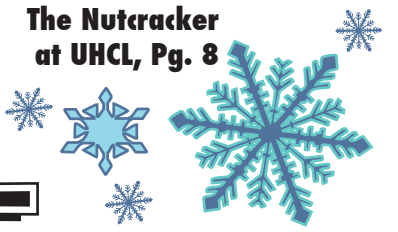




End of the
World?, pg. 4

THE SIGNAL

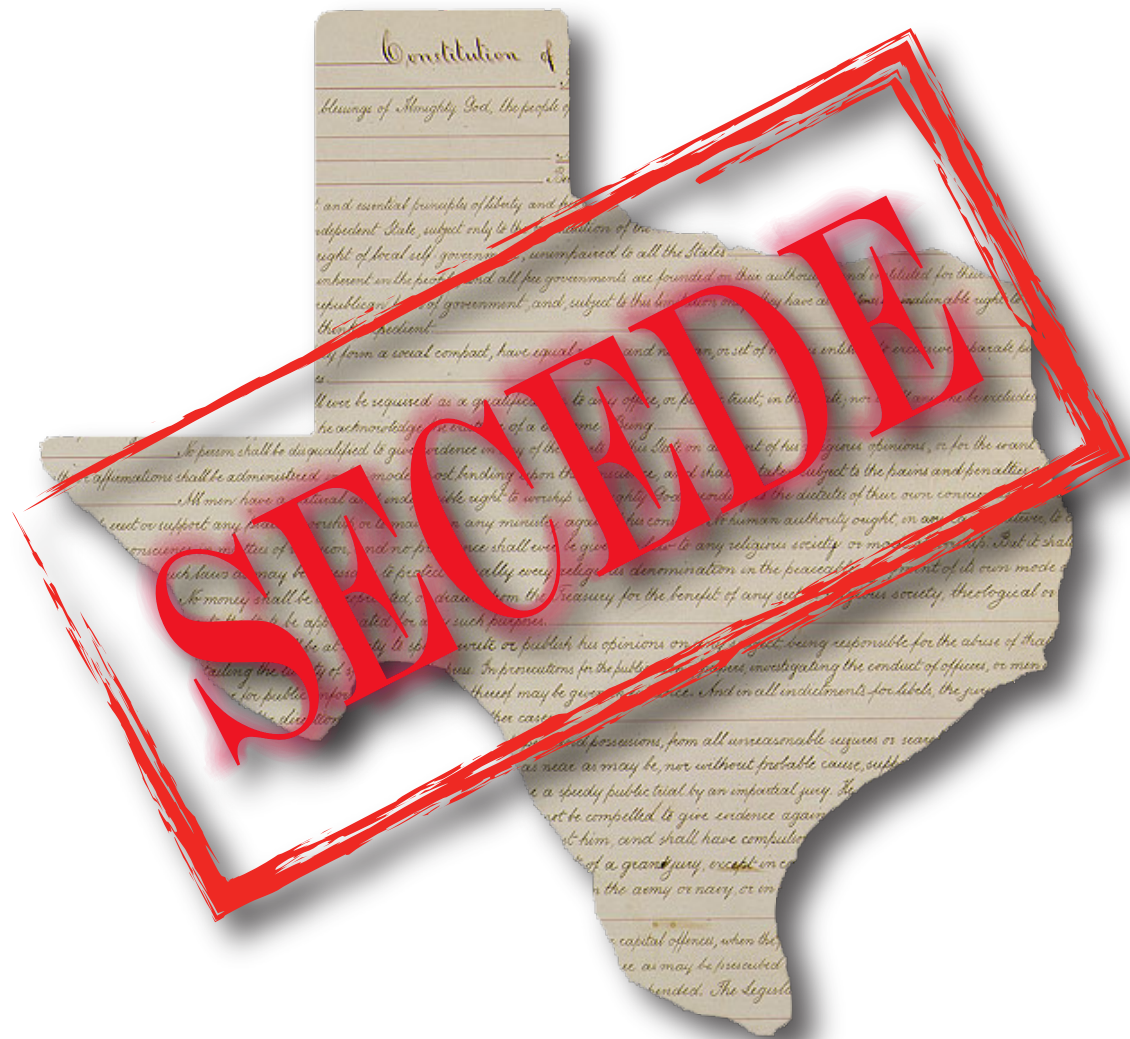
The Nutcracker
at UHCL, Pg. 8



VOLUME XL, NUMBER 12

www.UHCLTheSignal.com

DECEMBER 10, 2012



CHARLES LANDRIAULT:THE SIGNAL

LONE STAR COUNTRY

Petitioners seek secession from U.S.

