

THE SIGNAL



Election Day
is Nov. 4

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Election expects record turnout

Jeffrey Meier
The Signal Staff

America’s next four years will be decided Nov. 4, when voters cast their ballots for a Republican John McCain – Sarah Palin ticket, or a Democratic Barack Obama – Joe Biden ticket.

Voters from across the nation will make history by either electing the first female vice president or the first African-American president.

This year’s election could very well be one of the most important elections in United States history, and each vote will be crucial as the candidate for presidency is selected.

There are many issues at stake in this

election: the economy, energy, war in Iraq, health care, social security, homeland security, border security and education.

Both parties have different outlooks on these topics, which contribute to the importance of voting and the direction our country takes in 2009.

“It seems that we are at a major philosophical fork in our road,” said Randy Weber, Texas state republican representative nominee. “Will the government be called upon to solve all our problems and take care of us, or will we expect ‘good ole American capitalism’ to find the best and most efficient way to build a better mousetrap?”

On the other hand, Democrats believe America needs a complete makeover and turnaround.

“Changes that have been made the

“It’s important for students to vote during their ‘developmental phase.’”

- Randy Weber
Texas State Republican Representative Nominee



Laurie Vaesa-Perez: The Signal

An American flag, the symbol of democracy and freedom, flies at full mast in Shoreacres.

last few years have not been for the betterment of the country,” said George Billups, volunteer for the Brazoria County Democratic Headquarters. “America is in turmoil and it is time for some change.”

One issue members from both parties can agree on is the importance of voting.

“Voting is my personal right and it is made possible for all citizens, male or

female,” Billups said.

Democracy is a form of government that gives the power to the people in its society and the right to have a voice in the government. Voting is one of the main ways to exercise that democracy, which is also the backbone of our country.

“Voting makes citizens aware and

Voting: continued on page 10



Karen Raney: The Signal

UHCL Child Psychology major Nallely Carmona celebrates with her elder, Arturo Carmona. Celebrating Our Elders is an essay contest for both African-American and Hispanic students. This year 48 students entered essays; 14 scholarships were awarded.

Culture defines Latino students

Jim Livesey
The Signal Staff

Every day different faces, young and old, fill our classrooms and halls where cultures mix into a big educational melting pot. UHCL prides itself on this. This semester, each issue of *The Signal* will focus on a different aspect of diversity on our campus. This second article in a series of five focuses on Latino students, the challenges they face and what each of their cultures brings to UHCL.

Latino students occupy an interesting position at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. They make up fewer than 20 percent of the student population, but they are the largest minority group on campus. They are very difficult to define as a group since Latinos come from many countries throughout Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Mexico and the

United States. Some speak Spanish as their primary language, others are bilingual, while many speak only English.

“Latinos are such a diverse group,” said Linda Contreras Bullock, assistant dean of student diversity. “Hispanic is a government word for anyone who speaks the Spanish language, including those from Spain. Some Latinos have chosen not to speak Spanish to fit into the American mold.”

There is, however, a quality that is found throughout Latino Americans.

“It is a pride in the Latino culture and even though some people have lost elements of the culture, they still have their pride,” Bullock said.

This pride can be seen as the defining characteristic of Latino students at UHCL. It is not the stereotypical Hollywood machismo style of pride so often attributed to Latinos, but a justifiable pride in

Latino students: continued on page 10

Is the sky falling? Understanding the U.S. economic crisis

“Optimism is the foundation of courage.”
Nicholas Murray Butler, author, educator, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize and adviser to seven presidents

Katherine Antes
The Signal Staff

What is the actual state of the nation’s economy? Have the U.S. financial markets hit rock bottom, or is the worst still yet to come? Will the bailout solve the nation’s financial woes, or is it simply a Band-Aid to stave off the inevitable? It seems that no one knows for sure. In fact, depending upon whom one asks, the answer lies largely upon one’s perception.

By now, most Americans are aware that the state of the U.S. economy is troubled. For many, there is speculation and anxiety as to how bad the situation really is. Unfortunately, there is no clear answer, except to say that many, if not most, Americans perceive that the U.S. is experiencing an economic crisis even though the economy is still growing and the unemployment rate remains low.

“Albeit the economy is not experiencing the same rapid rate of growth that it has seen over the past decade, the

U.S. economy is still strong,” said Charles M. Stagg, certified public accountant and financial planner.

“I would say that it is a bad situation, but it is not a depression-type situation,” said Jason E. Murasko, associate professor of economics at UHCL. “It is not a ‘sky is falling’ type situation. It’s bad.”

In addition to not fully understanding the extent to which the economy is or is not suffering, many individuals are left trying to figure out what has caused this state of panic. There are a number of factors involved that have contributed to the current situation, Stagg said.

“The market meltdown was triggered by events that occurred over a decade ago when government-sponsored enterprises such as Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp. (Freddie Mac) were allowed to purchase loans from banks that previously were considered undesirable loans. These ‘sub-prime’ loans made without proof of ability to repay and without homeowner equity in the form of a down payment became commonplace.

“As the housing value increase waned and foreclosures occurred at a higher

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Is America Ready to Vote?

College Students' Vote Will Make a Difference

With all the public discussion about the voters' values, the underlying question is, what is the role of government in defining our culture? Do both red states and blue states look to government to set or guide our cultural direction, whether it is about marriage vs. the gay agenda, free speech vs. pornography, life vs. abortion/cloning/euthanasia, property rights vs. community development, or sovereignty/patriotism vs. globalism/open borders?

The first true step in becoming involved in any state or national election is to register to vote. Unfortunately, it is too late to rectify that in time for this election if not already registered. The second step is to actually follow through and vote.

Imagine sitting in a country where no one has a voice at all. Each and every person is a robot that performs the will of the government. It is important to vote because in order for a democracy to continue to operate properly and fairly, it needs the participation of its citizens.

Statistics have continually shown that it is difficult to get college-age adults out to the polls to vote. Historically, the 18-25-year-old age group has been one of the most under-represented demographics in terms of voter turnout. Although 2004 saw one of the highest turnout rates in decades, less than half of the country's youngest voters reported to the polls. In contrast, nearly three-quarters of those aged 65 and over voted.

As millions of Americans gear up to vote in the 2008 presidential election, experts are predicting that the expected turnout for this race will be so huge that it could strain the voting system, triggering an electoral meltdown.

This election year will make history because it will either see a woman or an

African American in the White House. But will the 18-25 year olds merely observe history being made or will they become a part of history?

