

THE SIGNAL

Renaissance Festival

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Volume XXXV, Number 12

www.uhcl.edu/thesignal

November 5, 2007

New policies for the UHCL police department

Neesha Hosein
The Signal Staff

The police department at the University of Houston-Clear Lake has a new police chief who has begun implementing a series of new policies and procedures.

"I feel like we should always display that certain amount of professionalism," said Paul Willingham, UHCL chief of police. "You'll see. There will be a change

in uniform soon that will be more professional-looking. In the spring you might start seeing a little more involvement in community outreach. I'm working with David Rachita to perhaps assign officers as liaisons with the student clubs and organizations, and possibly even be invited to take part in some of the campus activities so that we're not just uniforms to people. That's important."

In response to complaints about parking and traffic related fees, Willingham

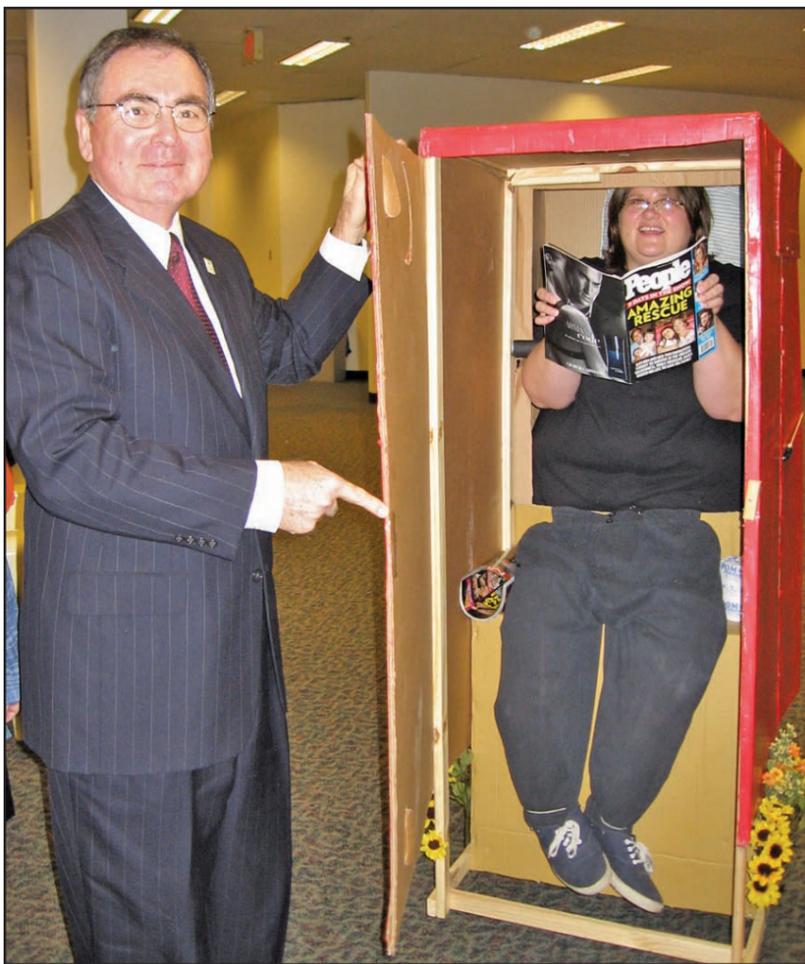
says the fees here are not higher in comparison to that of other institutions from what he has seen. Parking fees go toward keeping the roads and parking lots paved and painted, pays for the process and supplies for parking permits, lights, emergency call boxes, and maintenance. He says he is aware that some lots have problems and solutions are in the works. Lots A and B are scheduled for repair this December.

The annual parking fee at UHCL is \$70

and the annual fee at UH-Main Campus is \$130. Students at Texas A&M University at Galveston pay \$33 per semester.

"Parking fees are determined through the University Shared Governance Process," Willingham said. "The university police work in concert with other UHCL departments and governing bodies [Finance, University Life Committee, Traffic Committee, etc] to determine the appropriate fees for parking. The intent of

POLICE DEPT: continues on page 10



Richard Willis: The Signal

Human outhouse wins UHCL Halloween costume contest

The individual winner for the UHCL Halloween social and costume contest conducted Wednesday, Oct. 31 was an outhouse. Pictured from left, President William Staples opens the door to the outhouse and finds Aditra Derouchie, cashier/accounting assistant.

UHCL seeks to reverse national attrition trend

Bret Newcomb
The Signal Staff

Among the most pressing issues concerning post-secondary education is that of student retention.

A study by ACT, Inc., an independent, not-for-profit organization that conducts assessments and research in the areas of education and workforce development, found that student attrition has been on the rise for the last 20 years. The study shows more than a 13 percent drop in student retention from 1983 to 2005 in public universities' undergraduate programs.

This national trend is also reflected at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and steps are being taken to address the problem.

"Here at UHCL we are no different from our sister institutions," said Dean of Students Anthony Jenkins. "However, everyone from the University President, Provost, Division of Student Services and faculty are working to pull together every resource we have to develop a comprehensive retention strategy that will hopefully have a profound impact on our students."

The first step in coming up with a strategy to handle student retention is to understand what causes the problem in the first place.

"In spite of bringing in large groups of new students our enrollment is not growing," said Darlene Biggers, associate vice president of student services. "We have not kept accurate, consistent data of semester to semester retention or persistence to degree for cohorts so we aren't sure how big of a problem it is. However, looking at the past couple of semesters we saw that about 1,000 students per semester were eligible to return but did not. Now, of that group we aren't sure how many were pursuing degrees or how many were pursuing certificates and had just completed the certificate. We also have quite a few students on academic probation and suspension each year. But the majority of students who don't return are in good academic standing."

The challenges facing students are varied and include insufficient preparation for academia, family constraints, lack of funds, work demands, inadequate childcare and a disconnect with the college community.

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings addressed student enrollment and retention in a 2006 Department of Education Study stating, "There are far too many Americans who want to go to college but cannot - because they're either not prepared or cannot afford it."

Secretary Spellings put together a commission

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Seabrook Pelicans



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Texian Market Days



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FERPA amendment poses no imminent threat to student privacy

Melissa Bird
The Signal Staff

In recent years, violence in schools, including many universities, has become more prevalent and gained the attention of the entire country. Rep. Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania is sponsoring a bill that he hopes will help prevent further violence by eradicating the liability of schools after disclosing information.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, colleges and universities are allowed to disclose certain information about students if it is determined that they pose some sort of harm to themselves or others. There has been a lot of finger pointing and many lawsuits about who was responsible in cases where tragedies occurred.

"Parents have sued universities for telling them [about their troubled child], and parents have sued universities for not telling them," said Anthony Jenkins, dean of students.

The Mental Health Security for Families and Education Act, HR 2220, would allow universities to disclose any information they

deem necessary to the parents of mentally troubled students as long as they get the written consent from a mental health professional stating that the student poses a significant threat that could increase the chances for suicide, homicide or other violent acts. This would remove liability from the university.

"Unfortunately, the interpretation of FERPA is so unclear that schools are fearful of being sued," Murphy told members of Congress earlier this month. "The just released report from the National Association of Attorneys General Task Force on Campus Safety calls for an update of the FERPA laws that would allow for protection from liability if schools make good-faith efforts to protect students, faculty and staff, which is precisely what my bill offers."

Murphy's bill comes as a reaction to the recent tragedy at Virginia Tech. Some say it is just a bandage for a bigger issue.

"Every now and then a politician will create a feel good bill just to make people feel better, Jenkins said. "We've done this with

FERPA: continues on page 10

New police chief plays by the book

Enhanced directives have officers more active on campus

There is a new chief in town; his name is Paul Willingham and he comes to us with 16 years of experience at The University of Texas at Houston.

The UHCL Police Department is also implementing some new policies. They are focusing on: internal processes, patrol expectations, traffic enforcement standards, critical incident response and student-related crime response. Willingham has also vowed to improve the customer service of his department.

No one enjoys getting a ticket, but they are a necessary evil.

The price of parking permits, parking tickets and speeding tickets can be over-

whelming, especially after paying tuition. As unpleasant as they are, these pricey items are a necessity to maintain parking lots, parking lights and roads on campus, as well as maintain campus safety. The money collected allows parking lot and road maintenance to advance.

In order to avoid being ticketed, one must do the following: buy a parking permit and display it correctly, park in the appropriate parking lots, and do not speed on the campus roads. The respective speed limit is 30 mph.

