual

availability and club sports are suspended. At Step 2 expect limited availability to locker rooms, personal training, and massage therapy, plus virtual sports and fitness.

Food Market:

The university is working to open the Food Market. At Step 2, the Food Market will be open by appointment only.

More and updated information can be found on the UHD website under the "UHD COVID Communications."



UHD helps manage student stress in pandemic

By Salvador Hernandez Academic Advising By Priscila Batres Counseling Services

“What’s your major?” A typical, cliché question that many students or professors ask on the first day of class. There are endless answers to this question, however, many students cannot always provide one.

Although a student may not know what they want to do, there is always guidance available from UHD. Academic Advising is a good place to find guidance that can be helpful to understanding your passion in life.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, UHD’s Academic Advising Center was forced to

adopt a virtual platform. This does not mean that the quality of advice or quantity of advisors has diminished. It does mean more flexibility for students, and the appointments are the same 30 minute length as usual appointments. Students have the option of two formats - virtual and over the phone.

To schedule a meeting with an academic advisor, be aware of where to go. Like many services in UHD your first stop is to arrive at the UHD landing page. Once on the landing page, place your cursor over “Academic”, and select the depart-

ment to which you belong. You will be redirected to your department homepage; under “Current Student” you will see “Advising.” From there, schedule an appointment via the “Navigate” website set up by UHD. Make sure to log in with the same credentials used for BlackBoard and GatorMail.

The services provided range from academic advising to learning about special programs or planning the route to your degree. Students can even set up phone or email reminders to manage their schedule.

The beginning of the fall semester is here and 80% of classes have been offered online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This new academic school year will be challenging for many students, especially those that are not used to taking online courses.

UHD is offering multiple services like counseling to help students transition to the “new normal,” and have a successful fall semester.

UHD Student Counseling Services offers five complimentary counseling sessions per student, per semester. As stu-

dent fees cover these costs, all currently enrolled students are eligible. To set up an appointment, call 713-500-3852 or fill out the form on the UHD Counseling Services webpage. They also offer 15-minute phone sessions on a first-call basis Monday-Friday at 10 a.m.- 11:00 a.m and 2:00 p.m and 3:00 p.m.. However, it is best to make an appointment first, so that your session is scheduled and guaranteed.

All counseling sessions are confidential, and the counselors are open to listening to any type of concern a

student might have, even if it is not a seemingly ‘big’ issue.

As college students, it is important to take care of one’s mental health, the same way one would care for their physical health. Asking for help takes a lot of courage since mental health is so often stigmatized. However, taking a step and talking to someone when things get overwhelming can help many students succeed, not only academically but also personally, as it helps to bring peace of mind.

Faculty Spotlight: Professor Michael Duncan, Ph.D.

By Sheryl Sellers

Professor. Writer. Researcher. Guitarist. Religious scholar. Music aficionado. Those are just a few of the titles that characterize Michael (Mike) Duncan, Ph.D., professor of Technical Communications in the UHD Department of English. At UHD, Dr. Duncan is also the outgoing president of the campus faculty senate.

This list of distinctions began developing when Duncan completed his undergraduate degree in Media Arts from the University of Arizona. He then moved to Boston where he worked for several social media-type startup companies with similar ideas to Facebook. Though the ideas were innovative, such as “putting webcams in dorm rooms,” he noted. None of the companies exist today.

After three years, he returned to his hometown to attend the University of Memphis where he earned his M.A. in Professional Writing followed by a doctorate in Composition Studies. Duncan explained this decision.

“The reason I pursued the doctorate was a combination of working as a graduate teaching assistant, and having a much more positive and intellectual experience with campus in graduate school than I did in my undergraduate years.”

So, why would an individual with a Media Arts degree turn to academia? During his doctorate course studies, he had a revelation that the professors had a pretty “sweet gig.” They had good ideas and concepts and seemed to him that their career looked vastly preferable to what he had been doing

at that time, repairing computers. After completion of his doctorate he followed the academia path to land at UHD.

Dr. Duncan teaches many courses in the English department and has also taught three sections of a course in religious studies. When asked whether he had a favorite course on his lecture list, after some thought he responded, “I teach a graduate course in Rhetorical Theory and Criticism, it plays to my strengths.”

As a writer, Dr. Duncan has contributed to several articles and publications on such subjects as the history of rhetoric, scholarly publishing, and technical communication. With a passionate interest in writing and argumentation studies, he has recently published articles titled, “Knives in the Air: Argumentative Arrangement in Demosthenes’s

330 BCE ‘On the Crown’ and Donald Trump’s October 10, 2019 Minnesota Rally Speech” and “The Curious Silence of the Dog and Paul of Tarsus: Revisiting the Argument of Silence.”

The Dateline was interested in Duncan’s tenure as president of the faculty senate, a term that expired in August. He explained that the senate affords a way to organize the faculty in a representative way and offers each member an opportunity to speak up, act, and have a voice in the policies of the university. Dr. Duncan cast the faculty senate as a parallel to an informal union. Members are elected by each department and the number is based on the number of department tenure and tenure-track faculty. There are also five slots for full time lecturers.

What did Dr.

Duncan find to be the most rewarding stint as president of the faculty senate? He had the ability to learn and see the big picture outside the silo of his department.

“I was able to see how it all intersects and fits together.”

He observed that in the six years that he served on the senate, this past year as president (2019-2020 academic year) has been the busiest. They passed five resolutions during that year, and the summer months involved several side-meetings and ongoing negotiations. The many committees that function within the faculty senate acted on such issues as an emergency plan for what became the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty and staff compensation plans, and anti-racism, to name just a few.

There was a time that the Dateline

asked Dr. Duncan to submit text to the publication. Questioned if he would consider that again, he answered that it “may be more challenging.” In our current environment he, and others like him, are stuffing 50 hours of work into 20.

As indicated at the beginning, Dr. Duncan is quite a musician and a member of a small band comprised of other faculty located on the 10th floor. He owns an impressive collection of guitars and a poster of the great Jimi Hendrix hangs in his 10th floor office.

“Hendrix”, Dr. Duncan stated. “is one of the holy trinity: Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and Jimmy Page.”

Dr. Duncan’s Favorites:

Food: Steak, medium well

Movies: “The Empire Strikes Back” and “The Godfather”

Pastimes: Playing the guitar and drums, woodworking, chess, fencing, computer and board games, and playing Legos with his five-year-old son

Books: Science fiction; “Dune” by Frank Herbert and authors Robert Heinlein and Roger Zelazny

Music: Classic rock and blues rock



Professor Michael (Mike) Duncan, Ph.D. Photo credit: UHD website

Gator Support

Tips for incoming Freshmen

By Salvador Hernandez

Where do I get my textbooks?

This is probably one of the many questions bouncing around in a newly enrolled freshman's mind.

Before doing anything, it is always best to ask a few questions. For example, are my textbooks so specific to the course that I have to get them through the bookstore, or can I get them elsewhere? This is a good question to ask a professor before acquiring course materials.

Now, let's get down to the nitty gritty of places to find textbooks. One of the textbook providers for which many students vouch, is Chegg, a company that in addition to textbooks also provides tutoring services and helpful extracurricular materials. The other upside to Chegg is that in comparison to other companies they provide free shipping on qualifying orders, competitive prices that will save money and typically include free gifts with each purchase.

Other places to look include eBay because there is always the possibility there will be used

books that students want to resell. Amazon is another option especially if a student is pinched for time, since Prime Student offers complimentary two-day delivery.

The rule of thumb with textbooks is to always price match. There is always the possibility of a book being cheaper in UHD's Bookstore than in other places. Textbooks which include access codes such as, Cengage or McGraw-Hill can only be purchased new. In some instances, books with access codes are specific to the course and have to be bought at UHD's Bookstore.

Where is the material for my classes?

If students are not familiar with BlackBoard, this is a quick crash course. BlackBoard provides students with a space to view course material, grades and updates to courses.

It can be easily accessed through UHD's main page under "Quick Links" or simply type bb.uhd.edu in the address bar. Many students make the mistake of relying on BlackBoard updates to keep up with course work.

Always check the course content tab for any updates to course work or due dates.

There is always maintenance going on in Blackboard so it is important to save your documents constantly.

Other Important Tips:

Additionally, there will be moments of confusion in a course lecture, taking good notes is important.

Check Quizlet to find flashcards from people who have taken the class before. It is a free online resource. If not, it's always beneficial to make your own flashcards to review course materials.

Another thing to note, applications like Office365 are included with UHD's student tuition.

There will be many sleepless nights, but in the end your hard work will be worth it. Welcome to college, Gators.

By Keven Balderas

The rapid spread of COVID-19 has forced most institutions of higher education, including UHD, to go almost fully virtual. For those determined to go to college, it is going to be an experience like no other in modern history.

Following are three steps that incoming freshmen can take to start the semester strong:

1. Attend the Freshman Orientation. Not only is this a great way to learn about available campus resources, but it also offers students an opportunity to meet with an academic advisor and register for classes.

There are two parts to UHD's Freshman Orientation sessions – Gator Ready and Gator Gateway. In the first segment, freshmen will finalize enrollment, while in the second portion, they are given the opportunity to interact with faculty, staff and other new students.

For any questions about Freshman Orientation, reach out to the orientation team at orientation@uhd.edu.

2. It is recommended that freshmen

attend Welcome Week as much as possible, which takes place the first week of school. It is a week-long series of activities, all virtual except for the Drive-In Movie at UHD's Bayou Parking Lot. This offers freshmen the opportunity to connect with other students, play games and meet staff from the several departments serving UHD students.

Welcome Week is just one of the many ways that the Office of Student Activities seeks to help students of all levels and classifications to "develop their life and leadership skills...and enrich [their] college experience."

"There are numerous clubs and organizations, research initiatives, study abroad opportunities, honors programs and so much more," Tremaine Kwasikpui, Director of Student Activities, tells The Dateline. "If they need any help with getting involved, reach out to the Office of Student Activities at studentactivities@uhd.edu."

3. It is a good idea to follow the official social media accounts of UHD,

The Dateline, and other student-run organizations to be kept in the loop on things going on around the campus. For example, following [@uhdmaincareer](https://www.instagram.com/uhdmaincareer) on Instagram informs students about the job fairs that UHD's Main Career Center is planning to host in September.

Eugene Bernard, Director of Student Transitions at UHD, offers incoming freshmen the following advice:

"Get involved on campus, and don't be afraid to ask for help. Our team of professionals are always ready and willing to assist in any way possible. We also encourage students to stay positive and remain flexible. There are many uncertainties in our current climate with COVID-19.

We are all learning to manage our new normal and together we can find endless opportunities in the midst of our current circumstances."