Many young people rationalize not voting with the mentality, "Why do I care about voting now? I will vote when it will actually affect me." What they do not realize is, it is and has been affecting them since the day they were born or became American citizens. It affects immediate concerns such as the relief efforts of Hurricane Ike to issues that will affect us later in life such as social security.

Another issue younger voters need to address is whether their opinions are their own or merely regurgitations of what they are taught at home or on campus. It is easy to understand how young students, on their own for the first time in their lives, could be influenced by the liberal or conservative tone of their parents or professors.

The more college students discuss politics and current events outside of class and away from home, the more likely they are to vote. Students should get educated on the candidates and on the issues pertaining to this election. College does not exist to tell the students what to think, but to teach them how to think.

The government is not going to help our age group if our age group does not vote to help itself. It is a cycle, so let's break it.



Nick Anderson: Houston Chronicle

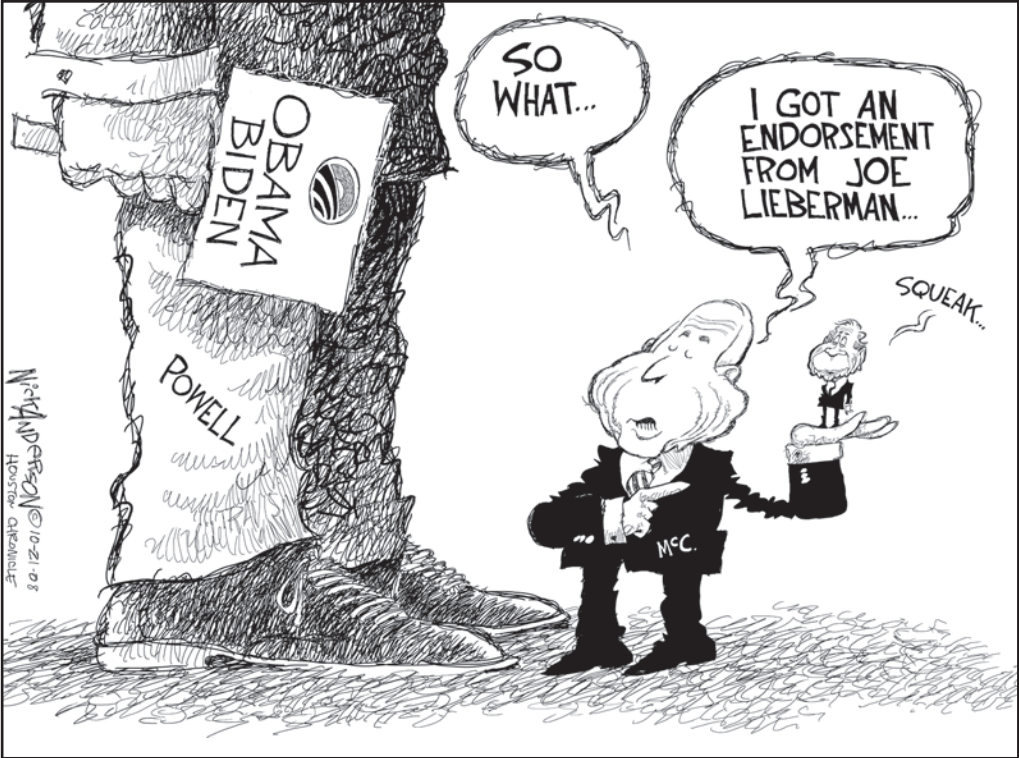


Laurie Vaesa-Perez, Jeffrey Meier: The Signal
Nick Anderson: Houston Chronicle

CrossSignals

The Signal staff members share their opinions regarding the election. Join the discussion by logging on to The Signal blog at:
www.myspace.com/signal_UHCL

Voters across the nation will make history by either electing the first female vice president or first African- American president. Regardless of the outcome, what do you think the long-term effects of the election will be?



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An inside look at NASA Johnson Space Center

In 1969 my dad drove the car down NASA Road 1 with me in the back and mom in the front seat. We drove past the entrance of NASA Johnson Space Center, only then it was called the “Manned Spacecraft Center.” They renamed the center after the late President Johnson in 1973. I told my parents, “I am going to work there someday.”

That was a defining moment in my life. If a child tells you he or she wants to achieve something you may feel is impossible, try not to say it is impossible. Dreams really do come true. I am living proof it can happen. Women were not allowed to work at JSC in those days. I went to work for NASA contractor KRUG on May 1, 1997, in building 37.

Today I work for another NASA contractor: United Space Alliance. I never imagined the responsibility I would have working for NASA. I am a quality assurance inspector for the Flight Crew Equipment division in Houston.

The International Space Station is one of the jobs I have participated in at KRUG and USA. As an electronic technician for KRUG, I built all the power cables for a treadmill being used on the space station today. I worked on the astronauts’ communication hardware such as handheld microphones. Everyone has seen them on the news. They are the blue boxes with a microphone, which the astronauts use to talk to the media.

FCE is a division that trains, feeds and equips the astronauts with all their life supporting suits and communication equipment. We also have a food lab that cooks and packages the food for each mission. There are two types of suits that FCE supports. The first is the Crew Escape Suit, the orange suit you see at launch and landing. We call it the pumpkin suit. This suit is meant to sustain life, if for some reason the shuttle loses cabin pressure.

The other suit is the Extravehicular Activity Suit. It is the white suit

astronauts wear outside the shuttle and space station. It is an all-sustaining life support suit. The suit contains water for drinking, oxygen, radio and a heating and cooling system. It is basically a house for them to live in while floating in space.

There are many ways of communicating with the space station or the shuttle. The lab I am working in now is a laptop computer lab called “Flight Computer Processing.” I am one of five inspectors in the lab. There are approximately 30 inspectors at FCE. We work in every lab and cover every piece of flight hardware that will be flown on a mission. Inspectors, quality engineers and others make sure all the hardware is flight-ready.

There are many interesting jobs at FCE and one of my favorites is the camera lab. Those guys have all the fun. They work with photography equipment, which is my passion. I love to take photographs, and who knows, maybe one day I will be a photographer for the astronauts. Remember when I said, “I would work at NASA someday.”

I am a lucky person. I meet such interesting people. The first astronaut I was allowed to assist was Katy Coleman. She is the astronaut who went on the mission to repair the Hubble Telescope in 1998. I have met celebrities, such as Tom Cruise, and we even have an ex-professional women’s basketball player, Barbara Bolden, as one of our engineers.