For the sake of student safety, it is important that students, faculty and staff purchase and display their parking permits

to keep potentially harmful predators off the premises. Parking permits are a way of keeping track of who is coming on campus and who is leaving.

If students wish to appeal a parking ticket or any other type of fee, they may fill out a request to The Parking Citation Appeals Committee by going to the Police Department, Room B 1636, before the resolve date. Traffic tickets cannot be appealed on campus, but may be taken to court by transferring the citation to Harris County upon request.

In addition to enforcing parking restrictions, the UHCL Police Department offers a number of other services designed to

keep the campus safe for UHCL students, faculty and staff. The campus police help with locked keys inside vehicles, walk students, faculty or staff to their vehicles for added safety, and provide emergency response to reported incidents, among other services.

Nobody likes paying a fine, but let's face it, we know the rules. At least the rule-breakers do pay for maintenance that benefit the students while driving on campus. If you do not want a fine, follow the posted rules and regulations. You will find these on the campus police Web site at www.uhcl.edu/police.

COMMENTARY

What issue is most vital for students: more security or freedom?

Josh Conwell
The Signal Staff

As a reaction to all the violence in schools in the past few years, lawmakers are now planning on making a small change to the student privacy act.

Rep. Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania presented a new bill that, if passed, will revise the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The new bill proposes that mental health information be revealed to parents of students when the school deems students as being harmful to themselves or others.

Right now, FERPA is the law that colleges go by to protect a student's privacy. FERPA allows only certain student record information to be released based upon a student's written permission. This includes the student's parents or guardians.

The bill proposes that a college must report the behavior of students who pose a threat to themselves or others to a mental health professional, and then the college will be allowed to release the mental health information of students to a parent or guardian.

This bill comes as a reaction to the April 16 Virginia Tech shootings where the college was blamed with not following through and helping the shooter, Seung-Hui Cho, with his mental illness. Even

with concerns raised by students and professors, the college failed to discuss the situation with Cho's family and take appropriate action. This bill has been proposed to help prevent that tragedy from ever happening again.

However, the problem with this new law is that FERPA already allows colleges to consult with mental health professionals and student's parents or guardians in cases of emergency.

Dean of Students Anthony Jenkins said that he does not see any reason to make changes to FERPA because it already allows them to make those exact same decisions. Universities can already contact a parent or guardian, as well as talk with a counselor, if they think that a student is a threat to themselves or the university community.

Darlene Biggers, associate vice president of student services, views the new bill as not really a harm to colleges, but agrees with Jenkins that it is redundant.

This type of bill that has been introduced is what Jenkins calls the "feel good bill." When something devastating happens in our society, such as the Virginia Tech tragedy, people want to know what is going to be done about it so that it will never happen again. Enter the "feel good bill."

It seems that Congress believes that whenever something bad happens, they can just pass a bill and it will make everything better in the public's eye. As long as we add a new law, then we have made a difference in our society and we can stop worrying and can begin to feel better about what has happened. Right?



Josh Conwell: The Signal

With each new "safety" bill that we pass, we risk losing another piece of our civil freedom in exchange for "security." There is a belief in our society that the only way we can be truly safe is to pass another law and then we believe that the problem is solved. We owe it to ourselves to question whether we are really more protected with this new bill as a community or if we are just being sold a false sense of security.

What should make a difference in our society and make us feel safer is not all these bills that are being passed, but the knowledge that we are all looking out for one another. Biggers believes that our safety should be everyone's business. The only way we can feel safer in our school community is by knowing that we are

helping each other and are aware of people's needs.

The introduction of this bill cannot really be seen as a very important act, and it does not seem likely to make much of a difference on how schools will deal with student's issues. This is just a small step toward trying to help solve a very large and important problem – the need for schools to build a bridge of communication between the college, the students and their family members. This bill might benefit students in a few certain situations, but sadly, in the end, this is just one of many bills to come that will fall short in the attempt to give our students what they truly need, a nurturing educational environment.

THE SIGNAL STAFF

Co-Editors Neesha Hosein
Bret Newcomb

Designer Richard Willis

Assistant Designer Kimber Roque

**Videographers/
Video Editors** Alicia Gutierrez
Alana Pennington

Web Master David Kiss

Broadcast Reporters David Kiss
Ashley R. Marie

**Reporters/
Photographers** Melissa Bird
Angela Bolton
Kim Boswell
Monica Buchanan
Josh Conwell
Heather Frame
Jamie Griffiths
Emily Jaschke
Kevin Kettle
Ashley R. Marie
Cassandra Spencer
Lauren Taylor
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Stephanie Wilcox

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The Signal is a public forum and will print letters to the editor subject to the following: letters must be no longer than 500 words. Where necessary, letters will be edited for grammar, spelling and style requirements. Letters must be signed and include the writer's full name, address and phone number. The editors reserve the right to refuse letters, announcements and contributed articles deemed libelous.

Address letters to:
The Signal
UH-Clear Lake
2700 Bay Area Blvd., Box 456
Houston, TX 77058

Reach the staff:
Phone: (281) 283-2570
Fax: (281) 283-2569
E-mail: thesignal@uhcl.edu

**Ad Manager/
Production Asst.** Lindsay Humphrey

Faculty Adviser Taleen Washington

Living in a generic world

The straw that broke this suburban camel's back was the absence of Folgers de-cafeinated coffee.

I mean, come on, we are not talking about organically grown coffee from the foothills of Tibet, harvested by Buddhist monks. All I wanted was a large can of my good old Folgers. Oh, mind you, I could get a teensy, itty-bitty can of it, for about \$400 an ounce. But forget about an economical size. Ah, but wait! I could have a big can of "Mountain Country" coffee for a lot less. Oh, joy. I hate "Mountain Country" coffee.



Kim Boswell
Consumer Critic

This is happening more and more to me. Every time I go into my conveniently located, on-the-way-home store, there is something I WANT that

they DO NOT HAVE, in the size or brand of my choice.

I have to admit, I played a role in getting myself trapped by the store. Over the last decade, I gleefully passed up shopping at smaller chains and mom-and-pop independents, suckered in by the low prices and endless choices offered by the biggest grocery store chains. One by one, the little guys died off.

"Well, survival of the fittest, may the best store win!" I thought, mentally genuflecting to the free market gods. "I'll just be left with the stores that offer top-quality products and services."

Uh, well, no, actually. It's not turning out like that. As the competition dwindled, so did the endless choices. I go in the store looking for Del Monte whole green beans in a big can. I am offered only "Mountain Country" beans in a large can. Can my daughter, sick with a sore throat and begging for Mrs. Smith's pumpkin pie, have it? Oh, nooo, no. But there is "Mountain Country" brand, stacks of them, just waiting for me to buy.

I crater, out of desperation, and buy the generic pie. She won't notice. Her taste buds are fried, anyway. Hah! Busted, the minute she took the first bite!

I put up with second-rate pie, but I refuse to accept second-rate coffee. That does it! I want to talk to the manager. No, the underlings won't do. I want the grand pooh-bah, head honcho, fearless leader of this store. Now!

Poor Jack comes walking briskly over with a great big grin. I know Jack, the manager, in the way you know someone you see several times a week, but with whom you rarely converse. I knew I was about to have a conversation with him that he would probably not welcome.

"Jack, my name is Kim Boswell and I am very frustrated at this moment," I said. "It seems lately that every time I look for something in the size or brand I am used to buying, it's not available. For the second time in a couple of weeks, Folgers de-caf coffee, large can, is not on the shelf. Not only that, Jack, but even the little sticker, marking the spot where it goes, has been removed. Hope no longer springs eternal in this human breast, Jack, for the return of my coffee. I am deeply concerned."

"Now, Mrs. Boswell, I'm going to tell you something you probably don't want to hear," Jack said patronizingly. "We only stock things that have a large turnover, things people buy often."

"Jack, we are talking about Folgers coffee here," I countered. "That's about as normal an American purchase as you can make. You've got eel sushi sitting 20 yards away! I'm not buying your explanation. I've got your number, Jack. You guys are trying to make me buy the store-owned 'Mountain Country' brand if I want a large can of coffee. I'm on to you."

By this point Jack's smile is not reaching his eyes. Sweat is beading on his brow and his eyes are darting about furtively, as if someone may overhear what he is about to reveal.

"Mrs. Boswell, look, even I have to go to other stores to get certain things I need these days," Jack pleaded.

Oh, goody, another stop on the way home. I try to flatter myself, imagining a European-style shopper, browsing the market each day for the freshest produce to cook that night. Truth is, I'm a last-minute Lucy, swinging into the store every afternoon to figure out what's for dinner and picking up items we need. What you're telling me, Jack, is either accept a generic lifestyle or my one-store-a-day habit is about to morph into two-store fix with a prolonged commute. Thanks, buddy.

