


THE SIGNAL



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Roberta Cowan: The Signal

Facebook depression a growing epidemic among teens

Norma Villarreal
The Signal

A new study from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has coined a new phrase called “Facebook depression.”

Facebook depression is a condition that affects troubled teens who obsess over online social networks such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter.

One example of Facebook depression, said William H. Reading, MD, diplomat of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, is teens logging on to Facebook and viewing the status of their friends, only to find that a friend’s popularity extends beyond his or her social circle. Not being a part of that extended social network can lead to feelings of isolation and depression.

“Teens do not have a well-established identity, so they try to fit into groups,” Reading said. “They get really fearful if they are ostracized from that group. If someone says something negative about them all of their friends see it, the group that they are trying to fit into.”

Social networking is the most common way for today’s youth to communicate with each other.

Recent polls conducted by The Benenson Strategy Group show that 22 percent of teens log-on to a social media site more than 10 times a day; 50 plus percent log-on at least once a day; and 75 percent of teens have cellphones, with 25 percent of those using them for social media, 54 percent for texting and 24 percent for instant

messaging.

“When I was growing up we didn’t have Facebook,” said Joycelyn Gordon, physician assistant certified. “It is better to go back to talking on the phone or to people directly, hanging out at the mall or whatever the case may be. I try to get my patients to understand that a lot of what others say on the Internet is not the truth or accurate representation. People want to represent themselves in the best of light.”

The AAP has set guidelines recommending that parents educate themselves and their children to the dangers of social networking. Some of these guidelines discuss how parents should become better educated about the numerous technologies their children are using and to talk to their

children about online use and the issues that children face using social networks.

The AAP has new guidelines for doctors to ask patients including whether they use Facebook and, if so, how much time they spend on the site in an attempt to offset Facebook depression.

“The age group that is affected by Facebook depression is predominantly among women and teenagers,” Gordon said. “Just within the last six months, for some reason, it seems like I have had a lot more patients dealing with issues of depression, anxiety and social issues.”

Parents should not get the impression that online social networking is going to cause depression in their child’s life, but

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Same-sex marriage constitutionality debated



Roberta Cowan, :The Signal

Ashley Smith
The Signal

The House of Representatives, led by Republican House Leader John Boehner, said recently that it will defend the Defense of Marriage Act that

President Barack Obama deemed unconstitutional earlier this year.

Boehner leads a five-member bipartisan legal advisory group that voted to instruct in-house lawyers to take legal action to defend the law on behalf of the House.

DOMA, signed into law in 1996 under President Bill Clinton, amended the U.S. code, Title 1 Section 1, defining marriage relating to acts of congress as between one man and one woman. A spouse is defined as person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife. This act restricts same-sex couples from receiving the same federal benefits as heterosexual couples, like health

Marriage continued on page 6

UHCL seeks designers for logo, slogan contest

Mark Bownds
The Signal

Submissions are now being accepted for a contest that would create a logo and slogan for UHCL’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

The QEP will play a significant role in the upcoming 2012 reaccreditation process overseen by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

The topic chosen for UHCL’s QEP is Applied Critical Thinking for Lifelong Learning and Adaptability, a topic that the logo and slogan should reflect.

L. Jean Walker, professor of marketing and convener of the QEP Promotion Committee, says she is excited about what will be submitted.

“There are so many people throughout this university that

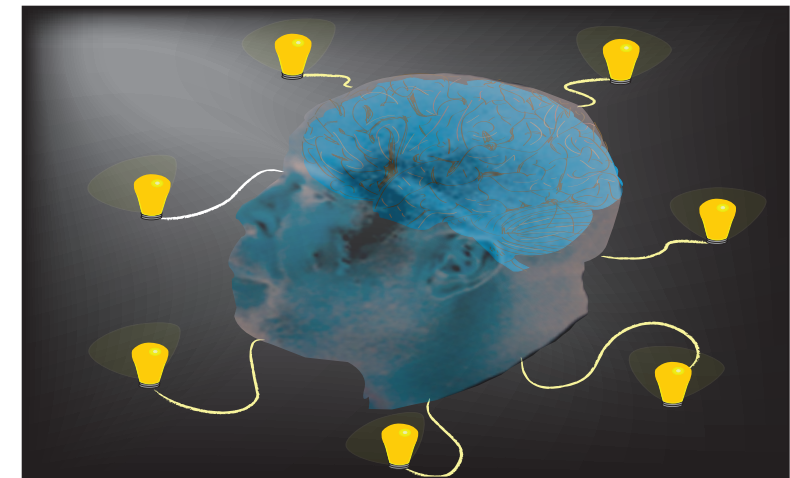
have all kinds of great ideas and concepts,” Walker said, “so we’re excited to see what comes forward and where it comes from.”

All students, faculty and staff are encouraged to enter because the contest is designed to create campus-wide awareness of

the QEP and its topic on critical thinking. The contest is also an opportunity for creative minds to generate motivation and enthusiasm toward the topic.