Students return as pandemic rages

By Lauren Anderson

Health officials warn that the growing number of COVID-19 cases pose unsafe conditions for students to return to school. Despite these warnings, in early July, President Trump insisted that students should return to the classroom like in other countries. Trump threatened to cut federal funding for the schools that do not open in the fall.

Even though Trump pushed forcefully for the reopening of schools in the fall, he retracted his previous claims stating all students should return to school. He is now supporting the use of masks and acknowledged that the pandemic would only worsen before it improves.

"In cities or states that are current hotspots, districts may need to delay reopening for a few weeks, and that's possible," Trump told reporters.

Along with a few other countries, the U.S continues to

debate on this matter, while others all around the world prepare for the reopening of schools in phases.

In Wuhan, China, schools reopened in May, but students and teachers had to wear masks, pass through temperature checks, and enter and exit at staggered times to avoid crowding. In Beijing, authorities closed schools once again in June after an outbreak in the city. In Shanghai, students and staff must enter through thermal scanners when schools reopened after months on lockdown. The walls are covered with posters, explaining the steps to protect against COVID-19, and glass walls divide the tables in the lunchroom, so only two students can eat together.

Although China is taking steps to reopen with caution, Israel's government is postponing any reopening decisions until Sept. Israel reopened a few schools in May when

the transmission rates were low. However, after reopening schools, these rates increased so schools shut down once again.

Israel attempted to reopen schools with the requirement that students and staff wear masks and practice social distancing. However, this move was boycotted by parents because of poor government preparation. India is another country that is undecided about whether schools will reopen this year or not. Summer break is over, but schools in Israel remain closed.

Denmark closed its schools in March but is now the first country in Europe to reopen them. Almost all primary schools were functioning by April.

Strict rules were put in place as students returned. Students stayed in small groups, classes took place outside, arrival times varied between students, staff and teachers to enforce social distancing. Out of fear of a second

wave, many parents have kept their students at home. However, Denmark has shown no significant spikes in cases.

South Korea reopened schools in a series of phases beginning in late May, but the process was not as smooth as Denmark's process. Rules included disinfecting classrooms, wearing masks, checking temperatures, and social distancing. However, schools shut down after COVID-19 cases increased among students in Seoul.

On the other hand, South Africa has not reopened schools because parents have refused to send their children, and teachers are much opposed to the ideas of reopening. They argue that a crowded classroom will put both the students and teachers at risk.

However, in Australia, schools reopening has differed between states. Some schools have reopened in May, while others reopened in June. Schools in New South Wales, Australia's most populated state, only allowed students to attend one day a week and to arrive at different times.

While in Taiwan, schools closed for only a couple of weeks in February. Now, students are required



to sanitize their hands and shoes before entering; they must wear masks and eat lunch behind dividers. The younger students are even learning how to measure one meter of social distance.

Although not every country can reopen schools safely, many schools have implemented safety requirements such as face masks, hand sanitizers, and desk shields. In contrast, others have limited class sizes and scattered arrival and leaving times. Some schools even restrict the return to school to specific grades. Hybrid plans, where students spend some time physically in school and some time learning from home have also been introduced. Many schools leave the choice to send students to school to the discretion of parents and legal guardians.

Despite the precautions taking place with the reopening of schools, many parents still worry about the spread of the virus and feel that it is still unsafe for their children to attend school. Many parents, teachers, and students are distraught about returning to school but are

also worried about the implications of not returning to school.

Families say that because of the indecision within their communities, they have resorted to pulling their students out of school altogether to homeschool them or hire tutors. However, while some have the resources to learn from home, others are missing months of education. Because of this, some families do not have a choice. Some schools will reopen, while others will not.

Pediatrician Michael Rich, founder of the Center on Media and Child Health said that although students without medical problems are not at risk for the virus, like other people, they can still spread it to family.

"Kids in general are less symptomatic, but that also means they can be super-spreaders," Rich said. "In other words, they can come back home as carriers of COVID-19 and not even know it, and no one around them knows it."



On Aug. 5, in Godley, Texas, elementary school students wear masks and wait in the gym for school to start. Photo Credit: LM Otero, AP

Hurricane Isaias leaves 6 dead, billions in damages

By Lauren Anderson

Hurricane Isaias left at least six dead, over 3 million with power outages, and \$4 billion in damages as it ripped through the East Coast from July 23 to Aug. 6.

Hurricane Isaias was identified by the National Hurricane Center on July 23. Isaias produced tornadoes and deposited rain along the U.S. East Coast over the past couple of weeks, starting in North Carolina. Although the storm had started as a tropical storm, it was soon upgraded to a Category 1 hurricane and reached an intensity of 85 mph and a pressure of 987 millibar.

It then weakened back into a tropical storm after arriving in North Andros, Bahamas, on Aug. 1 before traveling through Florida and Georgia. It then made its way to the Carolina coastline and escalated back into a hurricane as it arrived near Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, on Aug. 4. Lastly, it continued to travel along the East Coast as a strong tropical storm before settling down in Quebec.

The governor of North Carolina, Roy Cooper, warned that the storm could be dangerous no matter the strength

“Whether it’s labeled a tropical storm or a hurricane,

you should take this storm seriously, and make sure your family is ready,” Cooper said.

The National Hurricane Center had been correct in their predictions that the storm would be life-threatening and that people on the East Coast should take the necessary precautions to keep themselves and their families as safe as possible. The most damage occurred in the east and north because that was where the hurricane’s eye was. Boats piled on top of each other, decks facing the water were smashed, homes were destroyed, and at least six people were killed.

Two people were killed, dozens of others were misplaced, and ten homes were destroyed as tornadoes tore through North Carolina. One person died in Pennsylvania as their car was overtaken by flooding, two other people died from falling trees in Maryland and New York, and another died from a falling tree branch in Delaware.

Ross Dickman, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in New York, said that Isaias brought the strongest winds since Superstorm Sandy back in 2012.

“The wind and flooding impacts from Isaias will be similar to what the city has seen from some of the strongest coastal storms. But we haven’t seen one this strong in many years,” Dickman said.

There were power outages, collapsing trees, tornadoes, and heavy rain. There was even a storm surge warning for a life-threatening flood of water coming from the coastline in Ocracoke Inlet to Oregon Inlet N.C. Hurricane Isaias came when the East Coast was also suffering from the pandemic’s effects. However, despite this, the East Coast suffered considerable damage at the hands of the hurricane.

Power outages spread through the entire East Coast. Over 3 million people lost electricity. Utilities rushed to

restore power and make improvements to prepare for the rest of hurricane season. Mark Treyger, a council member who represents parts of Brooklyn in New York City, expressed concerns for future storms.

“When people ask me, are we prepared for another storm? The answer is, ‘No,’” Treyger said.

“We’re better informed, but we’re not better prepared. We are simply managing crises day to day, we’re not solving crises on a day to day basis.”

In Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, where the hurricane’s eye moved over, many homes were flooded, and at least five houses caught fire. Eighty miles north of where the storm first landed, in Surf City, about 30 people were displaced due to a condominium complex catching fire. The counties along North Carolina’s Southeast Coast were the hardest hit with fires and reports of tornadoes, and about two dozen shelters were open due to the storm.

Five adults and three children had to be rescued after a storm surge, which also caused damage to the beachfront and caused electricity and sewer facilities to go offline. Moreover, in Suffolk, Virginia, many homes were damaged by falling trees, and there were tornado reports. Many buildings and businesses, including

a fire station downtown, sustained damage from heavy rains and flooding.

There was a tornado warning in the Wicomico County in Maryland as a tornado swept through Vienna in Mardela Springs. In Charles County, Maryland, emergency workers rescued a man and woman after flooding swept their cars away.

The woman was found clinging to a tree limb, and the man was on the roof of the car. Motorists had to be rescued as roads flooded in the Philadelphia area.

Further north, in Lehigh County, a motorist was killed after driving into high water and being swept downstream. In New York City, the Staten Island Ferry had to suspend service, because strong winds and rain attacked the city, and barriers were set up to protect Wall Street and the South Street Seaport from flooding.

In Bertie County, North Carolina, deputies visited people’s homes to see if anyone needed help. An aerial shot by WRAL-TV showed rescuers looking through the wreckage to find those in need.

“It doesn’t look real; it looks like something on TV. Nothing is there,” John Holley, the Bertie County Sheriff, told reporters. “All my officers are down there at this time. Pretty much the entire trailer park is gone.”



A motorist drives through the tropical storm in Philadelphia on Aug. 4, 2020. Photo courtesy of Matt Slocum. AP



High winds cause a tree to be uprooted and falls on a fence in New York on Aug. 4. Image courtesy of David Crary. AP

Derecho winds of 140 mph rip through Midwest

By Sheryl Sellers

Tornados, hurricanes, typhoons, are all storms with which we are familiar. But a derecho? From the Spanish word for “straight” referring to direction, a derecho is a straight-line, long-lived windstorm associated with severe thunderstorms.

A recent derecho raced through Iowa, Illinois and Indiana on Monday, Aug. 10 leaving a swath of destruction in its wake. On Sunday night, Aug. 9, a thunderstorm developed in South Dakota, grew as it thundered through Nebraska, picked up strength as it raged through central Iowa, and finally weakened as it approached Ohio. By the time it descended on central Iowa, it was classified as a derecho, not an ordi-

nary thunderstorm.

In Iowa, original estimates of 100 mph winds were conservative. The National Weather Service data later determined that 140 mph winds ripped through Cedar Rapids, among the hardest hit communities. This wind strength would equate to a Category 4 hurricane.

Iowans had little warning as the severe thunderstorm gained intensity. The Storm Prediction Center in Norman, OK predicted severe thunderstorms and some tornados forming in the area. There was no indication that these models would form a derecho.

Cedar Rapids resident, 77-year-old Barb Eastland McMickle, described windows shaking

in her condo as the straight line, intense winds blew for 45 minutes, much longer than wind associated with a tornado. Asked if she found safety, she explained, “I put on my bicycle helmet and fled to a closet.”

The derecho tore through cornfields lying stalks on the ground, and ripped up silos, storage bins and hog buildings. It is estimated that two-thirds of the state’s corn crop was demolished, and a loss of 3.5 million acres of corn.

Innumerable trees were uprooted and crashed onto electric poles, cars, barns, and homes. One of the strangest sights was an airplane wing from Cedar Rapids company, MidAmerican Aerospace, that neighbors watched

cartwheel over houses finally landing in the garage of a nearby home.

A derecho is estimated to occur every one to two years in the Midwest, Ohio Valley and Mid-Atlantic states, primarily between May and August. Typically, a storm is characterized as a derecho if it travels across at least 240 miles with winds exceeding 58 mph. They are very hard to forecast because the features causing a derecho occur subtly.

Four deaths have been attributed to the storm, three in Iowa and one in Indiana. More than 8,000 of the 200,000 Iowans that lost electricity, were still without power

as of Aug. 22. Cleanup efforts are expected to continue for more than a month.