As I roll my eyes in defeat and start to walk away, I turn back for one more dig.

"Hey, Jack!" I holler out. "You know those covers I've been begging you guys to get for the open-air olive bins back by the deli? I just saw two 7-year-old twins with matching upper-respiratory infections do a slime job all over your feta-kalamata salad. Have a good day, Jack!"

To plan or not to plan: hire a wedding planner

Have you ever tried to plan a party on your own? Well then you know the stress of having to get everything organized and ready. Imagine what it feels like to plan your own wedding and deal with people who seem to be out to make you a crazy person.

I got engaged in February and was so happy and carefree -- so happy in fact that I decided to plan my own wedding



Heather Frame
The One With the Mouth

because it looked fun and easy. Well, it has its moments of being fun, and yes, in the beginning it was easy, but let me be the first person to tell you how wrong I was. It seems like with each month that goes by something or someone is adding to my already full and overloaded plate.

In planning your own wedding you have to make sure everything looks great, especially when everyone knows that you are planning and orchestrating everything on your own. So you must ensure that everything from your cake down to the soap in the restrooms looks great, smells good, is the right color - in other words, perfect.

First, you must pick a beautiful place at which to get married and hope that not too many other people you know have been married at that place. You have to make sure that it can hold enough of your closest friends and family. Oh, by the way, when people catch on that you are having a wedding with free alcohol you will find out that you have many, many friends.

Second, you must pick out a magnificent dress that makes you look like a goddess. After trying on 8 million dresses you finally find one, and then you realize that your body now has cuts and bruises from all of the tulle, corsets and petticoats that you had to put on just to get in your goddess wedding dress in the first place.

Third, you must decide who your favorite people in this world are - or at least at the time - because now you have to ask them to be in your wedding and go spend anywhere from \$150 to \$300 on a bridesmaid dress. Then you must ask one of the six to be the maid of honor. In my case, I have two maids of honor because I didn't want to hear about it or have to decide who was more important. The bad thing about having two maids of honor is that now I am back at square one because I still have to decide who stands first. So take my advice, do not as I do, do as I say.

Fourth, you must pick out a wedding cake that is to die for, and not only do you have to eat 40 pounds of cake (and gain 15 extra pounds that you already lost working out) when tasting all the cakes at all of the bakeries, but you must make sure that you have enough to feed an entire army. Then, after all of this, you must decide on a cake topper that is unique and fits you and your fiancé. This is almost impossible unless you are a cowboy fanatic whose figurines are wearing a cowboy hat complete with a lasso around the groom's neck.

Fifth, you must sit down with all of your family and future in-laws and try to decide on the guest list. This is, by far, the most exhausting issue you will deal with at the time, because you are inviting everyone your fiancé ever grew up next to and played t-ball with, whom he hasn't even seen since. Then you get to explain to the two families that each side is equally important.

Finally, it becomes time to send the invitations, and since all of your very important bridesmaids and maids of honor are too busy with their own lives, you have to make 400 invitations by yourself because you decided that it would be awesome to create them with a friend. But you soon realize that you are alone in punching more than 1,000 holes for the ribbons, and even more alone now that you have to address all of these invitations and response cards by yourself.

So my fellow brides-to-be and even grooms, when you decide to wear the old ball and chain and you think it is smart to plan your own wedding to save a few pennies, remember that it is more work than you can ever imagine, and you still have to maintain the life you already live and be in charge of the biggest party you have ever thrown. Grooms, tell your bride that she deserves the best and that will convince her that she is worth the wedding planner. So do yourself a favor and don't be dumb like me -- HIRE A WEDDING PLANNER! It will be well worth the money, your sanity and it will make things much easier on you and your husband-to-be.

'Tis the season to be giving

Some say it's better to give than to receive. I am one of those people.

With the holidays approaching it's easy to get caught up in the glamour and glitz of the Yuletide. It is easy for a materialistic society to forget the true meaning of what the holiday season really represents — giving.

October is when the ghosts and goblins come out, sitting on shelves right next to all of the Christmas

early age it is an attribute that will become part of their lives in later years.

There are many avenues that a person can take in order to make someone's holiday a little merrier.

Over the past few years, I have had the opportunity to volunteer with many different organizations. I have to say that it is truly the most rewarding way to experience the spirit of Christmas.

In case you are interested in giving this season, there are many organizations that you can go through to donate toys, food and clothes. The local churches usually provide ways that you can help families in the community. If you are not familiar with an organization and what it may need, all of the organizations usually list who they help, what they are in need of, and ways to contact them on their Web sites. You can also donate online on many of these Web sites.

You do not have to donate financially; you can donate your time. Shelters around the Houston area are always in need of volunteers, especially during the holiday season. Most shelters have hot meals that they serve to the residents, and are in need of help to serve and cook meals. You can also volunteer with child care activities at various women's shelters or domestic violence centers.

I contacted Star of Hope, which

has a variety of shelters around the Houston area. Lillie Durden works in the client support assistance department at the Star of Hope Transitional Living Center. The living center provides living quarters for up to 66 families and 45 single-mother families.

Detergent, toilet tissue, diapers (infant size 3 to toddler), baby wipes and cleaning supplies are the things that Durden said are most needed because the residents use them on a daily basis. She likes the donors to keep in mind there are a lot of children and they use more than 1200 diapers a week.

Another idea is to clean out your closet. If you have any clothes that don't fit you, your spouse or your child, donate them. Children's toys and books are other things that you can donate. Keep in mind the old saying, "One man's trash is another man's treasure."

Be creative; giving is such a first-class feeling, and remember, giving a little goes a long way.

In the book "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," Dr. Suess writes, "Maybe Christmas, [the Grinch] thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more." This is something that we all need to keep in mind as the holidays are approaching. No matter what age, race, gender or religion you are, everyone can experience the joy in giving.



Lauren Taylor
Mouth of the South

decorations. Society is so consumed with the commercialization of Christmas; we forget that there are many people who will not be getting anything for Christmas.

I am sure that we all know youngsters who have made a 5-page wish list of all the things they want from Santa Claus. Sure, these things would make them happy, but we should make a valiant effort to find ways to teach children to give and not only anticipate receiving. If children are taught to give at an

Upcoming Events



Houston Ballet Presents the Nutcracker Market Nov. 8-9, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Nov. 10-11 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Reliant Center. Tickets \$10 at Randall's, \$11 at the door (713) 227-2787.



Indian Student Association Presents Diwali Nov. 10, 6:30 p.m. - Midnight, Atrium II. For additional information, e-mail info@isauhcl.org.



Communication Association BBQ Baked Potato and Bake Sale Thursday, Nov. 15 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., Atrium I. Help raise money for The Wish Tree.



Teacher Job Fair Sponsored by UHCL Career Services Thursday, Nov. 15 12:30 - 2:30 p.m., Atrium II. Register at www.uhcl.edu/job-fairs.

Experience the show live:

'So you think you can dance' comes to Houston

Emily Jaschke
The Signal Staff

"Be good if you are coming to audition this year," said Nigel Lythgoe to an audience of Internet hopefuls on the show's Web site. "Don't expect us to be nice and sweet; you know we all can't be Paula Abduls. If you can't dance I'm going to tell you, 'you can't dance.'"

That is just one of many pieces of advice from Lythgoe, co-creator and judge for Fox Network's "So You Think You Can Dance." He and his fellow judges, as well as the show's choreographers, witness thousands of competitors audition. Some of whom are amazing and get to move on to the next level. Then there are others who are not so fortunate, like one contestant whose nerves were so completely shot that she threw up right on stage.

FOX teamed up with the creators of "American Idol" and the producers of "The American Music Awards" and "American Bandstand" to create a nationwide search for those best blessed with rhythm. The dancers bring variety to the floor with everything from pop-n-lock, ballroom, ballet, salsa, breaking, jive, hip-hop and krumping.

If contestants can kick it, they get a straight ticket to the next city. If they show that they are only promising, they must endure a judged choreograph session. This is where some of the best free-stylers and other hopefuls get sent back to the street.

In the show's third season, producers traveled to New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Atlanta in search of dancers who best represent the rhythm of America. The trek was worth it because they found talent in winner Sabra Johnson.

Is it all really worth it, dancing from morning till night, twisting ankles and back pain?