“The idea is that critical

Contest continued on page 6




Roberta Cowan :The Signal

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Video: UHCL’s Chili Cook-off

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COMMENTARY WARNING: Facebook may cause depression

David Miller
The Signal

The most influential invention of our time is nothing more than a website. It has helped connect billions worldwide, and social networking as a whole has opened a floodgate to this new wave of communication.

Users can upload photos and tag people for the entire world to see, but lately concerns are arising over the recently exposed threat of Facebook depression.

Facebook depression results when a user obsesses over online social networks. They feel left out and don't think their life measures up. Sometimes Facebook depression can also occur when a user is abused, ridiculed or harassed through the website.

Facebook is a tool that we need for networking so it must be treated with respect and used constructively. Social networking sites have made breakthroughs for online socializing and general connectivity.

The average teen spends 31 hours online per week, alot of them on Facebook. Nearly all new cellphones come with a Facebook

application. This enables people to be connected all the time, anywhere.

It is possible that any depression linked to Facebook is merely circumstance and not in direct result from using the site. Regardless, Facebook can be intimidating to people dealing with poor self-esteem.

Sometimes the harm is intentional, cyber bullying being a worst case scenario. However, sometimes usage creates unintentional harm.

Since online text lacks body language and other expressions, there is no way to see or hear physical communication or emotions, similar to text messaging or email. Harm can come unintentionally from a lack of self-censoring or cyber civility.

There are multiple accounts of teen suicide as a result of cyber bullying. The invasiveness and pervasiveness of the cyber world can be overwhelming to users.

The ones most vulnerable to Facebook depression are teens and children. Parents need to understand that too much Facebook can have a negative impact

on their children. It can make them obsess over a fictitious life, much like obsessing over video games.

Users also need to understand the difference between a friend and an acquaintance, and about the superficial tendency of social media. If unsupervised, they can end up living vicariously through the site, abused through it or depressed by it.

Facebook can make communication easier for socially well-adjusted children and have the opposite effect for those prone to depression, but even well-adjusted children can become depressed when negative messages are repeated over and over and appear to be coming out of the woodwork.

Nevertheless, when Facebook

is used constructively, it provides worldwide networking like nothing else in history. It can be a magnifying glass on ourselves, but Facebook is a great way to connect for free with people from all over the world, and so it must be used constructively and with respect.



COLUMN: Rape is another four-letter word

Jessica O'Rear
The Signal

Rape is an extremely touchy subject. It is almost treated as taboo due to its violent and degrading nature.

The recent gang rape of an 11-year-old Cleveland girl has caused a number of mixed emotions among the community.

Some locals have voiced anger, shock and sympathy while others have expressed apathy, denial and skepticism. Accusations such as "where was this child's mother?" and "what do you expect, the girl was dressed provocatively?" have been thrown around, seemingly as a way to shift blame onto the middle-school victim.

The girl's relatives have been torn apart as a result of this tragedy. Threats against the family forced them to move out of Cleveland, and the girl has been placed in foster care.



No matter what the girl was wearing and regardless of whether or not this child made comments about "wanting to have sex," the fact remains that this child was just that – a child. An 11 year old cannot consent to having sex with an adult or even another 11 year old.

To make this heinous violation more horrific, police claim it wasn't just one man who committed the offense; it was a multitude of men over a course of several months on several different occasions.

Eighteen suspects – 13 adults and 5 juveniles - have been arrested in the case, ranging in age from 14 to 27.

You have to wonder if any of these men had the slightest bit of a moral compass telling them that what they were doing was wrong. Where were their mothers? If parents are to blame here, then maybe these mothers and fathers should also be on trial for raising sons who rape juveniles.

The U.S. Department of Justice completed a National Crime Victimization Study in 2005 and

found rape to be one of the most under-reported crimes. Victims commonly experience shame, guilt, depression and fear. For a child to have experienced this callous act and then for people to try to hold her partially responsible is revolting.

Victim blaming is, unfortunately, not unusual in our society, teaching us that we need to focus on "not getting raped" rather than teaching us NOT to rape. In January, a Toronto police officer who was invited to participate in a safety education program at York University advised students that they could avoid being raped by not dressing like "sluts."

In response to this officer's ignorant remark, thousands of people rallied together April 3 in an organized SlutWalk to protest abuse of victim's rights and raise awareness. Men, women and children marched the streets of Toronto in hopes of changing the mentality that victims willingly attract rapists.

Rape is rape, no matter how you candy-coat it. If consent is not absolutely, positively given,

if your partner is under 17, or if your partner is intoxicated or incoherent, having sex with her or him is a crime.

Instead of blaming a child for rape, we need to come together and support her. We should try to find out what we can do to prevent this sort of tragedy from happening again. Not only should we teach sex education in schools, maybe we should teach rape defense classes as well.

Yes, we shouldn't mark "He Done It" on the forehead of an accused rapist before he has his day in court, but neither should we try to hold the victim accountable in any way by implying "she asked for it." As for the child, hopefully she and her family will be able to somehow, someday, move past this nightmare.

If you are the victim of rape and need someone to talk to, please don't hesitate to visit the UHCL counseling center. You can also anonymously call the national RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE or visit RAINN online at <http://www.rainn.org>.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In response to your February 21 article entitled "back 'packing.'"