Some of the derecho’s damages. Photo courtesy of Tracie Hodina Van Pelt.



Some of the derecho’s damages. Photo courtesy of The Weather Channel.

New York Attorney General sues NRA

By Priscila Batres

On Aug. 6, New York Attorney General, Letitia James, sued the National Rifle Association (NRA) to dismantle it for all these years of corruption. The lawsuit mentions years of bribery and mishandling money of several NRA officials, including the executive Vice-president Wayne Lapiere.

Rumors of Lapiere and other officials’ mismanagement of money and greed have been going around for a while. One of the many examples of corruption that the lawsuit presented is

that Lapiere used NRA money to fund luxuries like taking private jets to the Bahamas multiple times. According to National Public Radio (NPR), Attorney General, Letitia James, also found that the NRA has used more than \$64 million in the last couple of years as part of their financial misconduct.

Through the decades, the NRA has gotten more power and influence in politics.

“We seek to dissolve the NRA because no organization is above the law,” James said during the lawsuit’s announcement. This

lawsuit can take years before a final verdict, and although it may seem that dissolving the NRA is unrealistic, it is not impossible. The NRA is registered as a nonprofit organization in the state of New York. The attorney general of New York has the authority to dissolve nonprofit organizations that fail to meet the guidelines.

Soon after the attorney general made the statement to the press, the NRA responded that her actions “were politically motivated.” This action against the NRA would not only affect

them but the GOP. The NRA spends millions of dollars in GOP candidates’ campaigns and is expected to spend enormous amounts of money for

the GOP this year. If the NRA dismantles, the GOP will lose one of its main lobbying groups.

As of now, it is difficult to tell how

this lawsuit will end, but there should be new updates coming in the upcoming months.



Woman protests with a sign reading “stop the NRA.” Image Courtesy of Alyssa Yung

Trump's "shale revolution" plans arctic drilling

By Stacey Gutierrez

On Aug. 17, the Trump administration announced its plans to allow oil and gas companies to drill 1.5 million acres of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Alaska.

The plan was set in motion by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, PB 115.97, requiring that at least two 400,000-acre leases of the 1002 area must be sold by 2027 and authorizing oversight to the Department of Interior.

In a press release by the Interior Department, David Bernhardt, secretary of interior, confirmed approval of the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program, touting Alaska as the "nation's new energy frontier" with the hopes of creating jobs, increasing revenue and minimizing

the nation's reliance on foreign oil.

This decision is in line with Mr. Trump's promises to restore the American energy dominance through deregulation and innovation. Based on a 2005 assessment of Area 1002 by the United States Geological Survey, The Refuge is believed to contain an estimated 7.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil. By comparison, the 1002 Area contains 27% the amount believed to be held in the Permian basin, which is estimated to hold 28.9 billion barrels of oil and produces up to 4 million barrels per day.

As the administration plans to accept bids on the leases by the end of the year, it is unknown if the high-risk venture will spark any interest. John Hofmeister, for-

mer President of Shell Oil Co. and author of the book "Why We Hate the Oil Companies: Straight Talk from an Energy Insider" disagrees with the Department of Interior's recent decision. "We should leave the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge alone. The amount of oil to be obtained from it is not worth the environmental and social cost," Hofmeister said.

The decisions moved quietly through then Republican-controlled House and Senate, but it has since fueled dissent from environmental conservation groups and Alaskan Natives. These groups have spent years attempting to block oil and gas development in the Refuge for fears that oil production will cause irreparable damage to the fragile

ecosystem, which is home to endangered species like the polar bear and the arctic fox. Due to the refuge's remote location and extreme winter conditions increase the risk of a spill by 75%, delay emergency response, and prolong environmental remediation.

In 2006, BP Exploration Alaska was fined \$25 million after a pipeline released 267,000 gallons of crude oil into the Prudhoe Bay area and would take over a year to clean up. Following the investigation, it was determined that the root cause for the spill was environmental corrosion and improper maintenance of the aging well. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, between 2010 to 2019, reported 3226 spills

in Northern Alaska – North Slope.

As a response to Alaska natives and activist groups, the House of Representatives passed H.R.1146 on Sept. 12, 2019, which seeks to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by prohibiting leasing to oil and gas companies. However, the Trump administration continues to relax regulations for oil and gas companies. While the pandemic continues to negatively impact the energy sector, it is still too soon to tell if any energy executives will purse oil exploration in the Refuge. However, one thing is certain, if oil production is to proceed in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, enhanced oil and gas governance is needed to ensure corporate responsibility. The Arctic Nation-

al Wildlife Refuge, found in Northern Alaska, spans 19 million acres and is only a part of the Arctic circle which includes Canada, Greenland, the northern coast of Iceland, Norway, Finland and Russia. The Refuge was originally protected in 1960 and has largely left untouched for the harsh weather conditions and its fragile ecosystem, which is home to endangered species like caribou, Arctic foxes, polar bears and walrus. Adam Kolton, the executive director of the Alaska Wilderness League, opposes drilling in the Refuge.

"This is our nation's last great wilderness," Kolton said. "Nowhere else in the five-nation circle polar north do you have such abundant and diverse wildlife."

Remembering civil rights icon John Lewis

By Riyasa Shrestha

On July 17, Representative John Lewis, passed away at 80 years old, after a 6 month battle with pancreatic cancer. His death was announced by a statement from the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi.

"Today, America mourns the loss of one of the greatest heroes of American History: Congressman John Lewis, the Conscience of the Congress," Pelosi stated.

Lewis was the son of sharecroppers and a member of the

original "Freedom Fighters" who fought against racial and social injustice. During this time, Lewis said that in order to achieve change they need to engage in "good trouble, necessary trouble."

He was inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. and pursued racial activism from a young age. As a student, Lewis organized sit-ins at segregated lunch counters during the Nashville Student Movement.

In 1955, Lewis led the Mont-

gomery Bus Boycott. Later, in 1963 Lewis helped organize the March on Washington on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, which boasted Martin Luther King Jr. as its key speaker.

On March 5, 1965 Lewis, alongside Hosea Williams, led a march on the Edmund Pettus Bridge for voting rights and equality. Armed police discharged tear gas and attacked them with clubs, bullwhips and rubber tubing wrapped in barbed wire.

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John Lewis, official portrait as U.S Representative, D-Ga. Image courtesy of United States House of Representatives

Kamala Harris, the first of many

By Jazzmin Jones

On Aug. 19, Kamala Harris made history as the first woman of color to accept the nomination for vice presidency of the United States for the 2020 presidential election.

Harris, senator of California, will officially be part of the historical 2020 presidential race. While many people were thrilled to have Harris on the democratic ballot, others did not feel the same. During her time as California's first Black attorney general, the public has viewed some of Harris' decisions as controversial.

As district attorney, Harris was considered progressive for the time. During Harris' term, charges of possession of marijuana with

intent to sell were instantly dropped to misdemeanors, and she did not prosecute small possession charges. Harris refused to implicate the death penalty even in what the public considered as grossly unjust situations. While this decision appeared as admirable, her peers in the justice department did not feel the same way.

In 2004, three months after she took office, she refused the death penalty for a gang member who shot and killed Officer Issac Espinoza. Former Chief of Staff Timothy P. Silard said that The San Francisco Police Department shunned her for not pursuing the death penalty of such a respected officer.

"Command-

ers and homicide detectives refused to speak to her or look her in the eye during meetings in which she demanded they solve more murders in poor neighborhoods," Silard said. "Instead, they addressed white men; her subordinates."

Harris also understood that the exploitation of young girls was a growing problem in this country. Instead of prosecuting for prostitution, she treated women in sex work as victims. Harris advocated for the rehabilitation of young people involved in sex trafficking and prostitution. During her time as district attorney, Harris also implemented the Back on Track program for youth who

would otherwise be charged with felonies. The plan aimed to help them get back into school and get stable jobs.

Niki Solis, a manager of the public defender office considered Harris as a progressive district attorney.

"Although we as public defenders may have disagreed with Harris at times or wanted more from her office, there is no one who can say that there was a more progressive district attorney in California than Kamala Harris," Solis said.

In 2011, Harris took the office of the attorney general. At the time, California had one of the highest rates of police-involved shootings. Kamala

referred to the state's hands-off policy which prohibits the attorney general from intervening unless the district attorney has a conflict of interest. Despite being asked, she would not conduct any outside investigations into officer-involved shootings. It was a very unpopular move with the minority communities.

In her second term as attorney general, Harris outlined a plan to make police accountable for their actions. Bill AB-86 would have required a special task force to investigate police brutality cases. Harris refused to endorse such a bill because she did not like the idea of overstepping on district attorneys. Instead, she initiated

Open Justice which is a database for public access to crime statistics, including the use of force in the police department. This database was a widely popular tool in police reform that is still in use today.

Harris has had a challenging career. As the first woman of color in most of her previous positions, she had to climb uphill to succeed. Harris did what she believed was right at the time. Though some of her decisions have not aged well, she has remained an advocate for women and people of color. Most importantly, Harris has been and continues to be a strong advocate for justice.

Elections expose complications for mail-in voters

By Anthony Raul Ramirez

Amid pandemic, the U.S is looking to see if any issues may arise from full mail-in voting this coming presidential election on Nov. 3.

Since the rise of COVID-19, a hot-button conversation entertained the idea to allow mail-in voting for all citizens this coming presidential election. The movement to allow all citizens to vote by mail cites results from the states that allow absentee voting for all. Texas requires voters to present an absentee excuse that only allows vote by mail for citizens who

meet one of the requirements: must be 65 years or older, have a disability, expect to be absent from the country, or are in jail.

In the March presidential primary, California reported that over 100,000 mail-in ballots were rejected because of applicant errors. Over 18,000 mail-in ballot applications in Florida had errors or were received late. New Jersey held an all-mail-in vote this June that saw roughly one out of every ten votes rejected, leaving 9.6% of the ballots being unused. An analysis by National Public Radio

(NPR) found that New Jersey rejected about 65,000 votes that showed up late. A USPS vehicle in New Jersey was set on fire June 25, 2020 that potentially contained mail-in ballots.

Reporter Patrick Marley for The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel covered the difficulties of timely delivery for voting ballots in Wisconsin.

"Three mail tubs containing 749 ballots from the Fox Valley didn't get to voters in time for them to cast them," Marley said. "Appleton officials had given the absentee ballots to a third-party mail vendor on April 6, the

day before the election, according to the report. The mail vendor provided them to the post office about 6 p.m. on election day."

At least 1,600 ballots for Fox Valley were found to have not reached citizens in time for voting. The Fox Point village in Milwaukee also had 160 ballots accidentally delivered to the wrong location, leaving the residents unable to vote.