Vonda Atchley
The Signal

For the first time in the history of the United States of America, citizens in all 50 states have signed petitions at www.whitehouse.gov to secede from the union with Texas leading the way with more than 118,000 signatures.

“Upon the re-election of Barack Obama as President of the United States, the citizens of this country are voicing their frustrations in a nation that believes the information the democrats are putting out to the public to be true,” said Dave Mundy, media liaison for Texas Nationalist Movement.

The objective of Texas National Movement is to restore Texas to its rightful status as an independent state, guarantee the individual rights of every Texan,

and achieve Texas’ place as a nation among nations.

While the current state of our government may have the citizens of the nation screaming “secede,” The Texas Nationalist Movement has been working to secede from the union to secure the political, economic and culture rights of Texas since the early 1990s.

“Seceding from the union is something the Texas Nationalist Movement has been doing pre-Obama,” Mundy said. “It has nothing to do with the parties in office. It has everything to do with the state of our government and the fact it is overstepping the boundaries it has been given to rule the states. We are a world of difference than other states, politically, economically and culturally; we want to preserve those differences

SEE SECESSION, PAGE 6

Piper nominee William Hoston will represent UHCL at state

Laura Figueroa
The Signal

UHCL announced this year’s nominee for the Piper Award for the 2012 academic year is William Hoston, assistant professor of political science and program covenor.

The Piper Award, established in 1958 by the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation is based out of San Antonio. This award recognizes outstanding professors across Texas.

The purpose of the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation is to assist men and women in Texas who wish to complete their education and obtain a degree. Minnie Stevens Piper and her husband Randall Gordon Piper were the principal donors.

The Piper Award recognizes and honors 10 professors each academic year from universities and colleges across the state. Two- and four-year college and universities submit one nominee for consideration for the Piper Award recognizing outstanding dedication to the teaching profession.

The UHCL Piper Award committee reviews the nominations received from September through October submitted by students and faculty.

After the committee reviews the nominations, the top 5 nominees are selected based on the

number of nominations received and their ratio of credit hours taught.

“The Piper Award committee requests that each of the top five faculty members submit the official award nomination form along with a notebook with supporting documents that supports their contributions to the university including teaching, service and research,” said Lindsey Fulton, student services coordinator. “Upon receipt of this documentation, the committee meets to review the notebooks and make a subjective decision for the finalist based on the information submitted.”

Once the finalist is selected, he or she must submit the proper documentation to the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation.

The winner of the Piper Award receives a certificate of merit, a gold pin and a \$5,000 award. But the nomination alone is rewarding to UHCL’s professor Hoston.

“To be nominated by the students is the greatest part of the award,” Hoston said. “It is a humbling feeling when you know you have made a difference in another individual’s life. I thank them dearly.”

Hoston received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of New Orleans in 2007 and has been a faculty member at UHCL since 2009.

He is the author of “Listen to



WILLIAM HOSTON

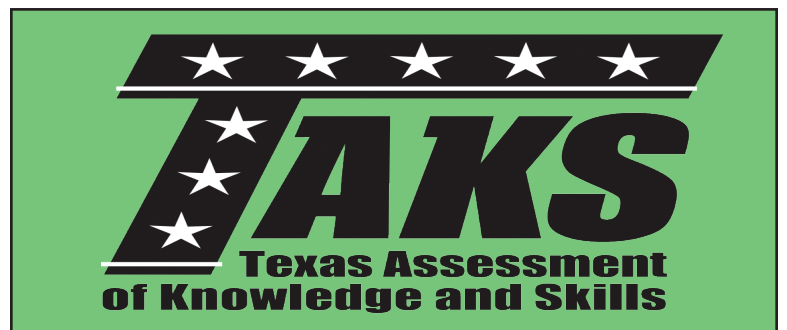
Me Now or Listen to Me Later: A Memoir of Academic Success for College Students,” and has been published in numerous academic publications.

Hoston has also presented to numerous audiences through conferences, seminars, and workshops, as well as at various colleges and universities.

Hoston also served as a senior airman with the Louisiana Air National Guard. He received an honorable discharge in 2002.

“It is my firm belief that the ultimate gratification is making a difference in students’ lives,” Hoston said. “The goals I have as a professor are threefold: (1) I want to inspire my students to become better social scientists, (2) To become life-long learners of any capacity, and (3) strive to become better human beings.”

SEE HOSTON, PAGE 6



Standardized testing flunks out in schools

Meaghan Marquez
The Signal

As of Nov. 30, Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) reported 875 districts representing more than 4.4 million students have adopted a resolution against high stakes standardized tests in Texas schools called the Resolution Concerning High Stakes, Standardized Testing of Texas Public School Students.