I have a job that allows me to meet astronauts almost every week. I am impressed every time I meet an astronaut because I know he or she will be on the shuttle headed for space. I feel like I am a part of space exploration. The 50th anniversary is only a small amount of time. The Earth needs space exploration, and my small part as a USA/FCE inspector just might help. We can all benefit from the work being done at NASA.



Andrea Drake
The Signal

Not-So-Haunted House

by Jessica Taylor



A haunting trick disappointment

Imagine arriving in the woods on a cold, wet night. Sounds of chain saws, axes banging on walls and bloodcurdling shrieks fill the air. Haunting images of bloodied, masked men flood your thoughts and before you know it, your heart is racing as fear pumps through your veins.

What is worse is that what awaits you on the other side of the blood-stained, battered door leading into these fictional woods has yet to be seen. The door opens and someone yells “fresh meat” as you begin your journey through what will surely be a terrifying adventure. The narrow halls of the haunted house are pitch black and creatures lurk around every corner. As the strobe lights begin, a maniacal clown jumps through a window to your left, while the chilling voice of a slaughterer breathes down your neck, asking if you are ready to die.

If only these horrifying events were as traumatizing as they sound.

A small group of friends and I went on a mission to become as terror-stricken as possible. The obvious solution was a haunted house. We visited five attractions at Phobia in an attempt to satisfy our pursuit of horror, but it turned out to be as scary as “It’s the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown.” Our disappointment was a result of groups of 10 or more people who were

allowed into a house at the same time. While I understand the time-saving reasons of allowing large groups of visitors to enter a house at the same time, only those at the front of the line enjoy the thrills. For those of us stuck behind the fortunate leaders of our group, the surprise was ruined. Once the person in front of you has wailed and collapsed on the floor, your expectations are shot since you now know something spooky is coming up.

Approximately 30 seconds after entering one house, I felt someone clinging to my shirt. My initial thought was that an “actor” was trying to spook me, which I must admit did send a few chills up my spine. I quickly realized that it was a group of teenagers who were trying to literally push me through the attraction. I removed them from my back and let them continue ahead of us, while we waited for their screams to grow faint.

After they were gone, my friends and I continued through the house. As I rounded a dark corner, the glowing eyes of a masked creature appeared inches from my face as a chilling voice asked me if I was ready to die. It was during that moment that I screamed the one and only time. The remainder of that house brought zombies, maniacal slaughterers and psychos wielding chain saws, which would have been scary if we had not caught up with the group ahead of us.

In the end, staying at home watching horror movies would have been scarier. Turning out the lights, closing the curtains and letting my imagination take over so that even the smallest sounds haunted me has proven to be more frightening than all five of the attractions combined.



Amy Parsons
The Signal



Non-Creepy Creatures Families celebrate with arts

Kimberly Olivarez
The Signal Staff

Halloween traditionally features witches, goblins and other creepy creatures. Haunted houses and scary tours of haunted mansions make Halloween frightening fun. That is not the case at the Children's Museum in Houston. They offer a Halloween environment that is not scary for children, a free family night and many fun activities.

Children run with excitement when greeting Super Mario and Hello Kitty at the entrance. Black and orange streamers with shiny pumpkins hang from the ceiling. Staff members dressed in non-scary costumes, such as Hello Kitty, Super Mario, Dr. Seuss and The Queen of Hearts, make children smile as they play at different exhibits.

"We came so my daughter could have fun with things that would not scare her," parent Elizabeth Carter said.

The museum has many exhibits and fun activities to enjoy. The traveling exhibit teaches children diversity by showing different countries of the world. For now they are featuring Mexico. The Mexican village has many colorful streamers celebrating Dia de los Muertos. They also had an altar with pictures of the deceased, candles and goodies. The altar even included bread for the dead. The market had products from Mexico that characterized the village. The museum is getting ready to have dragons and fairies become part of their showcase.

The museum is going to expand by March 2009. Days full of exciting fun are about to come for the children who come out and play at the museum.

Face painting is a popular activity. Children have fun coloring their faces with circles and wiggly lines in many colors. They express themselves with their faces full of color.

At the arts and crafts station children make spaceships with colorful streamers, paper cups and plates. The discovery guides help the children make and decorate their spaceships.

Throughout the museum children can trick-or-treat at the exhibits. The discovery guides hand out candy or a small toy at each exhibit.

"I love working at the museum," said Rene Gonzalez, discovery guide. "It keeps me youthful, gives me energy and the kids make my day."

What makes the museum especially fun for Halloween are the admission prices. Admission for adults is \$5, \$4 for seniors children under two and museum members are free. Every Thursday after 5 p.m. it is Free Family Night. The entire family can laugh and play at no cost. For more information, visit cmhouston.org or call 713-522-1138.



Kimberly Olivarez: The Signal

Even the statues outside the museum display the Halloween spirit.



Stacy Parent: The Signal

A moth enjoys a fiery sunflower in the Bloomin' Blossoms flower garden.

Dewberry Farm Fall into fun at Dewberry Farm

Stacy Parent
The Signal Staff

Dewberry Farm is tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the city in Brookshire, Texas. The farm offers a taste of fall in the country and a number of unique and family-oriented activities.

The farm's feature attraction is the corn maze. The visitor's guide highlights the maze's political theme. An illustration of the maze reveals the faces of presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain.

Mary Emerson, co-founder of Dewberry Farm, said the illustration depicts the actual paths in the maze.

Visitors must navigate dead-ends and unexpected turns in order to find their way out of the maze. An elevated look-out platform provides a bird's eye view of the surroundings and allows visitors to regain their bearings.

The farm also boasts a vast pumpkin patch, which features baby pumpkins on the vine and larger freestanding pumpkins. Children may discover tiny pumpkins nestled beneath

the vine's large leaves or try to pick up pumpkins half their size.

Out of all the attractions, this is the visitors' favorite.

"The pumpkin patch, that has to be the number one thing," Emerson said.

Sunflowers, zinnias and cosmos display brilliant fall colors in the Bloomin' Blossoms flower garden. Visitors can gather flowers and observe bees, butterflies and moths up close as they flutter among the petals.

No farm is complete without animals. Dewberry Farm is home to horses, cows, pigs, goats, chickens and turkeys. Visitors can pet many of the animals and root for their favorite pig during the scheduled pig races.

The goats have their own Golden Goat Bridge and Goatel 6. A unique conveyor belt contraption allows visitors to feed the goats by placing food in a cup and pedaling with their hands until it reaches the top of the structure.

