

UHD DATELINE

Student Run Since
Volume One

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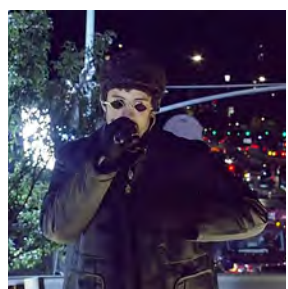
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Dedicated staffers of Mail Services save UHD's sustainability garden

By Indira Zaldivar

Debora Evans and Jacqueline Simms of the Shipping and Receiving and Mail Services Office in One Main Building, sensed a depressing void in campus when UHD closed in March. Without students taking care of the sustainability garden located in front of the mailroom, the whole project risked going to waste. Amid abrupt change, Evans and Simms took charge of the sustainability garden, distributed harvests among family and community, led more staff to participate, and created a therapeutic experience out of the ongoing void on campus.

Evans, who manages the office, has worked at UHD for 14 years. Working these past seven months in an empty campus has been hard on her.

"It was depressing," Evans said. "I miss everybody."

In March, Evans and Simms reached out to Lisa Morano, Ph.D., director for Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability, about taking care of the garden. They feared that the garden would go to waste when the student volunteers from UHD Gardening Club were prohibited access because of the pandemic.

"We looked straight at it every day, and it's a joy to look at it," Simms said. "We just don't want to be wasteful; we don't want it to just rot."

Evans first volunteered in the sustainability garden during its initial stages in the fall of 2015. She helped plant food and build the garden with students from UHD Gardening Club. The Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability and the College of Science and Technology support the efforts and initiatives required towards the sustainability garden. Evans' continued involvement developed into friendships with the student volunteers and Morano.

"They knew us, and they would bring us stuff," Evans said. "Whatever we had that was in excess, we shared."

Evans dedicates her spare time distributing harvests from gardens all around Houston to people in need.

"You would be surprised where they have gardens," Evans said. "It could be anywhere, places you wouldn't think of." Harvests in April from the sustainability garden included fresh tomatoes, basil, cucumbers, hot peppers, mustard spinach, watermelons, pumpkins, and okra. Simms first got involved in the garden in March. Despite being her first time gardening, she said it was easy researching online how to maintain the garden pest-free and weed-free using homemade remedies.

"Sometimes we're

in there from an hour to three hours, but it is not work." Simms said. "It's a joy."

Simms invited her baby, JosiYah, and husband, Jamarick, to participate. Jamarick whacks the weeds, treats the beds, breaks the leaves, trims the grass, and turns the compost bins. Maya, Evans' granddaughter, also helps water the plants.

"We have runners and joggers and people that ride their bike that stop and say, 'Man, y'all are doing a good job,'" Simms said.

Simms said that she wanted to buy organic food for her family but that "not everybody can afford organic food." Simms said her mother was ecstatic when she brought her a fresh tomato from the sustainability garden.

Simms said the food is tasty. "It's crunchy and tender."

In June, Tuyet "Snow" Huynh, Facilities Analyst in One Main Building, joined Evans and Simms in taking care of the garden after being allowed back on campus for work. Huynh said her interest in green initiatives grew while studying at University of Houston where she graduated with a degree in architecture.

Huynh also found working in the garden therapeutic. She regrew store-bought

potatoes and celery to use in the garden. Huynh spends her breaks in the garden. They all encouraged students to become more involved in the garden when it becomes safe for them to return to campus and participate in student activities.

"When I am at work the whole time, I want to de-stress, and I want to get in the sun," Huynh said. "It's a calming effect when I am out there focusing on the plants, seeing them grow and thrive. It's also very motivating and gratifying to see that you're bearing the fruit of your labor, and then you can take it and eat it."



From left to right: "Snow" Huynh, Debora Evans, and Jacqueline Simms, who tended to UHD's sustainability garden throughout the pandemic.



Debora Evans' granddaughter, Maya (5), also helped tend to the garden. Images courtesy of Debora Evans.



THE DATELINE

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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 University of Houston-Downtown, 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.

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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 editordateline@downtown@gmail.com.

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Faculty Senate Update

By Sheryl Sellers

A variety of items were on the Sept. 15 Faculty Senate meeting agenda. It included a preliminary report of spring semester statistics surrounding student use of the S/U option, a report from Enrollment Management, and updates on spring class modalities and the new duo authentication. Faculty Senate President, Ron Beebe, Ph.D. introduced Jimmy Jung, Ph.D, the Vice President of Enrollment Management who delivered a preliminary report on fall semester student enrollment. Fall enrollment was up 8% from this time last year, and the 1,525 first time in college (FTIC) enrollment was even to that of fall 2019. Incoming transfer student enrollment was down 5% at 2,200 students. New graduate student enrollment was up 28% to 580 students; however, continuing graduate enrollment was down 5%.

Jung expressed that, "Students appear to be needier," regarding financial aid adding that the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Cares Act (GEER) will be helpful. Since there is no roster to confirm a student's class attendance online, the Title IV certification will be handled via a student receiving a grade of F and in compliance with Title IV requirements.

The conversation with Jung continued surrounding the interim admissions policy. He asserted that the SAT and ACT tests nationally are awry due to COVID-19. No upper level institutions are using them because test centers are not available. Therefore, tests are optional for fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters. A question was raised concerning

the evaluation process for applications. He responded that typically, the top 25% [high school graduates] are admitted or incoming students with a GPA of 2.5 or greater. Applicants with a GPA lower than 2.5 can be granted conditional admission. Also, UHD does offer those students support. Provost Eric Carl Link, Ph.D. was next to speak, and he commended enrollment management for the admirable efforts in summer enrollment.

"This is a crucial week for us," Provost Link continued, adding that UHD needs to look into those with non-payment status.

Discussion then turned to the upcoming spring semester.

"We have to render a decision now, this week," he asserted, furthering that guidelines will be provided the next day at the earliest. Senate must adopt a strategy of what a "Yellow - Stage 3" spring semester will look like. Provost Link further maintained that, "It will be easier if we adjust prior to the start of spring."

At the end of the fall semester UHD will determine if the campus can move to stage "Yellow". Nasly Dyer, Ph.D., Executive Director Institutional Data Analytics, Institutional Research and Mik Yegiyan, Director Institutional Data Analytics, presented a study on letter grades and the S/U option following the spring semester. The study utilized undergraduates registered in the conventional academic calendar not those from an eight week or a mini semester. Of the students who chose a letter grade for the spring semester, 41% achieved a letter grade of "A"; 25%

achieved "B"; and 9% received a grade of "C"; 3% "D" and 5% of students received a mark of "F". Of the remaining 13%, 6% chose the "S" option and the remainder elected "U".

Overall, the spring semester GPA settled at 2.91; and those who did not opt for the S/U option had a cumulative GPA of 2.964. Those who chose S/U with only one U, would have had a GPA of 2.319. The cumulative GPA of 2.959 applied to students who chose the S option and no U option.

Comparing spring semester 2020 to fall semester 2019, 40.94% of students received A's in the spring and 31.85% received A's in the fall. "The grade distribution was not that radical. Students seemed to use [the option] appropriately," Yegiyan explained.

Dr. Dyer further expounded on the accomplishment of the Gator Success program stating that students who attended 100% of the time re-enrolled and attained a higher average GPA. Provost Link discussed a recent meeting held with the department chairs and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) regarding the upcoming spring semester. As for class modality, consideration will be given according to faculty choice. Per the matrix, 30%-40% of classes will include some sort of face-to-face instruction.

Michelle Moosally, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English, and Associate Vice President of Programming and Curriculum suggested that the group think as positively as possible and to think about what is best for the students.

Continued on the next page.

Faculty Senate Update (continued)

Currently, there is no deadline to make the modality of instruction decision. If the instruction begins as face-to-face and moves to online, Provost Link recommends that commitment to class time stay consistent. Furthermore, the decision of asynchronous and synchronous should be defined plainly for the students so they can make good decisions. (NOTE: In the current case at UHD, asynchronous can be defined as online; and synchronous describes interaction

between student and instructor, i.e. via Zoom.)

UHD will undertake good marketing for the students so they can discern the mode of a particular class when registering for the spring semester. As much public relations as possible will be provided to students so good decisions can be made on their part.

Jerry Johnson Jr., Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Faculty, Research and Sponsored Programs noted that UHD may be pressured to open

its campus.

Faculty who typically teach a face-to-face class and request to teach online will need to request an accommodation such as a medical reason. In Aug., the UH Chancellor maintained that faculty could choose their own teaching modality.

“There is contradictory messaging going on,” stated Mike Duncan, Ph.D., Professor of Technical Communication.

Dr. Johnson will follow up on the communication

inconsistencies. There is concern that the process to moving a class online is inequitable to begin with. Among the senators, much resentment was revealed in that faculty was not advised of a change in requesting a fully online course. It was further mentioned that it is easier to go online from a face-to-face class than the other way around, and annoyance was present that they would be forced into a decision by the Board of Regents.

Anecdotally, students are all over the place:

some are fearful to return to campus, others want to return to face-to-face classes.

The final discussion centered on the rollout of “Duo Two Factor Authentication” (of course with a new acronym Duo 2FA) affecting Office 365.

It was brought to the senate’s attention that a graduate student at UHD has had to use the application, and that 2FA could be a huge hindrance to many of UHD’s students, not just faculty.

Faculty senate comments were

uncomplimentary as well, with statements like:

“What is Duo?” “Why is this being shoved down our throat with no thought of the effect in managing our classes?” “Like Ally.” “Messaging sucks.” “Who’s collecting the data?” “Why do we have to pony-up?” “Is this a fishing expedition?”

The only known aspect of the new process seems to be the system mandate of a Sept. 30 deadline for students to create their accounts.