Courtesy of Dick Clark Productions

Benji Schwimmer thinks so. He was voted America's Favorite Dancer in the second season and received \$100,000, a new car and a contract to appear in Celine Dion's "A New Day" show at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

"It takes personality, uniqueness and unique voice in the way you move," said Mia Michaels, show choreographer during recent interview posted on the show's Web site. "Hard work, great attitude, lots of training, a lifetime of training and focus. In the dance world it's like 99 jobs you lose and one you get."

"So You Think You Can Dance" is also taking the show on the road, live. The tour will be making a stop in Houston Nov. 15 at the Reliant Arena. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster.

"We are thrilled with the tremendous growth of the show and excited to take 'So You Think You Can Dance' across the country yet again to showcase this year's world-class talent," said Simon Fuller, co-creator and executive producer in a live tour press release.

"Viewing the contestants performing on television does not even come close to experiencing them in-person. We look forward to having the country's favorites hit the road coming to a town near you."

You missed your opportunity to audition this go around, but there is always next season. In the mean time, you can check out the competition from your couch or catch it live at the Reliant Arena.

For more information regarding the show, go to <http://www.fox.com/dance/>.

Dracula frightens audiences at The Texas Repertory Theatre

Monica Buchanan
The Signal Staff

"I want your fear ...your fear makes your heart pound; it renders your veins rich and full."

You can have your zombies, your Frankenstein, and your ghosts. There is no other villain more terrifying (or refined) than Dracula, and he is haunting the stage of The Texas Repertory Theatre from Oct. 24 to Nov. 11.

While most associate live, professional theatre with the downtown theatre district, The Texas Repertory Theatre was designed to bring the excitement of the theatre to a broader audience.

Located off of 1960 past the north Beltway, The Texas Repertory Theatre is nestled quietly within the suburbs of northwest Houston, far away from the traffic and hassles of the downtown theatre district. Founded in December of 2003, the theatre has been operating only since February of 2006, and has seen dramatic appraisal from both spectators and the press.

Craig Miller, the theatre's associate artistic director and director of public relations, is proud of how far his theatre has come and what they are bringing to the Houston area.

"In our third season we are seeing a huge response from the entire Houston community," Miller stated. "We have season ticket holders from all over, including Katy and Alvin ... we are hoping to start a new trend

in professional theatre that includes the concept of bringing the theatre to the people, and not the people to the theatre."

While the theatre closely resembles some of the more small, quaint theatres, the large stage and beautiful set designs will allow the audience to be lost in a magical world. The Texas Repertory Theatre has hosted a large array of plays and musicals, and their most recent adaptation of "Dracula" was no less thrilling and horrifying than any other.

The scenic designer, Meghan Hakes, used every trick (including trap doors) to help the audience get lost in the mystery. The costumes were expertly coordinated by Fernando Zamudio, whose modest dresses and men's suiting lent a legitimate feel to the Victorian time period.

Most of us have either read Bram Stoker's "Dracula" or seen one of the many attempts or versions that Hollywood has produced, but to sit front row and have the legend stand no more than five feet away is more terrifying than any film can portray. With bits of humor sprinkled in between the horrific cries of the amazing cast, an evening with Dracula will surely leave you breathless.

For more information on ticket prices and season tickets, visit The Texas Repertory Theatre Web site at www.texreptheatre.org or call (281) 583-7573.



Courtesy of The Texas Repertory Theatre Co.

Student Life * Student Life * Student Life



The National Society of Leadership and Success

in partnership with the
UHCL Student Leadership Institute
www.societyofsuccess.com

Christine Comaford-Lynch



**“Rules for Renegades:
Make More Money, Rock Your
Career, Revel in Your Identity”**

She'll share the surprising truth behind her most offbeat rules:

- Everything is an Illusion, So Pick One That's Empowering
 - Rock Rejection and Finesse Failure
 - Learn to Love Networking
 - Work Your Money Mojo

Visit [Rules for Renegades](#) for more about Christine.

Date: Tuesday, Nov. 13, 2007
Time: 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Location: Bayou 2512

OPEN TO EVERYONE! NO CHARGE!
www.uhcl.edu/studentleadershipinstitute

Fee Proposal Meetings

The Student Government Association (SGA) cordially invites you to the fee proposal meetings!



All students are encouraged to attend and voice their concerns.

Meetings are scheduled as follows:
Tuesday, November 6th—Review of Proposals
Tuesday, November 13th—Vote to Support or Not to Support Proposals

All meetings will be held in the SSCB Lecture Hall, 1.100 from 11:30-12:30.

CONGRATULATIONS TO: Michael, Nida, and Patrick who received **National Certified Student Leader** status at the conference in California...**HICCA!!**

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The pioneers of our culture: A trip through the Texas timeline

Richard Willis
The Signal Staff

The cannon fires create a blanket of smoke under which the men representing the Mexican Army raise their muskets and take aim. Across the battlefield, clear of the cannon smog, those representing the Texas Revolutionary Army do the same. The command to fire is then given from each side's highest-ranking officer. The battle has begun.

As the loud volleys from the gunmen are exchanged, the field is plagued with smoke covering the soldiers and officers in a way that makes them almost disappear. Suddenly, above all the gun shots, a booming voice from the Mexican Army can be heard; "CHARGE!" was the single command. Within the fogged battlefield the Mexican Army can be seen sprinting. At this point the youngest of the Texas Revolutionaries have only one thing on their minds – run back in a panic-stricken sprint to their parents and teachers who were watching on the sidelines.

This battle was actually one of the many re-enactments that allow children to participate with professional re-enactors as they learn about the living conditions of the early 1830s, just before the Republic of Texas was founded.

"We didn't expect the kids to react like that," said Burlom Parsons, who played the part of a Mexican colonel. "We were told not to do that [charge] again."

Parsons chose to represent a Mexican colonel, whose outfit and equipment cost more than \$2,000, because he wanted the opportunity to "present the Mexican soldiers' side of the story."

"What we try to do is portray the Mexican soldier as an equal to Texans," Parsons said. "[Mexican soldiers] represented a young nation that all of a sudden was hearing rumors of a revolution

that would cost them a big chunk of their nation, which did eventually happen."

This period of time was one of four represented at this year's Texian Market Days held at George Ranch Historical Park. The other

three Texas time periods represented included the 1860s, 1890s and 1930s.

The South rose again in an 1860s Civil War re-enactment

that was canceled due to a civil dispute between the Civil War re-enactors representing the Northern Union States and the Southern Confederate States. This dispute sent the re-enactors representing the Union Army home said Sue Angle, an attendant at the event.

"There was something mentioned that there was a shortage of re-enactors on one side and the other side had too much pride to let one or two cross over," Angle said.

The 1890s area hosted Dr. E.T. Bushrod's – Old Tyme Medicine Show, a re-enacted medicine show based on actual medicine shows of the past.

While the real purpose behind a medicine show was to push sales of miracle products such as E.T. Bushrod's "Wonder Oil," which was claimed to cure anything from "Arthritis and Tonsillitis to Farsightis and Nearsightis," medicine shows also had great entertainment value.

"Between the 1860s and 1920s medicine shows were the leading form of entertainment," said Dennis Hubberd, who played Dr. Bushrod. "It became a real social affair for some people."

Moving into the 1930s, there was an antique car show, and what would a true ranch be without an antique tractor show?

Other attractions included old-time cooking demonstrations, blacksmithing, gunsmithing, old-fashioned games, hard tack making, cemetery rubbings, working cowboy demonstrations and more.

Texian Market Days is an annual fall event at George Ranch Historical Park. For more information, contact them at (281) 343-0218 or visit their Web site at www.georgeranch.org.



Texas frontiersmen Jack Payne, Tom Rooney and Elmer Smith take aim at potential trespassers.



Assistance for the hearing impaired is provided at Dr. E.T. Bushrod's Old Tyme Medicine Show, although it just seems like shouting to most.

1830s

1860s

1890s

1930s

All photos by Richard Willis. Individuals identified in top photo banner are: left, Tony Tristan as a Mexican sergeant; middle, Matthew Davis re-enacting a Civil War drummer boy; right, Mick Castelberg is dressed in a modern cowboy fashion.

Rediscover the

Renaissance

Nicole Wheatley
The Signal Staff

Her ye', Her ye'! Take a trip back in time by attending one of the most acclaimed festivals in Texas, The Texas Renaissance Festival. There are 150 plus performances, 330 arts and crafts shops, dozens of rides and games for children and adults, and more than 3,000 costumed characters daily on this 54 acre re-creation of a time when life was enchanting but simple.