Dear Editor

I agree with John C., the dissenting writer whose words you published in the latest edition of The Signal.

As a CHL holder and a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard with 5 years of law-enforcement experience I am not concerned with what this new legislation will bring to campus...actually, I am concerned with people's emotional reactions in response to your poor portrayal of the facts. Time

should be taken to educate people on what might be allowed under an extension of the current law: what types of weapons can be carried, what people can LEGALLY do with those weapons, who and at what age people are legally allowed to carry a concealed hand gun etc. Articles like yours, with pictures that depict a gross over exaggeration of the facts only worry parents and concern fellow students. Instead, your efforts should focus on learning about the facts, reporting them and educating people about what to expect. You know, un-biased reporting!

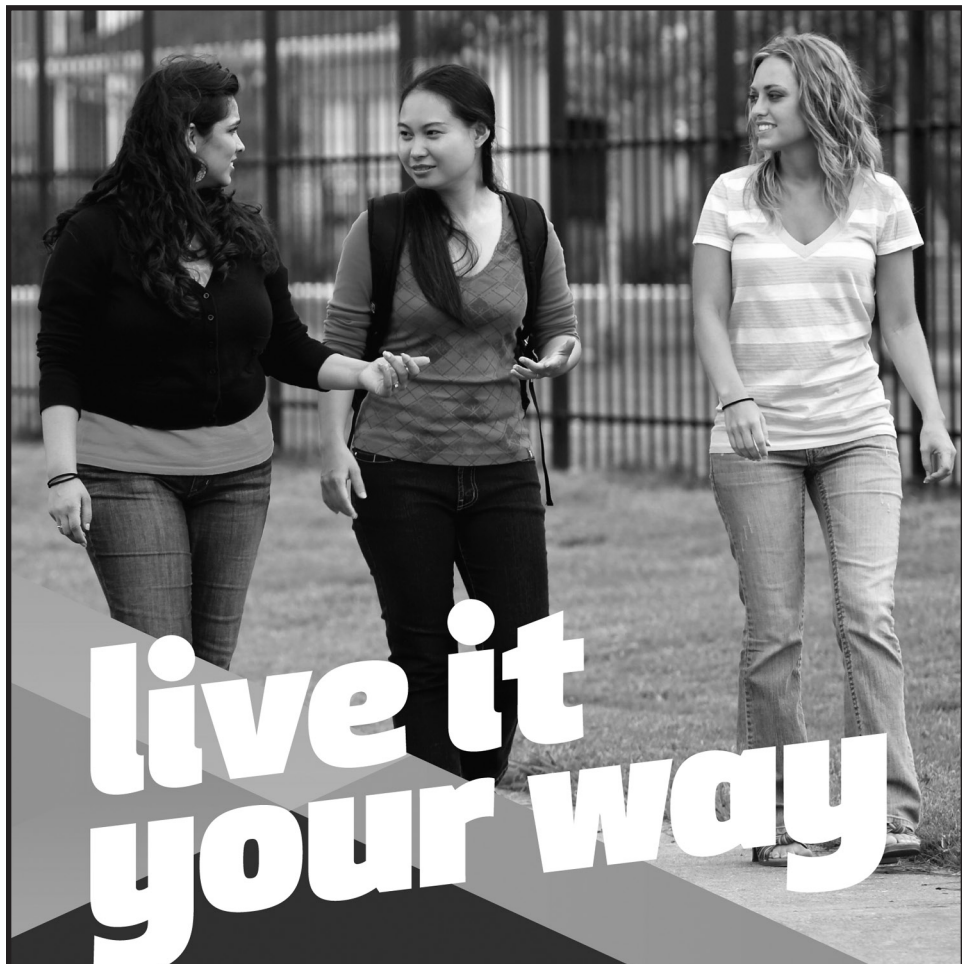
(It's what real journalists do naturally.)

I understand this is a concerning topic for many people, my family included. My wife and children have the right to expect that I be allowed to take reasonable measures to ensure I return from work/school/shopping safely. The proposed house bill does that, it extends the law where it was previously lacking.

I have heard time and time again the concern that under the proposed house bill extension, police will not know who the real 'bad-guy' is in the event of a

school shooting. Truthfully, this concerns me too. This is why I urge the school police department set up a half-day instructional, available to any CHL holder, instructing them on actions to take to protect lives in the class room in the event of a school shooting. Ideally, it would form a plan for CHL holders to stay in place, take measures to protect their classroom, not get further involved. A proactive plan should enable campus police to quickly contain the issue and avoid unnecessary additional casualties.


Ian Horne




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Do you need community service hours or extra credit for a class or a resume/curriculum filler?

Volunteering to work with the Student Conference for Research and Creative Arts, held on campus from April 20 to April 22, is a great way to get the experience of meeting students, faculty and staff from UHCL as well as other universities across the country and internationally!

Volunteer shifts at the conference last 3 hours, and you may choose to sign up for more than one shift. Training is provided, and all volunteers receive a certificate of participation.

The Conference would not be possible without the help, time and skills of volunteers like you, so sign up today!

Contact the Student Conference at StudentConf@uhcl.edu or 281.283.8875 for more information!