Students discuss sexual misconduct on campuses

By Priscila Batres

Sexual assault and harassment is a problem encountered by many students in college, especially women. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in every five women experiences sexual assault or an attempted sexual assault.

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for universities to ignore sexual assault and harassment allegations. Oftentimes, they simply do not do enough to prevent it.

For instance, a UHD student shared their experience of sexual harassment on campus. This student (who would like to remain anonymous) was part of an organization and reported the incident to the individual in charge of the organization. Sometime later, the organization leader

stepped down, and a new leader took over. The new leader was not so understanding of the situation and made the student feel as if the harassment was the student’s own fault. The new leader did nothing to move the report forward.

The mishandling of an incident like the example above also goes against the sexual misconduct guidelines of UHD and Title IX. UHD statements and processes for sexual assault and harassment are as follows:

The university identifies sexual harassment as “any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.” It is also important to mention that the university assures that any person who reports sexual misconduct is protected by university policy against retaliation. These statements can be found under the Title IX and sexual misconduct column on UHD’s website. There are also two links in the same col-

umn which a student can fill out to make a regular report or an anonymous one. However, under the sexual misconduct policy, students are given a year to make a report. Furthermore, UHD also applies the necessary Title IX regulations, a civil right act passed in 1972 that prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational funded programs.

Under this law, sexual misconduct is illegal. Under these guidelines, universities must effectively respond to

any incident of this nature if the university is aware, and they must eliminate the hostile environment and address the issue. Yet the story above illustrates an example of a time where the university failed to do so. The issue was not addressed, the case not moved forward.

UHD is an institution that claims to care about their students and has shown that they do care by providing different resources for victims of sexual assault and harassment. But do they do enough to protect their students and from the victim blaming that often accompanies these situations?

UHD and other universities should be doing more, and people in charge need to be held accountable. Sexual mis-

conduct is a serious matter and should be treated as such. So what can UHD and other universities do to assure their students that they are safe while on campus? Sexual misconduct, assault, and harassment needs to be spoken about more, the resources should be made more readily available, it should be continuously addressed throughout each semester, and the victims should be heard, and their cases moved forward. UHD and other universities need to be able to guarantee that if a student comes forward with an allegation on campus, there is some sort of justice and protection for the victim.

“The University of Houston-Downtown is committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind sexual misconduct, a form of sex discrimination, is antithetical to the standards and ideals of the University. The University will take appropriate action to eliminate Sexual Misconduct from happening, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects.”



Faculty Spotlight: 2020 September Symposium Presenters



Michael Duncan, Ph.D.

By Keven Balderas

On Sept. 24, UHD Professor of Technical Communication, Mike Duncan, Ph.D., presented his ongoing research at the English department's ninth September Symposium. Though hosted annually, this is first one hosted entirely over Zoom.

Duncan's first slide was a picture of the back of a man's head. That was his view as he sat in the basement of an office building in downtown Houston, waiting to hear whether he would be picked again to serve as a member of a jury. Twenty years ago in Boston was his first and only previous time, when, at the last minute, despite having attended the whole trial, he was made an alternate juror and had to sit out on deciding the fates of three alleged murderers.

Eventually, he found out that the Boston trial would be the only time he proceeded beyond the summons. But for him the wait downtown had not been a waste of time. Not only did it satisfying his sense of civic duty, but it also left him with an idea for his next scholarly paper – the paper presented at this year's Symposium: "Some Issues Regarding the Persuasive Purpose and Method of Select-

ing Juries By Lot in 4th-Century Athens."

Antiquity has persistently fascinated Duncan, at least since he decided to write his doctoral dissertation on the Early Christian rhetoric. "It's been a useful analogy for me when making arguments about contemporary rhetoric," Duncan explained. "Not much has changed in terms of how people persuade one another." To wit, he published earlier this year on the similitudes between the rhetoric of Demosthenes and Donald Trump.

What helped him narrow his focus onto legal matters in ancient Athens was a serendipitous stumble upon the "Athenaion Politeia," the Athenian constitution. "In this case, it was that the explanation that the author was giving for why the lottery system existed didn't make sense," Duncan further explained. "You get these huge juries. Why are you bothering with this complicated lottery procedure?"

By a huge jury, he means a crowd of 501, a number far greater not only than that of the American jury, but also far greater than that in artistic depictions. Having in mind UHD's Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Auditorium provides a clearer idea of the

size of the average Athenian jury, but even that hall falls short, capable of sitting only 411.

"Physical scale is important when understanding complex systems like this," said Duncan, a few minutes into his presentation, before exhibiting a replica of the "pinakion," to his colleagues. This pinakion, fashioned from the maple of a guitar neck is a small bronze or wooden stick, about the size of a Roku remote, that Athenians would carry around as a means of identification.

Duncan did not, however, go so far as to build a replica of that slab of stone, or "kleroterion," itself about the size of a liquor cabinet, which the citizenry would drop their "pinakia" into, and which the clerks would then manipulate to determine the jurors.

Indeed, as to why ancient Athens bothered with these devices or anything besides, the author of the "Athenaion Politeia" says little more than that it all curbed corruption. Notably, though the document outlines the jury selection process, there is hardly any mention of how it worked in real life.

Continued on the next page.

Ashleigh Petts, lecturer

By Keven Balderas

Ashleigh Petts, Technical Communications lecturer in UHD's English Department, presented her research at the department's ninth annual September Symposium on Sept. 24. Her presentation, "Disentangling a different story: Using ante-narrative to challenge dominant narratives," relates closely to her doctoral dissertation, as she is currently pursuing her doctoral degree (expected 2020).

Petts began her presentation by stating that she is a "methodology and methods" geek – someone who is passionate about the ways in which research is carried out. Getting to the bottom of how people reach their conclusions is especially important to her because it can cast light on the moral or ethical oversights inherent in certain methods.

As it turns out, ante-narrative can help with that. Literally "the story before the story," ante-narrative is a relatively new academic concept. David Boje, Ph.D. introduced it to the world in his 2001 book, "Narrative Methods for Organization and Communication Research."

"Ante-narrative is little bits or pieces of stories that challenge that dominant story, that

tells us more than we could get by looking at the dominant story," said Petts, a few minutes into her presentation.

To illustrate this, she presented a slide with the Bayeux tapestry, a long piece of embroidery that recounts how King William I of Normandy conquered England in the 11th century. "With ante-narrative," she had explained, "you can start to sort of pull on those threads, and then reweave the tapestry with new threads."

She first met with the term not through Boje's work, but through a 2016 paper, "Disrupting the past to disrupt the future: an ante-narrative of technical communication." The way in which they authors applied ante-narrative to challenge the established idea that the field of technical communication is only about effectiveness in writing, showed Petts just how powerful ante-narrative can be in scholars' hands.

Petts' ultimate decision to adopt ante-narrative as a method for her dissertation stems from an hours-long conversation between her and the English Department Chair of North Dakota State University, to whom she was then assistant.

The conver-

sation centered on the discoveries the two had been making about how people work together, as they helped a group of academics write a policy proposal. "I was so interested in how they were using software or not," Petts said. "Someone would make a suggestion, 'Let's use Slack, or let's use something.' And other people were like, 'We don't need any more tech stuff. That's going to make it more complicated.'"

About three and a half years passed from the time she began assessing data on the group for her dissertation to when she presented at the Symposium. During that time, she conducted interviews, combed through emails and observed meetings in order to disentangle the group's process.

The nature of the group's work also enabled Petts to explore how social justice in academia truly comes about. The group consisted of female STEM professors, and their goal was to improve gender equity at the universities where they taught.

Continued on the next page.

UHD honors faculty, recognizes achievement

By Sheryl Sellers

On Sept. 22, Faculty Senate president Dr. Ron Beebe, Professor of Educational Research, welcomed faculty and guests to the delayed 2020 Faculty Awards ceremony presented via Zoom. Prior to announcing the award recipients, addresses were given by UHD Interim President Antonio D. Tillis, PhD and 2019/2020 faculty senate president, Dr. Michael Duncan, Pro-

fessor of Technical Communication.

Dr. Beebe introduced Dr. Tillis whose opening remarks included applauding the work of the UHD faculty for their spirit of excellence in teaching.

"I am elated to work alongside all of you in your various categories of recognition. Not only do we honor tenured faculty for exemplary

teaching, research, and service, but we also honor the outstanding lecturers and adjuncts roles that are integral to UHD serving over 15,000 students in our physical and virtual labs and classrooms."

Honoring Dr. Hsiao-Ming Wang, 2020 recipient of the Distinguished Faculty Award, Dr. Tillis had these celebratory words, "The distinguished faculty award will be given this afternoon to a faculty member who has served UHD over 19 years. His commitment to intellectual curiosity, mentoring students through their multiple stages of the learning process and serving the global community have not gone unnoticed. Thank you, Dr. Wang for your dedication to excellence and commitment to UHD and to our profession."

Recognizing the university's number one commitment has become his custom, Dr. Tillis asked all to pause at this time to note UHD's "commitment to putting student's first... thus impacting generations."

Next, Dr. Duncan offered a short report on the previous years' Faculty Senate accomplishments. Having served the senate in various capacities, Dr. Duncan described the 2019/2020 year as the "wildest senate term he's seen yet."

In fall 2019, faculty and staff compensation were the main topic which cumulated in a joint resolution in November, and a transparent addition to the spring budget process. Among other items addressed by the senate were online teaching, revisions to the senate constitution, resolutions on ESL (English as a Second

Language) writing across the curriculum, and the receipt of requested guidelines on campus violence incidents.

Due to the pandemic, meetings were moved to Zoom in April. The year rounded out with many summer meetings which resulted in resolutions on the campus reopening process and the senate's anti-racism statement.

