



THE SIGNAL



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Every Move You Make, We'll Be Watching You

L.D. FORREST
THE SIGNAL

Expansion and reach of U.S. government surveillance programs are set to grow in 2014 with citizens and corporations poised to push back.

Mass surveillance of the American populous has grown since the passing of the Patriot Act in 2001. Currently, the National Security Agency (NSA) is at the spearhead of mass data collection. The NSA is equipped to collect telephone and cell phone logs, emails, chat and instant messaging transcripts, text messages and even images and audio files.

In late 2013, the NSA finished creating one of the world's largest data centers. The Utah Data Center, also known as the Intelligence Community Comprehensive National Cybersecurity Initiative Data Center, is estimated to have cost \$1.5 billion to build and is able to store 1 billion gigabytes of data.

One billion gigabytes is enough storage to hold 100,000 Libraries of Congress – this includes all digital material, audio and video the Library of Congress has on file as well as text literature and information.

The Utah Data Center is used as a mass information gathering facility where the NSA can sweep a broad net through domestic and foreign telecommunications data. The data is gathered and temporarily stored until it is analyzed.

This information is then sent to a secret court, the United States Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISA), where it is determined what, if any, actions need to take place in regard to the analysts' findings.

In 2007, a ruling by the FISA court removed the requirement for a court-ordered



ADRIANA CAPILLA-GARCIA:THE SIGNAL

warrant before government surveillance agencies could wiretap someone's phone. This, in part, has lead NSA to the broad-net surveillance structure that it has today.

This method of surveillance has thwarted a number of plots aimed at causing harm to U.S.

citizens here and abroad. In July, during an open Capitol Hill hearing, the director of the NSA, Army General Keith Alexander, said that the NSA's wide-sweeping surveillance had foiled more than 50 terrorist plots worldwide since September 2001, but Alexander could only provide details to the panel for a handful of cases.

The public found out about NSA spying practices after former NSA private contractor Edward Snowden leaked thousands of classified documents to the media in May. Snowden's actions have been met with both acclaim and criticism. In June, U.S. federal prosecutors charged Snowden with theft of government property and unauthorized communication of national defense information. By then, Snowden had already fled the country, and by August, Snowden was granted temporary asylum in Russia for one year.

Alternative methods for monitoring people of interest besides mass data collection have not yet been determined by the NSA.

"These were programs that were developed to defend this country," Alexander

SEE SECURITY, PAGE 6

Future Of Astrodome Unclear

RACHAEL DEVINNEY
THE SIGNAL

Harris County voters rejected Proposition 2 Nov. 5, which would have repurposed the Astrodome into a multipurpose event center.

The proposal in Proposition 2 would have allowed the county to issue upward of \$217 million in bonds and a tax increase of \$8 a year for houses worth \$200,000 and above to repurpose the Astrodome.

With a vote of 53 percent to 47 percent, the proposition was shot down. The Astrodome's future is now unclear.

Once known as "The Eighth Wonder of the World," the Astrodome has had its doors closed since 2009.

The failed proposal, also known as "The New Dome Experience," was for a multipurpose facility, which would turn the Astrodome into a new convention center that could host sporting events, festivals and conferences.

The Astrodome has been standing, unused, for four years. Right now the Astrodome costs \$2 million to \$3 million a year to keep the building structurally sound and standing safe. This cost does not include repairs.

When voters rejected the proposal, they did not automatically vote for a demolition. The vote has left the Astrodome exactly where it was, collecting dust next to Reliant Stadium.

"We're back to where we were. Square One," said Steve Radack, Harris County Commissioner.

Demolishing the Astrodome could cost the county between \$78 million and \$120 million. Then

more proposals would have to be reviewed as to what to do with the new space.

The Astrodome was considered a wonder of modern architecture because it was America's first domed stadium. The Astrodome housed both the MLB's Houston Astros and the NFL's Houston Oilers, was home to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, as well as countless concerts and performers.

The Astros now play at Minute Maid Park, Houston's first retractable-roofed stadium, which opened in 2000.

The Houston Oilers moved to Tennessee in 1998 and became the Tennessee Titans. In 2002, Houston gained a new football team, the Houston Texans, who play in the new Reliant Stadium.

The year 2002 marked the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's last concert in the Astrodome with performer George Strait breaking all records with 68,266 in attendance. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo moved to Reliant Stadium in 2003.

The Astrodome now sits in shambles next to Reliant Stadium, waiting for the next decision to be made. At the next Harris County Commissioner's meeting, the future of the Astrodome will be discussed, though it is unlikely any decision will be made.

No one has made a move to demolish the "Eighth Wonder of the World," but neither have they made a move to refurbish it.