The resolution proposes to reexamine the public school accountability system in Texas and to develop a system that includes multiple assessments and other external evaluation arrangements that will more accurately reflect what students know.

The resolution of high-stakes testing was written by Advancement Project; Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund; FairTest; Forum for Education and Democracy; Mecklenburg ACTS; Deborah Meier; NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.; National Education Association; New York Perfor-

mance Standards Consortium; Tracy Novick; Parents Across America; Parents United for Responsible Education-Chicago; Diane Ravitch; Race to Nowhere; Time Out From Testing; and United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries.

“Tragically, standardized testing is taking up to 45 of the 180 days of class time,” said Peter Wuenschel, executive director of Communities in Schools Bay Area and social work adjunct instructor at UHCL. “This time should be spent allowing teachers to teach their students. In order for students to be ready for college and careers, teachers need to have more time with students teaching them critical thinking and other skills to make them more competitive in the market and in post-secondary education. Unfortunately the standardized testing we have in place in Texas does not adequately measure a student’s competencies.”

SEE TESTING, PAGE 6

ONLINE in this issue

LATEST NEWS

Qwerty, why passwords keep getting hacked

VIDEOS

End Time, a parody of the apocalypse

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Could Texas secession succeed?

COMMENTARY

Gary Cecil III
The Signal

Petitions have been submitted from all 50 states to secede from the union. In Texas’ petition, petitioners state one thing they hope to achieve from seceding is to “re-secure their rights and liberties in accordance with the original ideas and beliefs of our founding fathers which are no longer being reflected by the federal government.”

They do not specify what these rights are, but taking into account the timing of this petition, it appears that President Obama’s policies, such as his stance on rights for women and minorities, are a contributing factor.

The petition for Texas to withdraw from the union has around 118,000 signatures right now, which is 93,000 more than needed for the petition to be addressed by the White House.

First of all, contrary to myth, Texas has no special, legal right

to secede. The myth states that Texas was given the special right to secede when it joined the union. The only right Texas was given was the right to split into five states as declared in the 1845 Joint Resolution for Annexing Texas. But no explicit right to secede was given.

However, any state may secede if, and only if, the government is oppressing its citizens, and their rights to life, liberty and property are being attacked instead of protected. If Texas were to secede on these grounds, it would need to form its own government and currency, and it would have to continue to keep up its successful economy.

Texas’ successful economy is listed in the petition as one of the reasons why it should secede. There may be more to it than on the surface since Texas’ economy is largely based on trade with other countries. To keep up its economy, Texas would need to keep up this international trade. However, this reliance on other countries is not a very safe bet.

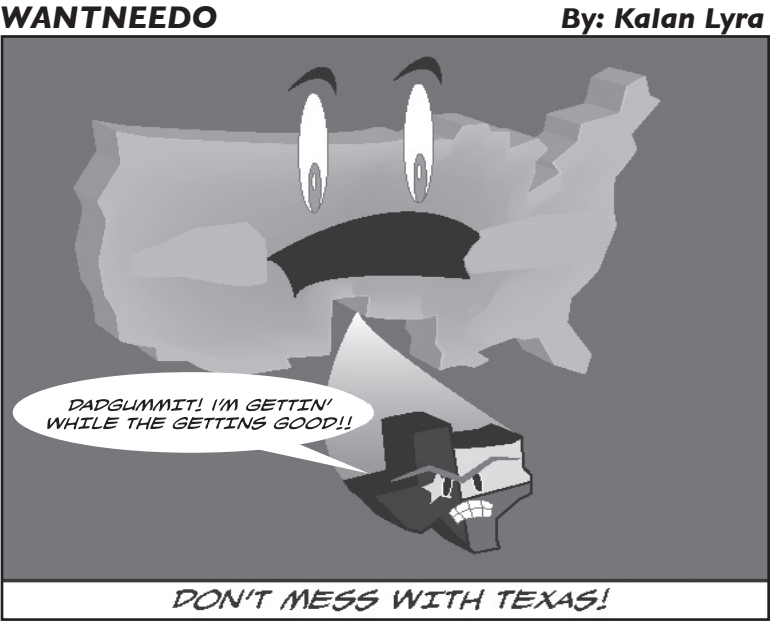
Since these other countries are obviously friends to the U.S., they may not want to abandon such a large ally by continuing trade with an independent Texas.

To give Texas the benefit of the doubt, perhaps by divine intervention, destiny or just dumb luck and these other countries do decide to keep up trade with Texas, there will still be problems residing right inside the nation of Texas.