Highlighting the

He further recognized members of that years' executive committee: Dr. Ron Beebe, Dr. Michael Kavanaugh, Dr. Simon Wang, Dr. Nathan Neil, Mitsue Nakamura, Dr. Joe Sample and the senate administrative assistant Darlene Hodge, thanking them in a light-hearted and self-deprecating manner.

"All of who were active and willing in the

Duncan (continued)

But that lack of firsthand knowledge is key to understanding who truly wrote it. Duncan is inclined to count himself among those scholars who believe the author is Aristotle himself, the famous Greek philosopher, given that he was not an Athenian citizen, and therefore would never have personally participated in that process.

"Firsthand knowledge of a process leads to a different kind of document than secondhand knowledge. And that's what I see in Aristotle's dispassionate account," he said near the end of his presentation, proving that a background in technical communication enables one to read between the lines in even the most distant of texts.

Petts (continued)

In recent years, university faculty across the country have increasingly pushed to address the lack of equality or representation within their fields, including the field of technical communication.

"If we think of technical writers who are trying to help the audience or their readers or viewers and be successful," said Petts, "we really need to think about who we think the audience is, right? The audience is probably much more diverse than what we have been writing to."

In the end, Petts determined that the group had been hampered

throughout their project by three running threads. The first is proximity: the distance among stakeholders, either physical or ideological. The second is transparency: when stakeholders do not clearly convey the reasons behind their actions or inactions. And the third is accountability: when, for their actions or inactions, stakeholders are not held responsible.

"One of the things that's really interesting that can be applied to the workplace right now," said Petts, "is just learning other people's work styles, and then learning to be patient with one another."

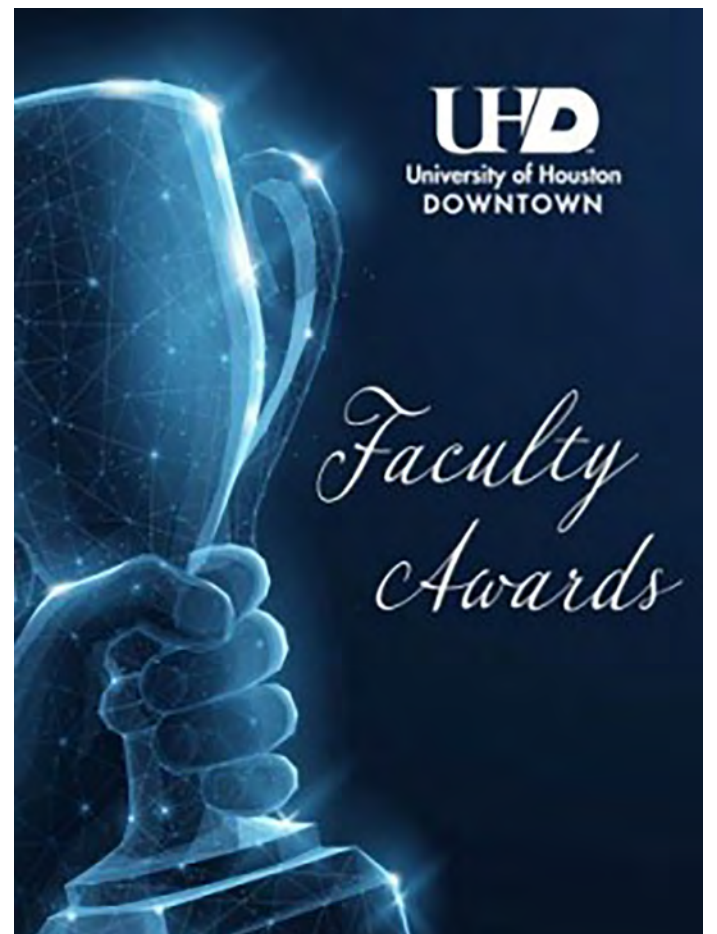


Image courtesy of UHD website.

magnitude of work the senate executed during a pandemic spring, Dr. Duncan went on to say, "The senate formally met 19 times last year including twice in executive session. That might be a record. If you were a senator, please mention that number in your annual report in January."

He recognized former UHD President Juan Sanchez Munoz, and Provost Eric Carl Link, PhD, for responding quickly to the senate's endless requests for information and clarification.

planning and consultation on accuracy that happens before and after senate meetings and offered much valuable advice that prevented me from making even more boneheaded mistakes than I did."

"If the pandemic has taught us anything it is the welfare and interests of faculty and staff and the entire UHD community are closely intertwined."

With awe inspiring recognition from their peers, the winners of the 2020 UHD Faculty Awards are listed below.

Continued on the next page.

UHD faculty (continued)

Next, Provost Link acknowledged and recognized those faculty who have given 20 plus years of service to the UHD community.

“Make no mistake these recognitions for years of service are among the most significant awards that we give each year for they take note of the commitment and dedication of faculty who shaped the very identity of the institution and work to elevate its status for decades.”

Recognition of Faculty Years of Service:

Dr. Link ended with this expression of appreciation, “Thank you again for your contribution to this institution and to the community and we look forward to continuing to support you in all of the great things we know you will accomplish in the upcoming years.”

Dr. Beebe closed the ceremony with some final words of gratitude.

“This [awards ceremony] seems a little off this year in terms of Zoom attendance but that does not mean we do not still celebrate and appreciate the work of the committees and the work of those who have been awarded as well as the general work of the faculty at UHD. Thank you all who attended. Again, our congratulations not only to the award winners but to all the finalists and to those

who have provided the tremendous years of service to UHD. All of you are models for us and people to

look up to in terms of our own professional development in practice here at UHD.”

2020 Faculty Awards:

Outstanding Adjunct: Richard Powers, Criminal Justice

Outstanding Lecturer: Luke Fedell, Theatre & Acting

Excellence in Scholarly/Creative Activity: Dr. Benjamin Soibam, Computer Science

Excellence in Service: Dr. Windy Lawrence, Communication Studies

Excellence in Teaching: Dr. Yuan “Connie” Kang, Biology

Distinguished Faculty Award: Dr. Hsiao-Ming Wang, Criminal Justice

Faculty Development Leave Awards:

Dr. Emund Cueva, Professor of Classics & Humanities

Dr. Omprakash Gupta, Professor Management

Dr. Anisul Islam, Professor Economics

Dr. Katrina Rufino, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Dr. Michael Tobin, Associate Professor of Biology

Recognition of Faculty Years of Service:

20 years:

Dr. Mark Cervenka, Professor of Art & Director, O’Kane Gallery

Dr. Peter DeVries, Professor of Management Information Systems

Dr. Johanna Schertz, Professor of English

Dr. Leigh Van Horn, Professor of Education

25 years:

Dr. Susan J. Baker, Professor of Art History

Dr. Philip Lyons, Associate Professor of Biology

Dr. JoAnn Pavletich, Associate Professor of English

Dr. Tammis Thomas, Professor of English

30 years:

Dr. L. Kirk Hagen, Professor of Humanities

Dr. Anisul Islam, Professor of Economics

Dr. Vien Nguyen, Lecturer of Mathematics

Dr. Patrick S. Williams, Associate Professor of Psychology

Dr. Shishen Xie, Professor Mathematics

40 years:

Dr. Ruth R. Robbins, Professor of Management Information Systems

Questions flare as fires blaze through northwest

By Sheryl Sellers

Raging wildfires continue to burn through California and blaze northward since Sept. 11. More than 3.7 million acres have scorched California as of Sept. 27. This is 26 times more lost acreage lost to wildfires than in 2019.

More than 8,100 structures have succumbed to fires while 26 people have died and another 37 have been injured. This is not the first time that uncontrolled fires have left the region in ash. Now there are more questions while answers vary as to where the blame smolders and how to control the wildfires in the future.

Some believe the increase in wildfires is due primarily to climate change. Scientists do agree with this theory. Since the early 1900s, the overall California temperature has risen two degrees Fahrenheit, and recent summers have witnessed the hottest on record.

Climate change is not a new concept. Sweltering temperatures lead to drought, another indicator of climate change. Since 1950, the average rainfall in California has dropped, the soil has

become drier and with the intensification of heat, water evaporates quicker.

Others, including scientists, believe the answer lies chiefly in the lack of logging and clearing undergrowth. Some of the natural forests have become infernos due to lack of removing underbrush.

Before Europeans settled in North America, Native Americans used fire to manage game migration, hunting, and to grow plants for food. These managed burns kept the forests healthy and unclogged underbrush. However, the settlers of the 1800s saw fire as a threat to their property, and in the early 1900s fire suppression became a U. S. federal policy. California U.S. Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Elk Grove, shared his thoughts on the decrease of timber harvesting in California.

“If we were harvesting the same amount of timber we once did, we’d have fewer fires but also a revenue stream for the treatment of many thousands of acres (hectares) that we’re not treating today,” McClintock said.

To save the lives of several endangered species,

during the 1970s special interest groups fought for an end to logging, which had been on the rise during the world wars and the following housing growth. The “circle of life” was interrupted. What was put in place for the endangered species turned out bad for the forests and ultimately people.

Then, land development also increased. Homes were built close to the forests and thus put people closer to dry timber.

Finances and budgets also play a role. In 1995, fire control was 16% of the Forest Service budget, but in 2015, it comprised more than 50%. More of the budget had to be allocated to controlling wildfires with little left over to be proactive in managing the land for controlled fires and clearing the undergrowth.

These issues together actually offer part of the answers. Researchers agree that both fire suppression and climate change have driven the crisis, and both should be addressed.

Clearing the smoke, time travel back to the ways of our Native Americans could supply the best result.

Trump announces 1776 Commission to counter 1619 Project

By Salvador Hernandez

On Sept. 17, President Trump announced that he will sign an executive order establishing the 1776 Commission. This commission would promote “patriotic education” to counter the assertions found in the 1619 Project. In August of 2019, The New York Times Magazine published the 1619 Project, an ongoing effort to highlight the consequences of slavery and spotlight African American’s contributions to the United States.