"There's no formal plan or authorization to demolish the building," said Willie Loston, executive director of the Harris County Sports and Convention

SEE ASTRODOME, PAGE 6

Students Vote To Support Proposed Tuition Increase

TIFFANY FITZPATRICK
THE SIGNAL

UHCL students voted Nov. 19 in support of a tuition increase and fee changes that were presented by university administrators at the Nov. 5 Student Government Association meeting.

At the meeting, university President William Staples explained the proposed increase – 3.9 percent for undergraduate students and 4.9 percent for graduate students – applied to designated tuition, one of the three types of tuition students at UHCL pay. The other two, statutory tuition, which is set by the state, and differential designated tuition, which is specific to certain schools and programs, had no changes proposed.

Designated tuition is tuition beyond the state mandated \$50 per credit hour statutory tuition and is set at an amount determined by a university's governing board in order to fund university operations. The University of Houston System

Board of Regents is the governing board for all universities within the UH System and sets a unique amount for each of the system's four universities.

Staples said the funds generated by the increase would be applied to four main areas: faculty and staff compensation; additional faculty to support university growth; the Four Year Initiative; and the shift of financial aid services away from student services fee funding. He stressed the importance of being able to give raises to the faculty and staff who have earned them.

"We're no better than the people we have," Staples said. "If you don't have good faculty and good staff, you won't have a good program. It's that simple. So, in order for us to not only attract, but retain, as many good faculty and staff as we can, we have to pay attention to compensation."

Darlene Biggers, associate vice president for student services, said that the funding

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SOARING HAWK CELEBRATION
Go online to read blog by Suzette Ortiz



ISS' GLOBAL EXPO 2013
Go online to view video by Victor Araiza

Are We Heading Toward ‘1984’ In 2013?

Mention the words “es-pionage,” “spy” or the phrase “gathering intelligence,” and most people picture James Bond or the Cold War; mention that the government is spying on innocent civilians, and people may conjure up something more Orwellian.

Throughout the last year, the U.S. government has come under fire for its acts of espionage against its own citizens as well as countries friendly to the U.S. Both President Obama and the National Security Agency (NSA) have been blamed in the spy games.

Government espionage is nothing new. The act of spying has been around for ages and spans into ancient times.

Ever since the United States was conceived, spies were vital for the success of the nation. Paul Revere and Nathan Hale are the two most notable of many agents during the American Revolution from 1774 to 1776.

From 1939 to 1945, World War II employed many agents. Allied intelligence agencies worked against the Axis intel-ligence agencies, usually trying to steal technology or decipher the enemy’s codes.

The Cold War, which is often dated from 1947 to 1991, is where most people get their idea of spies playing a shadowy game of cat and mouse with Soviet counter-parts.

During his presidency from 1969 to 1974, Richard Nixon tape recorded political opponents and people his administration consid-ered suspicious. These recordings would eventually lead to Nixon’s downfall during the Watergate

EDITORIAL

Scandal as they implicated the president with the break in at the Democratic National Commit-tee headquarters at the Watergate complex.

After the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, President George W. Bush signed the Patriot Act into law. This act gives the U.S. government the right to spy on suspected terrorists by searching telephone, email and financial records without a court order. In actuality, it expanded the govern-ment’s power against civilians’ privacy for the promise of safety.

In June, the British newspaper The Guardian reported the NSA collected telephone records on millions of U.S. citizens from an undisclosed source.

Next, the Washington Post exposed an Internet surveillance program called PRISM (not an acronym), which grants the NSA direct access to systems such as Google, Facebook, Apple, etc.

A few days later, Edward Snowden, a former CIA employee and NSA-contracted computer specialist who worked on surveil-lance programs, was revealed to be the source of the information leak. Snowden was declared an enemy of the state by the govern-ment and fled the country.

In July, The Sydney Morning Herald and Brazilian newspaper O Globo reported that the NSA was using a program called “XKeyscore,” a program that detects and analyzes Internet data on foreign nationals as well as searches and listens to commu-

nications of American citizens without court approval.

An internal NSA audit run in August, as well as top-secret documents, showed thousands of privacy violations committed by the agency. The audit revealed that the agency broke its own internal regulations 2,776 times in one year, even going so far as agents spying on love interests.

Most recently, news agencies learned of the NSA’s efforts to spy on world leaders including the collection of French phone records and the phone tapping of German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

President Obama recently called for an end to the wiretap-ping of foreign leaders, stating to the media that the U.S. is in the process of reviewing the way intelligence is gathered; however, many are confident that the presi-dent was aware of the surveil-lance, if not directing it.

While surveillance on friendly foreign leaders is not a policy we should endorse with America’s already unpopular view from many nations of the world, most Americans are more fearful of the privacy violations in our own homeland.

Historically, governments that watch their civilians that closely have created a fear-based society and have used the information collected for tyranny.