As you walk through the gates you are approached by ferocious barbarians, gallant knights, lords and ladies, beautiful fairies, mouthy wenches, begging paupers, the most infamous Renaissance King Henry VIII and Queen Catherine of Aragon. Entertainers of all kinds done up in 16th century garb, as well as employees and a few exhibitionists, are there to make sure every person who walks through the gate gets the feeling they have stepped back in time.

The smell of turkey legs, sausage on a stick, fried turkey breast, gyros and blooming onions fill the air. Anything and everything you could ever imagine eating and drinking from chocolate dipped strawberries at Fruitful Endeavors, to different meads, ales and wines at the King's Wine Tasting, are available for patrons to enjoy for just a few pounds. If you would like to participate in the King's Wine Tasting you must make reservations by going to the Web site www.texrenfest.com.

Walking through the festival there are many villages to visit with each having its own theme. There is the Agora, home of the gypsies and Greeks; Captain's Gallery, where the English souls reside; La Fiesta, where everything is a Mexican fiesta; Polinia, home of the proud Polish; and Sherwood Forest, a children's playground.

Attendees travel down cobblestone pathways and interact with fortune tellers, jugglers, performers, hair braiders, face painters, jousts and magicians of all sorts. Patrons can take in the sights and sounds of the times by attending the many performances such as: jousting, The Mud Pit, Shunyata Belly Dance, Sound and Fury and many, many more.

"We do five shows a day," said Bill Wasten of The Sturdy Beggars. "The crowds really get into the mud slinging."

"While window shopping through several hundred different stores selling pottery, sculpted metal, woodcarvings, jewelry, and other items pertaining to the period, patrons get the feeling they are truly in the Renaissance period, which inspired its inception," said Jeffrey L. Baldwin, director of entertainment and marketing for The Texas Renaissance Festival. "A perfect day ends as you see a burst of Royal Fireworks conducted at dusk above the Festival's lake."

The festival is located on FM 1774 between Magnolia and Plantersville, 45 minutes northwest of Houston and runs every weekend through Nov. 25. Tickets are available at HEB Stores, Woodforest National Banks, Randall's Stores, Market Basket Stores, Apple Tree Stores and click-n-print online, for \$18 adults and \$8 a child. Gate prices are \$21 an adult and \$10 a child. For more information, visit the Web site at www.texrenfest.com.



Photos by Nicole Wheatley
Left: The Prince and Princess of Darkness, Liam Seater and Marsha Seater.

Right: Centaur Greg Hickman with Danyelle Wheatley.



A harvest full of fun activities for the family

Angela Bolton
The Signal Staff

The fall season has arrived and opens its doors to a gorgeous day of crafty activities and family fun at the 13th Annual Harvest Festival held Oct. 27 in League Park by the Parks and Recreation Department of League City, Texas.

Among the activities were lines of booths filled with arts, crafts and even a charity with a special cause, where vendors and representatives graciously welcomed guests to browse. Guests had a generous range of products to fulfill their shopping appetites. Some of these varied from beautifully handmade jewelry, purses, paintings and home décor to Mary Kay and ion water filters.

Carrie Wright of Wisteria Lane Creations in League City started her business in a resale shop out of Seabrook, Texas.

"I do this to see the joy that you're giving to someone else," Wright said.

One year, Wright says, a man came to her booth and admired a necklace he wanted to give his wife, but could not afford.

As the man briefly explained his financial situation and left the booth, Wright felt compelled to simply give him the necklace. She sent one of her associates and watched while her associate delivered the necklace.

"I'll never forget the look on his face," Wright said.

At another booth, a nonprofit organization called Invisible Children was guided by a zealous group of young individuals. Micah Wesley, Stephen Webster, Amanda Alexander, Brittany Noland, Mallory Doeckel and Sabrina Dubrin all explained that they were there to raise awareness about the war-affected children of Uganda.

"We want to bring awareness to League City in order to make this generation of children open their eyes outside their own world to the other generations of kids that are hurting," the group said. "There is a genocide taking place in Uganda, and no one here sees this happening."

Further down the way was Tammy Angeler, a representative for Mia Bella Candle Company, who explained that each candle burns evenly and is made of natural vegetables.

There were several candles from which to choose, each with their own delightful smell. One of the crowd's favorite candles was 'angel wings,' with a cherry vanilla smell that sent your senses haywire.

Although shopping consumed most of the guests' time, this event was tailored for the entire family to take part in the festivities. There was a pumpkin carving and costume contest for the kids, a costume

contest for the family pet and a pie-baking contest for the adults.

William D. Morris, a recreation specialist for League Park, explains the festival as a family affair with most of its emphasis being geared toward the children.

"A little girl who entered the costume contest was disheartened because she didn't win a place in the contest," Morris said. "It broke my heart to see this little girl walking away with her head hung low, so I quickly thought of a box of donuts I had and gave them to her as a prize. You should have seen the smile on her face."

He further described how heartwarming it is to see the delight this event brings to the children and watch how proud the parents are of their child. Morris explained that this is what the Harvest Festival is all about.

League Park is a family-friendly environment nestled right in the center of downtown League City. It runs along a restored railroad track with an ac-

companying old-fashioned railway caboose that serves as a concession stand for its visitors. Guests can enjoy treats such as hot dogs, popcorn, candy and sodas.

This is a place where the locals can meet their neighbors and kids can partake in fun activities. It is no surprise, with an ambiance that makes everyone feel right at home, why this quaint little park serves as the grounds for the Harvest Festival.



Angela Bolton: The Signal

A volunteer group that raises funds for the war-affected children of Uganda showcase their cause. Listed in alphabetical order: Amanda Alexander, Mallory Doeckel, Sabrina Dubrin, Brittany Noland, Stephen Webster, Micah Wesley.



The Facts

As of present day, the percentage of homeless people in the United States divided by race is:

- 57% African American
- 30% Caucasian
- 10% Hispanic
- 2% Native American
- 1% Asian

Fifty percent of America's homeless women and children are running away from domestic abuse.

One in five people in a soup kitchen line is a child.

3.5 million Americans now live in hunger or on the edge of hunger.

What do these famous people have in common?

- Halle Berry
- Janis Rodney (J.R.) Richard
- Kelly Clarkson
- Ella Fitzgerald
- Jim Carrey

They were all homeless at some point, whether it was when they were a child, young adult or even after their career ended.

Halle Berry was 21 when her mom refused to give her money, so she stayed in various shelters throughout Chicago.

J.R. Richard had a stroke while warming up before an Astros game, which ended his career. Being too proud to ask for help financially, Richard lived under a Houston highway until word got around and friends helped him out.

Kelly Clarkson's apartment burned down in 2002 and she had to stay in a shelter for a few days.

Ella Fitzgerald was homeless for a year in 1933 in Harlem. The following year, she won an amateur contest at the Apollo Theatre.

Jim Carrey's father lost his job when he was young and he was homeless for a short while. His father finally found a job at a factory and had the entire family work there to earn a living.

How you can help:

- www.searchproject.org
- www.houstonfoodbank.org
- www.volunteerhouston.org
- www.starofhope.org

These are just a few Web sites for the Houston area that is dedicated to helping the homeless. Each Web site has various ways to help, such as volunteering during Thanksgiving and Christmas, and donating clothes, blankets, canned goods and money.

Life on the street: It could happen to anyone

In America there are approximately 3.5 million people who are homeless. While many of us will refuse to make eye contact or ignore them, they are real people and they all have a story to tell.

Imagine only being able to remember a life growing up on the streets. At age nine, you lose your father and a few years later your mother finds out she has cancer.

Leonard, of Houston, knows this life too well, plus much more heart-break. Years later, without parents, he has survived the streets of Houston and several drug remissions.

"It's been a hard life," Leonard explains. "But this is a normal lifestyle for me, because this is all I have ever known."

Leonard's father and mother both attended Texas A&M, where his father was a football player. One evening, when driving back from a road trip, there was a life-altering car accident. While his mother survived the accident without any serious injuries, his father was not as fortunate, losing the use of both legs. He would live the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

"The doctor said my dad was lucky," Leonard says. "They were close to having to amputate his legs off. He didn't have the use of his legs so it shouldn't matter, but that would have been a harder life."

There were so many doctor bills after the accident that Leonard's parents could not keep up financially with any of their bills. Leonard's father lost his scholarship since he was no longer able to play on the football team, forcing him to drop out of school.

Hoping for a big break, Leonard's father and mother moved to Houston. Leonard's father worked at a local burger place, while his mother jumped from job to job as a food server.