Some historians have criticized the 1619 Project. Bob Woodson, a long-standing civil rights activist, is one its critics. Woodson decided to form the 1776 Unites, a project designed to counterpoint the 1619 Project and bring an aspirational twist to the history of African Americans in the United States. In an article published by The Washington Free Beacon in Feb., Woodson gave his view on the 1619 Project.

“This garbage that is coming down from the scholars and writers from 1619 is most hypocritical because they don’t live in communities [that are] suffering,” Woodson said.

In a separate article, Woodson highlighted the goals of the 1776 Unites curriculum countering the 1619 Project narrative.

“[We] maintain a special focus on lesson plans that celebrate Black excellence, reject victimhood culture, and showcase African Americans, past and present, who have prospered by embracing America’s founding ideals,” Woodson said.

Woodson proclaimed that people are at their best when “given victories that are possible” instead of “showering them with injuries to be avoided.”

Apart from the criticisms, voices exist that applaud the 1619 Project and its attempts to highlight America’s racist past and its future effects. In an article published by the Washington Post, Historian Wendell Nii Laryea, encouraged the projection of issues by the 1619 Project in the current socio-political climate of the United States.

“The 400th anniversary of slavery in what would become the United States has inspired renewed scrutiny of the curse of color ... on our collective consciousness,”

Laryea said.

Laryea called attention to inequalities in present-day America, from the widening gap in health services available between African Americans and whites to the mass incarcerations of African Americans. She made the arguments that these are the touchstone issues that need to be discussed – issues to which the 1619 Project bring attention.

Academic debates sparked when Nikole Hannah-Jones, the project manager of the 1619 Project won a Pulitzer Prize for commentary on May 3, 2020. In these hard times it is clear that Americans are in need of a common identity, whether the President’s 1776 Commission provides an answer to this issue or not is uncertain. What is certain is the need to understand the impacts and atrocities of slavery, while also understanding how far we have come and what we have accomplished as Americans. Americans need to be provided with materials that will recognize the success of the United States without undermining the shortcomings that are often left unaddressed.

RBG passes at 85, but she continues to inspire youth

By Aansa Usmani

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg
(March 13, 1933-Sept. 18, 2020)

On Friday, Sept. 18, 2020, American hearts shattered after hearing the passing of the longest-serving justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Known in pop culture as the Notorious RBG, she passed away at age 85 after battling pancreatic cancer, once again. Although she has had various health scares and battles with pancreatic and breast cancer, she continued to serve upon the nation’s highest court, partaking in landmark decisions that have impacted women, people of color, immigrants, and members of the LGBTQ community.

Since her days as a law clerk, she championed the belief of equality between both genders; as a recent law graduate, she received rejections from numerous prestigious law firms, despite having top marks and graduating first in her class. In the 1970s, as director of the Women’s Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, she appeared before the National Supreme Court in six different cases, arguing over gender equality and women’s rights. Ginsburg believed that “law was gender-blind” and that “all groups were entitled to equal rights.” She was an ardent supporter of wom-

en’s rights and believed in true gender equality. One specific case, though, favored women over men; at the time, the Social Security Act favored women widows over male widowers, excluding them from receiving certain financial benefits and pensions.

In 1980, then-President Jimmy Carter appointed Ginsburg to the District of Columbia’s Federal Court of Appeals, where she would serve until her Supreme Court appointment. Over a decade later, in 1993, she was chosen by then-President Bill Clinton to fill the vacated seat of Justice Byron White. At the time, the Supreme Court leaned more towards the right, and Clinton believed that Ginsburg had both the intellect and political skills needed to make decisions that could impact many American lives.

She was confirmed almost unanimously by the U.S. Senate (96-3), serving as the Supreme Court’s second female justice. Ginsburg presided over landmark cases, ranging from *Bush v. Gore*—deciding who would become president in 2000 after a tumultuous election—to *Obergefell v. Hodges*—a case that would legalize same-sex marriage across the fifty states. Although Ginsburg ruled mostly center left, her legacy is an inspiration to many

Millennials and Generation Z “Zoomers.” She inspires them to work hard for their goals and to never give up, despite the challenges or setbacks that may arise. She has shown that hard work and dedication can help one go far within their career; she persevered within her early years of law, leading to an appointed seat and having a significant impact on the Supreme Court for decades to come.

The decisions she had presided over has allowed women to attain more financial freedoms. Had it not been for her cases, unmarried or single women today would not be able to open credit cards, take out loans, or even serve on jury duty. These little freedoms taken for granted would not be available to a significant portion of the population, had Ginsburg not intervened.

Albeit the political pressure to confirm Amy Coney Barret—Trump’s pick for the Supreme Court—to the late justice’s seat, Ginsburg on her deathbed wished that a Supreme Court appointee be confirmed in a non-election year. The same issue arose over four years ago with Merrick Garland, as GOP Senators refused to confirm a justice within an election year. If precedent has been made, it should be followed and respected, with Ginsburg’s dying wishes.

Hurricane Sally leaves 2 dead, \$2 billion in damages

By Lauren Anderson

On Sept. 15, Hurricane Sally emerged onto Gulf Shores, Alabama as a category 2 storm that left heavy flooding, destroyed buildings, and left thousands of homes and businesses without power, and killed at least two people. Although Sally was downgraded to a post-tropical depression the next day, it moved through Pensacola on the Florida Panhandle at 24 miles per hour with nearly 30 inches of rain and maximum wind speeds of 105 miles per hour.

As the storm weakened, it traveled along the southeast and caused major flooding in Alabama, which led to flooded roads and submerged cars. The governor of Alabama, Kay Ivey, said that many areas, especially around Mobile, Alabama, saw historic flood levels and urged his citizens to heed the warnings. Other areas were also affected as beaches and highways in Mississippi and low-lying properties were flooded in Louisiana.

Because the roads were unpassable due to the flooding and the winds were too strong, residents were told that it could be hours before emergency services were able to aid those in need. At least 400 people were rescued from flooded areas in Escambia County, Florida and at least 35 people were rescued in Mobile Bay, Alabama.

Florida Gov-

ernor, Ron DeSantis warned people as the flooding subsided, that heavy rains from the north would cause even more flooding in Panhandle rivers. He also said that residents should expect a lot of property damage due to the flooding.

“So, this is kind of the initial salvo, but there is going to be more that you’re going to have to contend with,” Governor DeSantis said. “When you see downtown Pensacola and you see 3 feet of water there, that’s going to affect probably every business.”

Floodwaters in Alabama and Florida also sent multiple out-of-control construction barges into waters along the Florida Panhandle. One barge slammed into the Pensacola Bay Bridge that was under construction, destroying part of it. Another barge with a crane was also heading towards the Escambia Bay Bridge at some point, but the barge never reached the bridge and ran ashore instead.

Over 290,000 people lost electricity in Alabama and 253,000 people lost electricity in Florida. The massive power outages prompted the National Weather Service in Pensacola and Mobile to issue warnings about how to properly use generators to avoid monoxide poisoning.

Sally’s damage is expected to cost up to \$2 billion in damages because

it uprooted trees, brought down pylons, eroded beaches of barrier islands, and pushed large amounts of sand into areas of beach homes. David Middleton, who opened his auto parts store 33 years ago in Robertsdale, Alabama, said his business lost its storefront.

“I started getting calls around six this morning from friends and customers saying the shop’s bad, took the roof off,” Middleton told CBS News. “We actually had to chain saw our way to get here. I can’t comprehend the damage it’s done.”

The storm was expected to travel through the remote, low-lying areas of southeastern Louisiana and possibly reach beyond the New Orleans metropolitan area. However, places like Mobile, Alabama and Pensacola, Florida were the most affected by the storm.

Dangerous gusts of wind disturbed the residents of south Alabama. Although Mobile avoided the worst of the storm, strong gusts of wind damaged buildings and left debris that cluttered walkways. Fallen trees even blocked freeways and forced motorists to drive on the opposite side of the road. Smaller roads were scattered with fallen leaves and branches.

Videos and images from residents and media outlets showed just how

much damage the hurricane left behind.

A bridge in Pensacola, Florida was missing two large sections, likely because a barge had smashed into it. Roofs were destroyed, boats were scattered, and some areas were cut off by fallen trees and heavy flooding.

Homes were ripped apart by strong winds, boats were torn from their moorings, and powerlines were downed in many towns and cities.

In Foley, Alabama, images showed a destroyed mobile home and a door that appeared to have been yanked by the wind from a house.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Geodetic Survey released aerial imagery that shows the extent of the damage that was caused by Sally. The imagery covered areas surrounding Mobile, Alabama, and Pensacola, Florida, which showed the damage to marinas and the Pensacola Bay Bridge.

“NOAA’s aerial imagery aids safe navigation and captures damage to coastal areas caused by a storm,” the agency said. “Aerial imagery is a crucial tool to determine the extent of the damage inflicted by flood-

ing, and to compare baseline coastal areas to assess the damage to major ports and waterways, coastlines, critical infrastructure, and coastal communities. This imagery provides a cost-effective way to better understand the damage sustained to both property and the environment.”

Despite the damage to Alabama and Florida, organizers have scheduled cleanup events that prompted thousands of volunteers, even from other states, to help those in need in the aftermath of Hurricane Sally.



Hurricane Sally floods Pensacola, Florida. Image Credit: Gerald Herbert, AP



One of the many houses in Perdido Key, Florida that Hurricane Sally damaged with intense winds and 20+ inches of rain. Image Credit: REUTERS)

Latin American countries celebrate independence

By Indira Zaldivar

Seven Latin American countries celebrated their Independence Day over the month of Sept. The current pandemic involved many changes in the celebration of “Fiestas Patrias” in Latin America and here in Houston, Texas.