Nazi Germany and the Communist Soviet Union both employed heavy surveillance of their citizens. Both even started out with what seemed like very real concerns to their governments for enacting such policies such



HEATHER ALFORD

as economic crisis and perceived enemies within their borders.

Most recently, North Korea has been using surveillance to persecute and at times execute its citizens who dissent either politi-cally or religiously.

It is understandable to seek an end to the threat of terrorism that plagues American society these days, but if we trade our freedoms and our comfort for a possibil-ity of safety, the terrorists have already won. America will have fallen and become some blurred, distorted vision of its old self.

As stated by Benjamin Frank-lin: “People willing to trade their freedom for temporary security deserve neither and will lose both.”

We should all strive to live under the security of freedom, not the stringencies of “Big Brother.” To combat the watchful eyes

of the government and the FISA Improvements Act of 2013, which some are saying is a “fake fix” from the NSA, stopwatching.us has organized rallies and pro-tests like the Rally Against Mass Surveillance that was held Oct. 26 in Washington D.C. Held on the 12th anniversary of the signing of the Patriot Act, the rally included speakers such as NSA whistle-blower Thomas Drake, security expert Bruce Schneier, and former Congressmen Dennis Kucinich and Justin Amash in order to educate and gather support for the cause.

Perhaps voices against the government’s spying can grow loud enough that the watchful eyes and listening ears of “Big Brother” will actually hear and finally put an end to this policy against privacy.



STAFF COLUMN

SAM SAVELL
THE SIGNAL

Houston, the fourth-largest city in America, and my home-town, is a city designed for progression. Just like the freeways that run through it, the city is al-ways making changes in the name of improvement.

I’ve always felt that Houston only grows in what it has to offer its inhabitants and travelers, such as our expansive city culture, an abundance of activities and our still-rising job market.

Recently, I came across a statement about my beloved residence on ucityguides.com, a website with travel guides geared toward the “modern urban trav-eler.” What I found was clearly

U-G-L-Y, Houston Does Have An Alibi

offensive: Houston is the seventh-ugliest city in the world and num-ber one in the United States.

Ucityguides.com’s reasoning was not because of a disagree-ment with the city’s overall appearance or even the lack of efficient public transportation; it was simply because of “a large homeless population and a cityscape with no formal zon-ing regulations.” These two lone points placed Houston higher than Atlanta and Cleveland, both cities ucityguides.com also found unat-tractive.

For the sake of statistics, data researched by the U.S. Depart-ment of Housing and Urban Development rated Houston as number six for the largest number of homeless people in a major city in 2012. New York, Los Angeles and Seattle were among those whose homeless count was a large jump ahead of the Bayou City.

If it’s any consolation, Hous-ton was also listed number two for largest decreases in homeless population, shedding off 15.2

percent since 2011. Again, we are a city of constant progression, and I think the numbers fare well against the rest of the country, especially when you consider our low population density.

Our lack of zoning laws is also another example of our progres-sion, as we are the only major city in the United States that doesn’t apply zoning laws to the makeup of our city’s design.

A lack of zoning means the city government won’t restrict the nature of buildings constructed solely on the location they are built. This doesn’t open a free-for-all for building owners, as there are still many other city ordi-nances that would make it illegal to open a restaurant inside a home or refine chemicals in a neighbor-hood.

This does allow someone to own a home right in the city, outside of the typical suburban neighborhood. This is what makes areas like Midtown, which mixes homes, businesses, restaurants, clubs, museums and schools, even

possible. This is the very charm of Houston culture itself, since the city is such a huge melting pot of just about everything.

Let’s look at some things that make Houston unlike any other city, and show that we aren’t ugly, but rather attractive and captivat-ing instead:

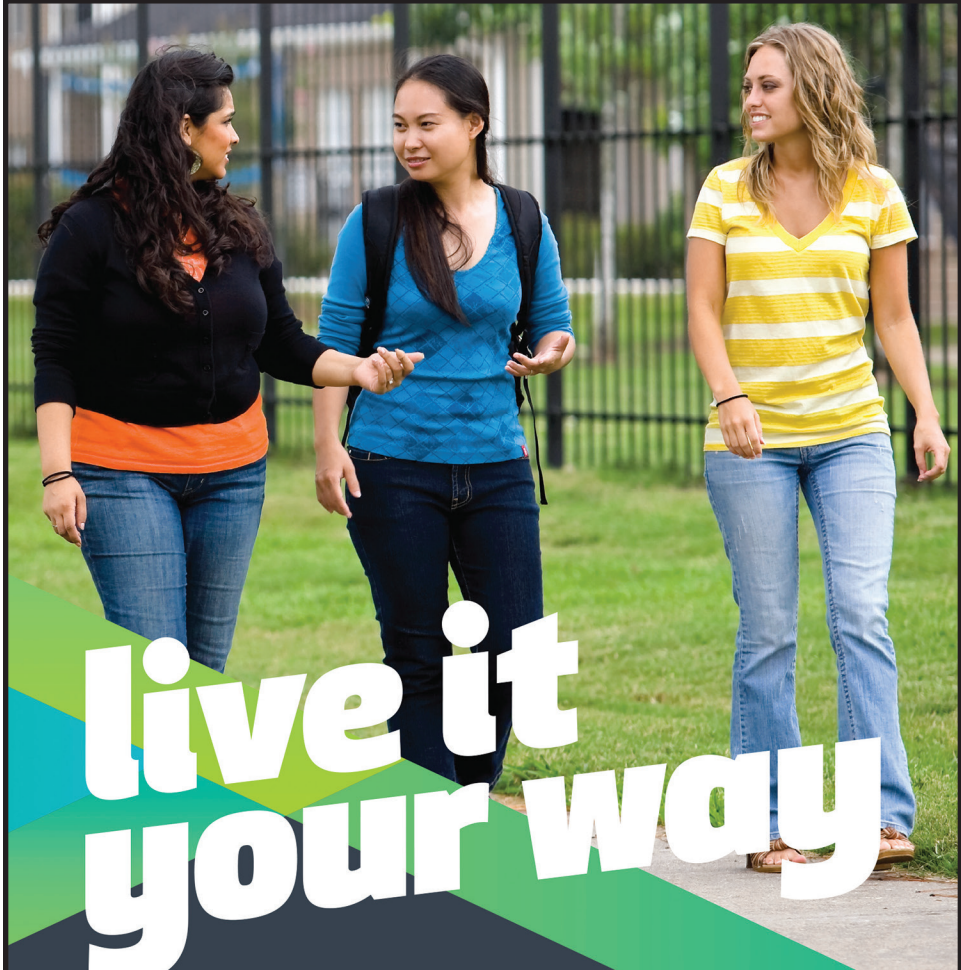
- For those looking to relocate, Houston’s job market and economy has been growing where other cities have dramati-cally lost work due to recession. In light of this, Houston has seen many young professionals as new faces to the city. Forbes recently gave kudos to this fact, declaring us the “coolest city in America.”
- Houston has a large internation-al community and shines in the availability of cuisines offered in the metroplex. It’s pos-sible to find food authentically cooked from every continent without ever leaving the city. Departures.com says Houston is “redefining American cooking.”
- The four major performing arts:

opera, ballet, music and theater, are all proudly represented by Houston-based professional organizations. Many Broadway acts visit Houston regularly. We are also home to America’s second-largest concentration of theater seats in a downtown area.

- As long as you don’t want to see mountains or snow, Hous-ton’s landscape offers various environments: from the tall woods in the north, the open country in the east and west, to the coast line of the Gulf of Mexico in the south. Outdoor-life is abundant outside of the busy city for those who want to get away for some hunting or fishing.


As a native Houstonian, I don’t think it’s right that we were called an ugly city. Not just be-cause “ugly” is a bad adjective to describe characteristics that rate unattractiveness, but even more so because there’s a lack of credibil-ity here and the shots fired on my Houston pride feel unwarranted.

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Kennedy Killer Shrouded In Mystery 50 Years Later

DANIEL DURBIN
THE SIGNAL

It was a warm, sunny morning in Dallas when our youngest president, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and his motorcade cruised at a pace of 11 miles-per-hour through the downtown area Nov. 22, 1963.

The streets were crowded with thousands of excited citizens who hoped to get a glimpse of the president and first lady Jackie Kennedy as they waved from the presidential blue 1961 Lincoln convertible.

The motorcade, which was en route to a luncheon where JFK was scheduled to speak to business and civic leaders in an effort to promote his re-election campaign, never made it to its destination.

Three shots rang out seconds after turning onto Elm Street. Our 35th president was dead.

Fifty years have now passed since John F. Kennedy was shot and killed. Although the government officially announced through the Warren Commission that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin, many Americans refuse to believe he was solely responsible for one of the most notorious acts in American his-

tory. The result has been hundreds of conspiracy theories over the years regarding who really killed Kennedy.

“Basically, JFK had created enough enemies by 1963 that there was a perfect storm of criminal and institutional elements that wanted him dead,” said Tim Silver, author and operator of ThePeoplesHistory.net, a blog site that addresses and investigates the American government’s hidden agendas. “A few specific groups had the means to do it as well.”

The most common conspiracy theory is that there was a second shooter hidden in the grassy knoll located in front of the motorcade. Multiple witnesses that day claim shots were fired from the grassy knoll, an opportune spot for a sniper to hide.

Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly shot Kennedy from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, which was behind the motorcade.

Those who have seen the infamous video footage of JFK being shot witnessed a bullet crashing through the front of his head, which sent a bloody mist showering behind him and jerking his head backward. Silver

and other theorists argue that if Oswald did in fact shoot Kennedy from the depository, his head would have fallen forward, and his blood would have sprayed the opposite direction.

Many theorists believe Jack Ruby, the Dallas nightclub owner who killed Oswald at the Dallas Police Department while police were transferring him to the county jail, was involved.

Ruby was rumored to have affiliations with the mafia, which had its own motives for killing the president.

“Even if it wasn’t the mafia that ordered the hit, it was likely them that pulled it off,” Silver said.

Another popular theory is that CIA operatives were responsible for killing the president.

Kennedy’s popularity with the CIA plummeted after the failed Bay of Pigs mission, which was a ground assault in Cuba led by the CIA as an attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro’s communist government.

Kennedy neglected to send air support after Castro’s army overwhelmed and outnumbered the deployed troops, which angered members in the agency.

JFK also refused to release

false information about Cuba that was presented by the CIA in order to campaign war efforts. The president instead fired leaders of the CIA for attempting to orchestrate such an attempt.

The most controversial – and troubling – theory can be found in Roger Stone’s book, “The Man Who Killed Kennedy.” In it, Stone determines that Kennedy’s own vice president, Lyndon B. Johnson, was the mastermind behind the assassination.

Prior to the assassination, Johnson and Kennedy were known to strongly dislike one another. The Vice President, a Texas native, was allegedly involved in a number of political bribery scandals that were emerging into the public’s eye through the media, the consequences of which could have landed Johnson in prison.

Robert Kennedy, JFK’s brother and acting U.S. Attorney General, wanted LBJ off the 1964 re-election ballot. With his political career potentially in shambles, Stone claims, Johnson had the most to gain in the wake of Kennedy’s death.

Despite all the theories circulating throughout books, articles and the Internet, some experts

still rely on the proven evidence to construct their conclusions.

Sean Cunningham, an American history professor at Texas Tech University who has conducted extensive research on the Kennedy assassination, claims people build on conspiracy theories because they are sometimes easier to believe than the truth.

“Conspiracy theories – whether those involving JFK or some other ‘unsolved mystery’ – are often strangely comforting to Americans, particularly among those unwilling to accept the fact that momentous, world-changing events can come as a result of random, isolated acts of violence, perpetrated by relatively insignificant individuals,” Cunningham said.

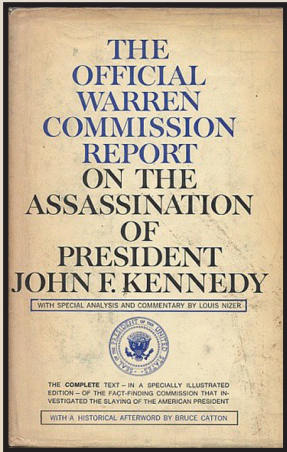
After 50 years, it seems the general public is still unsure of what to believe. It may take another 50 years before the American public can fully agree on a conclusion, but then again, the mystery behind the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy may live on as the most prolific cold case in American history, and no amount of evidence – no matter how concrete – will ever be enough to satisfy the entire public’s opinion.



Photo of Lee Harvey Oswald with a rifle, taken in his backyard in Dallas, March 1963.



One of the bullets used to shoot President Kennedy as well as inflict wounds in Governor John Connally.



The cover of The Official Warren Commission Report.



JFK and Jacqueline Kennedy ride in the presidential limousine just moments before the fatal shooting.



Jack Ruby shoots and kills Oswald in the basement of the Dallas Police Headquarters as he was being transported to county jail.

AMERICAN CAMELOT



ADDRESS AT RICE UNIVERSITY ON THE NATION'S SPACE EFFORT, SEPT. 12, 1962:

"Well, space is there, and we're going to climb it, and the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there.

And, therefore, as we set sail we ask God's blessing on the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked."

It was Jacqueline Kennedy who initiated the myth of Kennedy's Camelot in her final interview before leaving the White House, and like Arthur's Camelot, it has survived the passing of time.

The legend reflects America – and the time in which Kennedy led the country – as much as it represents the man whose confidence and charm gained the faith of a nation as he spoke of fairness and justice.