The farm also provides an opportunity to strike back at Hurricane Ike. Visitors can take aim at Hurricanes Ike and Rita or a Western gunslinger and shoot corn cobs out of the

corn cannon.

The human hamster wheel requires a collaborative family effort. As the wheel rolls forward and gains momentum, many lose their footing and find themselves laughing and rolling at the bottom.

In addition, children can sing along with the chickens at the Cackle Palace, ride the barrel train and jump on bales of hay. There are countless things to do and see on the farm, and many families will find themselves returning for more.

"This was our first visit to Dewberry Farm, and what a wonderful surprise it ended up being," said Sean Goings, a visitor to the farm. "Our son Grayson put my wife and me through an endurance test as he enjoyed everything from stacking pumpkins to the playground, petting zoo and giant air pillows. I can assure you that we'll be visiting again soon."

Dewberry Farm's seventh season ends Nov. 30, 2008. For more information, visit www.dewberryfarm.com or call 1-866-908-FARM.

UPCOMING
EVENTS



Gulf Coast Film and Video Festival
Nov. 14 – 16
Tickets: Special Package price – \$30
Includes entry to the Friday mixer at Villa Capri and 2-day movie pass (\$40 value)
Call Hal Wixon at 281-333-5804.



Moody Gardens Galveston Benefit Concert featuring the Beach Boys
Nov. 1, 5-9 p.m.
Tickets: Lawn – \$20, Premium – \$45
Call 800-298-4200 or visit www.concert-sonthegulf.com.



House of Blues Houston presents Blues Traveler
Nov. 6, 7 p.m.
Tickets: Balcony Seating – \$50-65, General Admission SRO – \$25
Call 888-40-BLUES or visit www.hob.com



The Sounds I See: Photographs of Musicians at Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Through Jan. 19, 2009
Call 713-639-7300 or visit www.mfah.org.

HAUNTINGLY HISTORIC

Discover Houston’s Ghost Walk provides interesting, informative outings through the city

Amy Garcia
The Signal Staff

A walking tour of Houston provided entertaining tales of historical landmarks mixed in with gruesome tales of murder and despair.

Discover Houston’s Ghost Walk tour starts and ends at the Spaghetti Warehouse where the common tale of a former owner who is said to have died in the building is told. The tale, told at multiple Spaghetti Warehouses around Texas, speaks of a past owner and his wife who employees say still haunt the building.

Dot Honeycutt, tour guide for Discover Houston, tells the story of how the man went to the top floor and fell to his death down an empty elevator shaft when the restaurant was a pharmacy warehouse. His distraught wife is said to haunt the upstairs women’s restroom crying for her lost love. The restroom is next to what used to be the elevator shaft.

Honeycutt informs the guests that the management and staff are no longer allowed to be in the building alone after the manager encountered the apparition while closing up one night.

While the tour group did not encounter any ghosts in the establishment, the setting and mood upstairs with the lights off and the old pictures and trolley was enough to make tour guests’ hair stand on end.

“This is my first year doing ghost tours and I don’t guarantee that you’ll see any ghosts,” Honeycutt joked. “But it’s all in fun and I will have good stories to tell.”

The next stop, historic Buffalo Bayou, provided many entertaining stories of the early days when the bayou was a dock for sea vessels. Honeycutt, who has been giving historic tours of Houston for 10 years, delighted the group with the

story of a crew who disappeared off a ship after the ship was caught in the bayou. The ship was later boarded, only to discover that the crew was missing. They were never head from again. With the bayou’s rich history dating back to 1836, Honeycutt believes some spirits may have stuck around.

Sandra Lord, owner and founder of Discover Houston tours, has been researching Houston’s history for 10 years and believes that there are enough good ghost stories to merit a haunted tour of the city.

Pictures with orbs, a spherical ball or circle of energy, were present throughout the walking tour. An orb of energy is a type of spirit manifestation. When an orb is captured on film, it represents a spirit. Lord has reports of tour guests taking pictures of an extra set of legs at Founders Memorial Park.

Magnolia Brewery, dating back to before prohibition, had Kathy, the bar’s bartender, telling the story of how a resident spirit she calls William saved her life one night. Kathy explained that she was closing up one night around 4 a.m. While walking out, a chair moved out from one of the tables. Startled, she went around the back of the bar to leave. That is when she saw a man through the window. He was leaning against the wall with a knife, waiting to mug her. Had the chair not moved, she would have walked out straight through the middle of the bar without a view out of the window. Kathy also said William likes to haunt the men’s bathroom and tease with unsuspecting patrons.

Other stops on the Ghost Walk included: the old hanging tree off Capitol and Bagby; Alley Theatre, where a murder took place in 1982; Tranquility Park, which is dedicated to the astronauts killed in the Challenger and Columbia disasters; and La Carafe, said to be the oldest bar and oldest commercial building in Houston.

Honeycutt spiced up the tour between stops by giving information on historical landmarks along the way. While the Ghost Walk is sold out through the rest of the month, Discover Houston does offer rail tours and holiday walks of Houston. For more information, visit www.discoverhoustontours.com.



Amy Garcia: The Signal

Patrons listen as Magnolia Brewery bartender Kathy regales the story of how one of the bar’s spirits, whom she calls William, saved her life from a mugger one night. The brewery has been in Houston since before Prohibition.



Amy Garcia: The Signal

Dot Honeycutt, Discover Houston tour guide, has been entertaining and informing Houstonians about the history of local landmarks like the Buffalo Bayou for 10 years.



Amy Garcia: The Signal

Orbs frequently appear in pictures taken on the banks of Buffalo Bayou. Ghoststudy.com explains that “orbs are believed (by many) to be ghosts in the form of balls of light.”



Amy Garcia: The Signal

The railcar on the second floor of the Spaghetti Warehouse sits empty and dark – the perfect setting for tour guests to spot a former owner’s wife who is said to haunt the establishment.

NASA

Space Talk: 50 years of communicating in space



Kyrstin Hewitt: The Signal

STS-125 Pilot Gregory Johnson and Commander Scott Altman train in the Shuttle Mission Simulator for an upcoming mission in February 2009.



Kyrstin Hewitt: The Signal

A glimpse at the old Mission Control Center, kept in its original state.

Kyrstin Hewitt
The Signal Staff

Communication has always been a vital part of our everyday life. But imagine being one of the first astronauts up in space, thousands of miles above Earth. In space, communication is more than simply keeping in touch with friends and family; it is a means of survival.