Sept. 15 marks the first day of the annual patriotic festivities in five countries in Central America. Guatemala, El Salvador, Hondu-

ras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica commemorate Sept. 15, as the day they claimed independence from Spain in 1821. Chile celebrates on Sept. 18.

Marie Zaldivar, music student at LSC-North Harris recounted her experiences celebrating Independence Day in Honduras.

“My favorite part of the parades was listening to the school bands play

native Honduran music,” Zaldivar said. “The folkloric dances were a great way to learn my country’s history while dancing.”

In Honduras, the traditional parades and public events were canceled to avoid the propagation of the novel coronavirus. Zaldivar said her family watched the virtual celebrations hosted through a TV station in Honduras. Mexico’s Indepen-

dence Day officially falls on Sept. 16, but the largest celebrations and gatherings happen the night before. This year marked the first time in 153 years that the Zocalo, the grand plaza in Mexico City, closed to the public during Independence Day. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, president of Mexico, rang the historical bell from the National Palace and reenacted the Cry of Dolores

without the usual thousands of people celebrating in the Zocalo. The event was broadcasted live.

The City of Houston canceled its annual Fiestas Patrias Parade in Downtown Houston due to COVID-19 restrictions. Houston’s Fiestas Patrias Parade would have turned 52 this year. Last year, Telemundo Houston hosted a Fiestas Patrias event at Traders Village featuring Az-

tec dancing, folklore ballet, and a variety of Latinx cuisine.

This year that did not happen either. Other than broadcasting the Cry of Dolores occurring in the Zocalo in collaboration with the Consulate of Mexico, the TV stations in Houston of Univision and Telemundo did not host a separate celebration to commemorate Fiestas Patrias this year.

Only one officer with wanton endangerment in Breonna Taylor case

By Deniece Joseph

On Sept. 15, the city of Louisville and the state of Kentucky agreed to a historic settlement with the family of Breonna Taylor, a young Black woman murdered in her own home in March via a botched police raid. The \$12 million settlement promised sweeping police reforms in a case that garnered national attention with regard to the Black Lives Matter movement that has pushed America to confront its long history of police violence and injustice.

The city hoped to put a close to the controversies surrounding the wrongful death lawsuit filed by Taylor’s family. Repercussions extended even to the Office of Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer. Mayor Fischer received a vote of “no confidence” from

city council members over the perceived ill management of the case. However, actions taken by state Attorney General Daniel Cameron has contributed to continued discontent with the proceedings

On Sept. 28, the grand jury’s decision admitted no criminal wrongdoing on the parts of the officers and only resulted in three counts of wanton endangerment for shots fired into the neighbor’s apartment by former Louisville police Detective Brett Hankison. The decision comes after months of nationwide calls for the arrest and subsequent conviction of all officers involved in Taylor’s killing.

Samantha Mosley, a criminal justice student at UHD and UHD’s Black Student Association president, said

she felt hopeless following the announcement of the recent charges.

“I think it’s a miscarriage of justice that the grand jury presiding over the Breonna Taylor case weren’t even given the option to charge the officers that actually shot Taylor,” Mosley said.

“Overall, I do feel hopeless and exhausted at the thought of her not receiving justice for being murdered in her home, where she was committing no crime.” Cameron revealed that he had not recommended to the grand jury the charge of homicide or any other felony, only wanton endangerment. A lawyer representing one of the grand jurors revealed that the client felt the case was misrepresented to the public. This prompted a re-

quest by lawyers representing the Taylor family for the release of the grand jury transcript and recordings detailing the presentation and procedure of the deliberation. Mosley said the transcripts are necessary for transparency.

“There is no benefit to the secrecy that outweighs justice for this woman’s life,” Mosley said. “I believe that knowing the dialogue could potentially expose bias and convolution present.”

Olivia Kately, a social work student and membership chair of BSA at UHD, said she felt hopeless despite the grand juror’s request.

“It’s sad to say, but I don’t think it will change anything,” Kately said. “It will only show that corruption, oppression, racism, among other foul play

was being covered up.”

Kately said that while courts have used body camera footage in the past, they have often failed to convict the officers on trial.

“We’ve seen time after time that body cam footage doesn’t matter, officers still literally get away with murder,” Kately said. “In my opinion the same will happen with the recordings... nothing.” Cameron initially denied the release of said material but was forced to accept a judge’s ruling that ordered him to do so. The recordings were set to be released on Sept. 30, but the attorney general managed to get a one-week extension of the release under the grounds of protecting grand jury witness information.

The current situation remained

tense as the public feared that this was another stall tactic by the attorney general. On the morning of Oct. 2, Cameron released the transcripts.

I’m confident that once the public listens to the recordings, they will see that our team presented a thorough case to the Jefferson County Grand Jury,” Cameron said the next morning.

The timeline and reception of the case has shown the sewn seeds of distrust present in the psyche of not only local constituents but across the country in a time where confidence in the criminal justice system is at an all-time low.

Bad Bunny performs live concert from moving truck

By Indira Zaldivar

Bad Bunny stalled traffic while performing a live concert from a moving truck in New York City on Sept. 20. Over a million fans tuned in live on YouTube. Other fans filled social media platforms with praises.

The concert was held in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. Sept. 20 also marks the day Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, Bad Bunny's home, three years ago. The 26-year-old singer thanked Latinos for their support and encouraged them to vote.

"We must vote and raise our voices because it boils down to giving ourselves respect as people and as Latinos," he said. "That's why you have to go vote."

The concert ended outside the Harlem Hospital

in New York as the Latin Grammy-award winning artist sang "Yo Perreo Sola". He honored the frontline workers by saying "respect and thanks to those people who sacrificed their lives in this city."

Guadalupe Ramirez, psychology student at University of Houston, said his live performance was one of the "few good things 2020 has had

so far." She said she and her friends had a lot of fun singing and dancing as virtual spectators and felt "really happy that Bad Bunny did that for his fans."

Ramirez also considers Bad Bunny as an icon of Hispanic Heritage due to his support towards the LGBT community, especially in the Latinx community. She praised Bad Bunny

for dressing up as a drag queen in the music video of "Yo Perreo Sola" and relating the video to the death of Alexa, who was killed for being a transgender.

"Bad Bunny is always using his famous voice to advocate for the LGBTQ community and the power of women in society," Ramirez said. "The main message was if a girl says

no, it means no."

Marie Zaldivar, a music student at Lone Star College-North Harris, was also a virtual spectator. She said Bad Bunny "stomps on toxic masculinity." Zaldivar said she loved listening to Bad Bunny perform "Yo Perreo Sola".

"This song encourages women to embrace singlehood and to thrive without a man," Zaldivar said. Ana Treminio, UHD political science alumna and senior criminal intake clerk for Harris County, did not miss the concert either. She said Bad Bunny tackles masculinity issues. Treminio recounted all the backlash Bad Bunny received for dressing up as a drag queen in the music video and for being seen with painted nails in real life.

She applauded

the way Bad Bunny "breaks the norms" in a male-oriented genre such as reggaeton. She praised the Puerto Rican artist for amplifying the anti-femicide movement, #NiUnaMenos and for the plot in "Solo De Mi" that centered on leaving an abusive relationship.

"I think it's great that he can combine amazing music with a meaningful message," Treminio said. "To me, he is saying what needs to be said: Women need to be respected no matter if they were born female or not... and consent is important."



Bad Bunny dodges trees and traffic lights during his live performance from a moving truck in New York City. Image courtesy of Univision.

"South Park" debuts new season, pandemic special

By Anthony Raul Ramirez

It is safe to say that 2020 has been a rather interesting year. A brief list of some major event in a "New York Post" article by Jackie Salo include Australian bushfires, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex leaving the British royal family, COVID-19, Kobe Bryant's death, President Trump's impeachment, the Twitter hack of celebrity accounts for a bitcoin scam, the Black Lives Matter protests, rumors of Kim Jong

Un's death, and murder hornets just to name a few. With all of these monumental events happening in less than a year, one question has been on many people's minds: What is "South Park" going to do this season?

The show has been known for taking pop culture and adding an insane spin on it to create even more disastrous situations for the people of South Park. The last season's episodes included

covering the "impossible meals" trend, how Americans have switched to streaming services instead of cable, vaccinations, and even China censoring or outright banning content (Winnie the Pooh was in this one).

That seems like an average season for "South Park", but 2020 has created so many different routes the show can take this time around. Another person in the town could play the role of Joe Biden similar to Mr. Garri-

son taking the place of Donald Trump in the show. The boys could travel to China as spies. Tweek could be in a shelter away from all the craziness. The possibilities are endless. Adding the fact that the show has taken a more narrative style with episodes connecting to each other rather than their own standalone stories as the earliest seasons did also allows more details to be spread throughout episodes, rather than having to cram one

topic into just a single episode.

Season 24 of "South Park" began September 30 and debuted with an hour-long "Pandemic special." The previews of the special show the boys having to social distance in school while wearing masks, protective plastic barriers around their desks, Detective Harris as their new teacher, Cartman wanting to remain home for school, and Randy selling more weed from his farm

(he refers to the sale as a "Pandemic special," referencing last season's "Halloween special" he did that was during "South Park's"...well... Halloween special).

Episodes premier every Wednesday at 8/7CT on Comedy Central, as well as the ability to stream episodes at any time on HBO Max.