Consider what Texas petitioners are proposing the petition. Basically limits the rights of minorities and reflects mostly Republican beliefs. About 40 percent of Texans are Democratic, and 55 percent are non-hispanic whites.

And many of these citizens are Plus a large chunk of the 99.538% of the Texas population that did not sign the petition to secede.

If Texas manages to secede, how will that portion of Texas respond to being citizens of a union that opposes all of the issues for which they stand? Not kindly, probably by relocating to



the U.S.A.

Texas stands no chance on its own without so many of its hard-working citizens, and it takes a great risk in failing by losing the help of other nations who will remain loyal to the U.S.A. Secession leads to no place good.

If things go down this path, that is it for Texas’ economy. Eventually, “border patrol” will refer to Mexico trying to keep out Texans. But to every dark cloud is a silver lining. Nov. 6, citizens of Puerto Rico voted to support statehood. If Texas manages to secede and Puerto Rico becomes a state, the U.S. will not have to change the number of stars of its flag. That is certainly a relief.

The Construction of Gender LETTERS

On Monday, 3 December a group from Dr. Charlotte Haney’s anthropology class conducted a gender identity initiative where various students and faculty were asked to provide their thoughts on gender. They were given open license and allowed to comment however they thought appropriate. Fifty percent of the those surveyed gave a definition for gender and based their definitions on either one’s outward appearance, a predefined role, sex organs, or as determined by cultural norms; the largest percent of this group focused on the category of outward appearance. We saw that while the idea of gender differs among ages variances and ethno-social backgrounds, there was an issue with the ability to accept others for who they identity themselves to be – instead of the way someone else identities them.

Of the remaining 50%, only 16% defined gender in terms of a vision upon which gender identity should be based. The

input received included equality, blind acceptance, and personally defined by one’s sense of self. By the remaining 24%, media was recognized as an influencing factor in the identity of gender, thus we thank the Signal for running this article as we strive to bring to the forefront of people’s minds a conscientious thought that gender identity is less about constructed stereotypes or culture, and that it is ok to be accepting of differences.

So let us think and talk, as a community, about other’s viewpoints and rise to the challenge of accepting a view which aligns with, as some surveyed so eloquently phrased it, allowing females and males to do and be anything and anyone they desire which includes traits stereotypically regarded as meant for one based on their sex. As another surveyed expressed, let’s do away with arbitrary labels. Will you meet the challenge of taking the time to look beneath the surface, and embrace diversity?

Sharon Young
Psychology Major

A letter from The Signal editors LETTERS

Dear readers,

On behalf of the student publication’s fall 2012 news staff, we would like to thank all the faculty, staff and students for a great semester. Your continued support and contributions throughout the semester has been most appreciated. We would like to reinforce the fact that the Signal newspaper would not survive without the help of the clubs, organizations, events and spirit that the university brings. It has been an honor and privilege working with all the people that make up this wonderful university.

The Signal’s mission is to serve as a student forum so that the voices of the student body may be heard and encourages story ideas, letters to the editor, photos representing campus life and other contributing works by students, faculty, staff and alumni.

As a staff, we were handed the responsibility of carrying the torch that existed before us, which we hope to pass on to the next wave of students willing to accept the honor of writing for the student newspaper at UHCL. We understand, that the paper, as an entity, is bigger than its current staff and it is our hope that the paper will continue to thrive and grow long after we are gone.

The publication staff took on many challenges this semester and we can honestly say that we are proud of the work we have done and the goals that we have accomplished. From the unveiling of our new school mascot, the Hawks, to covering of the

presidential election, the semester has been filled with the stress of meeting deadlines and overcoming our stage fright while learning the fine art of interviewing. Publishing with only a small staff of nine students forced us to come together as a team quickly in order to produce work that was publishable.

We entered this classroom/newsroom, wide-eyed and terrified at the thought of having what was essentially our homework published for the world to critique. Here it is at the end of the semester, and we are publishing of what is going to be this staff’s final issue.

We will be leaving here with the confidence that comes from achieving goals that we once thought were impossible. We are reminded that it is the hard-earned accomplishments that mean the most. Each issue presented its own set of challenges forcing us to hone the skills that we accumulated throughout our academic career at UHCL.

As a staff, we have a responsibility to keep the paper’s integrity and reputation intact by providing insightful, accurate and newsworthy information to our student body. Interacting with the Student Government Association and numerous student organizations here on campus provided invaluable resources for our articles. We would also like to acknowledge the faculty and staff who generously offered their time and expertise.