Detailed volunteer duties and applications can be found at www.uhcl.edu/researchartsconference/.

• Student Life • Student Life • Student Life • Student Life •



NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION
INSPIRE • GROW • SUCCEED

Are you looking to get involved?
Need volunteer hours?
Interested in introducing new students to UHCL?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above then being an O Leader is the position for you.

Deadline to apply is **Fri., June 10** applications are available in the Student Life Office (SSCB 1.204) or online at www.uhcl.edu/newstudentorientation.

Students must be available during the following time frames:

- **Wednesday, August 10, from 4 - 7 p.m.**
- **Friday, August 12, from 1 - 4 p.m.**
- **Saturday, August 13, from 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

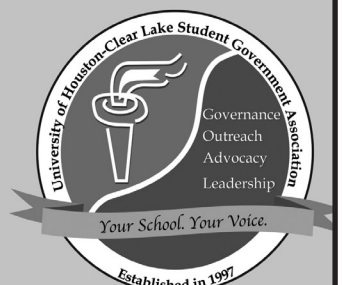
For questions or additional information contact Ali Albrecht at Albrecht@uhcl.edu or 281-283-2660.

Student Government Association

Executive Council Director!

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Your “keys” to Campus Involvement!



Volunteer Opportunities!

Student Organizations!

All SGA meetings are at 11:30 am in the SSCB Lecture Hall (1.100.03)

For Details Contact The SGA Executive Council:

Rebecca Smith – President
Prashanti Pandit – VP Committee Coordinator
Amanda Schoolcraft – VP Outreach & Communications
Clare Leonard – VP Administration

SSCB Rm.1.205 * 281-283-2556 * SGA@uhcl.edu * www.uhcl.edu/SGA

Flaming HOT



Eugene Bernard: The Signal

FROM LEFT: Amanda Schoolcraft, Quintin Stevenson, Jill Fredo, Susan Sireno and Mel Bousley, all students of the Management Association, win first place for their chili for the eighth time in ten years.

Eugene Bernard The Signal

What began as a somewhat gloomy day in terms of weather, ended up being a sunny, fun-filled day at UHCL's 22nd Annual Chili Cook-off, held April 2 on the SSCB lawn between Liberty Park and the North Office Annex.

"The Chili Cook-off serves as a way to provide family-friendly activities, camaraderie and community between UHCL and surrounding areas," said Allison Scahill, coordinator of student life activities & student organizations.

The Chili Cook-off is sponsored by the Office of Student Life and is one of UHCL's ongoing traditions; it is open to faculty, staff, alumni and community members.

The air was filled with music, laughter and the delightful aroma of chili as children jumped tirelessly in the moonwalks, played games and climbed the gigantic rock-climbing display. Others graced the stage, singing karaoke to their favorite songs, regardless if they knew the

correct lyrics or not.

In addition to moonwalks, rock climbing and karaoke, this year's activities included chili tasting and judging, an ironman obstacle course, a dunking booth and face painting. In contrast to past chili cook-offs, this year, not only were teams judged by the unique flare of their chili, they were also judged on their karaoke performance as well.

The event was free and open to the public; however, there were refreshments and other edibles for sale. Students paid \$4 with their ID, all others paid \$5, to participate in the popular votes tasting segment.

There were 18 Chili Cook-off teams this year. The Management Association took home the first place trophy for best chili in the judging competition for the eighth out of the ten times. TMA also took the Student Government Association award for overall best student organization this year.

The winners received first, second and third place trophies in the judged chili competition, which was based on five areas:

taste, consistency, spice, aroma and color on a scale from one to 10.

A second place trophy was given to the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society student chapter, and a third place trophy was given to the Society of Industrial Hygiene and Safety Professionals team.

The popular votes were determined by the cook-off attendees, and the spirit award was given to the most spirited booth, which was judged on the following criteria: theme, decorations and attitude.

The popular votes went to The National Society of Leadership and Success's "Running Wild with Bacon Wrapped Duck" for the Cook's Choice Award. School of Education Advising won best booth for their Harry Potter theme and SIHSP won best chili in the popular votes.

"We are so excited to win again!" said Jill Fredo, president of the management association. "We were kind of nervous because we weren't sure with all these other organizations, but we dominated once again. Our recipe is awesome and we

continue to use it every year; we have no changes."

"There are no pre-made mixes, we mix everything ourselves," Fredo said, who revealed TMA's secret to success in the Chili Cook-off.

Everyone was warmly welcomed and the teams portrayed true sportsmanship by creating an inviting, exciting and fun-filled atmosphere for everyone, including new participants like the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society student chapter.

"This was the first time HFES competed in the Chili Cook-off, and this is only the second year we have been a student organization here at UHCL," said Jo Jardina, applied cognitive psychology major. "From what I've heard, everyone had a great time, and those who will be around are looking forward to the cook-off next year," Jardina said.

The Chili Cook-off is a competition; however, it is a friendly competition. As for the 23rd Annual Chili Cook-off, TMA said, "Bring your A-game because we are bringing ours."

Chili Cook-off



The Women's Studies Student Association members flex their muscles aka "Rosie the Riveter", in front of their booth at the 22nd Annual Chili Cook-off.