"Back then we didn't have voice communication; we only had teletype," said Charles Lewis, a retired flight director for NASA. Lewis was a flight director for NASA from the early 1970s to the mid 1980s, where he experienced many of the first developments in space communications.

During the time of Mercury, communications teams were set up in various sites around the world such as Australia, Mexico and Texas. Each site provided astronauts with a small window of time – five to six minutes – to communicate with the site's communication team to relay information back to Mission Control Center.

"But then, when we started the Apollo program, we had remote communications, data and voice communications, through the remote sites from the control center... Communications has been the biggest change," Lewis said.

With the help of NASA engineers throughout the past 50 years, astronauts are able to stay up to date using the same technologies that are used in our everyday life of communicating to one another, almost making it seem as though they are merely a city away from their friends, family and colleagues.

On July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 became the first lunar landing mission. Everyone gathered around their television sets to watch as Neil

Armstrong and Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin stepped foot on the moon's surface.

"The bandwidths were very limited for transmitting pictures, but we did transmit color pictures," said Bernie Embrey, the closed circuit television subsystem manager at NASA Johnson Space Center. "We used Field Sequential Color System, which transmitted filtered black and white pictures, and it would put together on the ground to make color out of them. Now we've changed the transmission lengths so much that we have better bandwidths. We're now able to transmit high-definition TV."

Today, communication satellites are continuously in contact with space vehicles. While they may not be sporting their Blackberries or iPhones onboard, astronauts are able to communicate back to Earth in a number of ways.

"We now have basically been able to create a virtual Internet onboard the space station...letting them e-mail, video teleconference, IP phone, and transfer files [from their computers to the ones in the control center]," said Matt Lemke, the electronic design and development branch chief at JSC. "It's great for the astronauts. They can literally pick up the phone and call anyone in the world without having to go through mission control."

And it does not stop there. People are e-mailing in various questions to ask Greg Chamitoff, the current U.S. astronaut onboard the space station, such as, "Why does the space station have to be in a specific orientation in order to dock to shuttle or re-supply spacecrafts?" His video responses are sent back through JSC and posted on NASA's YouTube Web site, in a segment called "Space Intelligence." You can find these videos online at www.youtube.com/user/reelnasa.

Simulation of Flight: a glimpse into space preparation

Kyrstin Hewitt
The Signal Staff

With the seats tilted forward in launch position, the flight simulator lifts back at a perfect 90 degree angle. The mock shuttle shakes abruptly. Booming sounds of a launch in progress surround the walls and voices from mission control are heard through headsets.

"Copy that Houston; let's go for config four," says Megan McArthur, mission specialist for the STS-125 astronaut crew into her microphone.

Moments later, following orbit, the crew prepares for landing. The simulator points downward and landing gear is activated. The shuttle shudders for a quick second as it touches ground. A voice from mission control pierces the silence, "Houston to Atlantis, welcome to Spain."

"Thank you, Houston; it feels great to be back," responds Scott Altman, commander for the STS-125 astronaut crew.

This process is repeated at least

four to five times a day with crews preparing for upcoming missions. In between each trial, the crew takes a break to debrief with members of the Mission Control Center and Shuttle Mission Simulator team to discuss what went smoothly along with any technical anomalies needing to be corrected and how to better communicate with each other.

"They would be in the spacecraft simulator and we were in the control center and it worked just like a real mission," said Charles Lewis, a retired flight director. "You really felt like you were in the actual mission environment."

The flight simulator, also known as the Shuttle Mission Simulator, is an apparatus used to mock the feel of an actual mission. Mission Control and the Shuttle Mission Simulator team will often test out the crew's response to an emergency situation, preparing for the unexpected.

Training in the flight simulator is simply one aspect of the overall training process astronaut crews go

through to practice for future missions.

"Depending on the mission, they generally will spend about a year training," said Tom Hanson, Shuttle Mission Simulator team lead.

The crew undergoes instruction on how to work in an environment without gravity through underwater training in the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory, which contains a 100-foot mock-up portion of the International Space Station.

"This is definitely one job you just can't afford to have any mistakes," said Hanson. "Things need to run perfectly or you put others at risk."

The STS-125 crew consists of seven members: Gregory Johnson, pilot; Scott Altman, commander; Michael Massimino, Michael Good, Megan McArthur, John M. Grunsfeld and Andrew J. Feustel, all mission specialists. The members are currently preparing for their shuttle mission to make repairs to the Hubble Space Telescope. They expect to launch in February 2009.

For more information on the



Tom Hanson, Shuttle Mission Simulator team leader, demonstrates how to operate the waste collection system.

flight simulator at NASA Johnson Space Center, visit academy.grc.nasa.gov/2007/tour-summaries/shuttle-mission-simulator/.

UHCL and NASA, partnered for more than 43 years

Amy Carr
The Signal Staff

The University of Houston-Clear Lake and NASA Johnson Space Center united in 1965 to provide degrees in higher education closer to JSC.

“The university was created in response to a request by then director of the NASA Johnson Space Center, Robert Gilruth, to offer educational opportunities for the new and exciting ‘field’ of space exploration,” said William Staples, UHCL president.

Originally the university started off with just 50 acres under the name Clear Lake Graduate Center. In 1968, the Friendswood Development Corporation donated 487 acres, allowing the university to expand and recruit more students. In 1973, classes started for the graduate center

and there was one building on campus, now called the Arbor Building. In 1974, the second part

of the campus opened for undergraduate and graduate-level students.

“NASA Johnson Space Center and University of Houston-Clear Lake have a long-standing relationship,” Staples said. “The university continues to look at ways we can benefit our neighboring space-related industry.”

Throughout the years, several space-related programs and courses have been established at the university. These programs are meant to give students the knowledge of what it takes to work in the aerospace field.

“It is also true that many of the university’s academic programs are designed to meet the needs of NASA and aerospace contractors,” Staples said. “Examples of these programs include computer engineering, software engineering, systems engineering, engineering management, physics and biotechnology.”

Staples pointed out that by having this relationship with JSC, the university is now able to provide courses such as space physics, mathematical modeling and computing systems.