In July, the League of Women Voters sued the New York State Board of Elections for the state's current "error-prone ballot verification process". The League of Women

Voter's website featured a statement by Co-Director at CLC, Danielle Lang.

"All eligible voters should be able to have confidence that when they participate in an election, their vote will be counted," Lang said. "As more New Yorkers rely on the state's vote by mail system to exercise their right to vote during the pandemic, more face the risk of disenfranchisement due to their signature or other benign errors. New York's rejection rate for absentee ballots is alarmingly high. The lack of notice to voters and an opportunity to fix errors

must be resolved with urgency with less than 120 days until the General Election."

A group of seven minority voters, along with the organizations Common Cause Massachusetts and MassVOTE, filed a petition to sue the state of Massachusetts for failing to deliver mail-in ballots. The state recently allowed citizens to request mail-in ballots, but the group cited a lack of internet accessibility that creates a disadvantage for voters in the community.

Biden-Harris accept nomination at DNC

By Aansa Usmani

*Updated as of Aug. 25

During the Aug. 2020 Democratic National Convention (DNC), former Vice President Joe Biden and Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) accepted the Democratic nomination for the White House. Nearly a year ago, both were pitted against each other seeking their individual Democratic nominations, but they have now joined to form one campaign.

As the nation continues to struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic and racial tensions, it is crucial to understand the significance of this pairing for the White House. Although both differ in terms of political experience and viewpoints, they share the commonality of wanting to serve the American people and conclude the Trump-era of the White House.

Since the beginning of his campaign, Biden has continuously spoken out against the current Administration's stances and legislative policies. He references the infamous 2017 "Unite the Rally" rally in Charlottesville as motivation for his presidential run, reaffirming the statement of how he is "running for the soul of America," tweeting,

"White supremacists descended on Charlottesville with torches in hand and hatred in their hearts. Our president said they were 'very fine people.' It was clear then, and it's clear now: We are in a battle for the soul of our nation, and we must win."

Although his campaign has dealt with controversies and blunders, it has shown leadership, resilience, and openness to change—qualities that the American people have longed

desired since Trump's inauguration.

Biden's record in Congress proves his ability to compromise with those across the aisle. As Vice President, he—alongside then-President Obama—was able to lead the country into economic growth and stability, leaving office with policies that aim to assist the economy, while also benefiting the American people.

Senator Kamala Harris, Biden's Vice-Presidential choice, also has extensive knowledge and experience under her belt. In addition to being the first South Asian and Black Individual to serve as California's Attorney General and Senator, her experience speaks for itself, receiving a 100% rating from both the American Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) and the American Federation of General Employees (AFGE).

According to the AFGE website, former Attorney General of California, Harris, advocated on behalf of unions and has prosecuted local companies that seek to take advantage of workers and their wages.

Yet, her tenure as California's Attorney General drew criticism from the left-wing, arguing that she frequently sides with police unions, and did not attempt to overhaul known police departments; these criticisms have given her the nickname of "Copolmalala" on various internet threads, questioning whether her previous record is best suited for being Vice President, especially during an era of racial awakenings.

The Biden-Harris campaign hopes to adopt more progressive stances regarding racial relations, imprisonment, and

other social policies. According to their official website, they hope to tackle implemented systemic racism within the legislation, institutions, and other places of power, hoping to empower everyone and allow more to succeed, without having their ethnicity or racial background be a setback, "ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and has [the] equal opportunity is built into all of Joe's domestic policies."

The Biden-Harris ticket hopes to eradicate the divisiveness and polarization within the country, implementing policies that will benefit all, and dis-

mantle systems that have setback progress to some. Although they themselves are not perfect, it is better than the current solution within the Oval Office.

This year's election is significant, especially noting how there are individuals wanting to make voting harder within specific areas. In the wake of this pandemic, racial tensions, climate change, and other issues, this election will either be a referendum on the current Administration, or a continuation of their policies. Regardless of politics, it is crucial to participate in the democratic process (voting).



Running-mates, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. Photo courtesy of www.foxnews.com

Voting during pandemic

By Jazzmin Jones

With the general election around the corner, many people have concerns about voting during the corona pandemic. Mail-in voting could be a solution in many states, but not in Texas. In Texas, mail-in voting is mainly for seniors over sixty-five, disabled people, out of the country military peoples, and those in jail but still eligible to vote.

According

to the Texas Supreme court, the "lack of immunity" to COVID-19 is not a qualification for mail-in voting. These restrictions force most Texans to vote in person, which might be dangerous for some during the corona pandemic.

The general election is on Tuesday, Nov. 3 and Texans are permitted to vote early. Early voter registration ends on Mon., Oct. 5 while

early voting officially begins on Oct. 13. This general election is crucial. Based on run-off elections, voter turnout is expected to be record-breaking. In the 2018 midterm elections, about 432,180 democrats voted. According to an article published by the New York Times, this year, over 955, democrats voted in the state-wide run-off election. Many more should be joining to vote in

the upcoming general election, which is great for democracy, but what about the COVID-19?

People are being persuaded into voting early, especially in Texas. With USPS at risk of being entirely defunded and mail becoming delayed, mail-in voting is not considered viable. However, almost every state allows early voting. Wearing a mask and keeping social distance should be enough to protect from COVID-19 during early voting.

For those that are at higher risk for COVID-19 for any reason, there is curbside voting. Curbside voting is available via paper ballot or portable voting machine. Keep in mind that best practice is to call the voting location ahead to request curbside assistance. This option is open to everyone that seeks it.

While mail-in voting may not be available to everyone in Texas, but there are other ways to stay safe and cast a vote. Early voting

and curbside assisted voting are two very viable options for those concerned about COVID-19. It is our right to cast a ballot, and the nation should be able to cast a ballot without fearing for their health and safety. This general election could prove to have the highest voter turnout to date, so it is essential to take the proper precautions. Wear a mask and practice social distancing!

Check out VoteTexas.com for more information.

Remembering civil rights icon John Lewis

By Riyasa Shrestha

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In the debacle, a police officer fractured Lewis' skull. The gruesome image infuriated the nation and galvanized support for the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was signed by then-President, Lyndon B. Johnson.

"Sometimes when I look back and think about it, how did we do what we did? How did we succeed? We didn't have a website. We didn't have a cellular tele-

phone," Lewis said. "But I felt when we were sitting in at those lunch counter stools, or going on the Freedom Ride, or marching from Selma to Montgomery, there was a power and a force. God Almighty was there with us."

Lewis fought against segregation and poverty. In 2011, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom by America's first Black president, Barack Obama.

Obama said in a statement after Lewis' death that he will "continue, even in his passing, to serve as a beacon in that long journey towards a more perfect union."

After the killing of Houstonian George Floyd in May, Lewis told "CBS This Morning", "It was very moving, very moving to see hundreds of thousands of people from all over America and around the world take to the streets—to speak up.

to speak out, to get into what I call 'good trouble.'"

Former President Obama said, "Generations from now, when parents teach their children what is meant by courage, the story of John Lewis will come to mind – an American who knew that change could not wait for some other person or some other time; whose life is a lesson in the fierce urgency of now."



John Lewis, official portrait as U.S. Representative, D-Ga. Image courtesy of United States House of Representatives

Activists paint streets of Laredo, "Defund the Wall"

By Indira Zaldivar

On Aug. 16, anti-border activists of Laredo painted "Defund The Wall, Fund our Future" on a street outside the U.S. Federal Courthouse in Downtown Laredo in opposition of the federal contract that awards \$275 million dollars to build 14 additional miles of border wall in Laredo, Texas.

The No Border Wall Coalition said the mural sends a message to Washington to reprioritize the funds and invest them in schools, healthcare, affordable housing, and conservation of the Rio Grande in Laredo. The multimillion-dollar contract projects construction to start at the beginning of Trump's second term if re-elected. Construction would displace many homeowners, businessowners and a Catholic orphanage. UHD student and director of community en-

gagement with SGA, Cassandra Aparicio, opposes the wall. "There are more important issues to worry about than a wall with no purpose," Aparicio said. "Health and education should always be prioritized."

No Border Wall Coalition said on a press release that water for Laredoans and the endangered Rio Grande are at stake.

"The wall threatens Laredo's only source of drinking water, the Rio Grande, as well as public spaces, private homes, and ranches, and the city's Master Plan for economic revitalization." Laredo Councilwoman Nelly Vielma condemned the government decision to prioritize funds for the border wall over the needs of the people in the community facing a pandemic. "At this crucial time,

when our community is experiencing a significant loss of lives, our City has been urgently requesting state and federal assistance to provide essential ICU care and hospital services to no avail," Vielma said.

"The priority for our region should be to fund a trauma hospital to serve our tax paying constituents' needs, rather than funding this outlandishly expensive wall. We should not be losing lives due to lack of funding."

The grassroots, anti-border group said they were inspired by the many Black

Lives Matter street murals painted nationwide. While the Laredo City Council unanimously granted permission for the mural on July 27, the mural was painted without city funds. Community leaders, volunteers, enraged property-owners, and activists collected funds from people

that are appalled with the situation affecting Laredo's natives. Coalition member and filmmaker Karen Gaytan said in a press release that art has a power to convey important messages. "We believe that public art can ignite important conversations about what we value in our society,

and what we want our future to be," Gaytan said in a press release. "We believe that if we say, 'DEFUND THE WALL' the rest of the country will pay attention to what's going on here, and listen to what we, the residents of Laredo, want for our future."



On Aug. 16, activists and volunteers with the No Border Wall Coalition finished the street mural that reads "Defund The Wall, Fund Our Future" outside of the U.S. Federal Courthouse in Downtown Laredo. Photo courtesy of No Border Wall Coalition's official Instagram page.

Virtual mode is the new normal... or just a phase?

By Jesse Fitzgerald Rodriguez

What defines normal when it comes to education, and is that education worth risking our health?

Since December 2019, over 200 countries have been affected by COVID-19. Millions of people live frustrated, nervous and, unsure about tomorrow.

As the 2020 fall semester begins for students of all ages, who will study online? Who has access to this virtual shift and online education, not to mention, the new norm of living, shopping, congregating, working, and educating one another in an unstable environment?

What lies ahead, and will school ever be the same again? Undoubtedly, no. The country has taken a dramatic turn. Tensions are rising to

an all time high due to the virus. Millions of people are out of work, many parents are contemplating whether to send their children to school, and meanwhile, this disease shows no sign of slowing down amongst its enemy: the people.

In all honesty, education is the last thing on one's mind. But no matter what, we will prevail. Yes, our educational routine and status may not return to normal, but the education system itself cannot disappear. Nonetheless, many still ask themselves, "What is normal?"

Additionally, the HoustonPress announced that Texas's largest school district, H.I.S.D. has taken massive action and stated that its schools would go virtual beginning Sept. 8

through mid-Oct. On top of that, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo and Mayor Sylvester Turner agreed to keep Harris county schools in virtual mode.