Jennifer Clark, assistant director of Student Life, sings karaoke at the cook-off.



Students, family and friends enjoy activities at the Chili Cook-off.

Drag Queens

bring glitz
and glam
to UHCL

Carissa Puls The Signal

Kimberley Ann O'Neil sits in a UHCL classroom not ready to learn, but ready to change. What was once a drab boring classroom has been transformed into a dressing room fully equipped with large mirrors and vases of pink roses.

With a gigantic makeup case and a garment bag holding a beautiful gown, Kimberley begins to unpack. Powder brushes, lipsticks, mascara and other items scatter the table as he begins to put on his face.

Kimberley, aka Doug Boyd, didn't come to UHCL as a student, but as a performer who hoped to better educate younger generations about unity and acceptance. He was invited by UHCL's Unity Club to perform in their Glitter Masquerade Ball held Friday, April 1, in Atrium II.

"It is important to branch out to our young ones because someone has got to take our place someday," Boyd laughed as he applied more blush.

The event raised funds for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, and Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

The show included professional performers from the Houston chapter of the Empire of the Royal Sovereign and Imperil Court of the Single Star.

"We do an event every weekend, and I myself do maybe six or seven a month," Boyd said. "It takes me about one hour just to do my makeup."

Atrium II was covered with confetti, blinking lights and condoms, as an excited crowd waited for the divas to make their entrance.

They strutted in with sass and pizzazz, stimulating the audience with curiosity and shock before the divas began the performance with their very own "Liza Minnelli."

Over the past 27 years, ERSICSS has raised \$1 million for the LGBT

community by doing fundraisers, shows and party events.

Part of the money raised by ERSICSS is used for a scholarship opportunity available to members of the LGBT community.

Boyd, who has been performing drag for ERSICSS for 11 years, stresses the importance of unity.

"The idea of unity is extremely hard to gain for the LGBT community," Boyd said. "It's an obstacle we have been trying to overcome for a long time and so we are always promoting unity in everything we do."

Unity is a student organization created to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender awareness through educational workshops, speakers and activities.

"Unity is here at UHCL to make a gay-straight alliance so that everyone on campus feels welcome no matter what their sexuality is," said Cassandra Jones, Unity vice president of finance.

Valerie Siman, Unity president, and the other club members have worked hard since last summer to build up the program.

"Someone suggested doing a drag queen show and we were all like 'YES!'" Siman said.

"So we are hosting a drag queen show to help raise funds, promote cultural diversity and gay/lesbian acceptance."

Jones, dressed as Lady Gaga, wore a silver mini dress and a long blonde wig. All glittered up, she bounced around the audience encouraging them to donate to PFLAG and GLSEN.

"We wanted to do something

fun for the student body and we are hoping to raise a whole bunch tonight," Jones said.

The show brought a new and exciting experience to UHCL.

"I think this is the most lively the school has been in years," Jones said.

This was the first time ERSICSS attended an event for a university audience.

The Glitter Masquerade Ball raised a grand total of \$638 for PFLAG and GLSEN, but members of Unity hope that the event did much more than just raise funds.

"I'm hoping this will help people become more aware about the LGBT community," Jones said, before she walked away leaving a trail of glitter behind her.

For more information about Unity visit www.facebook.com/unityuhcl.

For more information about the ERSICSS scholarship visit www.ibelieveinadreamscholarship.org.

GLSEN

is the leading national organization that focuses on ensuring safe schools for all students.

"Our local chapter is trying to provide professional development workshops for local teachers in K-12 settings," said Kim Chase, co-chair for GLSEN and UHCL professor of psychology and women's studies. "These workshops will teach teachers how to address LGBT issues that come up in the classroom, such as derogatory terms and bullying."

GLSEN's goal is to develop school climates where diversity is valued for its positive contribution.

"We want to make sure school will be safe for all children regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression," said Leo Chan, co-chair and training coordinator for GLSEN, and UHCL professor of communication and digital media studies.

PFLAG

provides a support system for parents struggling to accept their gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender child.

"We are a support group, not a counseling group," said Barbara Larsen, a Houston chapter PFLAG facilitator. "It is strictly peer to peer."

PFLAG's mission is to keep families together.

"It's a coming-out process for the parents as well," Larsen said. "It's a place where the parents can share and get support with others parents who have gay or lesbian children."

PFLAG includes small-group discussions where families can share their journey and learn from each other.



Kimberley Ann O'Neil, aka Doug Boyd, second from left, with members of ERSICSS in drag for the Glitter Masquerade Ball.

Roman Rama III: The Signal

Marriage: continued from page 1

benefits and Social Security benefits.

President Obama has encouraged Attorney General Eric Holder to not uphold the law. Those against the president’s decision feel he is not upholding his oath.

“President Obama’s refusal to defend DOMA not only departs from these legal precedents, it also departs from the Department of Justice’s longstanding practice of defending all federal statutes in court, regardless of the President’s personal beliefs about the meaning of the constitution,” said Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott.

However, those who support President Obama’s decision feel this is finally a step in the right direction.