“It also led us to introduce the first courses in the design of micro-processor-based applications in Texas,” Staples said. “Other key partnerships with NASA Johnson Space Center included the creation of the High Technologies

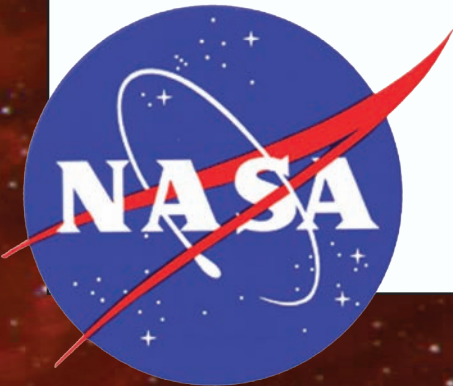
Laboratory at University of Houston-Clear Lake and the Research Institute for Computing and Information Systems.”

UHCL maintains its long-standing relationship with JSC. The university received the JSC History Collection in fall 2001 and spring 2002. This collection of documents has around 1.5 million recordings on each manned spaceflight program. It is displayed for the public at the UHCL Archives. There are also documents and books provided in the Alfred R. Neumann Library.

“The UHCL Archives have enjoyed a very productive partnership since 2001, in which we house and provide access to the historical records of NASA Johnson Space Center,” said Shelly Kelly, library archivist. “We are able to help not only NASA contractors and civil servants planning for our return to the moon, but also Ph.D. scholars, authors, Smithsonian curators, aerospace historians, television producers and aerospace hobbyists.”

UHCL and JSC have grown together throughout the years and both institutions have continued contributing to the space program.

“We’re proud to have such a strong history with NASA and look forward to being part of its future,” Staples said.



Background photo provided by www.nasa.gov

NASA continues to explore, discover, and inspire after 50 years

Jenna Simsen
The Signal Staff

October marks the 50th anniversary of NASA’s existence as a part of American history. For half a century, NASA has continued its efforts to explore what is beyond our earth, discovering more and more everyday.

For more than 50 years and 150 missions, NASA has successfully landed 12 people on the moon. Today, it remains the only agency to have launched missions outside of our solar system. NASA was the first to view another planet, Venus, from space and was the first to land an unmanned space vehicle on Mars. From Neil Armstrong’s first steps on the moon, to the launch of Skylab, America’s first space station in orbit, generations have been a part of the phenomenon that is space travel.

“Exploration is motivating to human beings,” said Gregg Buckingham, chief of education programs and university research division at NASA Kennedy Space Center. “We all want to leave a legacy, so contributing to something bigger than ourselves is important.”



Jenna Simsen: The Signal

Above: Inside the Multifunction Electronic Display Subsystem, MEDS; Right: Inside of the International Space Station Mission Control room.



Every year the Smithsonian Institute honors three entities. This year, NASA was honored. An exhibition was set up at the Smithsonian’s Annual Folk Life Festival at the Mall in Washington D.C. The entire agency was invited to attend and speak to the public about what it is like to work for NASA, and highlight some of the agency’s key programs and projects.

“Make no mistake – the excellence that NASA has accomplished over the years is a direct result of the quality of the people doing the work,” said Napoleon Carroll, executive director of the spaceport management office at Cape Canaveral.

One of NASA’s key programs, the Constellation Program, consists of 34 missions scheduled over the next 13 years that will one day enable NASA to fully operate outside Earth’s environment.

“You catch yourself thinking about the history we are making,” said Trey Brouwer, Gemini systems flight controller at NASA Johnson Space Center. “We do what we do here to make things better here on Earth and for all mankind.”

NASA’s future is bright, with hopes to land a man on Mars by 2037 and get more detailed surveys of Saturn, Mars and the sun. The agency has also planned missions to Jupiter, which are scheduled to launch in 2011, and plans to build a permanent base on the moon in 2020 for future astronauts.

“NASA’s successes have changed the technology, engineering, science and even cultural elements of the entire world,” said Patrick Simpkins, director of NASA engineering at KSC. “Mankind’s spirit of exploration is made through efforts like NASA’s first 50 years. I think it’s important that nations and governments continue that spirit.”



Jenna Simsen: The Signal

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CALENDAR

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UHCL Spirit Week
Call 281-283-2560 for information.

October 28
SGA Day, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.,
Bayou Atrium II

Workshop: Resumes,
3-4 p.m., SSCB 3.308
Call 281-283-2590 for information.

Workshop: Dress for Success,
5:30-6:30 p.m., Garden Room

October 29
Workshop: Resumes,
10-11 a.m., Bayou 2104
Call 281-283-2590 for information.

LGBT Support Group,
4-5 p.m., Location TBA

Environmental Career Night,
5-7:30 p.m., SSCB 3.109
Registration recommended.
Call 281-283-2590 for information.

October 30
AMA Professional Networking
Reception, 4:30-7 p.m.,
Bayou Garden Room
Call 281-283-2606 for information.

November 3 – 7
Know Your Numbers Week &
Assessment Week, Fitness Zone
Call 281-283-2410 for information.

November 3
Workshop: Chicago
Documentation Style,
3-4 p.m., Writing Center

FOR MORE UPCOMING
EVENTS ON CAMPUS,
VISIT THE STUDENTS TAB AT
WWW.UHCL.EDU

You CAN be a hero: get in the spirit by donating canned food



UHCL Student Life: Courtesy

UHCL Student Government Association Executive Council members get into the spirit of giving. Pictured from left to right: Connie Lafayette, vice-president, administration; Patrick Cardenas, president; Andrew Reitberger, assistant director of student life and SGA; Jessica Williams, vice-president, outreach and communication; and Steven Steiner, vice-president, committee coordinator.

SGA is sponsoring a canned food drive that kicks off during Spirit Week on SGA Day, Oct. 28. The drive will last through Nov. 18. Food collected will go to St. Bernadette Catholic Church Food Pantry and Interfaith Caring Ministries, both local food banks. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to drop off canned food at the Student Life Office, SSCB 1.100. For more information about Spirit Week or the canned food drive, call 281-283-2560 or visit www.uhcl.edu/studentlife.

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Monday, Nov. 3	4-5 p.m.
Tuesday, Nov. 4	4-5 p.m.
Monday, Nov. 10	4-5 p.m.
Tuesday, Nov. 11	4-5 p.m.

ALL sessions will be held in **B1306**

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Voting: continued from page 1

focused on issues, candidates and solutions,” Weber said. “It helps form the policies and direction of our community.”

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that only 49 percent of registered voters ages 18-24 voted in the 2004 election. This year’s election could see an increase in young adult voters due to its historic nature and the efforts of nonpartisan campaigns such as “18 in ’08” and celebrity endorsements.

“It’s important for students to vote during their ‘developmental phase,’ at least the younger ones,” Weber said.