Six months after moving to Houston, Leonard's mother became pregnant. Once Leonard was born, his mother stopped working so that she could stay home with him. However, there were too many bills in addition to the apartment rent. Eventually they were evicted from the apartment. The family never recovered financially. Leonard's father lost his job because he missed too many days and when he did make it in, he was always late.

Leonard's father gave up on looking for a new job and, instead, started looking for a decent place to stay on the streets of Houston.

"We never stayed in the same place for more than a night or two," Leonard says. "We always stayed in Houston though. I still don't know why we lived that way."

For food, they were able to go to a shelter for dinner, but Leonard's father refused to stay at a shelter. Because Leonard grew up that way, he still will not sleep at a shelter.

When Leonard was eight years old, his father got extremely sick. Because his family did not have money or insurance, his father never healed completely and finally passed away.

"It is still hard for me to understand why that happened," Leonard explains. "I needed my dad and it was hard making it without him. We did not have a home, no jobs, no food, but he protected me and my mom. He made all the decisions. I had to grow up to be a man at eight years old."

Written and Photographed by Alana Pennington
Designed by Kimber Roque

Clockwise from top left:

Even through tough times, man's best friend sticks by his owner's side.

Many homeless people will seek buildings on the street with a doorway to sleep during the night.

On the corner of Beltway 8 and Telephone Road, there is usually at least one homeless person on the side of the road seeking donation.

As it gets closer to sundown, many homeless people will pack their belongings up to start searching for a place to stay for the night.

Leonard stands on the feeder of Interstate Highway 45 downtown each day, waiting to receive money or food from anyone who passes by.

Ryan waits as the train is getting ready to take off to a new location.

When Leonard was 15, he tried looking for a job. His goal was to get off the streets and protect his mom. Unfortunately, Leonard was not able to find a job because no one wanted to accept his application. He realized that he would be forever stuck living on the streets.

More tragedy hit when Leonard turned 16. His mother noticed a lump in her breast and decided that she needed to go to a free clinic to find out if it was cancerous or not. It was, but she was not able to do anything about it. A year later, she lost her battle to cancer.

Leonard was on his own. He has been on his own since he was 17 and has never depended on anyone on the streets.

"I have to take care of myself," Leonard says. "I am tough. Losing my dad made me a man, but losing my mom made me tough. I have to survive on my own and I will; I have."

Imagine another life, one that consists of a street life, but in a new city almost every day. Ryan of Little Rock, Ark., hops from train to train hoping to one day find the perfect destination. Ryan is 17 years old and has been living this lifestyle for the past year. He does not know when he will stop running, nor does he know where his next meal will come from, yet he keeps surviving.

Ryan came from an abusive home, physically and emotionally. He left his house in the middle of the night and has not looked back since. So far, he has been through part of Oklahoma, and all throughout Texas. He wants to stay in the South for now, since it is getting cooler outside.

Each evening, Ryan finds a train that is already moving or one that is about to take off and he hops on it. He stays on the train until he is too tired to hold on and then he jumps off. After he jumps off the train, he looks for a place to sleep for the night.

"I try to find a place that will block me from public view, so that I can sleep as long as I need to and not have an audience," Ryan says. "And if it's windy or cold, I try to find the warmest place that will block any wind."

Ryan had two more years of high school left and planned to go to John Brown University, in Siloam Springs, Ark., where he would have studied chemistry.

"I guess that dream is dead now," Ryan says. "Especially since I will never be able to graduate from high school."

Ryan has decided to take each day one step at a time because he does not know what his future holds. He hopes to find a place where he can settle down and try to make things good in his life, but until then, he plans to keep going.

"I do not like where my life is headed, but my life at home was worse," Ryan explains. "I don't know where I'm headed. It's just wherever the train takes me for the night."

It is unknown whether these two men will find a way to leave their homeless life, but there are ways to help these men, and every other homeless person, survive life on the streets. Shelters and food banks greatly appreciate donations from the public, big or small. For more information on how to help, check out the sidebar.



CAMPUS CALENDAR

November 6

Workshop: The Leadership Paradox: To Be Great, You Must Be Least, 5-7 p.m., SSCB 1.202.07

Presentation: Change Begins With Me, 5:30-7 p.m., SSCB 1.100.03
Sponsored by the American Marketing Association

November 6-8

SSA Harvest Fair, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Bayou Atrium II

November 11

Veterans Day Celebration, 3-4 p.m., SSCB/Liberty Park

November 13

NSLS Speaker: Rules for Renegades: Make More Money, Rock Your Career, Revel in Your Individuality, 6-7:30 p.m., Bayou 2512

November 14

IISS Global Expo, noon-5 p.m., Bayou Atrium I

November 15

Fall 2007 Teacher Job Fair, 12:30-2:30 p.m., Bayou Atrium II

November 16

*OPEN REGISTRATION FOR SPRING 2008 BEGINS

November 21-23

Thanksgiving Holiday

November 30

English Enhancement Class, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Location TBA
*Registration required

To place an event on the calendar, e-mail thesignal@uhcl.edu.

Prestigious professors picked for Piper

Jamie Griffiths
The Signal Staff

After weeks of nominations, the votes have been tallied and the finalists have been selected. Six professors have been chosen as finalists to represent the University of Houston-Clear Lake for the prestigious Piper Award.

UHCL finalists include: Krishani Abeyskera, lecturer/systems administrator of computer science and computer information systems; Hisham Al-Mubiad, associate professor of computer science; Kim Case, associate professor of psychology and women's studies; Cynthia Howard, associate professor of biology and environmental science; Michel Izygon, adjunct professor of computer science; and Ashley Packard, associate professor of communication.

Founded in 1958, the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation originally awarded eight Texas professors \$5,000 each for superior work at the college level. Now, 15 professors from around the state receive this award each year. The one thing that makes this award different from others is that the students and faculty of each school participate in the nomination process. UHCL has been participating since 1976.

"It's an honor because students and colleagues do the nominating," Packard said. "Watching students walk across the stage at graduation, knowing

that I contributed to that" is her favorite part of teaching.

Packard has 15 years of teaching experience and would like to thank everyone who nominated her.

Case also represents the School of Human Science and Humanities and has been teaching almost 10 years.

"I feel extremely fortunate to be able to teach and learn with UHCL students," Case said. "We have some of the most dedicated, creative and passionate students, and I consider that a great gift."

Case decided to teach about prejudice and discrimination after a personal experience in one of her undergraduate classes.

The other four finalists all represent the School of Science and Computer Engineering.

Abeyskera has been teaching at UHCL for seven years and first began "teaching" by tutoring her classmates during high school and college.

"After them, the students I now have are a breeze," Abeyskera said. "It is very rewarding to see proficient students excel."

Al-Mubiad has been a part of the UHCL family for more than six years.

"I've been nominated before," Al-Mubiad said.

"However, it is my first time to be a finalist. I feel like teaching is a mutual process, a two-way highway."

For Al-Mubiad, teaching is a

discovery. He also prides himself in his educational-based research.

The next finalist draws her students out of the blackboard jungle of college life, and delivers them into the real one.

"The best part about teaching is taking students to the Amazon and watching them discover the world around them," Howard said. "I have been teaching [at UHCL] for over 19 years. It's very flattering and very nice, probably more flattering than nice, to be nominated for this award."

Howard just "fell into" teaching and is very happy that she did.

There were seven finalists originally, but one declined the nomination because he has previously been a finalist.

"I personally believe it's a lifetime award," said Ken Black, professor of decision sciences. "It's always nice, but there are other deserving candidates."

"I think [the finalists] are excellent individuals and outstanding faculty," said Darlene Biggers, associate vice president for student services. "Some are named year after year, which speaks volumes about them. We have a diverse group with good representation from several schools."

Biggers has been heading the Piper award for 13 years.

The UHCL winner moves on to represent the university at the state level, serves on the Piper

Award committee the following year and receives \$5,000. Winners are also a source of wisdom for other finalists throughout the years.

"I really appreciate the time it took [students] to put together the nomination," said Larry Rohde, associate professor of biology and last year's nominee winner. "Finalists only have a short time to put their notebooks together, so get started," Rohde recommends to all of this year's finalists.

Previous finalists are eligible to receive nominations the following year(s).

"To receive an award for something that brings me such pleasure is icing on the cake," said Laurie Weaver, associate professor of bilingual and multicultural education.

"Being a recipient of the Piper award is a great honor." Weaver received the nomination in 2004.

From year to year, each finalist brings different definitions of what a professor is.

"As a kindergarten teacher, you are on the front line of picking up on disabilities," said Rebecca Huss-Keeler, associate professor of early childhood education. "It's wonderful to see them grow up and have their own kids." This 2006 award winner for UHCL has been teaching for more than 30 years.