Universities and community colleges have been following the rules and taking necessary precautions and safety measures. Can we blame them? Do we adapt? Are these mandates declared by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) acceptable, feasible, and healthy? Is our education system being corrupted and mangled by big government and education lobbyists? Is virtual mode constitutional or unconstitutional?

Given the facts, the statistics and the growing number of COVID-19 cases, should students return to school, or

will everyone be taught virtually? The desperation, the frustration, and the uncertainty of our education lingers in the wind like pollution in the air; it is everywhere around us, and we cannot even see it.

Judge Hidalgo explained her decisions on July 24 on KRPC Channel 2.

"The last thing I want to do is shut down a brick and mortar representation of the American dream. But right now, we're guided by human life."

So, we must not forget about the American dream, about one's goals and aspirations, and, more importantly, our education. Any attempts to chase these dreams must be done safely and cautiously.

In these rough times, we must think about self-education

as a vital tool to achieve the American dream. While resources are limited in this time of crisis, virtual mode is the new normal, and we must remain optimistic and stay safe by all means necessary. Help someone. Teach someone. We must redefine and identify the new normal in our lives. We must stick together. Even UH's interim president, Antonio D. Tillis, Ph.D., seems to think so.

"This is not the way any of us envisioned the beginning of this academic year. Working together, however, we can keep you and your families safe while making sure you stay on track for a successful semester and, ultimately, graduation," Tillis explained on Aug. 7.

We must stay strong, stay safe, and

begin this academic year optimistic about the future, our education, and the school system, regardless of hardships, obstacles, and the challenges that await us.

Though schools around the U.S. are forced to adopt a virtual mode to cope with the ongoing pandemic, citizens of the nation don't have to give up their goals or sacrifice their education. They simply have to find new (and virtual) ways to reach those goals. Who knows? Maybe this new normal will prove to be even easier than the old one.

A new age of dating for a new age generation

By Khadesia Nedd

In the age of COVID-19, many of us somehow find time to date. Since the days of video dating, technology has opened the floodgates of possibility. Choosing a partner has been commodified to the likes of online shopping, where simply click and add the people we would like to meet our virtual cart of matches. We have been living in an age of instant communication at infinite degrees of separation, and the pandemic has only pushed us

deeper into online dating's myriad of choices. COVID-19 has wedged distance between us all in our familial, working, and social worlds. For as far back as long-distance letters, people have used a variety of mediums throughout the ages. Today, many people have gotten creative by taking advantage of technology like online video gaming and live video chats. Now more than ever, people are dating remotely. This shift in pace and platform has

various benefits and roadblocks that make the dating world enjoyable. The social distance measures are forcing an even pace in the popcorn brain's need to match, meet, and date as fast as the internet can connect.

For people like me who prefer a more even pace for dating, you finally have another excuse to take things slowly. Allowing someone into your social bubble now requires an extra level of commitment. Even the most skept-

tical would not want too many strangers huffing and puffing in their personal space. Allowing pauses for those to agree to an in-person date: are you willing to risk the virus for "Jacob, 28" who dared to take a poorly-lit selfie in his cluttered bed? Furthermore, dating applications like Bumble have new social distancing profile filters that allows you to identify your personal pandemic preferences. You have the options of socially-distanced and

masked, unmasked, or entirely virtual dating. Different forms of dating give extra insight into the dating setting during the pandemic.

For those bold enough to immediately meet a stranger in a public place, maybe faced with another dilemma - where? Restaurants of my childhood are closing day by day. To date, bars, and nightclubs across Texas are entirely shut down - including my go-to spot, Neil's Bahr in EaDo. Searching

around, you'll find fewer date spots, with no air-conditioned movie theaters to open and no local concerts to watch. There will no longer be quirky plays to see along with no nightclubs to dance in. Supposedly, in an attempt to avoid crowds, many people are proposing to have a first date at home - to which I instantly declined. All hope is not lost, for there are plenty of options available aside from the classic indoor dinner and movie.

Continued on next page

A new age of dating for a new age generation

By Khadesia Nedd

Continued from previous page

You will find plenty of space at your local park, drive-in movie theaters popping up across town, and even outdoor concerts are becoming more widespread. Some of these alternatives, such as drive-in movies, may become trendy in the post-COVID-19 age. Of course, there's always virtual dating.

If you're ready for the new age of dating, do try virtual dating. There are live, multiplayer card

games, board games, and video games alike that allow you to keep the energy going for even the shyest dates. At the pandemic's spark, a charming and quaint animal world of Animal Crossing appealed to both casual and hardcore gamers alike. Wildly enough, many people used this as a platform to hang out with other people by using an in-game character avatar in an aesthetically pleasing

world. Due to the chat limitations in the game, dates would supplement the game with video chatting or the classic phone call. I found that having a phone call first helped test the waters and breath the ice for conversational chemistry. Video chats have been surprisingly engaging.

You are able to make eye contact, get a feel for their unfiltered appearance, and even do some innovative activities

like a show and tell of the books and gizmos around your room. Not to mention, all of this is entirely safe and free. Frugal people can find fun and free alternatives like music and games to entertain your date. Then, of course, wallflowers can find an abundance of conversation kindling to stroke the date's flames. Cautious people like me can add an extra layer of security before

meeting someone in person. That means you won't have to get catfished or sit at a cafe with a guy who thinks testing your IQ is a fun activity.

The pandemic has impacted the entire world, but that does not mean that you have to stop living your life. As we navigate through this effervescent world of change, we have the opportunities to discover new and creative ways to

connect and reflect on our needs. Technology will continue to enlighten us on a new avenue for intimacy, such as video dating. At the same time, we face an unforeseen revival of archaic pastimes like drive-in theaters. We are at a fascinating crux of past and present, bound to engender a new age of science, art, and life for years to come.

The weakest link - Pandemic healthcare for disabled

By Michael Kowis

The "weakest link" in society is at risk. We must take a stand for the healthcare of the disability community now, while we still can.

We live in a society that is comprised of extensive health checks. We undergo temperature-checks every time we enter a public building. We get swabbed if we are feeling even the slightest bit sick. This is all fine if you have a car, your own house, and are otherwise healthy.

But what if you lived your life in a wheelchair for 99% of your day? Or what if you are blind and forced to rely on the closeness of others to guide you through the world? What if, for whatever reason, your cognition is impaired and you do not understand the severity of COVID-19?

I live my daily life with a condition called Cerebral Palsy,

which, among other limitations, means that my muscles are tighter and consequently weaker than the average person. I use a walker everywhere and rely on public transport services and family drivers to get me where I need to go.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 61 million Americans live with a disability. Of those 61 million, 21.6 million did not have a regular healthcare provider and did not attend a yearly checkup, due to costs. This means 1 in 3 disabled adults do not have access to healthcare. In Houston alone, the disabled population exceeds 215,000.

The point of these numbers is to illuminate the sobering fact that disabled people do not reside in the shadows of outdated census statistics, nor are they just a small part of a larger whole. This

population is significant, and the care for this population is of utmost priority.

In my research of how the health of the disabled population is being handled, I talked with Michael Young, Assistant Dietary Technician at Focused Care of Linden, to discuss what his post-COVID-19 training as a Direct Service Provider had taught him.

Young explained that employees are required to wear Proper Protective Equipment (PPE) including masks, gowns, and gloves. He also stated that temperature checks are conducted regularly. In the event that a patient contracts COVID-19, the employee is required to self-isolate for 14 days and not return until their temperature is below 100 degrees and the virus tests return negative. This news is good as it relates to how persons with disabilities

are cared for during this pandemic. Often people like us are sent to group homes or are offered home health aides.

In this scenario, it appears that the nurses and nurse assistants are doing everything they can to ward off this virus currently. I should make that point more vivid though: as of Aug. 13, 31.2% of ICU patients are either confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19, according to Community Impact Newspaper. According to The Texas Medical Center (TMC) in Houston, they can free up an additional 504 ICU beds.

We cannot afford to be complacent now. I say this because in Starr County, Texas, healthcare rationing was implemented. This basically states that the healthcare community has the power to decide who deserves to live and

who cannot be saved. Starr County Memorial Hospital did this because they ran out of ICU beds. As of July 24, the hospital ran out of the 29 beds in its COVID-19 unit. It could be argued that Houston hospitals may never reach that state, but it is a worrisome issue. What if the COVID-19 surge overwhelms our hospitals and we have to implement healthcare rationing? It is the 215,000 persons with disabilities and their attendants that will suffer.

According to the CDC, disabled persons are three times more likely to have secondary conditions that impact their health. These individuals are more likely to be turned away if healthcare rationing is implemented. Consequently, the parents or guardians of these individuals will likely be forced to pick up the slack. This takes hard-working individuals out of

our economy, which hurts the bottom line of the state of Texas. This is what I mean by saving the weakest link.

The weakest link is the lack of stable healthcare of the disabled and the economic prosperity of their guardians, parents and attendants. I leave you with the following image: Society is like a chain, only as strong as its weakest link. Shoring up the weakest link ensures that the greatness of the chain remains intact, not just for the upper-class or even the working class but everyone. We should save the weakest link so we can come out of this stronger than ever. Stay strong, stay safe, and remember that even the smallest person can have a major impact on the trajectory of this pandemic.

Why I don't wear a mask

By Keven Balderas

I finally decided to go to the grocery store myself last week, because my wife can never find the Lorna Doone cookies. When I arrived, however, I was not allowed in for not having a mask on. I admit I got upset and threw an angry fit, at one point overturning a shopping cart next to me.

At first, I did regret it because I became a meme. A recorded video of my actions showed up in my peer's feeds. My neighbors and coworkers laughed at

my expense for some days before another local curiosity went viral, and made them forget about me. I now take great pride in my public outburst, for which the Facebook groups I belong to have showered me with hundreds of likes and flattering comments, validation I have long craved.

Yes, I hold that it is not fair that I, or anyone else who considers themselves a law-abiding patriot, should have to wear a mask (or rather a muzzle) when unwilling to do so. These are my reasons, which

will be found compelling.

First, when snug, the mask supposedly blocks debris from going out, and it from coming in. Along with that, others around you exhale. They forget to mention, though, how uncomfortable it is wearing one.

It is, in fact, amazingly uncomfortable to walk around with a mask on, which, besides leaving marks on one's temples, it smells obscene. (It can't be that it is my own bad breath which I am being forced to become

aware of, as my Millennial daughter has suggested. She cannot be right...I brush my teeth too frequently and too vigorously to have bad breath.)

Secondly, if anyone will take a moment and turn to the mirror when you put a mask on, it must be quickly and thoroughly observed that it might as well be a baby's diaper on your face. A mask not only covers my trimmed six-day beard, but also stings my delicate self-esteem. I feel intolerably ugly with a mask on.