It has been our honor to represent the student newspaper and we pass the torch to next semester’s class proud of all we have accomplished.

THE SIGNAL

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Scan the QR code to check out the latest stories and multimedia on The Signal Online.

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- Letters must be no longer than 500 words.
- Letters to the editor are reprinted unedited.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer’s full name and contact information.
- The editors reserve the right to refuse letters, announcements, advertisements and contributed articles deemed libelous.

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President

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APPLY TO BE AN O LEADER

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ TODAY ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Are you looking to get involved?
Interested in introducing new students to UHCL?
Looking for a volunteer opportunity?
If you answered yes to any of the questions above, then being an O Leader is the position for you!

What are we looking for?
-Representatives of the University of Houston-Clear Lake (Ambassadors)
-Dedicated and professional individuals
-Friendly, open and approachable personalities

What are the benefits for volunteers?
-Gain an understanding of university wide information
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-Establish new friendships

Past O-Leader Comments about training and NSO:
-It improved my confidence in speaking before students during the Keys for Success.
-I had fun working with everyone and having a chance to help new students
-I enhanced my building teamwork skills

Applications available at www.uhcl.edu/newstudentorientation or in the Student Life Office.



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Any person needing an accommodation for a disability to participate in this program should contact the Student Life Office at StudentLife@uhcl.edu or 281-283-2560 at least one week prior to the event to arrange for the accommodation.

UHCL SGA STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION YOUR SCHOOL. YOUR VOICE.

Sarah Says
Happy Holidays

The 2012-2013 SGA Executive Council wishes everyone a wonderful holiday season and Happy New Year!



- *New Year! New Fun!!*
The 1st Spring 2013 SGA meeting takes place Jan. 22 at 11:30 in the SSCB Lecture Hall
- *Vote for January's Student leader of the Month*
Deadline: January 23, 2013 at 10 a.m. in SSCB 1.205.
- *Get involved! Join a committee!!*
Applications available in SSCB 1.205 or Student Lounge

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Stephen Schumacher
The Signal

Huddled in an underground fortress, surrounded by canned food and water by the gallon, thousands of people will wait in anticipation for the world as we know it to end Dec. 21, 2012.

The fear of an apocalypse or something similar derives not from the specific date of Dec. 21, but from the end of the 13th b'ak'tun, which in Mayan literature represented the end of what was known as the third world, one of three worlds created before the one in which we currently live. Because the third world ended on the 13th b'ak'tun, the Mayans held that time period in high regard, signaling what they believed could be the end of this world.

Conspiracy theorists and religious fanatics alike have snowballed these century-old prophecies into the 'Apocalypse 2012' phenomenon with which we are currently inundated. Fears of how the world will come to an end this December span out in all directions, from distant planets colliding with Earth to the always-popular extra terrestrial takeover.

As far as the Mayan calendar is concerned, the only thing set to end Dec. 21 is the 13th b'ak'tun, a recurring period of time lasting roughly 394 years, used in the Mesoamerican Long Count calendar.

The Mayan prophecy has sent many around the world into a state of worry, and in some cases, panic. Those looking to chime in on the subject need look no further than their personal computer, where online communities have been coming together to discuss the implications of such events.

Users at Reddit.com, a popular user based news website known for its sarcastic humor and intelligent discussion, have been keeping an eye on the upcoming day and, more importantly, the people

they feel may take it too far. One user claimed he would be filling up his gas tank just in case. Another user intends to go camping on the 21st just to be on the safe side. Of course it wouldn't be Reddit without users making jokes about the matter as well with one user responding, "Go hard or die Mayan."

One Reddit user, who prefers to be left unnamed, believes that the world will in fact end on the 21st.

"I have been doing a lot of research over the topic the past couple of years," he said. "People want to try and make it out to be a joke and that's fine, but I believe something is going to happen and I am preparing for it.

"I have about a year's worth of canned food stored in my basement. I have the equivalent of that in water as well. I am not much into weapons, but I have purchased two guns and ammunition in case things come to that. It is my duty to protect my family and I am willing to do whatever it takes in order to do so."

Scientists across the globe, including experts from NASA, have been working to assure the public that they have nothing to fear this December. Scientists have been unable to find any evidence that coincides with the theories and rumors of these supposed upcoming phenomenons. NASA has even set up a frequently asked questions page on its website titled "Beyond 2012: Why the World Won't End." Questions are answered covering a wide range of topics including planetary alignment, blackouts and even the Mayan calendar.

Regardless of its factual inaccuracies, people continue to cling to these man-made prophecies, aggressively preparing for what they believe will be the end of the world. The most extreme of these people

have been widely publicized in popular reality television shows like National Geographic's "Doomsday Preppers" and Discovery Channel's "Doomsday Bunkers."