Not sure where to vote due to Hurricane Ike? Check out these sources for information about election polls:

- 1-800-252-VOTE (8683) - Texas Secretary of State
- www.sos.state.tx.us - Texas Secretary of State
- www.votexas.org - click “information for displaced voters” link on the homepage

Dress Code – you are not allowed to campaign within 100 feet of a polling location. The following are not allowed: Buttons, shirts, hats, or other campaign gear. Visit www.txdemocrats.org or www.texasgop.org under voting information for dress code and rules.

“It is my belief that if they develop the habit of getting and staying informed, then they will indeed endeavor to stay involved and help shape the process.”

Leaders and issues on a national level are not the only ones at stake. City and state leaders will also be decided this upcoming election. Weber said local issues at stake are “illegal immigration, runaway property taxes and budget, mobility issues such as transportation and roads, education and funding.”

If you are a first-time voter and do not have your voter’s registration card, you must bring one of the following: Texas driver’s license, Texas identification card issued by the Department of Safety, birth certificate, U.S. citizenship papers, U.S. passport, mail sent by a government agency, bank statement or identification deemed acceptable by the Secretary of State’s office.

“Will we be responsible for our productivity, decisions and future, or will the government be responsible for our ‘pursuit of life, liberty and happiness?’” Weber asked. “Remember, whatever the government can provide, it can also take away.”

For more in-depth information on the issues this election and where each side stands, visit www.johnmccain.com and www.obama.com. Visit www.txdemocrats.org and www.texasgop.com for information on candidates running for state and city office.



www.lumaxart.com: Courtesy

Latino students: continued from page 1

their heritage, their achievements, their active role in the community and most importantly, their parents for helping them get to this point in their personal and academic careers.

Although education is considered important in Latino culture, the immediate needs of the family often takes precedence. Cutting education can be an easy short-term solution since it saves money immediately and frees up an individual to enter the work force. This means that many of UHCL’s Latino students are the first generation in their families to attend college.

“In the past education has not always been a priority; in the Latino culture family comes first,” said Marcus Alvarez, Hispanics Advancing Culture and Education president.

Ironically, at a time when educational opportunities and an openness to diversity has never been greater, some Latinos are finding the criticism they face due to their success lies not from without, but from within. As they speak English more than Spanish and as they mainstream into American society, some of their family and friends feel that they are choosing to distance themselves from Latino culture.

This is a growing concern for Alvarez, who is proud of his family and his culture. Alvarez was born in West Texas and does not speak Spanish.

“We are going to have to open ourselves up to other cultures and languages.”

- Linda Contreras Bullock
assistant dean of student diversity

“There is a generational issue between Hispanics,” Alvarez said. “I plan on studying law and immigration issues; I will need to learn Spanish.”

Another issue Latinos face is that education costs time and money. Latino students often underutilize the financial resources available. Sometimes this is due to the complicated paperwork involved, some is due to language issues, but often it is due to a cultural bias of paying for things in cash.

“Money is an issue – not being willing to ask for financial aid,” Alvarez said.

Bullock is working hard to ensure that this becomes less of a problem in the future.

“It is my personal mission to make education as attainable to Latinos as it is to everyone else,” Bullock said.

While some Latinos are finding it difficult to retain their culture, heritage and language, others are working hard to find a balance in being Latino and American.

“Why can’t we propose living a pluralistic life with both cultures?” Bullock said, “We are going to have to open ourselves up to other cultures and languages. I don’t want to see us losing our culture.”

Economy: continued from page 1

rate, many found themselves owing more than their home was worth and decided to turn their negative equity back over to the mortgage companies, thereby exacerbating the problem and accelerating the devaluation of mortgages,” Stagg said.

In addition to foreclosures, Stagg explained that media coverage and individuals’ resulting perceptions of the “crisis” – often panic – definitely affect the U.S. economy, as was recently observed on Wall Street. When individuals change their spending and investment habits due to their concerns, it perpetuates the situation.

“The perception that the future may hold more difficult economic times probably becomes a reality primarily because of perception,” Stagg said.

Murasco said the real estate market failure has had a domino effect on U.S. financial markets, causing major financial firms with real estate related securities and assets to be hard hit, leaving them on the verge of bankruptcy. To avoid that, some were purchased by other institutions or are in the process of receiving government loans.

This is where the economic bailout

enters into the equation. In a nutshell, the U.S. government has created and implemented a plan designed to prevent large investment banks with large portfolios comprised of collateralized mortgage obligations and collateralized debt obligations of diminishing value and liquidity to “bail.”

This means those investment banks will be able to sell their assets to the U.S. government in exchange for cash assets so they can continue to operate and handle day-to-day operations. The government becomes the new owner of the troubled assets and the hope then is that someday the value of those obligations will stabilize and the government will receive most, if not all, of its investment. If all goes as planned, U.S. taxpayers will not have to absorb the full cost of the bailout, although Murasko says “it is going to cost something.”

Whether or not the solution will actually be successful in re-establishing trust among institutions who have frozen credit and lending is yet to be seen, but the “alternative of leaving businesses and consumers without access to financing

is totally unacceptable,” said Henry M. Paulson, Jr., secretary of the treasury, in a statement released Oct. 14.

The economic bailout consists of hundreds of pages outlining details of an economic rescue proposal. The most notable highlights of the bailout are the \$700 billion in capital being offered, along with restrictions on executive compensation for participating institutions, judicial review over actions taken by the Treasury Secretary regarding management of the program, and foreclosure avoidance counseling programs designed to help reduce the number of foreclosures. Also, the limits of deposit insurance covered by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. have been adjusted to \$250,000 for individuals.

What this means for the average American is that access to credit and lending with reasonable rates will still be available, allowing individuals to continue to buy and sell property. This stabilization of the real estate market is an important step toward regrouping the U.S. economy.

The mission of the bailout, explained Paulson, is for the government to do what is necessary to restore the flow of funds

on which the economy depends in order to avoid the failure of any systematically important institution.

“The hope is that the bailout will be a long-term fix,” Murasko said. “It’s not intended to be a temporary solution.”

In terms of preparing for the future, Stagg recommends that “young people should have a budget where they spend less than they make, and they should always pay all their bills on time. Retirees should be conservative with their investments, being sure to preserve capital; they should avoid risk and accept reasonable rates of return.”