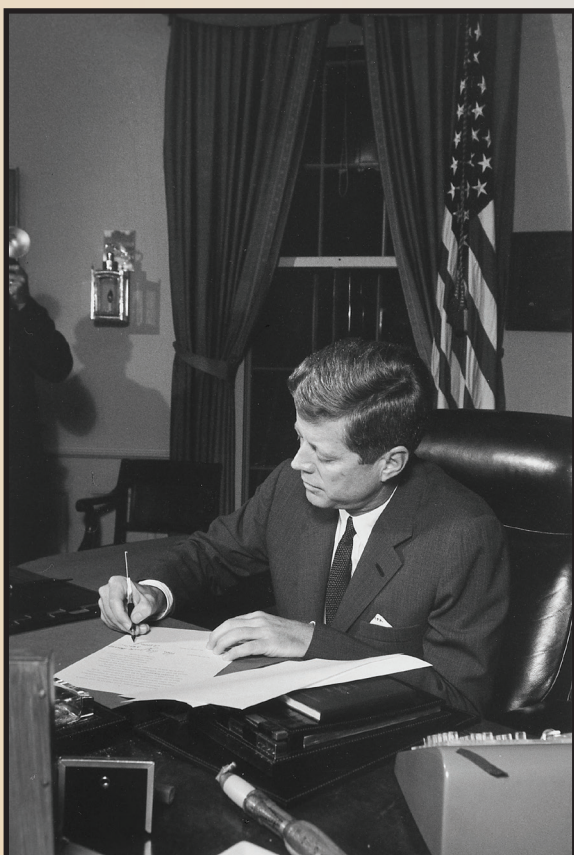


PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY IN HIS HISTORIC MESSAGE TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS, MAY 25, 1961:

"...I believe this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth."



First lady Jacqueline Kennedy exiting Air Force One ahead of her husband after landing in Texas on the day of his assassination.



ADDRESS CONCERNING THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS DURING A TELEVISED BROADCAST, OCT. 22, 1962:

"The path we have chosen for the present is full of hazards, as all paths are – but it is the one most consistent with our character and courage as a nation and our commitments around the world. The cost of freedom is always high – and Americans have always paid it.

And one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender or submission."

"and the song he loved most came at the very end of the record, the last side of Camelot, sad Camelot..."

'Don't let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot.'

There'll never be another Camelot again."

– JACQUELINE KENNEDY



INAUGURAL ADDRESS, JAN. 20, 1961:

"So let us begin anew – remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms – and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce."



THE ETERNAL FLAME BURNS OVER THE GRAVE OF JOHN F. KENNEDY IN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETARY.

Jacqueline Kennedy requested that an eternal flame burn over her husband's grave. She said she had a clear vision of how she wanted her husband to be remembered.

"There'll be great presidents again – but there'll never be a Camelot again," the first lady said in an interview with T. H. White.

SECURITY: continued from page 1

said at a public event in Baltimore in early November. “I am not wedded to these programs. If we can come up with a better way of doing them, we should, period.”

Cyber Command is a military cyber security agency that Alexander also heads. Cyber Command works to protect U.S. military networks from cyber attacks and began operations in May 2010.

“There is nothing that anyone from NSA or Cyber Command has done that is wrong,” Alexander said. “From where I sit, we’re doing everything we can to do this right. We hold ourselves accountable.”

The classified documents that were leaked by Snowden have provided the evidence necessary for class-action lawsuits against the NSA. These lawsuits call for the agency to be significantly reined in and for the mass data collection to come to a halt.

The oral arguments for the latest preliminary injunction request began Nov. 18. U.S. District Court Judge Richard Leon will preside over a hearing between the Department of Justice lawyers and Larry Klayman, leader of

the advocacy group Freedom Watch.

Klayman, along with other civil rights groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), claim that NSA is exceeding its authority under the Patriot Act. The government uses Section 215 of the Patriot Act to justify its collection of all American phone records. Section 215 allows orders for phone taps to be placed by only one party and the reasons for why the order was given do not have to be disclosed.

In the wake of details leaking that the U.S. government is also monitoring foreign leaders, even its allies, President Barack Obama made it clear in a call with President Hollande of France Oct. 21 that the United States has begun to review the way that it gathers intelligence, so that it properly balances the legitimate security concerns of its citizens and allies with the privacy concerns that all people share.

The PRISM project, a government codename assigned for another major government

“People want privacy, but our government has prioritized security and the economic interests of online companies that lobby against privacy legislation.”

– ASHLEY PACKARD
PROFESSOR OF
COMMUNICATION AND
DIGITAL MEDIA STUDIES

surveillance gathering program, cites Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to justify authorizing “intelligence agencies to monitor the phone, email and other communications of U.S. citizens for up to a week without obtaining a warrant” when one of the parties is outside the U.S.

“The collection under FISA

Section 702 is the most significant tool in the NSA collection arsenal for the detection, identification and disruption of terrorist threats to the U.S. and around the world,” the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the NSA stated in a joint statement released Aug. 21.

What makes this program different from the Utah Data Center is that NSA pulls information from other companies rather than collecting the digital data itself. Under PRISM, NSA gathered information from users through databases of companies including Microsoft, Yahoo, Apple, Skype, Google, YouTube and Facebook.