While there is nothing wrong with people being prepared for a natural disaster, shows like 'Preppers' are drenched in fear inducing imagery aimed at grabbing attention and garnering viewership.

Debra Clark, professor of communication and digital media studies, is not a fan of doomsday predictions, but is not surprised in the least by the appeal it brings to the media.

"While I do not buy into prophesizing, if it's a hot trend, the media will," Clark said. "The theory behind this type of interaction between what's trending in the public realm and what media report for 'soft' news is Uses and Gratification Theory. This means media typically report what the mass audience wants to hear. People respond to danger either via: God punishing us (religion), blaming others (especially foreign evil people trying to get us), science, or nature (nothing we can do)."

Ethics aside, in media, risky business is good business. While some of us may be fed up with the ongoing doomsday television drama, the simple fact is that the demand is there, regardless of their reasons for doing so, people are watching. The good news for the rest of us is that in less than a month they will all retire to their bunkers freeing up those timeslots for something that is, hopefully, less cringe worthy.

Lacking any scientific evidence to back it up, Doomsday 2012 will soon find its place on the shelf next to the Y2K scare of 1999.

P@\$\$w0rd Pr0tect!ion

Cameron Palmer
The Signal

The majority of people today are dependent on the Internet for banking, bills, entertainment, social media and gaming. The passwords we choose for our accounts are supposed to be secure, complex and, hopefully, unbreakable. Sadly most of the passwords chosen follow a pattern of repetition and are easily attacked by hackers.

Let's see if I can guess any of your passwords that you use for your accounts on the Internet. Let me begin by asking a few questions, then you let me know if I am getting warmer.

Are any of your passwords your name or perhaps the name of your child, pet or a family member? Are they something that is easy to remember such as "password," "12345678," "QWERTY" (the top letters on an American keyboard), or my personal favorite, "trustno1"? Perhaps they are of a popular band or a famous celebrity like "Bieber" or "Pitt."

Maybe you went a different, and perhaps more clever route such as "NCC1701" (the numbers on the starship enterprise), or "8675309" (a popular 80s song by Tommy Tutone – humming it now).

Am I getting warmer?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, your accounts or personal information are vulnerable to hackers. When

I say hackers, I mean unauthorized users deliberately gaining access to personal accounts, whether they are video game accounts, email accounts, bank accounts, etc., and possibly causing harm to your lifestyle via the internet.

Hackers can steal identity, personal information, funds or just make your life a living hell.

If you answered no to all these questions, do not think you are safe because you may still be at risk.

Research performed by Symantec's Norton, an antivirus company designed for computer security, stated that half of the users on the internet do not use secure or "complex" passwords. Users instead use simple patterns or obvious words that are easy to breach by hackers.

Passwords such as "Abc123" and "letmein" are NOT considered complex. Instead they fall into the top 10 worst, most used, and common passwords. If they happen to be a password you have chosen, I strongly advise you to change it immediately.

Obviously one can get more creative than "ABC123" right? The first three numbers and letters of the alphabet should not be a serious password.

So what does classify as a strong or

complex password? A mixture of symbols, numbers and capitalizations and lower-case letter is a start. A phrase or memorable word, such as your favorite author or favorite character in a movie or video game or even a favorite food will be more secure than "123123" or "QWERTY" ever will.

The two rules you must follow when creating a password are password length and password complexity.

Your password length should be at least eight characters long; the longer the password is, the harder it is for a hacker to gain access.

A password must also follow the "8 4 rule" or eight characters, one lower case, one upper case one number, and one special character. This insures maximum protection.

In this modern digital world our entire personal lives are kept online. Whether it be personal family photos or bank records, our passwords are our last line of defense against those who wish to poach from our digital lives.

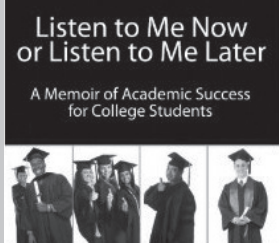
For more information about how to create a strong password visit: thegeekstuff.com/2008/06/the-ultimate-guide-for-creating-strong-passwords

Top 20 Worst Passwords

1. password
2. 123456
3. 12345678
4. abc123
5. qwerty
6. monkey
7. letmein
8. dragon
9. 111111
10. baseball
11. iloveyou
12. trustno1
13. 1234567
14. sunshine
15. master
16. 123123
17. welcome
18. shadow
19. ashley
20. football