“The Administration has acknowledged that there is no legitimate reason for this discrimination and, therefore, it cannot be defended under the Constitution,” said Jackie Yodashkin, communications manager of Freedom to Marry. “This is a momentous

step forward toward Freedom to Marry’s goal of ending federal marriage discrimination and fully protecting all loving and committed couples.”

Currently there are five states that issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont and New Hampshire. The District of Columbia also recognizes same-sex marriages. These states have defined marriage as between two consenting adults. This includes heterosexual as well as homosexual marriages.

States that do not allow or recognize same-sex marriage, like Texas, define marriage as a union existing solely between a man and a woman. Organizations known as pro-family groups support this definition and DOMA. Bryan Fischer, director of issue analysis for American Family Association, said that the optimal environment for children to thrive is in a home with both biological parents.

“The ultimate purpose of marriage is children,” Fischer said. “We can’t divorce procreation

from marriage and no children can ever come from a couple of the same sex.”

The Attorney General has stated that even though he, along with President Obama, feel DOMA is unconstitutional, the government would still enforce the law until either the courts settle it or Congress changes the law.

Those who support equal rights for same-sex marriages believe that everyone should have the opportunity to validate their relationship in the eyes of those around them and to themselves.

“We all grow up with the dream to be married and share our lives with the person we love,” said Barry Ouellette, president of Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality. “We shouldn’t have to explain that no, we aren’t married, we are partners in a civil union but that means the same thing. We just want to be seen and treated the same as all Americans with the same freedoms, rights and privileges, no more and no less.”

Depression: continued from page 1

should be made aware of the dangers in order to protect them.

Dr. Megan Moreno, an adolescent medicine specialist who studied online social networking among students, told AAP that Facebook can enhance feelings of social connectedness among well-adjusted kids, and have the opposite effect on those prone to depression.

“Parents do need to be educated so that they know what is going on in their children’s life,” Gordon said. “The primary issue with parents is building self-esteem at home so that children will have a strong sense of self-confidence in who they are and won’t have to look to others for validation from their peers.”

Worst-case-scenarios include cyber bullying. When a child or teen is targeted, threatened, harassed, tormented, embarrassed or humiliated by others who use the Internet or any other interactive social device or technology is called cyber bullying.

Recently several states have passed laws against cyber bullying, which are meant to protect kids from being harassed, threat-

ened, or humiliated online.

Cyber bullying is considered to be a third-degree felony. If someone is found guilty of cyber bullying, he or she can face as much as 10 years in prison.

Due to the invasiveness and pervasiveness of the cyber world, some users may become overwhelmed causing a negative impact on thier lives.

“The only way to avoid Facebook depression, is to not use the Internet as a primary need of networking,” Gordon said.

The term Facebook depression came from a small written paragraph written for the AAP on page 802 of a Clinical Report called The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families, authored by Gwenn Schurgin O’Keefe, pediatrician and journalist, and Kathleen Clarke-Pearson, M.D., FAAP.

By the time The Signal contacted Dr. O’Keefe for a statement, she was already weary of answering questions about Facebook depression. “Facebook depression is overrated,” is all O’Keefe would say.



Roman Rama, Ill: The Signal

Angela Duron-Larson, adjunct photograpgy instructor, gets a headscarf put on by Wardah Ajaz, president of the Muslim Student Association, for Islamic Awareness Day, Thursday, April 7.

Islamic Awareness Day dispels stereotypes

Ashley Smith
The Signal

When someone speaks the word Muslim, it can cause a wide range of emotions and reactions to different people.

The Muslim Student Association hosted Islamic Awareness Day to educate the UHCL campus, April 7, on what it is to be a Muslim and to combat stereotypes people may have.

Even though the event has been held in the past, the idea to host it this year began with a video.

“We did a video, asked six basic questions about Islam and went around campus and asked different people,” said Wardah Ajaz, president of Muslim Student Association and communication major. “Not many people knew the correct answers or what Islam was.”

This lack of knowledge along with the negative aspects the media focuses on caused MSA to want to clear misconceptions about Islam. The event, held in

Atrium I, has been promoted for weeks with MSA’s “High Five” campaign. The idea for the ad campaign came from the religion itself.

“There are five pillars of Islam and our idea to promote the event was high five,” Ajaz said. “Along with randomly telling people to say high five and make them curious about what ‘High Five’ is.”

Brown and light blue sheer fabric decorated Atrium I where tables displaying different aspects of the Islam faith lined the perimeter.

Students asked questions as members of MSA discussed their faith. Several of the tables created interactivity with visitors able to receive Henna tattoos and try on Muslim attire.

The Houston chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations also attended and offered information about their organization.

Along with the informational tables, MSA brought in several

speakers to discuss Islam. Imam, or prayer leader, Tyerre Boyd spoke about the “High Five’s” of Islam, known as the five pillars.

“We call them pillars because pillars are that which hold something up,” Boyd said. “It is the physical acts of worship. The five pillars we all must perform or do as a duty to Allah or God.”

Boyd, who is currently pursuing his bachelor’s degree in kinesology at UHCL, speaks frequently in public forums such as interfaith dialogues and community outreach about his faith.

“We build better relationships when we understand one another’s faith,” Boyd said.