Documentary Review - "This is Paris"

By James Jurewicz

YouTube has produced a documentary film on the life of Paris Hilton titled "This is Paris." Hilton is the great-granddaughter of Conrad Hilton, the hotel magnate who started the world-wide chain Hilton Hotels. Paris Hilton is a cultural icon, and her brand has stayed strong for two decades. With almost 3 billion dollars of fragrance sales alone, her business also includes skin care, makeup and over 19 different products. Paris can be and is considered the first influencer and is known to be "famous for being famous." As a working actress and a successful model, in the early 2000's a single photograph of Hilton could fetch anywhere between 50 thousand to a million dollars for the paparazzi lucky enough to capture it. Paris is also rumored to have invented and popularized the "selfie" and has started numerous

social media trends. Hilton says that she spends up to 16 hours daily on social media. In 2003 Hilton was the costar of a successful reality show "The Simple Life" with her childhood friend and fellow celebrity Nichole Richie. Today she continues to build her brand through her influencing and says she wears three to four outfits a day. Hilton has broken through into the world of electronic dance music and is the highest paid female DJ on the planet at a fee of one million dollars a show.

Paris Whitney Hilton was born on Feb. 17, 1981 in New York City to parents Richard and Kathy Hilton. Kathy was a child actress. Paris attended catholic school at an early age and states "my mom wanted me to be a Hilton and I just wanted to be Paris." Hilton's adolescence was char-

acterized as being a bit of a tomboy by her mother. Though her adult years show her addiction to a fast paced, dramatic life, her younger and only sister Nicky says that Paris was more comfortable "scrapbooking with her dogs at home and eating leftovers," in her younger years. Though she has lived a life of comfort and privilege, Hilton is secretly tormented by nightly dreams of terror stemming from a traumatic past.

Underneath the quaffed hair and flawless makeup lies a secret world of deep emotional pain. Her wild teenage years in New York City frequenting clubs with fake identification resulted in her parents decision to send her to emotional growth boarding school. Her stint at these schools originated with being violently and forcibly taken from her bed by two strong employees as her parents stood idly by. After all, her

parents had arranged the abduction. After spending 11 months at Provo Canyon School for troubled youth in Provo, Utah, Hilton's life was forever changed. The physical and emotional abuse suffered at the school left Hilton with severe post-traumatic stress. From mind-numbing medication to solitary confinement, Paris' experiences in that school made her decide that upon her release, she was going to make sure she could be so successful and independent so that her parents could never control her again. This mentality has endured to this day.

"I won't stop until I make a billion dollars," states Hilton, she says. "I'm not greedy, I just love making money." Hilton mentions that it is her past that has affected her relationships with men, recounting the five physically abusive

boyfriends that she has had throughout her life. This abuse took on a very public turn in the form of her sex tape that was released without her consent by her ex-boyfriend Rick Salomon in 2003. It was Salomon's insistence and pressure which led her to allow him to use the camcorder.

"It was like being electronically raped," Paris said of the very private moment that was made public. "The tape never would have happened if not for Provo Canyon School," Paris said, connecting one abuse with the other. She states that subsequent sex tapes released have become a blueprint for fame for multiple celebrities.

"The only genuine people that I know are my fans," states Paris. Like many celebrities today, she has given her fans a nickname; her "Little Hiltons." Celebrity Socialite

Kim Kardashian West briefly appears in "This is Paris" and credits her fame to Hilton.

"I wouldn't be here today without Paris," she said.

The documentary shows us a woman who has had several transformations originating from severe trauma and family pressure.

Paris says, "My life is a fantasy world, a cartoon that I created."

Though Paris Hilton plays a role of a shallow and materialistic celebrity in her public persona, her intelligence and drive shine through on the film. You can really see someone who knows what they want and has the cunning to achieve it. Anyone who has ever unfairly judged this woman needs to watch this documentary. "This is Paris" is available to watch for free and can be accessed on the YouTube website or app.

Series Review - "Lovecraft Country"

By Alex Riley

Misha Green, J.J. Abrams, and Jordan Peele team up for the first time to create a sci-fi thriller in the new HBO series based off the novel "Lovecraft Country" by Matt Ruff.

"Lovecraft Country" centers around protagonist, Atticus Freeman, and his family and friends as they brave the horrors of a supernatural cult they are pulled into while navigating

life as Black people during Jim Crow in the 1950s. They endure sundown towns, segregated public transportation, and white only municipalities, all the while dealing with an unearthly threat.

The series serves as the first time Jonathan Majors, who appeared in "Da 5 Bloods" and "White Boy Rick," is given a leading role in a film or series. Though

the show has not yet reached its conclusion, he has shone brightly as the star with his display of a wide range of emotions, standing strong in life threatening situations and passionately dealing with very real and tumultuous familial issues.

"Lovecraft Country" also features Michael Kenneth Williams, who many may recognize as Omar in "The

Wire" and Bobby McCray in the Netflix series "When They See Us." Williams plays the role of Montrose Freeman, Atticus Freeman's father, and is the catalyst for the entire story, after he writes a letter to his son while he is serving in the army fighting in South Korea during the Vietnam War. The letter is misunderstood and with the help of his uncle George, Atticus

deciphers where their adventure begins.

The series deviates quite a bit from the book in compelling ways. From characters in opposite genders, to entire scenarios beings introduced that are not part of the novel, the show keeps the viewer highly entertained and anxious for what is to come next Sunday. Fans can read the novel and watch the series and

be entertained by both without feeling like you are just seeing exactly what you read or vice versa. With each episode the story seems to drift further from the book, which can only lead the viewer to wonder how this twisted sci-fi tale can possibly come to some sort of peaceful climax.

\$12M settlement for Breonna Taylor

By Shirley Bright

The headlines read, "Another black individual shot and killed at the hands of racist white police officers." "Police serves a "no-knock" warrant and shot and killed a black Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)." "Police serves a search warrant for a known drug dealer who lives 10 miles away." The headlines have such stirring titles to capture any casual reader to find out the details.

The headlines were about the death of Breonna Taylor on March 13, in Louisville, Kentucky. The Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) executed a drug warrant and three white officers knocked down the door, shot and killed 26-year old Breonna Taylor. Breonna and her boyfriend Kenneth Walker were asleep as the officers did a "no-knock" warrant and knocked the door down. The drug dealer whom the officers were looking for lived 10 miles away and was already in custody.

After Breonna was shot down, her boyfriend Kenneth called her mother and said "please come because someone has kicked in the door and Breonna is hurt." Breonna's mother came and searched for Breonna and answers, only to be told Breonna was still in the apartment. Reasoning from her past life, she figured Breonna was dead. Palmer engaged the help of a local com-

munity activist and then a lawyer. She and her lawyer were asking for answers to what really happened? There were no real answers from the LMPD. No one was taking responsibility for the death of Breonna by the three white officers. This horrific tragedy was falling by the wayside like a sleeping giant waiting to be awoken. Then it happened, the senseless murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, MN. This murder accentuated the systemic racism within the police departments around the country. Now the sleeping giant had arisen.

The national headlines exploded with the EMT being shot while sleeping. However, no one had been charged with her murder. Breonna Taylor's story would follow right after the news story of the George Floyd. Their names were trending and you had to wonder, how could you have missed the killing of this 26-year old? Her murder happened in March, two months prior to George Floyd. Once again, the protesters were out. "Justice for Breonna Taylor," "Say her name," slogans were everywhere. Breonna's beautiful smiling photos appeared everywhere. The photo of a beautiful well, manicured poised Breonna appeared on the cover of Oprah Winfrey's "O" magazine. There

were 26 billboards around Louisville, KY as commemoration to the 26 years of this young aspiring nurse Breonna. Speak her name Breonna Taylor for young black women brutally killed by white police without a cause.

There were demands for charges to be brought, officers to be fired and procedures to be changed. The "no-knock" was deadly and had caused the death of this beautiful EMT. In the word of her mother, "she was living her best life". There were far too many questions about the shooting death of this one Breonna. Questions of the protocol and procedures of the warrant. They asked if the police were at the wrong door in the wrong neighborhood. The uproar was whether it was a "knock" or a "no-knock" warrant that brought the police to Breonna's door. Let us ask the question, how did we get to a "knock or no-knock?"

In July 1993 Breonna Taylor was born - another statistic of teen pregnancy. She was born to an unwed 16-years old mother, Tamika Palmer. Palmer grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The first 12 years of life was without her father. Palmer, unlike so many other teenage moms, did graduate high school. She was fortunate not to be among the statistics of having a second child as a teenager. She went

into the work force at a nursing home.

Our social system has embraced a system which will keep unwed moms in a cycle of poverty. The social service promises to help but puts them on a slippery slope with nothing to grasp onto to get ahead. It gives false promises to "assist" with the health and safety of the children in fatherless homes. The system promises to protect them with affordable housing, medical assistance and food. This system delivers a life of abject poverty with heavy penalties for any who would dare to escape.

Many young mothers become part of this social system which perpetuates them into a life of poverty stricken neighborhoods. There are not many fathers around to help make good decisions. The system penalizes the mother in whom it designed to help. Drug activities are the norms and mothers hope their children can survive and make it out. This kind of drug infested neighborhood is an environment which festers unseemly behavior in the best of people. Young girls and boys are lured to use or sell drugs. Young women entrapped by this cruel environment submit themselves to such low activities of degradation to get more drugs. There are no young men taking the responsibility to be a father. Now the young girls

become moms in this caged community of poverty. The cycle of teenage pregnancy repeats in a tighter cycle of households of young uneducated mothers.

There are young mothers enslaved by this social system wishing for a way out. Palmer wanted out and did not want her girls to see the same things she saw as a young lady growing up in Grand Rapids. The lure for the glamour is strong and not enough fathers to take hold of the children to direct to a different life. Many time children do not make it without becoming a user, a dealer or death. Breonna's mother knew of this life and had attempted to choose something different for Breonna and her younger sister Ju'Niyah. She stated in her interview with Vanity Fair, "Back home, I just kind of felt like history was always repeating itself, everybody was teenage moms, and ...75 percent of the boys I went to school with ended up in jail." She left Grand Rapids when Breonna was a young for a better life. Breonna's father has been in jail since was 6-years old. He had murdered someone because of a crack cocaine drug deal.