Enter your
password





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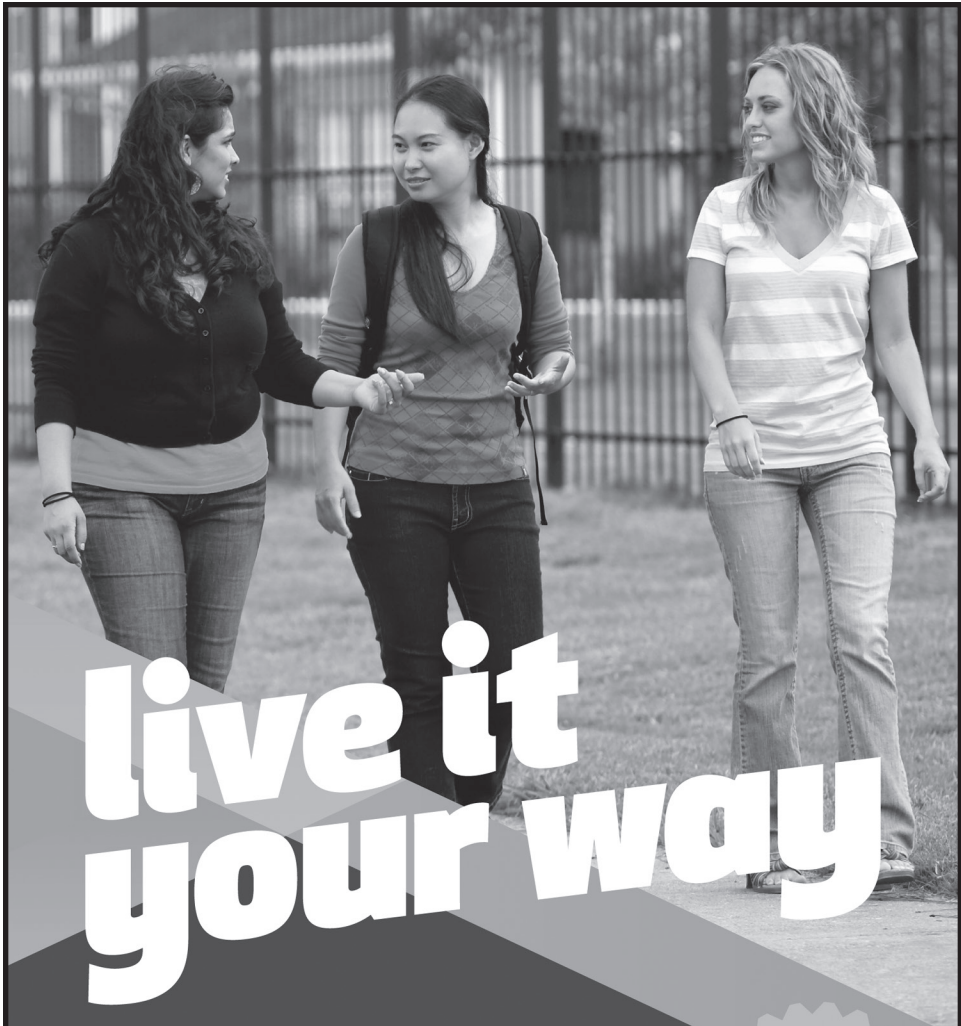
ci•vil•i•ty (sĭ-vĭlĭ-tē) *n., pl. -ties*
1. Courteous behavior; politeness.
2. A courteous act or utterance.

from The American Heritage College Dictionary

There is a difference between a scholarly debate and causing disruption by being argumentative and disrespectful.

You are a scholar and you paid for the privilege to be educated. Act like a scholar and succeed like a scholar.

For more information on UHCL’s conduct code, go online to www.uhcl.edu/deanofstudents or scan the QR code for UHCL’s Student Rights and Responsibilities, which includes the UHCL conduct code.



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The Signal wants to hear from you!

The Office of Student Publications is conducting a brief survey on readership to determine the most effective ways to reach the UHCL community. We would be very appreciative if you would, please, take two to three minutes to complete the survey.

You can access the survey by scanning the QR code to the right with your smartphone or by visiting www.uhclthesignal.com and clicking on the survey link in the sidebar on the right side of the homepage.

All answers are confidential.



Thank you!

Sugar Plum Fairies Grace Enchanted Stage

Vonda Atchley
The Signal

Feel the magic of Christmas as sugar plum fairies dance in your head when the Kennedy Dance Theatre performs The Nutcracker at the University of Houston-Clear Lake's Bayou Theater in three exclusive shows at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., Dec. 15, then again at 2 p.m., Dec. 16.