“People want privacy, but our government has prioritized security and the economic interests of online companies that lobby against privacy legislation,” said Ashley Packard, professor of communication and digital media studies. “We live in a wired world in which people don’t have adequate protections. They can either operate on that uneven playing field as best they can or

not enter the field, period. That isn’t a real choice.”

Some of these companies, particularly Google and Yahoo, were unaware of the extent of information the NSA was pulling from their data centers. In response, Google has rushed to finish encrypting the channels between its overseas data centers, a project that began almost a year ago, effectively shutting out the NSA from its systems and potentially reducing the amount of daily data intake collected by NSA by nearly a third.

Yahoo has announced similar projects, which are slated for completion by the end of the first quarter of 2014.

“As you know, there have been a number of reports over the last six months about the U.S. government secretly accessing user data without the knowledge of tech companies, including Yahoo,” said Marissa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo in a press release announcing the security-based projects. “I want to reiterate what we have said in the past: Yahoo has never given access to our data centers to the NSA or to any other government agency. Ever.”



The after-game celebration of the last Astros game held at the Astrodome, Oct. 3, 1999.

ASTRODOME: continued from page 1

Corporation, which takes care of the entire Reliant Park, including Reliant Stadium, the Astrodome and Reliant Arena.

There is another option for the Astrodome. The city of Houston can give landmark status to the Astrodome. However, this would only put a hold on demolition for 90 days, not indefinitely.

“There is an immediate need to protect the Dome from the wrecking ball,” said Chris Alexander, founder and CEO of ASTRODOMETOMORROW, a nonprofit corporation trying to ensure the redevelopment of the Astrodome. “All of us should be working to ensure that the Astrodome is protected.”

TUITION: continued from page 1

for financial aid services moving away from student services fees and into being base-funded by the university will allow student services fees to better support the things all students are allowed to use.

“Whatever is under student services, even if you don’t use it, you should be able to use it,” Biggers said to students at the meeting.

The consolidated student services fee will include the student ID card fee, the Student Success Center fee and the Writing Center fee.

The information resources fee will include the computer use fee and library use fee. Information resources is requesting an additional \$1 per semester credit hour to cover the rising software costs and increasing costs for existing licenses and maintenance.

The Academic Records fee will include the transcript and publication fee and the e-services fee.

There are also changes proposed for non-mandatory, per-user fees, including raising the graduation fee from \$65 to \$80. New fees include a \$25 proctor fee and a \$10 per subject Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Subject Retake fee.

Along with presenting the information at the SGA meeting, administrators were available to discuss the proposed increase and changes at two town hall meetings during the week between the

presentation and the student vote.

“Students don’t fully understand how important they are to this process,” SGA President Carla Bradley said. “Our SGA representatives may feel that all they do is ‘fill in’ for their organizations, but they forget that they are truly a small portion representing the student body at large. If UHCL faculty, staff and administration have taken time out of their busy schedules just to hear what students have to say and what their inquiries are, it means that they really would consider our votes of support and non-support.”

Jessyka Reynoso, graduate sociology student, said that, because graduate and international students already pay a higher tuition, it sometimes feels like they are being picked on when it comes to tuition increases.

“I would like to see a change in at least lowering the percent they’re asking from graduates,” Reynoso said. “I know money’s real tight, they’re trying to find it wherever they can and that’s fine, but I’d like to see them lower the percent they’re asking from graduates and from international students.”

Overall Tuition & Fee Increase

Undergraduate Resident (12 hours)
3.9% – \$112/sem Increase

Undergraduate Non-Resident (12 hours)
3.9% – \$304/sem Increase

Graduate Resident (9 hours)
4.9% – \$180/sem Increase

Graduate Non-Resident (9 hours)
4.9% – \$351/sem Increase

Designated Tuition Increase To Pay For:

- Faculty and Staff Compensation
- Additional Faculty
- Four Year Initiative
- Shift of Financial Aid

New Professor Strengthens Microbiology Program



COURTESY OF HEATH MILLS

Heath Mills (right forefront), professor of biology, works with students on one of his drilling expeditions.

KELSEY BENOIT THE SIGNAL

UHCL’s newest professor in the School of Science and Computer Engineering, Heath Mills, arrived on campus with a grant and research opportunities for students already in place.

Mills brought with him a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF is accountable for one-fourth of federal support to grade schools, colleges and universities in the United States for science and engineering research and education.

“The microbiology program has kind of floundered in the past 10 years, especially since the previous microbiologists have retired,” said Larry Rohde, associate professor of biology. “So we are now at a level that I think we can take microbiology into a new realm, and we are all excited about it.”