Biggers said the announcement of the UHCL winner will be made in early November.

Mercury Baroque Ensemble performs

Handel's Messiah

Saturday, December 15
7:30 p.m. in the Bayou Theater



The Houston Chamber Choir joins Mercury Baroque Ensemble for Messiah, a moving tribute to the holiday season. Hear Handel's masterpiece as it would have sounded in the day—the uncut "1743 Covent Garden" version.

For tickets or information, call Student Life Office at (281) 283-2560 or visit the Cultural Arts Web site at www.uhcl.edu/culturalarts. Complimentary reception will be held after the concert.

General Admission: \$12 presale/\$15 at the door
With UHCL ID: \$8 presale/\$10 at the door



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POLICE DEPT: *continued from page 1*

parking fees is to provide funds for repair and upkeep of university parking and street facilities, and also to assure a sense of order to the parking process. In comparison to most university campuses, UHCL parking is quite reasonable."

Students may appeal parking tickets through the Parking Citation Appeals Committee.

Warnings are not issued prior to parking tickets because the first 12 days of each long semester is the warning period. Permits can be purchased prior to the first day of class and during the 12-day warning period. They can be prepaid online.

Willingham explained that issuing warnings could prove costly to the police department because "students should know that they have to pay for parking. That's why warnings aren't given. They cost the same amount for the paper and manpower it takes to distribute them and staff to enter them into the computer and keep track of them just like citations. None of that stuff pays for itself."

As for designated parking lots such as employees' parking, only faculty and staff can park in designated faculty/staff lots. There is no permit distinction between faculty and staff; however there are permit distinctions from lot to lot. If someone is using a permit for one lot, but parks in another for which they are not authorized, they should expect a parking citation. Willingham justified that employees pay for parking because, just like students, they utilize the same roads and services at UHCL.

Students have complained that there has been a recent increase in parking and speeding tickets. Willingham explained that he does not yet have the full statistics for this semester, that information remains unavailable.

Each officer is required to spend a minimum of 90 minutes out of their eight-hour shifts doing reinforcement on traffic and parking. Checks are done randomly so violations will not go unseen.

Willingham also plans to work closely with the administration, especially with those who have direct impact on the daily lives of students.

"It is vital that [the police] have a relationship with the student body," said Anthony Jenkins, dean of students. "If our students only see them when they're being reprimanded, that creates a very hostile environment. This is a great opportunity for the police department to debunk myths and stereotypes."

Jenkins said that "the current chief is student-centered and student-friendly," and he noticed changes instantly as the two have worked together on several issues thus far. He feels that the roles of "the police department and dean of students are critical on any campus at any school in our ability to interrupt the educational process."

Jenkins hopes that students will learn to interact and feel more comfortable with the officers. In times of being pulled over or reprimanded for violations, he would like to see it used as an "educational moment" rather than a heated confrontation.

Both Jenkins and Willingham spoke of the impressively low crime rate at UHCL and hope that it is not just because students are unwilling or uncomfortable reporting crimes.

Willingham says no complaints will be "blown off." Officers will check on everything that is report-

ed. Police are on campus 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year. A minimum of three officers are always on campus during the peak hours of classes from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Some students have positive views about their campus police department.

"The police department on a whole have all been friendly, always acknowledging one's presence in the room," said Abigail Fabien, graduate student and management information systems major in the School of Business. "It shows a sense of genuine concern, whether it was just finding out where I am from, an audible hello, or a wave while driving by. Familiarity breeds security. As to before and after, most have always been friendly, but visibility and accessibility has improved remarkably. If you walk around every five minutes you can find an officer."

Some students are unhappy with traffic and parking-related policies.

"It sucks and the design of the permit is stupid," said Marco Zambetti, undergraduate in the School of Human Sciences and Humanities. "It is so poorly designed and falls off easily so it is sad that we have to pay for something that isn't our fault. And the price is nearly half of a year's worth of parking."

Parking and traffic issues are not the only area of concentration for the UHCL police.

A Code-3 is an emergency call. The expected response time for an officer to arrive on the scene is five minutes or less.

People on campus after hours can call the police department and request a "welfare check," where an officer can walk by and ensure that everything is OK.

Not only is the police department in charge of the daily security of the campus, but they are also planning for any future disruptions in campus safety. In the wake of such tragedies like Columbine and Virginia Tech, Willingham explained the need for a prompt action plan.

An active shooter drill will take place Dec. 15 in the Student Services and Classroom Building. This is a mandatory training day for all department officers. Actors will play the roles of potential threats as well as innocent bystanders and "dummy ammunition known as simmunition" will be used in place of real bullets. The drills help police become more conscious of campus layout and develop action plans in preparation for a crisis.

Willingham plans to continue to build a positive image of the police department by following through with his new initiatives.

"We have begun an overhaul of our administrative policies and operating procedures," Willingham said. "To date, we have focused on internal processes, patrol expectations and traffic enforcement standards. In addition, we are working with the dean of students to address critical incident response and student-related crime response. As a foundation for our directive system, we are using the standards manual published by the Commission on Accreditation for law enforcement agencies. Our goal is to adapt best practices of the industry and standardize our directives with those of the top law enforcement agencies in the country."

"What are parents going to do if they are 500 miles away like in most universities," Biggers said. "If you think someone is going to harm someone, you need to notify the police right away."

Although Murphy has caught some flack from universities, the intention behind his bill is being understood.

"I can understand [Murphy's] thinking and I've seen it work both ways," Jenkins said. "I've seen the courts say 'you did reach out, you did everything you could, it was a good-faith effort and you couldn't save the student, but we don't see any negligence on the university's part' and I've seen courts that said 'you had the information, you didn't use it correctly and we're going to teach you a lesson.'"

The main issue in Murphy's bill is the liability of universities in times of campus tragedies. By removing liability, the hope is that universities will no longer be fearful of being sued and simply report information about troubled students to their parents.

"Let's take down the walls between parents and schools," Murphy said to members of Congress. "Let's take action now to save lives tomorrow."

RETENTION: *continued from page 1*

to study the state of higher education in 2006 and their findings confirmed what was already apparent to many in the field.

In a summary of their findings the commission found that "access to American higher education is unduly limited by ... inadequate preparation, lack of information about college opportunities, and persistent financial barriers."

Those same reasons are prevalent at UHCL, though Biggers is not completely sure that these are the only reasons for the high turn over.

"We really don't know for sure," Biggers said. "Past surveys have indicated a mixture of general reasons such as financial issues, personal concerns, and family or work issues. Our students are basically nontraditional students who are juggling school, family and work responsibilities and some changes are beyond their control or the university's control. They also mention not being able to get the classes they need when they need them."

A 2002 study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics shows that the longer a student is enrolled in an institution, the less likely it becomes that the student will leave school without obtaining credentials.

For a junior-, senior-level institution like UHCL, that statistic bodes well, but does not alleviate the problem. UHCL is putting systems in place to combat the issue.

"We are now doing regular surveys of student satisfaction and are looking at other ways of obtaining student input," Biggers said. "We are beginning to gather retention data and need to do that in a regular, consistent manner. We also have several projects underway such as calling students who were eligible to return but did not, calling students who withdrew during the semester, and developing an 'early alert' system so that faculty who are concerned about the progress of a student can alert someone who will follow up with the student to see if he or she needs additional assistance. We are also doing some proactive things to prevent problems before they occur. The Dean of

"We must motivate and encourage them to set even higher goals – to dream bigger dreams."

- Darlene Biggers
Associate Vice President of
Student Services

Students Office has been calling new students to see how the semester is going and to apprise them of available resources on campus. Offices like Career and Counseling Services and Intercultural and International Student Services have been doing a lot of outreach activities to acquaint students with services."

As illustrated in studies conducted by NCES,

low academic performance at all types of institutions, whether 2-year or 4-year, is a primary factor in student attrition. The "early alert" system would be a means by which professors could intercede on behalf of students who may be having difficulty transitioning to the education environment of UHCL. The system, which is being developed by Jenkins, will seek to connect struggling students with the proper staff on campus to give them every opportunity to succeed at UHCL.

"Such a system has been proven to have a significant impact on populations similar to ours," Jenkins said.

For many students, the issue is not success, but being able to afford the opportunity to succeed.

In 2003, the state of Texas deregulated tuition after cutting state funds to public schools. Under the new system, public universities and colleges receive state funds based on enrollment. Anything not covered by state funds must be covered by tuition. As enrollment goes down, state funds follow, and tuition increases. As tuition increases, students who cannot afford the increase forego their education, which lowers enrollment again. Until changes are made, there appears to be no end to this destructive cycle.