The family-friendly atmosphere is intended to make attendees feel comfortable while enjoying an old time favorite ballet.

"Our Nutcracker performance is truly magical because we work very hard to make this a show that everyone in the family can enjoy" said Mary Lee Kennedy, director of Kennedy Dance Theatre. "Even our students as young as two years old love all the excitement."

The dancers have new sets and backdrops for their performances this year.

"We now have a growing tree, a fog machine, and a real wooden sleigh will turn the theater into a winter wonderland as the snow scene unveils," said Pam Urban, office manager for the Kennedy Theatre.

Kennedy said they chose the Bayou

Theater because it is centrally located and has a very nice stage to present the ballet. This is the company's fourth year to perform at UHCL.

"Most of our dancers are local students; the dancers start at age five with choreography that is playful, festive and comes to live on stage," Kennedy said.

"The Clear Lake campus is a great venue for these dancers and the stage provides a great place for this performance."

Along with the performance, attendees will also have a chance to do some Christmas shopping. Clara's Closet Christmas Market will be set up before and

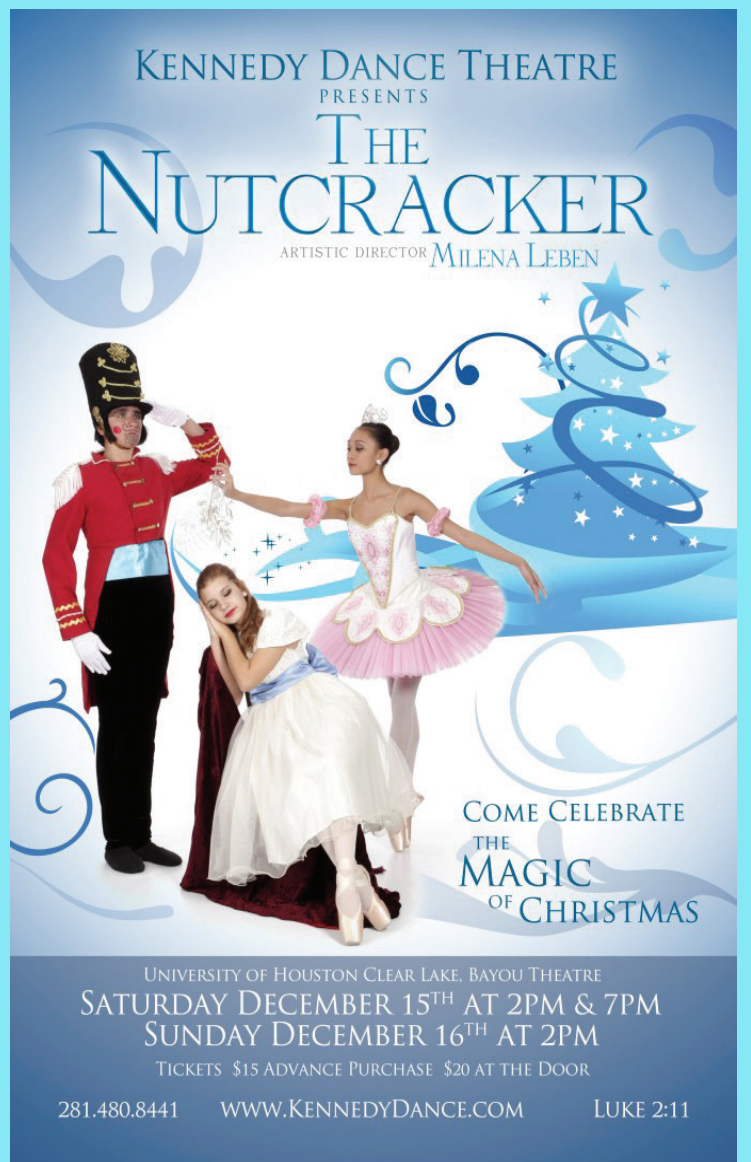
after the performances.

Choreographed by Milena Leben, The Kennedy Theatre's Nutcracker is sure to help bring the holiday season close to home and set the mood for the holiday spirit.

The show is open to the public. Student discounts are not available but advance tickets can be purchased for \$15 through the Kennedy Dance Theatre by contacting them at 281-480-8441 or tickets may be purchased at the door for \$20.

"THE CLEAR LAKE CAMPUS IS A GREAT VENUE FOR THESE DANCERS AND THE STAGE PROVIDES A GREAT PLACE FOR THIS PERFORMANCE."

— Mary Lee Kennedy
Director, Kennedy Dance Theatre



COURTESY: KENNEDY DANCE THEATRE

Cultural ARTS

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PRESENTS



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