Mills, professor of biology, was born and raised in North Carolina, graduated from Duke University with a B.S. in biology, focusing on zoology. After finishing his undergrad, Mills went on to become a technician at a cancer research lab at Clark Atlanta University for a year and a half. Mills continued his education at Georgia Tech University, earning his M.S. in biology, specializing in applied microbiology. He earned his Ph.D. at Georgia Tech.

In 2008, Mills became an assistant professor at Texas A&M University in the Oceanography department. It was at this point that he started working with the International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP) and began drilling deep into the ocean floor. He now has samples from all over the world including: Japan, the Great Barrier Reef and the Atlantic Ocean.

“One-tenth to one-third, depending on who you believe in the field, of all bio mass on the planet may be beneath the sea floor,” Mills said to explain why they do all of this drilling. They drill, Mills said, to see what

is down there and to “see what it means to be alive, what it takes to be alive, what are the limits of life on the planet.”

This is where the National Science Foundation grant Mills received and brought with him to UHCL comes in; Mills said the grant is to go into the Earth’s crust and to see “who’s there and what they are doing.”

Mills has gathered samples of the earth’s crust ranging in age from a few thousand years old to 120 million years old. As Mills gathers samples in his drillings, he brings those samples back to UHCL where he and his independent study students research them. Students get to have a hands-on-learning experience working in the labs with these samples with a professor who has years of discovery and research under his belt.

While drilling with the IODP Expedition 329, South Pacific Gyre with colleague Brandi Reece of USC, Mills collected sediment samples. When Mills and Reece tested the samples in the lab they discovered they were able to culture some fungi in the 120-million-year-old sediments. Mills and Reece knew they had something when they were both able to detect the same fungi at their different schools.

“Several of the species we have acquired are related to the penicillium that is one of the workhorses for the production of penicillin,” Mills said.

Although this is a big find, the research is not complete. Mills is continuing his study on the fungi here at UHCL with his students. They will continue to research these samples until they know what they have found and if it has the antibiotic characteristics of the market penicillin. Mills and his students are working to characterize the different fungi better and plan to write a paper about their findings.

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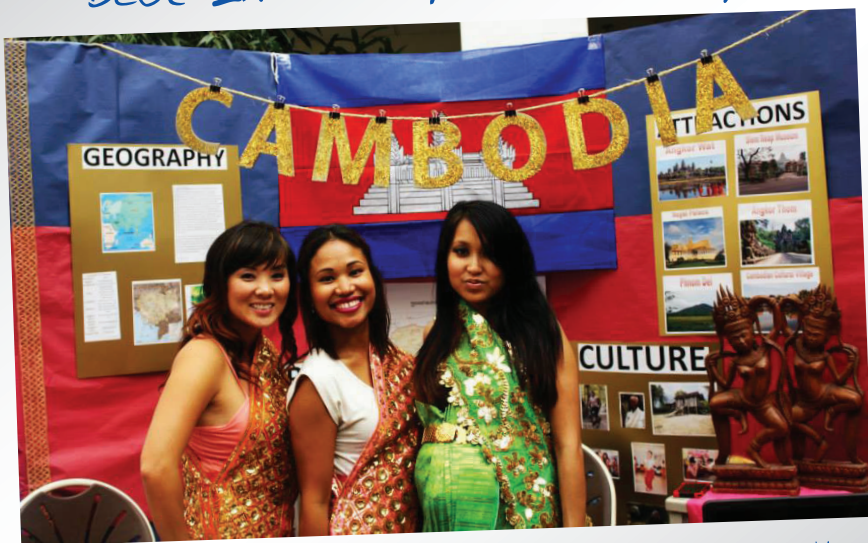
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World-Class Winners



Go online to read the full article on Global Expo by Haley Follett

Best Individual/Small Group



Leena Vuor, communication major (center), with two community members who helped run the Cambodia booth.

Most Spirited



From LEFT: Student participants for the Mexico booth - Liliana Zuniga, art education major; Karina Acosta, sociology major; Nhee Vang, coordinator for intercultural student services program; Aranza Contreras, industrial safety major, and Arietza Contreras, industrial safety.

Most Educational



From LEFT: Student participants for the P.A.V.E. booth - James Elmore, psychology major; Nhee Vang, coordinator for intercultural student services; Linda Bullock, assistant dean of student diversity; Melissa Negrete, psychology major, and Robin Aleman, social work major.

Most Spirited



From LEFT: Student participants for the Tamil Nadu booth - Kavitha Madhavargan, software engineering major; Samuel Vineeth Solomons, engineering management major; Nhee Vang, coordinator for intercultural student services; Ansu Sundaresan, computer engineering major; Gowtham Manoharan, computer engineering major; Kanya Ganapathy, biotechnology major, and Shobhana Manokaran, engineering management major.

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