Even more disturbing to the commission was that, not only are fewer people completing college degrees, those who do are not adequately prepared to enter the job market.

High levels of student attrition affect many beyond the students themselves; also affected are educational institutions and communities in need of skilled and qualified workers. In the same way the problem affects many, solving the problem will take a collective response.

"This is not a one person or one department effort," Jenkins said. "It will take the entire university. Everything we do, in the classroom and beyond, will impact whether a student stays or leaves."

Not only does UHCL want to see students complete their degrees, the university wants students to succeed after graduation and in life.

"I think of the issue as broader than retention," Biggers said. "That word seems to signify just keeping students enrolled from semester to semester until they graduate. I prefer to think our larger goal is student success – helping students accomplish their goals to the best of their ability and to become the best person they can be. We must motivate and encourage them to set even higher goals – to dream bigger dreams."

FERPA: *continued from page 1*

crime in this country with new gun laws, but where this becomes a problem is how do you enforce it and how do you police it and is it practical?"

So, what does this mean to the University of Houston-Clear Lake?

"It's real clear at this university if someone said 'I'm going to kill someone' or 'I'm going to kill myself' that we would notify the police first of all to try to protect the person and anyone in harms way," said Darlene Biggers, associate vice president of student services. "We take that very seriously."

The problem with Murphy's bill, say different university officials, is that it becomes redundant to FERPA's existing policies.

"Universities can do all of that now," Jenkins said. "The university would contact that individual's parents in consultation with counseling services in an effort to see if there is some historical piece of the puzzle we've missed and how we can create some support unit for that student."

Some officials have also wondered if contacting the parents would make much of a difference in these delicate situations.

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Seabrook Pelicans receive Extreme Makeover

Written and photographed by Stephanie Wilcox

We have all been warned about the ugly side effects of growing old; however, someone forgot to warn Seabrook's 6-8 ft. fiberglass pelicans about the effects of sun damage and aging. Luckily, the Seabrook Association and the city of Seabrook have hatched a restoration plan to repaint and resurface the birds in need and, in addition, start a maintenance program going forward.

Cheri Smith and Marcy Fryday, co-founders of the Pelican Path Project, in conjunction with the Seabrook Merchant and Tourist Association, were tasked with how to boost citizen and business enthusiasm as well as attract visitors and tourists.

After seeing the success of other city critters like Chicago's Cows on Parade, they launched the Pelican Path Project in the summer of 2000, which has grown into a 52-pelican fleet.

Pelicans seemed a natural choice since Seabrook is home to both the white and brown pelicans.

"At first glance the pelicans do not look so bad, but if you stop and get a close-up like so many people do, you will probably notice some of the pelicans are in bad shape," said Jack Fryday, who is in charge of the restoration committee and former mayor of Seabrook.

"The old clear coat that was used didn't have good UV protection," said Shelley Shanks, the artist who is currently restoring the pelicans. "I use an outdoor paint for its durability, and now we are using an auto clear coat for its UV and stronger protection against the elements."

The first, most eligible, pelican for the extreme makeover was Texan, who is poised outside of Steve's Super Shine on NASA Parkway.

Not only was he restored to pristine condi-

tion, but he also received some new embellishments including a football helmet and football.

The Commodore pelican was removed from his perch in front of Corrigan Environmental to be the second pelican to undergo restoration.

Just as older pelicans are being restored, new pelicans are being born.

"The process is longer than you think," Shanks said.

From conception to completion, the process usually takes about four months on average.

"The newest addition to the pelican fleet is Seymour," said Marcy Fryday.

Located outside of The Seabrook Visitor Center, "Seymour in Seabrook" sports a tropical shirt and binoculars.

"The next pelican in progress will be a teacher pelican located outside of the Old Parsonage Guest House Two," said Marcy Fryday.

In regard to the pelican "orphans" who have been abandoned by their owners after a business has closed – they will either be adopted out to new owners or will find their final resting place in a new Pelican Roost at one of the city's parks.

Prior to disbanding, the Seabrook Merchants and Tourist Association donated \$10,421 coupled with the city of Seabrook's donation of \$8,000 in hotel tax funds to fuel the restoration project.

Going forward, the annual maintenance fee for owners is expected to be \$50.

"The big thing to know is that it is a community effort, every hand that touches each pelican, the business owners and their friends and family that go through approving the design and naming process," Shanks said. "There is an artist involved in creating the mold, painting, foam sculpture, fiber glassing, clear coating, the name plates and installing each one is very special to the community and is a group effort; the pelicans are very special to everyone and everyone knows the story behind their favorite one."



Top far left: Seymour, by artist Shelley Shanks, named after the founder of the city of Seabrook, is the newest member of the Pelican Path Project who is searching for fun in the sun at the Seabrook Visitors Center.
Above: Before and after pictures of Texan, by artist Faith Shallis, who is now seeing better days, sets up for fourth and goal at the corner of NASA Parkway.
Left: The Commodore, by artist Paul Urbanek, could set to sea if his boat did not have a leak.

OLD TRADITIONS STILL ALIVE IN TEXAS



Who hasn't heard stories of sneaking people in by stowing away in the trunk, fogging up the windows, and watching two movies for the price of one? The thrill of watching a movie outdoors is something everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime. Our parents know all about it, and I'm sure they've told you a story or two.

Chris Rumfolo, owner of the Showboat Drive-in located in Hockley, Texas, is constantly thanked for operating his drive-in. He says that it is one of the most rewarding jobs he has ever had.

"My favorite thing about owning a drive-in is probably when customers come in to thank us for building it," Rumfolo said. "It has been a lot of fun to hear the stories and answer the funny questions. A little boy asked me one night how we turn on that giant TV."

A few weeks ago, I was fortunate to catch a couple of showings at the Stars and Stripes drive-in theater in Lubbock, Texas. It was an experience like no other. It was a cool, dry, fall evening. A nostalgic feeling was in the air.

We arrived early to get our tickets and a front-row spot. Walking into the concession stand was like going back in time. Antique signs and decor filled the room. They offered burgers, pizzas and glass-bot-

tled Cokes just like my father remembered. I began to realize why my parents were so fond of these places and why they had so many memories of nights at the drive-in.

As I made my way back to the car before the movie began, I started to feel like I was living one of my father's stories, minus the aroma of mosquito coils. There were people on the hoods of their cars, in the beds of their trucks or sitting comfortably in lawn chairs.

"Growing up in Clute, Texas, we used to visit the Surf Drive-in quite a bit," said Paul McGrath, adjunct professor for the School of Human Sciences and Humanities. "Once I got a car in high school we used to sneak people into the drive-in by hiding them in the trunk of the car. If my brother was in the trunk, I would drive to the back of the lot and drive all the way to the front, speeding up over the speaker hills to make sure the guys in the back got bounced around real good. My brother really loved me for that."

There is one modern convenience that today's drive-ins have adopted. They no longer have to use the speakers that hook to the window of a car. Movie watchers simply tune their car stereo to a specific station for sound. Everything is perfectly in sync with the movie.

The first drive-in movie theater opened in 1933. Richard Hollingshead is attributed with inventing the first of its kind. He started by projecting a movie onto a sheet in his backyard. Hollingshead fell in love with the idea of being

able to watch movies outdoors and decided to open up his own drive-in movie theater.

Although I associate drive-in movie theaters with the 1950s and 1960s, they peaked in 1987 with 2,084 operating theaters in the United States. The National Association of Theater Owners has compiled a list of almost 700 drive-in theaters in operation today.

The disappearance of drive-ins is due in large part to the rapid growth of malls with their own theaters and the invention of multi-screen theaters, which offer more convenience and more movie choices.

Due to the rise of movie ticket prices, the drive-ins still in business are thriving. Most drive-in theaters in Texas charge around \$5 a person, and with that ticket you get to see a double feature. In addition to the cheap ticket prices, patrons are allowed to bring their own food and non-alcoholic drinks.

"I enjoy seeing parents with their kids just having a great time as a family," said Jason Kirkland, owner of the Sky-Vue Drive-in Theater in Lamesa, Texas. "We are very family-centered."

Now you probably won't find the typical fogged-up car windows like the days of old. Today's drive-ins are more family-oriented. A lot of theaters have playgrounds for children to use during intermission. For more information about drive-in movie theaters in Texas, visit www.driveinmovie.com.

Written and Photographed by Kevin Kettle