In Palmer's narrative to Vanity Fair about the life of Breonna, there was not an utterance of the name of Jamarcus Glover. Palmer never mentioned the four-

year relationship with Jamarcus. Did she miss the signs of the life-style her daughter was living? Palmer said the family was always busy, but did she account for Breonna's absence? She knew the danger of living a life or the involvement with drug dealers. She was quoted as, "live by the sword, die by the sword". Did Palmer know how close Breonna was playing with the sword? She knew.

There was evidence of Breonna's continued relationship with Jamarcus. Over the years from 2016, she had spent over \$7,500 in bail money for him. She was involved with a rental car and the death of an individual in close contact with Jamarcus. Surveillance videos and photos have her in contact with Jamarcus as recent as Jan 2020. Was there ever a conversation of the dangers of being involved with drug dealers? Maybe Breonna was initially tied by the glitz of the money and then a stronger bond of love for Jamarcus. Maybe there were urgings from her mother to stay away from the north end of Louisville. The bond of a strong love was the connection to her South End apartment for a "no-knock" warrant.

Continued on the next page.

Breonna Taylor (continued)

Breonna had strong tenacity to see the end of the course for a life with Jamarcus. She had weighed the balances of a life with Kenneth, and dangerous life with Jamarcus. She had begun to make plans of a future with Kenneth and having a baby. She did not live in the impoverished north end. She knew of the

possible danger of that life. In a report to CNN, Ju’Niyah Palmer attempts to exonerate her sister by saying Breonna told Jamarcus not to bring his drug activities into her home. She is quoted as saying, “my sister live(s) here and I can’t jeopardize her getting hurt...” Breonna was making her attempt to run from

the dangerous and deadly life-style. Those bonds of love continued to pull her to Jamarcus and the game of roulette he was playing.

Breonna’s attraction for Jamarcus and her many bad decision implicated the “no-knock” warrant. It was not a mistaken identity or the wrong address. The LMPD had

the right address and right person. The 10 miles distance was not enough to keep her from the sword she had been playing with for four years. She was drawn by love for Jamarcus or his money. \$12 million restitution for the blood of Breonna, a life taken too soon.



Breonna Taylor. Image Courtesy of NBC News.

BLM movement impacts America in difficult times

By Cameron Smith

America is facing new lows, and the people are tired. Can the BLM movement be the light we all need right now?

Failure to recognize the cause of a problem but planning for the consequences, Louisville declares a state of emergency the day before Breonna Taylor’s case decision. Texas Governor Greg Abbott pushes for more rigid penalties to protesting. Trump calling “Anti-racist” teachings “child abuse” and pushing for a controversial idea of “patriotic teaching.” Is the BLM movement receiving less support because of people growing numb to the pains we face?

On Sept. 23, a grand jury found that the three police officers involved with Breonna Taylor’s murder were not indicted. Instead, only one of them was indicted for shooting into a neighbor’s apartment at the

time, nothing for the murder of Breonna Taylor.

Here is what we all need to know to get a better understanding of the situation. Not only did they falsify the police report stating no forced entry and Taylor having no injuries, they still got off. Even more, they tried to silence Breonna Taylor’s boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, by signing away his Miranda rights, which was done by a PIU Sgt. Amanda Seelye. After this, Louisville charged Walker with the attempted murder of a police officer, which was dismissed on May 26. Walker was later put on house arrest and can still be charged. Silence is what they wanted. All of this when they already had the suspect, Breonna Taylor’s ex, in custody in the first place.

It is also known that Walker not only did hear the police identify them-

selves as authorities but also the neighbors that were nearby that night. All of this was started due to a plea bargain offered to Breonna Taylor’s ex to shorten his years in prison and turn it into probation, wrongfully accusing her so he can get probation.

The ruling, of course, sparked even more protests throughout the nation. However, it seemed Louisville was ready for this, as the day before, the city instituted a state of emergency because they anticipated civil unrest from the decision. This includes enacting curfews and contract services, among other restrictions.

With all this happening, it is hard to see who is “winning” in these endeavors.

“Black people definitely aren’t winning because they have been told that a cop can just barge into your house

and shoot you. They can also say that they were defending themselves in your house,” said Trevor Noah, host of the Daily Social Distancing Show. Police are not winning either. They are not as trusted like before.

Moreover, when the police are being used to enforce some rules that ban or prohibit certain acts of protests, like what Texas Governor Greg Abbott is trying to propose, they are in a bad light. At a Dallas campaign event, Texas Governor Abbott is proposing higher penalties and creating new actions that are perceived as crimes and would require jail time if offenses arose at protests. All this bad news is making the people tired and fearful. Another issue that makes people worried is President Trump’s executive order of the 1776 commission, a “national commission to support patriotic educa-

tion.” This executive order has yet to be given a date of signing. This order can brainwash children into extreme patriotism levels, which has been known to lead to terroristic attacks like the 2019 El Paso shooting, which was directly attributed to Trump’s speech, as stated by the terrorist himself.

All this turmoil and strife leads to the BLM movement’s central issue, falling into silence once more. The American people are growing tired of constant bad news. Breonna Taylor’s decision by a grand jury, the constant protests, Governor Abbott’s proposals, and Trump’s push for the end of “anti-racism” teaching has taken a toll on many. In a Pew Research Centre survey, the BLM movement now has 55% of U.S. adults’ support compared to the 67% that was shown this past June.

The American people are feeling worn out, but we must continue forward.

However, good news stems from the movement, as well. The Prime minister of Canada announces a partnership with CDN banks to start the first black entrepreneurship program. This comes with funds for black business owners and two more initiatives. This, along with an anti-racism action plan being put in motion in the EU.

Although these are dark times in America right now, we must all look past it and look for the light of the future. The Black Lives Matter movement is exactly what we as African American citizens need to see at this time. An idea that has been running for seven years and continues to grow even after all these setbacks. Just like us. Just like America.

President Trump downplays COVID-19, now over 200K are dead

By Lauren Anderson

As COVID-19 spread around the world and put thousands of people at risk, President Trump downplayed the threat of the virus and ignored warnings about the potential severity of the situation with a series of lies, exaggerations and fabrications. The White House continues to try to establish the belief that Trump was a competent leader who saved people from COVID-19 by preventing further spread.

On March 18, the Trump administration put out a list of actions the government took to prepare for COVID-19 to attempt to show that Trump was on top of the situation from the beginning. Instead of proving Trump's competency, however,

it shows that Trump did not do everything he could have, despite experts' pleas and warnings.

Recommendations from experts before the period of COVID-19 about testing, equipment, and distancing were clear. However, Trump's inability to act quickly caused the situation to worsen as deaths and economic destruction increased.

America now has the highest amount of COVID-19 infections and deaths of any country. Yet there has still not been any national plan for testing, contact tracing, or isolation to stop significant outbreaks. These measures have helped other countries prevent further spreading before getting out of hand by identifying

them before people even show symptoms.

Despite all of this, Trump claims that he has always taken the virus seriously from the onset of the virus. He often argues with reporters who cite statements he made in the past dismissing the severity of the virus. On Jan. 30, Trump stated that there was no problem, despite the confirmation of seven COVID-19 cases.

"We think we have it very well under control," Trump said at a Michigan manufacturing plant speech. "We have very little problem in this country at this moment—five—and those people are all recuperating successfully. But we're working very closely with China and other countries, and we think it's

going to have a very good ending for us... that I can assure you."

This was the day the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus as a public health emergency.

As the coronavirus cases increased, Trump continued to insist that the government had it all under control and even stated that the virus would hopefully grow weaker as the weather became warm. He later compared the virus to the flu, saying that thousands of people die from the flu a year, which is a lot compared to the number of cases in February.

Trump even said that the virus would one day disappear like a miracle, despite the confirmed 60 cases, at the time

of this promise. A few days later, on Feb. 29, the first death occurred, and Trump said they have "taken the most aggressive actions to confront the coronavirus."

In early March, Trump stated that it was safe to fly, but a few days later, travel from Europe to the United States was suspended as the number of cases increased to over a thousand. On March 13, he declared it a national emergency and finally announced social distancing guidelines, saying that the outbreak could last until July or Aug.

In late March, Trump stated that he wanted the economy to be ready by Easter, despite over 65,000 confirmed cases. The re-opening of the

economy was postponed to April 30. On March 31, with over 213,000 confirmed cases, Trump said that the virus is "not the flu" and is instead "vicious." His stance completely changed at this point, as he compared the situation to a war.

"WE WILL WIN THIS WAR. When we achieve this victory, we will emerge stronger and more united than ever before!" Trump stated on Twitter.

It is currently unclear whether Trump's stance on COVID-19 has changed since he contracted the virus. At the time of this writing, the CDC COVID Data Tracker reported at least 7,307,511 confirmed cases and 208,202 confirmed deaths in the U.S.

Notorious RBG's demeanor trumps Trump's decorum

By Sheryl Sellers

The sheer volume of conspiracy theory trash and false information heralded by the Trump Administration as "alternative facts," that is frothing from President Donald J. Trump's mouth is, for lack of a kinder word, shameful. This unsophisticated, unrefined, low language is certainly not conducive with the high office he holds. As preposterous as that drivel is, that he could attempt to undermine and boldly question the words of one of the United States' most

polished, brilliant, and judicial women, Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG), days following her death, is utterly despicable.

I will allow that hearing about her death, his response was, "Wow. She just died? I didn't know that. You're just telling me now for the first time?"

Of course, he had not heard. He was busy carrying out crucial business for the United States people while holding a pep rally for himself. He is so concentrated on his narcissist shouting

from his self-made pedestal that he did not hear the crowd shouting to him that she had died.

He continued, "She was an amazing woman who led an amazing life. I'm actually sad to hear that."

I am glad to hear that he learned a new adjective, "amazing," to take the place of "good, very good." I know a nine-year-old with a more extensive vocabulary and better use of the English language than this man.