MSA hopes the event creates awareness about Islam.

“I didn’t know much about Islam or any of this, so it’s just interesting to see,” said Meghan Ewald, math major.

Muslim Student Association is open to all people who want to learn about Islam and they plan make Islam Awareness Day an annual event.

Contest: continued from page 1

thinking skills are portable and transferable,” said Chloé Diepenbrock, associate professor of writing and literature, director of the UHCL Writing Center and co-chair of the QEP steering committee. “You need to know what we [UHCL] are going to give you in terms of your education, or what you are going to come away with that will have the best value for you and that will allow you to go through the rest of your life being successful. I would say that the foundational skills are critical thinking skills. Your ability to assess information and to problem solve are going to be the most valuable thing.”

As part of the accreditation process, UHCL needs to show SACS that improvements are being made toward UHCL students’ developmental critical thinking skills. This raises the question as to how these skills can be measured.

“As a chair of the assessment committee, we have been investigating different measures of critical thinking skills to see how you figure out whether somebody’s critical thinking skills have improved, and there are various measures out there,” Diepenbrock said.

As far as the contest goes, Diepenbrock stated that the goal was not only to promote awareness of this particular mission, but to stir up campus involvement as well.

“Awareness is a big part of the contest, but it’s also to get people involved,” Diepenbrock said. “You know if a student decides to come up with a slogan for critical thinking, then that tells us a lot about how that student views critical thinking skills. We want people to be involved; we want them to have some sense of involvement or buy-in with this because this is your school.”

The winners of the logo and slogan contest will win a \$150 gift certificate to the UHCL book-

store, and the logo and slogan will be featured on many forms of media and communication tools. Walker explained that although it is undetermined exactly how the logo and slogan will be used to promote critical thinking, she was clear in that they would be put to various good uses.

“We are just starting to put together our promotional plan, which will be how do we promote to all the internal audiences once we have this,” Walker said. “It could be on additional fliers; I think that would be kind of logical, but there’s a lot of other options downstream when we start implementing the program. Certainly it will be on the QEP website, and certainly it will be on the front of the QEP program book that we submit to SACS when they come in the spring of 2012 to review us.”

Any student, faculty, staff member or administrator who wishes to participate in the contest can pick up submission forms in the Student Life Office. The deadline for submissions is Monday, April 18, at 6 p.m. All submissions must be in hard copy form and brought to the Student Life Office.

Stuart Larson, associate professor in graphic design and member of the QEP Steering subcommittee of implementation, had this advice for designing a logo.

“An effective logo is interesting enough to be viewed the size of a billboard, yet simple enough to be recognizable the size of a postage stamp,” Larson said. “Use a unique combination of simple shapes, making sure that the logo will function both in color and as a black and white silhouette.”

Additional forms for the contest, the official contest rules, guidelines, procedures, and all other information on the QEP can be found by going to www.uhcl.edu/qep.

Students capture record number of awards at TIPA

Tonya Torres
The Signal

More than 500 students from 60 schools around the State of Texas traveled to Fort Worth to attend the state conference for the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association.

While there, students completed in journalism contests and attended workshops geared to focus on evolving issues and trends in media.

“The Texas Intercollegiate Press Association is the oldest and largest state collegiate group in the nation,” said Fred Stewart, the executive director of TIPA.

Beginning in 1909 on the campus of Baylor University, TIPA was created with nine schools competing in only three categories. Nearly a decade later, there are more than 100 categories for prepublished work in newspaper, magazine, radio, television, yearbook, online, blogs, and more than 25 on-site competitions.

This year UHCL was in charge of creating a live scenario that was used for six on-site competitions.

“Our students wrote the script and acted it out,” said Taleen Washington, faculty adviser for student publications.

Corey Benson, communication major and vice president of the executive student council for TIPA, hosted the event with a rehearsed agenda for the news meeting.

“Since this is my third year at TIPA I knew what to expect and I was really excited to participate,” said Ashley Smith, a communication major and TIPA event participant.

The competition events were followed by a full day of workshops focused on improving knowledge and skills in the field of journalism.

An awards ceremony was held on the last day of the conference. The Signal took home 29 awards.

“Each year I am in awe of our students’ accomplishments,” Washington said. “UHCL student publications are not published by a paid staff. The newspaper and magazines are produced through classes offered in the Communication program, so our students are learning as they go; yet every year they compete against top universities and hold their own.”

This year marked the debut of UHCL’s new general news magazine, The Signal Relay. “Its first publication has already won five awards at state,” Washington said.

TIPA provides much more than recognition for students in the journalism field. It is also a



Tonya Torres: The Signal

Rose Pulido, left, and Ashley Smith, both communication majors, take part in a staged event for TIPA. On cue, accusations of cheating flew and attention quickly shifted from the announcer to the brawl on the carpeted flooring. Staged security guards pried the women off one another and lifted them to their feet, as photographers’ strobes lit up the room. Both are handcuffed and escorted out of the news conference on-site competition.

tool to connect students.

“I would like to keep TIPA a community year-round so we can communicate with each other to share our work and get feedback,” said Natalie Casanova, newly elected president of the executive

student council for TIPA.