In reference to the lingering question about whether or not the sky is really falling, Stagg suggested that it might be best to say, “If enough people believe that the sky is falling, then it may. But if Americans continue to believe in our economy - in the true spirit of American optimism - and continue to have faith in the strength of our country’s economy, it won’t fall. The latter is what will surely occur.”

Raising kids to be healthy adults starts at home

Ashley Helms
The Signal Staff

Sharon Hall, associate professor of psychology, recently published a book titled: "Raising Kids in the 21st Century: The Science of Psychological Health for Children."

The book discusses important issues for childhood development. Hall gives an easy-to-read guide on the skills children need to become healthy adults, as well as steps parents should take to help themselves become better role models.

"Modeling the behaviors we wish to see in our children is paramount to good parenting," Hall said.

She believes that "reasoning, warmth, congruence of our words with our deeds, and commitment to social activism start with us whether we are parents, teachers or other caring adults," and feels that this is the most important tip in the book.

Other tips in her book entail how to handle disaster situations such as a hurricane.

"Turn off the TV," Hall said. "After a disaster, reruns can be very hard on children."

Hall explained that reruns often cause the event to seem more traumatic because the child is watching it over and over.

Another practice Hall encourages is for children to have at least one positive environment outside of the home, such as a church or school. A healthy environment is somewhere a child can feel safe and receive positive reinforcement; it can even be just one classroom, it does not have to be the entire school.

A book signing for Hall was held by the Women's Studies Student Association Oct. 16, during which Hall explained that in times of need it is important to stay connected with the child and know how he or she coping.

At the book signing, refreshments were served along

with a program honoring those students who have received a Women's Studies Certificate for this year, those who are currently working toward a certificate, and those who are current Women's Studies majors.

Recipients of the Marilyn Mieszkuc Student Scholarship and the Nanette Bruckner Student Scholarship were announced, and congratulations were given to Shreerkha Subramanian, the first Marilyn Mieszkuc Professor of Women's Studies.

The basis of Hall's book came from personal experiences she faced while raising her own son.

"People who don't know the strong utility of psychological science are really at a disadvantage when raising their children," Hall said. "This book is a good guide and I tell the readers where these ideas came from. We have good research that backs up my arguments."

Many of Hall's former students attended the signing and had nothing but praise for her.

"Everything that comes out of her mouth is just wonderful," said former student Erica Trevino. "I'm actually buying a book for myself and one to send to a friend. Dr. Hall is just amazing. She's what I want to be when I grow up- she's a good mother, mentor, and professor. She's just a well-rounded woman."

Before teaching full-time at UHCL, Hall worked with children as a supervisor in a mental health clinic but realized "adjunct



Ashley Helms: The Signal

Sharon Hall, associate professor of psychology, autographs copies of her book, "Raising Kids in the 21st Century: The Science of Psychological Health for Children," at a book signing sponsored by the Women's Studies Student Association held on campus Oct. 16.

teaching at UHCL was the most enjoyable part of [her] week." She also wanted to have more time to do research so she applied for a full-time position after one year as an adjunct. She has found it to be "a great fit."

Hall feels the most important issue in the book that people need to consider is "social activism begins at home."

"Show your children the importance of voting, learning

about other cultures, and acting in ways to promote social justice," Hall said. "This is how we all build a better world, what the 21st century demands of us."


The price of the book ranges from \$25 to \$75, depending on a paperback copy or a hardback copy, and can be purchased at most bookstores as well as on the Internet.



"Modeling the behaviors we wish to see in our children is paramount to good parenting."


- Sharon Hall
Professor of Psychology

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For more information contact the SGA Executive Council:

Patrick Cardenas - President
Steve Steiner - VP Committee Coordinator
Jessica Williams - VP outreach & Communications
Connie Lafayette - VP Administration
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Houston Rockets Kickoff Preseason



Oraleyda Cantu:The Signal
Yao Ming, #11 center for the Rockets, scores a free throw during the Rockets game against the Kings, their sixth preseason game of 2008-2009.



Oraleyda Cantu:The Signal
Luis Scola, #4 forward and center for the Rockets, prepares to throw his free throw on their sixth preseason game against the Kings.

Rockets prepare for Blastoff

Oraleyda Cantu
The Signal Staff

Five. Four. Three. Two. One. Ready for take off! The Rockets prepared their season blastoff during their first preseason game Oct. 7.

The Houston Rockets were up to four wins with two losses at the beginning of their preseason for the 2008-2009 NBA schedule. Their first preseason game kicked off with a 96-93 winning score against the Memphis Grizzlies Oct. 7 at the Toyota Center. Carl Landry, Rockets’ forward, came in as score leader that night with a total of 18 points during their victory against the Grizzlies.

The Rockets began the preseason on the right foot with two wins against Memphis and San Antonio, but they experienced their first loss Oct. 11, in Manchester, Ind., when they played the Boston Celtics with a close loss of 89-90.

“Although we did not win during the game, it felt like we were in a season game,” said Bob Schranz, media services manager for the Rockets. “And the fact that it was played on neutral grounds made it even more exciting.”

With a split-hair game against the Celtics, the Rockets faced their second loss of the preseason in Tulsa, Okla., with a loss of 104-110 to the Oklahoma City Thunder. That did not stop them from coming back up to speed and thrashing the Grizzlies in yet another win of 101-97.

The Rockets came home to play against the Sacramento Kings Oct. 17, for a 95-90 win. The Rockets will face the Kings one

last time before the start of the season.

“During preseason you really come to see how players develop,” Schranz said. “You see players like Aaron Brooks who play a vital role to the team and then players like Ron Artest who is as advertised.”

John Paul, a 19-year-old fan from Pasadena, agrees with Schranz in Artest’s asset to the Rockets.

Schranz keeps records of the team’s wins and losses throughout the year with a close view of the team as a whole as well as individual accomplishments. As media services manager, his main objective is to provide the public with insightful information of the team and their victories. Part of his duty includes sending out post game notes to the media to provide them with accurate information that will allow them to print and broadcast to the fans.

“People glamorize what we do,” Schranz said.

“In reality, the intent is to show the audience a positive perspective that will promote the Houston Rockets from a business stand point.”

Schranz is on his fourth season working for the Rockets. With knowledge of the past three seasons, he is excited to see what this year will hold for them.

A Tracy McGrady fan, Paul always looks forward to the All-Star Game for the slam dunk contest.

“I am hoping anyone from the Rockets wins the contest, but I would really want T-Mac to win,” Paul said.

He is anxious for a great season and hopes to see that the Rockets go to the playoffs this year.

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