Yes, so personal appearance is not a Constitutional right. But still, why

should I put up with any discomfort, much less impose it on myself, in a country where I pay taxes, own property, and work hard for a living? To force me to walk around with a stuffy, sticky, smelly, sweaty, and unsexy mask on, in effect, is to waive my rights, my personal liberties, my choices. To me, wearing a mask that is stuffy and sweaty, containing my own recirculated air is an infringement on my right to comfort.

Indeed, I have heard it from *credible* patriotic sources that the masks themselves may be contaminating us with the so-called

"novel coronavirus."

Lastly, even if all the above were entirely false, burlesque and invented for satire's sake, there yet remains the most irrefutable reason: that I am so stressed and struck with fear by all the change and hardship caused by the pandemic, that refusing to wear a mask gives me a sense of control, which, though just an ounce, yet is gold to me in such a period as traumatizing and uncertain as to the one in which we are living.

The importance of wearing a mask

By Briana Garcia

In our current day, an age a new social norm is waving through our society. It changes our lives instantaneously because of the new guidelines everyone has to follow when out in public. COVID-19 has informed a mandatory mask mandate in many states in America - Texas, becoming one of them. The reason behind this order given to Texan residents is to keep the spreading of COVID-19 to a minimum and to reduce this disease's exposure. It has been informed to the public by the CDC that masks aid in reducing the disease's takeover in our communities.

When worn correctly, the masks are extremely beneficial as the correct material prevents any airborne contaminants from being inhaled

and keeping one's contaminants from being expelled. If wearing a mask in public and following the six feet apart, this will stop the rise in COVID-19 cases and keep loved ones safe then, and there should be no issue on the matter entirely. Its presence will significantly reduce the number of rising cases if the guidelines given with them are followed correctly.

The mask-wearing will allow one to still partake in most activities without interference whatsoever, and there are simple rules to follow when wearing one so no errors can be placed. The proper wear and care of a mask are simple, to have the item snug on one's face while it covers the nose in mouth, if needed to be removed, it

must be handled by the string and either cleansed, stored or disposed of correctly. The constant upkeep in hygiene with correct handwashing procedures is a helpful attribute to preventing COVID-19's spread. This, along with staying home if feeling ill or keeping a mask on when around people. Yet some choose to ignore these demands and choose their comfort versus the safety of everyone around them. The mingling in society without masks feeds into the rising cases, and those who act on it do not care what their actions can do to our community.

If one does not feel comfortable wearing a mask, then staying home and continuing to isolate should be readily available to most who cry discomfort. What about to those

who whine about how wearing one makes one hot and difficult to breathe in? The option to stay isolated and inside one's own home is still available, along with healthcare individuals explaining how to breathe intake does not decrease when a mask is worn. Those with medical conditions that weaken their immune system have been informed to stay home and isolate to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19. If an outing is needed, a mask is required. Reach out to your primary care doctor on up to date information regarding outings and the best masks to wear with the conditions one has. Masks are evolving daily, and new ones are available to purchase on many markets, masks with transparent shielding

near the lips are available for those with loved ones who communicate by lipreading. Safety guidelines are still present with those with disabilities to ensure safety for oneself and others.

Oh no, the mask is in the car, and one has already walked the ten feet from the parking spot to the doors, of the store, that hold flyers plastered all over it explaining how a mask is mandatory. Just as one walked to the doors one can take the steps back and place the mask on without screaming obscenities to the workers who are enforcing the mandate to keep other customers safe. Many are forced to shelter in their homes and have to rely on deliveries to prevent the spreading of this pandemic. Yet those who see themselves higher prevent this

disease from reducing. Their actions make COVID-19 more dangerous for all of society, specifically to those who do not have the same resources available to them. Until proper respect is given to mask's usage, the continuing rise in cases will spike higher than ever, which will merely prolong the stay at home orders and its lockdowns present around our nation. Wear your masks, the most effective masks to protect oneself and others, keep the distance between each other, respect others around you, keep masks worn correctly and practice safe hygiene and proper care and disposal for one's masks. This pandemic is merely beginning, and those who don't practice their abilities to end it will only let it fester and grow into a plague.

The Emmy's in color

By Jazzmin Jones

In the last few months, Americans have called for inclusion in the media. Award shows like the Emmys and the Oscars have notoriously been gatekeepers to Black people and people of color (POC) in the film and television industry. Often, actors are nominated multiple times for the same roles every year and rarely win. While the nominations this year are an improvement, there are still unrepresented groups. There is a glaring absence of nominees from the Latinx community despite having plenty of worthy candidates.

Indigenous and Asian populations are always overlooked as well. This year's nominees are a step in the right direction, but there is more work to be done.

This year 37% of the nominees are Black or people of color, a 6% increase compared to last year. Reginald Hudlin, director of "Boomerang" and "House Party," will be the first Black person to produce the Emmy award show. The Television Academy acknowledged the pressure to diversify the awards. CEO Frank Scherma was

quoted during a live stream with Vanity Fair stating, "This year we are also bearing witness to one of the greatest fights for social justice in history, and it is our duty to use this medium for change."

Dime Davis, director of "A Black Lady Sketch Show (HBO)," is the first Black woman to be nominated for Best Director of a Variety Series. HBO's "Watchmen" series tops the list with 26 total nominations, including Regina King's nomination for Best Lead Actress in a Limited Series. Zen-

daya snagged her first Emmy nomination for Best Lead Actress in a Drama Series for her role in HBO's "Euphoria."

Billy Porter is nominated for Lead Actor in a Drama Series for his role in FX's "Pose". The show is centered around LGBTQ+ people of color in the 1980's New York City. Noticeably none of the show's central trans actors were nominated. Hulu's "Ramy" was the first Muslim-American show to be nominated for an Emmy. Ramy Youssef, the lead actor, gained two nominations for Outstanding Actor and Outstanding

Director of a Comedy Series. Sandra Oh was nominated for the third time for her role in "Killing Eve." In 2018, Oh was the first Asian woman to be nominated in a Lead Actress category.

EGOT winner Rita Moreno was snubbed for her role in "One Day at a Time." Despite being on the show for four seasons, Moreno has yet to gain any Emmy recognition for her talent. This year's Emmy nominations only included one Latinx nominee, Alexis Bledel, for her guest appearance on "The Handmaid's Tale" which she has been nominated in and won multiple

times.

The lack of representation for Latinx, Asian, indigenous, and LGBTQ+ peoples only speaks to the work that still needs to be done in the tv and film industry. It is nice to have so many nominees, but how many Black and people of color will win? In 2018, only eight of the 38 Black and POC nominees won major acting awards. In 2019 only three walked away with trophies.

All of the nominees can be seen on Emmys.com and the award show will air on Sept. 20.

The games must go on - Sports in the pandemic

By Alex Riley

Four months after all sports shut down in America, the games have restarted in a capacity never seen before in efforts work around and throughout the ongoing pandemic.

On March 11, COVID-19 proved that no one is immune to its effects. That night, the medical staff of National Basketball Association's (NBA) franchise, Oklahoma City Thunder (OKC), rushed onto the court just moments before tip-off between the Utah Jazz and the OKC Thunder. The medical team spoke with the referees who immediately called off the game. Later, it was released that a member of the Utah Jazz had tested positive for COVID-19. This was

the first domino in a string of events that would ultimately lead to the postponement of the league.

Major League Baseball (MLB), which was originally slated to begin on March 26, only 2 weeks after the positive COVID-19 results from the NBA. In light of this, MLB delayed their opening day to Jul. 23, with a shortened season of just 60 games, as opposed to the usual 162. To say that MLB has navigated this tumultuous delay with ease, would be a complete farce. The league dealt with labor disputes between players and owners regarding salaries for the shortened season, in addition to concerns about how to safely commence the

season in the midst of a pandemic.

Major League Soccer (MLS) also began the season as COVID-19 was becoming prominent. All teams played only 2 games before the league was suspended on March 12. For MLS, this is the first time a season has been postponed since the attack on 9/11.

When National Hockey League (NHL) suspended play due to the pandemic, the league was only 3½ weeks from completing the regular season and beginning the Stanley Cup Playoff games. NHL's rapid response to growing concerns surrounding the spread of the virus proved beneficial as they were able to suspend the league

before any players or team personnel could test positive.

Resuming play was no simple feat, but every league that experienced disruptions was able to successfully recommence, though some much more effectively than others. All the league, however, were faced with the same reality upon restart: there is no way they could commence with fans in the bleachers.

Initially, this was an obstacle that seemed impossible to remedy with any sort of subtlety. Fortunately, European soccer began before any sports in America and provided a sample for how fans would react to crowd noise being virtually pumped into the broadcast. However, they did

offer options for the same game without the crowd noise in the background, should you prefer to watch it that way.

The MLS was the first of the American professional sports leagues to resume play with a tournament entitled "MLS is Back," which premiered on July 8. The tournament launched in a bubble-format in which all the leagues teams were contained to a site in Orlando on grounds owned by Walt Disney World. This "bubble" mandated that all team players and staff members stay in hotels inside the bubble. They were not allowed any contact with personnel outside the bubble (unless they undergo

required quarantine before leaving and returning), and must they must constantly test for the virus.

Prior to beginning the tournament, 10 players and 1 staff member of the FC Dallas team tested positive, as well as several members of the Nashville SC team. This forced an immediate expulsion from the bubble. Aside from the initial hiccup with 2 of the 26 teams making up the league, the tournament proved to be highly successful and went on to completion on Aug. 11, when the MLS crowned the Portland Timbers as the winner.

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The games must go on - Sports in the pandemic

By Alex Riley

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Major League Baseball returned to action on Jul. 23. In light of the delayed start, they reduced the season to 60 games and limited travel by having teams play most of their games against division rivals and teams in close geographic proximity.

For safety purposes, every player and coach for every franchise is being tested daily. Like other professional leagues around the

world, no fans have been allowed in attendance.

However, baseball has dealt with several hick-ups to date, including a mass outbreak on the Miami Marlins of at least 17 players testing positive for COVID-19, causing the franchise to postpone several games. The St. Louis Cardinals followed suit with 17 players and 10 members of the coaching staff testing positive dating

back to July 29. As of publication, MLB has had to postpone a total of 33 games due to COVID-19. NBA, the league that has served as the catalyst for the pandemic's effect on the sporting world, returned on Jul. 30, in unique conditions. Instead of the original 30 teams, the league was reduced to 22 teams and they all played in a bubble-format in Orlando, FL.

The top 13 teams in the west and

the top 9 teams in the east played eight regular season games to determine seeding for the playoffs. And like every other league, no fans were physically at the games. However, the NBA implored a tactic of allowing fans to appear virtually on screens around the court in order to add to the atmosphere of the game.