“I’m going to get people talking online,” Casanova said. “I want to get people connected and communicating outside the conference.”

Casanova has constructed a

website to provide information and keep students communicating about TIPA at www.reddit.com/r/tipa. For more information about TIPA, visit www.texasipa.org.



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CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA 2011: Students express themselves “Extravagantly”

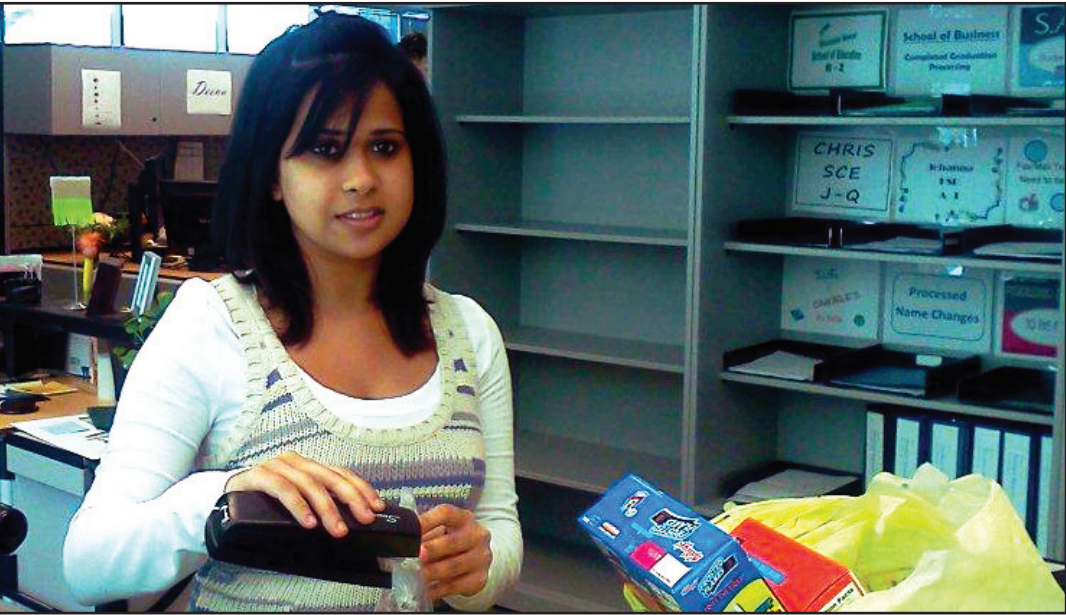


Norma Villarreal: The Signal
Dancer Raul O. Edwards dips Lorem Lopez, education major, while dancing to “La Vida Es Un Carnaval,” sung by Imelda Estrada-Wicks, COE program assistant in the IISS office, at the Cultural Extravaganza held March 26 in the Bayou Theater.



Norma Villarreal: The Signal
Uyen Le, MBA finance major, plays the wife of officer Minh Duong, MS finance major, who is in control of the village. She displays her anger after she catches her husband flirting with the women of the village. The play was part of Cultural Extravaganza held March 26 in the Bayou Theater.

Rallying rations for soldiers



Shannon Nevol: Courtesy
UHCL graduate student Susmitha Narasimhamurthy, a management information systems major, arranges care packages for the P.A.L.S. sponsored “Support Our Troops Drive,” which ran through April 4. Shannon Nevol, recording secretary for the Office of Academic Records, organized the effort that will transport items and letters to UHCL volunteer Sergeant Wayne Hosler and his platoon in Iraq. Nevol is planning an additional drive this summer.



Norma Villarreal: The Signal
Program Coordinator of Writing Katie Hart, stage name “Andromache,” belly dances with Ulrihe Fergerson, “Mahliqa,” Melissa Diniwan, “Wissa,” and Traci Charles, “Caira,” who make up the Chanson de Vie Belly Troupe, at Cultural Extravaganza held March 26 in the Bayou Theater.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
10 Astros vs. Marlins, Minute Maid Park, 1:05 p.m.	11 Rockets vs. Mavericks, Toyota Center, 8:30 p.m.	12 TSTA Bake Sale, Bayou Atrium I, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.	13 Unequal Pay: Implications of Gender-Based Wage Gaps, Bayou Garden Room, 5-6 p.m.	14 Social Services Networking Reception, Bayou Garden Room & Atrium I, 4:30-7 p.m.	15 The music of Led Zeppelin: A Rock Symphony, Houston Symphony, 7:30 p.m.	16 Avon Walk for Breast Cancer, Stude Park, April 16-17, 6 a.m.
17 Kemah Crawfish Festival, Under the Kemah Bridge, noon-6 p.m.	18 U.S. Department of State: Meet the Diplomat-in-Residence, SSCB 3109, 2-4:30 p.m.	19 David Sedaris at Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, 8 p.m.	20 Student Conference for Research & Creative Arts, April 20-22	21 Rienzi April Gallery Talk, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1-1:30 p.m.	22 Easter Weekend at the Kemah Boardwalk, April 22-24	23 Breakfast with the Easter Bunny at the Houston Zoo, 8:30-10 a.m.

A STUDENT PUBLICATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE

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