I digress.

Later that night in his formal, memorializing statement, he stated, "Her opinions, including well-known decisions regarding the legal equality for women and the disabled, have inspired all Americans and generations of great legal minds."

Trump referred to Ginsburg as a "titan of law" who "demonstrated that one can disagree without being disagreeable towards one's colleagues."

This at least proves that he can talk the talk, although

unable to walk the walk.

That all took place on Friday night, Sept. 19. But those sentiments were too much for the president to hold onto for long. By Mon., Sept. 22, he was back to his old self on "Fox and Friends," spitting out yet another false, unsubstantiated load of dribble regarding RBG's last words.

"My most fervent wish is that I will not be replaced until a new President is installed," is the statement we are told by her family, dictat-

ed to her granddaughter, Clara Spera, days before her death.

During the interview, Trump provided his unsubstantiated take on those words.

"I don't know if she said that or if that was written out by Adam Schiff, and Schumer and Pelosi. That came out of the wind, it sounds so beautiful, but that sounds like a Schumer deal, or maybe Pelosi or Shifty Schiff."

Continued on the next page.

Notorious RBG (continued)

Typically, social media lit up adding to this new conspiracy, some going as far as to say RBG's words were dictated to her "eight-year-old granddaughter." Spera, by the way, is a 2017 graduate of Harvard Law School.

Schiff's response, "Mr. President, this is low. Even for you."

Not to be outdone by the president's hoax, during his Sept. 22 broadcast, Fox News host, Tucker Carlson, stated that if the report of RBG's words is correct, the sentiment was "pathetic."

"Keep in mind; we don't know exactly what Ruth Bader Ginsburg's

last words were. Did she really leave this world fretting about a presidential election? We don't believe that for a second. If it were true, it would be pathetic because life is bigger than politics, even this year." Even this year. That was telling.

However, Carlson could not let his verbal, thoughtless, unsympathetic thoughts on the dead end there. He continued, "We wouldn't wish final words like that on anyone, so we choose to believe that Ruth Bader Ginsburg didn't actually say that, but in the end in real life, she was thinking in the end about her family and where she might be

going next. Human concerns, not partisan ones."

He must have missed the part that RBG dictated those words days before her passing and that she had plenty of time to think of and be with her family since she suffered from cancer for years. Furthermore, remember, politics was also her lifeblood.

Although, frankly, do we care what Carlson, and his cohorts choose to believe? Unfortunately, this year, no issue or life event is out of bounds for hyping by the President of the United States. He has the uncanny ability to talk out of both sides

of his mouth. The left lips lamenting, "May her (Ginsburg) memory be a great and magnificent blessing to the world," and the right retorting,

"I don't know if she really said that."

The American people know that we lost an amazing advocate for gender equality and women's

rights.

Rest in peace, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Rest. In. Peace.



"Notorious RBD. Image courtesy of CBS News"

Presidential debate recap, importance of voting

By Aansa Usmani

On Tues., Sept. 29, President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden met at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, for the first of several presidential debates. Chris Wallace, host of Fox News Sunday, and Senior Political Correspondent for the Fox News Network hosted the debacle. At times, Wallace became a mediator between the two candidates, asking the President to stop interrupting his Democratic opponent and adhere to the debate rules.

In layman terms, the debate was a mere "hot mess, inside a dumpster

fire, inside a train wreck," according to CNN's Jake Tapper. Instead of effectively persuading undecided voters or mentioning policy positions, the debate was merely a screaming match between the two male candidates, one of whom is our current President.

However, one moment truly stuck out amid the dysfunction. At one point, Wallace asked Trump to denounce the "Proud Boys"—a white supremacist group known to be a domestic threat. Instead, the President responded and told the Boys to "stand back and stand by." These remarks targeted left-wing rioters

and members of Antifa (short for anti-fascist). Unlike right-wing groups/factions (like the Proud Boys), these groups pose little threat to domestic life, as fewer than one percent of these members pose national threats.

This was not the first time Trump refused to denounce white supremacy. In Aug. 2017, a right-wing rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, quickly became violent. This resulted in the loss of lives (one including Heather Heyer) at the hands of those who promote Nazi or White Nationalist propaganda. Additionally, Trump has consistently embraced racism

throughout his presidency, by defending the Confederate Flag or its monuments and by enacting laws that explicitly target people of color, immigrants, or other groups he despises.

Typically, I

refrain from inserting personal comments when discussing Trump. However, these remarks are too important to ignore. As a Muslim woman of color, I, for once, am terrified. Throughout his candidacy and

presidency, Trump has vilified my religion among his supporters, from implementing the Muslim Travel Ban to saying that we were cheering in New Jersey as the Twin Towers crashed.



The first of the Trump-Biden Debates. Image courtesy of MPR News

Debate recap (continued)

Post-9/11, America has been hard for us, but the Trump Presidency has been much worse. Having another four years of Trump is unfathomable.

However, my religion has not been the only vilified group; in Trump's opening speech in June 2015, he referred to Hispanics as "drug dealers" and "rapists," vowing to build a wall among the Mexican border to prevent further illegal immigration. According to his niece, Mary Trump, he uses racial slurs towards the African American and Jewish communities. His racist notions should not be surprising to any American; justifying or defending his remarks shows that one is complicit and content with the obnoxious rhetoric he promotes.

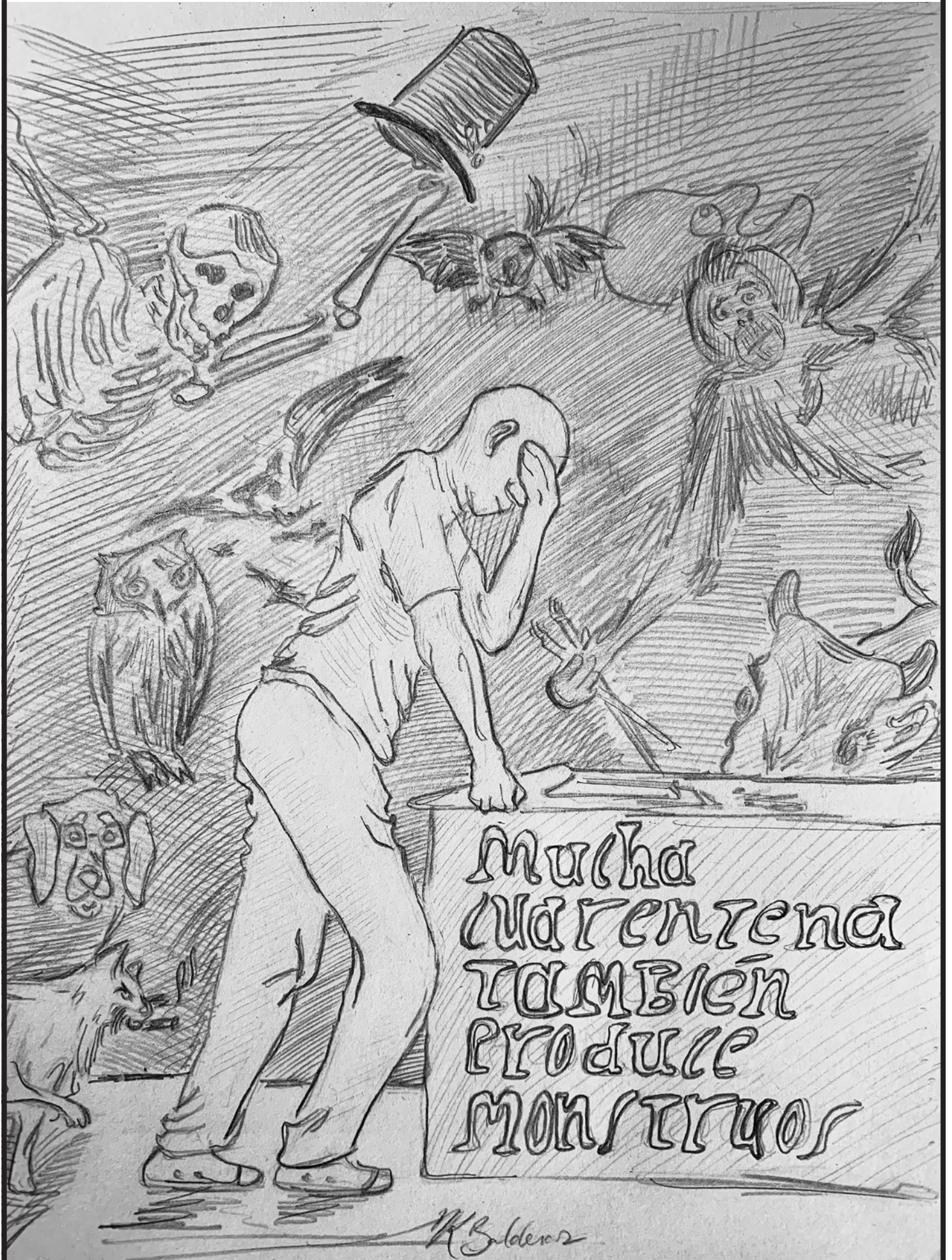
America does not need another four years of toxicity, incompetence, and racism. It requires a change within the governmental system, from the presidency to its cabinet. Competent, knowledgeable officials should be serving in these positions, not those seeking to better their riches or brand image.

Those who seek to better themselves while simultaneously detrimentally impacting the American people should NOT be serving within our government. America desperately needs structural reform, and it should begin at the ballot box. This election is more crucial than any other, and it will either be a referendum on the Trump Presidency or a continuation of their policies for another four years.

For more information about voting, visit Vote.org.

How Francisco Goya would put it

By Keven Balderas



"Being quarantined for a long time also wakes up monsters [in your head]."

An allusion to Francisco Goya's "El sueño de la razón produce monstruos"