Upon arrival, of the 302 players, 16 tested positive. Those players remained in isolation until the

public health protocols were satisfied.

As of the publication of this article, the NBA would have gone four consecutive weeks without a single positive test. This is a clear indicator the process the NBA is undergoing to finish their season is highly effective.

Currently, the NBA is playing out their postseason, MLB is continuing the grind that is the regular season, and MLS was able to

crown a tournament champion, telling us that sports can be played in this uncertain and tumultuous time. If the proper safety measures and precautions are exercised. Sports fans, like myself, only hope that the NFL is paying attention and preparing to do what it takes to safely and successfully play the 2020-21 season.

Trump sets the clock against TikTok

By Lauren Anderson

On July 31, President Donald Trump told reporters that he would ban the social media app, TikTok, in the United States.

The Trump administration and lawmakers believe TikTok is a security risk because it is owned by a Chinese company called ByteDance. Because both the republicans and the democrats worry about the security risk, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) warned people against using the social media app. President Trump stated that he would sign something soon and rejected the deal that Microsoft would buy TikTok.

Trump signed an executive order on Aug. 6, giving ByteDance 45 days to sell the app before it is banned in the U.S. Trump's executive order stated

that "The spread in the United States of mobile applications developed and owned by companies in the People's Republic of China continues to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and the economy of the United States." Trump then ordered ByteDance to strip itself of the data obtained from TikTok users in the U.S.

TikTok has around 65 million to 80 million users in the U.S. The American Civil Liberties Union, a nonprofit advocacy organization, stated that banning the app will go against freedom of expression and will be "technologically impractical."

Trump later modified his stance on the subject. He stated that rather than immediately banning the app, he would only ban it if Microsoft or another American company failed to buy the Chi-

nese-owned app by Sept. 15. "I set a date of around Sept. 15, at which point it's going to be out of business," Trump told reporters. "But if somebody, and whether it's Microsoft or somebody else, buys it, that'll be interesting."

Microsoft showed interest in buying the U.S. portion of the app, and announced it through a blog post. Trump later confirmed the news and stated that he and the CEO of Microsoft, Satya Nadella, spoke about it. Microsoft and ByteDance have given a formal notice of their desire to purchase to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), which will give Microsoft the ownership to operate TikTok in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Trump then insisted that Mic-

rosoft would have to pay the U.S. government to gain ownership of the Chinese-owned app ultimately. The Treasury Department has yet to respond to inquiries about how payment can be received if a deal is made. However, through the CFIUS President Trump has the authority to either pressure for a sale or force the company to stop operating.

The CFIUS has focused its attention on looking into Chinese investment deals with U.S. influence. ByteDance did not ask for authorization from CFIUS when it purchased Musical.ly in 2018, which is why TikTok is currently being investigated. Because TikTok has increased in popularity, many were worried that the Chinese government could gain information on U.S. citizens through the social

media app.

Despite this, experts say the demand for payment from the deal would be considered illegal. However, Microsoft confirmed both interests in the purchase of TikTok and in giving up government compensation.

If Microsoft ends up not purchasing the app, TikTok and its U.S. employees plan on taking the Trump administration to court to fight the ban. Mike Godwin, the lawyer who represents the TikTok employees, stated that the legal challenge to the executive order would be separate from the lawsuit from the company who owns the app.

It is unclear if the executive order will make it illegal for TikTok to pay its workers in the U.S. and it would prohibit any transaction with TikTok and ByteDance. The employees

argued that there was a lack of due process, which is safeguarded in the 5th and 14th amendments. They also stated that TikTok spent almost a year trying to engage with the U.S. government to discuss its concerns. Godwin stated that the legal challenge would be focused on worker rights rather than national security.

"TikTok is loved by 100 million Americans because it is a home for entertainment, self-expression, and connection," a TikTok spokesperson said. "We're motivated by their passion and creativity and committed to continuing to bring joy to families and meaningful careers to those who create on our platform as we build TikTok for the long term. TikTok will be here for many years to come."



Reviews and Recommendations



“Honey Boy”

By Salvador Hernandez

What makes a man a man? This question has been examined in various films, amongst them Richard Linklater’s “Boyhood” and Barry Jenkin’s “Moonlight”. In this instance, Alma Har’el’s “Honey Boy” answers the question by linking the relationship between an individual’s childhood and their presence as an adult. The plot revolves around Otis’ mandatory stay in a rehabilitation facility after driving under the influence and resisting arrest. The story develops in

a non-linear fashion in which the story switches between the protagonist’s present and past, operating in flashbacks of moments with his father, a recovering alcoholic, ex-felon and Vietnam veteran.

The film showcases beautiful cinematography. Though the shots used may not be the most experimental, it is a good watch. Director Alma Har’el creates a well-paced and visually captivating film using neon and a plethora of colors to expertly illustrate the madness and lunacy seen on screen. The

screenplay, written by Shia LaBeouf who also stars as Otis’ father James Lort, has a profound connection with the film. It is a semi-biographical look toward LeBeouf’s childhood and his run-ins with the law. At its heart, the film is a dark and heart wrenching look into the cycles of pain and confusion experienced in childhood and post adolescence.

Amongst the themes in “Honey Boy” of self-discovery, redemption and loss, masculinity sits at the focal point of the film’s narrative. Both characters

represent positive and negative aspects of masculinity with Otis trying to break from the immaturity of his father in order to become a full-fledged adult. For example, throughout the film James’ masculinity comes from a place of immaturity as he is unable to cope with his emotions of guilt and frustration. His emotions from his time in the war and alcoholism results in psychical and verbal abuse towards his son. Otis on the other hand develops a longing for a true father figure to bond with, one who, unlike

James, gives him the guidance needed for him to transition from a boy to a man. Otis sacrifices his past to redeem himself. Letting go of his demons provided the view that becoming a man means taking responsibility for your actions and letting go of childhood. He comes full circle, no longer lingering in the man-child mentality which his father inhabited. Rather his willingness to sacrifice has stripped him of his boyish immaturity and has led him to embrace mature manhood..

Overall, the

movie was an entertaining watch and an astonishing piece of cinematography. The film’s emotional connection is thoroughly felt through LaBeouf and Noah Jupe’s interactions on screen and are beautifully captured by the chemistry between the breakout performance of Noah Jupe and the veteran actor. The movie will certainly leave audiences feeling the sense of self-discovery that Lucas learned through his journey of redemption and his pursuit of righting his wrongs.

Five Anime series for fall

By Khadesia Nedd

In the days of yore, anime fans had to rely on Toonami broadcasts or unofficial and sketchy websites filled to the brink with pop up ads and phishing links. However, you can now find many of these titles on Netflix and other streaming sites. There are few streaming sites that missed the opportunity to feature popular anime titles such as Bleach, Naruto, and Dragon Ball Z. In fact, there are so many titles that you may get what is called “Netflix syndrome” where you spend more time

pressing through the selections than you do binging a show. To make it easier, here are several titles you should be watching. This is a primo array of anime as a jumping point for a nightly Netflix binge.

For the horror lovers, try “Parasyte the Maxim”. The 2014 film is about Shinichi, a high schooler that gets infected by a sentient parasite that can communicate telepathically. While most parasites take over the brain, this parasite only takes over the hand, leading to a oddball partnership.

The story darkens as the parasite becomes more ubiquitous and destructive. Shinichi must sacrifice his normal life for the good of humanity. As he develops better strengths and senses, other parasites begin to detect him and make attempts on his life and others. Follow as a young boy turns into humanity’s last hope as he works with the parasite in a symbiotic relationship. The show focuses on themes such as self-preservation, environmental issues and the value of empathy. It gives a

fresh perspective on life and cohabitation in nature. Madhouse produced this anime nearly 20 years after the original manga ended which results in a complete and satisfying anime. It was directed by Kenichi Shimizu and written by Hitoshi Iwaaka.

“Anohana: The Flower We Saw that Day” is a great tear-jerker. This supernatural drama features a character revisiting his old friend group after becoming a shut in. A childhood crush pays him a visit and settles in his home and life. He is forced to confront the rest of his estranged friend group one by

one as they uncover hidden secrets from their shared dark pasts and the events leading up to present day. Confronting the past is never an easy feat. Reconnecting comes as a serious obstacle. However, they must reckon with each other in order to move forward with their lives. This particular title goes past sentimental angst and provokes deep reflection in how people relate to each of the characters in their separate stories and how they converge. The characters endure a substantial amount of grief and guilt that can provide a profound catharsis for

viewers. Anohana was directed by Tatsuyuki Nagai and based on the novel written by Mari Okada

For those looking for something more lighthearted and fun, there’s the classic “Cardcaptor Sakura”. Originally released in 1997, this 90s classic is filled with the monsters of the week that delve into more complex issues as the series develops. This series is aimed towards a younger audience, but can be enjoyed by all. This anime captivates audiences with a cast of colorful characters and charming dynamic relationships.

Continued on next page

Five anime series for fall

By Khadesia Nedd

Continued from previous page

This is a magical girl classic where Sakura is tasked with collecting 72 clove cards that resemble tarot cards. The magic of the show is so simple and straightforward, but the characters learn about themselves and the world around them in ways that help them change and develop. Enemies become friends, friends become lover, and the characters learn more and more about who and what they should

trust. With 72 clove card monsters to face, the series does a great job staying consistent and interesting with its challenging foes. For this camp classic, the show is known for deviating from the standard heteronormative relations and innocently touching on controversial topics. Originally, when the United States syndicated the show, it heavily censored any mention of queer relationships. In fact, the series was begun by focusing

on a boy aside from the main character because it was not believed young girls would enjoy an action packed show. However, that proved to be false as many people of all genders grew up loving the show. “Cardcaptor Sakura” was directed by Morio Asala and was based on a manga by the creative collective known as CLAMP.

If looking for something inspirational and boldly aesthetic, watch “Gurren Lagan”. This

anime cannot be solely defined by its giant robots. From the first episode, viewers will know if this is the show for them. The series starts with a small and soft-spoken underdog that literally starts in an underground village. There, he meets Kamina, a loud-mouth champion of dreams and adventure ready to take his friends to greater heights. Literally. The series is as chaotic as it is simple and rings true with many viewers as an instant

classic legend. A boy realizes his destiny is bigger than his small dreams to follow his friends and it grows and grows to greater heights. Simoun starts off small and it is hard to believe that he is the main character as he is surrounded by people much louder and more colorful. But that is the point of the series. We watch him grow into someone bigger than his body and someone who cannot be ignored. After the first episode, it is hard

to stop watching as the 25-episode series successfully threads together an epic tale of a young boy’s path to revolutionize his world and the world of others. Gainax produced this original anime that proceeds any derivative works and succinctly encapsulates the beginning, middle and end.

As of Aug. 25, all of these titles can be accessed on Netflix.

“On the Trail: Inside the 2020 Primaries”

By Aansa Usmani

“On the Trail: Inside the 2020 Primaries” gives insight into how media distribution is ensured through the work of internal media spokespeople and how vital information made available to the public. It is more than just a political campaign documentary. It highlights the importance of women in media. Whether as producers or camera operators, internal media people within a campaign (also known as “em-beds”) are important roles that allow for further distribution of media content.

The documentary follows the lives of women from CNN ranging from Chief Political Correspondent Dana Bash and White House Political Correspondent Kaitlan Collins to Campaign Correspondent Kyung Lah and em-beds Daniella Diaz

and Jasmine Wright. Although it is dated to the beginning of the pandemic lockdown, it shows the importance of women in media and how their work helps inform the general public.

It also gives insight into the lives of em-beds and how their assignments meant constant change, whether it be moving or residing in hotel rooms to continue their campaign coverage. In the first few scenes, presidential candidate Amy Klobuchar em-bed Jasmine Wright mentions how her life is continuously evolving and how moving is a given within her field of work. Wright mentions how her work field has led her to sublet her D.C. residence until November. She stated “With this job, my life is just so transitional... on the road for six, sometimes seven days

a week.”

Similarly, presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren em-bed Daniella Diaz mentions how her life is “[running] around with a twenty-pound camera, seven days a week, 24 hours a day...documenting everything a presidential candidate is doing.”

When Klobuchar (D-MN) decided to end her bid and planned to endorse Vice President Joe Biden, Wright was the first to confirm and dictate Klobuchar’s plan going forward.

Additionally, Diaz gave full coverage of Warren’s press conference discussing the termination of her political campaign and the path ahead.

The documentary briefly touches on Kaitlan Collins, a CNN White House Correspondent, and the struggles she had to endure as a national reporter. Whether it

was asking questions or being booed at Trump campaign rallies, Collins stated, “Trump’s the only president I’ve ever covered...when [he] goes after the press...it’s definitely hostile. You still have to do your job.” Covering the White House has been a challenge, yet Collins continued to report and comment, often showing up at the near daily COVID-19 briefings.

Dana Bash’s role is briefly mentioned, touching on her personal life and her current position at CNN. She give an insightful message of hope to women covering politics (pre-pandemic) and how the field has shifted towards diversity and inclusivity. Bash stated, “I know how hard it is to be a woman in this business. You can have it all, but not always at the same time.” As of now, she

works remotely with the network, juggling filming and campaign coverage while helping her son with virtual education.

Towards the end, it showed how the news landscape has had to adjust to lockdown measures. Some anchors by filming from home or other methods to ensure social distancing and limiting further spread. For the em-beds, it was a sudden shock. Previously, they had been active within campaigns. Once ended, they were left with a sense of anxiety about their careers. For now, they are continuing to report on campaign matters for Joe Biden, instead using online reports rather than physically following the candidate. These measures could become the new norm for covering political campaigns, but time will only tell.

Overall, the documentary was well executed and conveyed its message of the importance of women in political media. Were it not for em-beds, campaigns would be shown through its outward appearance rather than the work that occurs behind the scenes. Although this documentary could be geared towards political or media junkies, it gives insight into women’s roles when covering significant events. It shows that the field itself has become more diverse and inclusive. However, much needs to be reformed to ensure more individuals can have opportunities.

The documentary, “On the Trail: Inside the 2020 Primaries,” is available exclusively through HBO MAX.

“Mexican Gothic”

By Laura Dunn

Set in a 1950s picturesque countryside in a fictitious town in Mexico, “Mexican Gothic” focuses around aristocratic Noemí as she journeys to check up on her newlywed cousin now living in a house known as High Place. High Place has a deep, dark past that is much more complicated than what meets the eye.

The main character Noemí is extremely likeable and perhaps ahead of the times for the period. She is chain smoking, sassy and extremely intelligent. Her ‘take no bull’ attitude is necessary for everything High Place reveals to her.

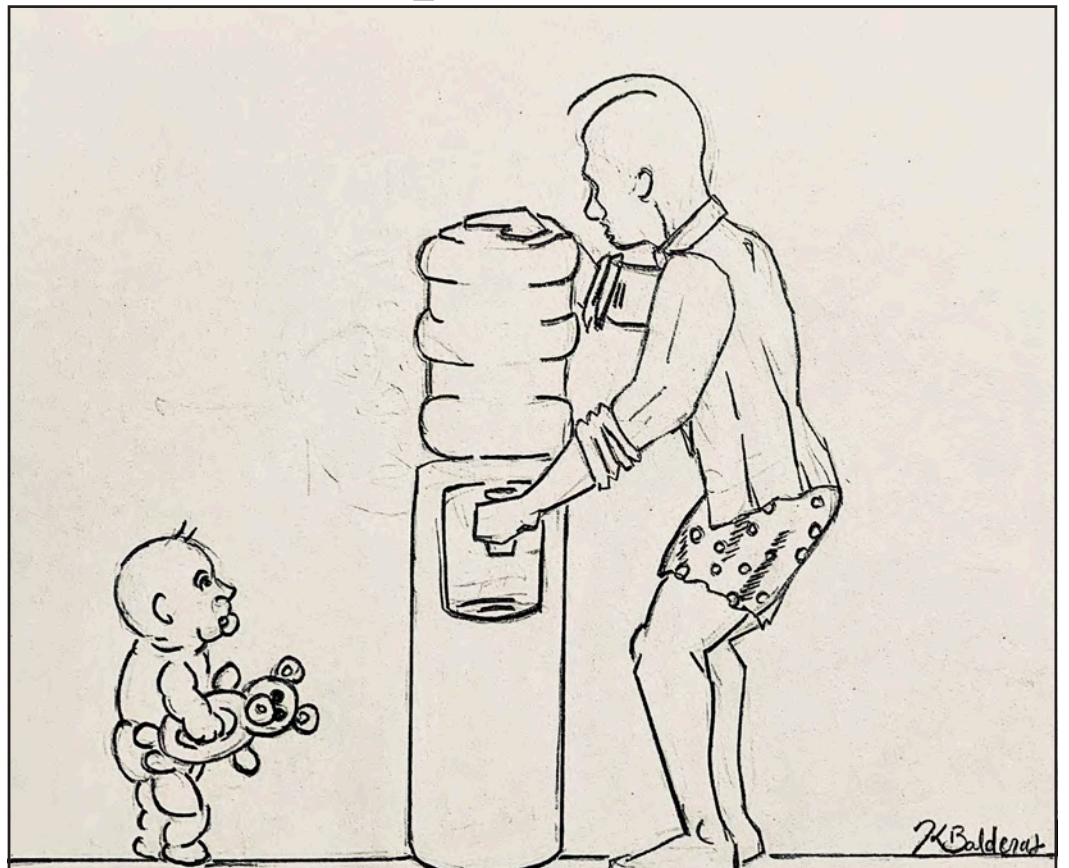
Her wit helps the reader along the way because no matter what happens, it is hard to lose faith in Noemí.

Fans of anything thriller, suspense, horror or mystery will find this an absolute gem of a book. Ancestral secrets, ghosts, medicine ladies, twisted doctors and more are all condensed into 301 pages of page turning intensity.

Once picked up, it is almost impossible to put back down. This book invites the reader into the strange universe that has been created. But be warned, you may need to sleep with a light on for a night or two.

Office Gossip in 2020

By Keven Balderas



Hey, did you hear about what happened during Monday's meeting? Matt's webcam... yea, that Matt, the one from Accounting...well, this guy's webcam fell down, and guess what? He wasn't wearing any pants! Well, but that makes three of us, don't it, pal?

“Black is King”

By Jazzmin Jones

In a country where Black skin was outlawed for generations, Beyoncé's “Black Is King” is monumental. The visual album is a companion piece to the Disney remake of “The Lion King” (2019). The film loosely follows the story of a young African prince cast out into the world who must find his way back to his home kingdom. West African cultures inspired art for the album. The film showcases and amplifies artists from Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, South Africa and Cameroon.

Overall the artistry is nothing short of perfection. Every scene, hairstyle, outfit and makeup choice were chosen with precision. The producers,

songwriters, directors and composers came from various different backgrounds and cultures. Traditional African dances inspired many of the sequences in the film. The background art decor is full of genuine west African art pieces, some borrowed from Tina Lawson, Beyoncé's Mother (RollingStone.com). There are voice-over clips from “The Lion King” (2019) movie that aid in the audio storytelling. Beyoncé is quoted as saying, “The soundtrack is a love letter to Africa.”

The use of west African artists brings a new sound to the mainstream music scene. Afropop is already thriving in Nigeria and the countries that surround it. American artists like Drake and Kendrick

Lamar have been using elements from this genre in their music. In this film, however, the complete sound is presented creatively and intriguingly. The dance sequences match perfectly with the numerous rhythms.

The criticism for this movie comes from East Africans. While everyone can agree that the visuals were outstanding, it is not entirely perfect. East Africa was extremely underrepresented. While parts of the visual album were filmed in Kenya, there are no Kenyans featured in the soundtrack or film. The movie is packaged as the sound of Africa, yet leaves out a culture that is thriving in new art and music. “The Lion King” movies use the Swahili phrase “Hakuna Matata,” which translates to

“no trouble.” This phrase is arguably a driving force in both films. Yet, “Black Is King” fails to use any reference to Tanzania, Kenya, or Uganda, all west African countries where this language is widespread. Understandably, Africa has 54 countries, and it would be tough to include every country's culture and traditions.

Another source of criticism comes from people who are tired of seeing African culture represented by painted white faces and African print. Nigerian college student Grace Basse spoke to the Washington Post in an interview stating, “There is so much more to Africa than lions ... and painting our faces white.” The use of this imagery suggests how the western world sees Africa. Ar-

tistically, this decision might be deliberate. In “The Lion King”, Simba loses his sense of culture because he left his home at such a young age. Black Americans suffer a similar journey. During slavery, Africans were taken from west African countries like Nigeria and Mali and brought to the Americas to be slaves. Most African Americans will find that they have roots in some of those western countries. Hannah Bleacher, the production designer for “Black Panther”, spoke to the LA Times, saying, “We were told that our culture was ghetto and bastardized, and that's just who we were. And we believed that for a long time. But what we didn't know, and what we've lost from the ancestors, is that we're none of those

things. We are joy and beauty and strength. So, the way Simba is learning about who he is, we are collectively rediscovering who we have always been.”

“Black Is King” is a reference guide to African culture from a Black American perspective. The disconnect between Black American culture and African culture stems from slavery and oppression. “Black Is King” seeks to prove that Black can be beautiful, divine and graceful. This visual album is for future generations to see how two very different cultures can combine and be great. It is a pathway back to the original roots of Black Americans.

The visual album, “Black is King,” is available to stream on Disney+.