

THE SIGNAL

Volume XXXVII, Number 7

www.uhcl.edu/thesignal

May 4, 2009



International Festival – Pg 6



Visual Arts Scholastic Event – Pg 6



Spring Crawfish Festival – Pg 12

Health Emergency - Swine Flu

UHCL Prepares for Potential Pandemic

Matt Griesmyer
The Signal Staff



Courtesy: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

H1N1 influenza, commonly known as swine flu, is quickly becoming a very prevalent issue of conversation.

As of press time for the publication of this article, there were 109 laboratory confirmed cases of the flu infection in the United States, with the only confirmed death from the virus happening in Texas; so far none have been reported on or near the University Houston-Clear Lake campus. The number of reported cases, however, are growing quickly.

Susan Prihoda, director of health and disability services at UHCL, as well as a family nurse practitioner, explained what would happen if even one person became infected on campus.

"If there is a confirmed case of swine flu, the Texas Department of Health will close the campus down," Prihoda said.

The World Health Organization has an alertness classification system in place for similar situations. Arranged from phase one through six involving the development and spread of a virus, and two phases following those involving the post-peak and post-pandemic alertness levels. The WHO, the directing authority for health within the United Nations, has raised the alertness level of the swine flu outbreak from phase four to phase five, meaning the pandemic is imminent.

Deb Blakely, assistant professor of communication at UHCL as well as a published author of "Mass Mediated Disease," a book analyzing three major pandemics and how the media covered them, explains what would classify the current situation as a pandemic, and consequently a WHO phase six alert.

"Rates of infection and the spread of infection," Blakely said. "With a pandemic, it typically means that many countries are involved. You have to have epidemics within several countries to be classified as a pandemic."

Students are being advised to maintain preventative measures to ensure the health of the area.

Prihoda said that the methods people need to use to prevent getting sick are all about prevention of infection.

"We already know the virus is here," Prihoda said. "Start with essential handwashing technique, use antibacterial hand gel if you cannot wash your hands often, and stay away from sick people."

Should a student feel ill and have flu-like symp-

toms, students are advised to stay away from campus and visit a doctor. The office of campus health and disability services at UHCL is prepared to test, in certain situations, for swine flu.

The symptoms of swine flu are no different than any other influenza strain. Running a fever, body aches, sore throat, congestion and runny nose are common symptoms, with the key characteristic being the fever. The incubation period for swine flu is 24 to 48 hours, with the illness lasting an average of five days.

UHCL is taking measures to prepare the university in case of confirmed infection. The university has put into place a risk management team to analyze all potential problems and situations involving swine flu, arranging university-level responses for each. Anthony Jenkins, dean of students at UHCL is on the risk management team. "We are looking at contingency plans," Jenkins said. "We are trying to think through every scenario possible and put in place something that will help us be proactive and reactive to that situation."

Situations that are still under analysis include finals, summer classes and commencement. If there is any update in the information regarding classes being held, students will be notified by email. Also, students can check the UHCL home Web page for updates.

A common idea shared by Jenkins, Prihoda and Blakely is to stay calm, but stay informed and aware.

Throughout these times it can be easy to become too inundated with hype produced by other sources that the facts can become muddled.

The most reliable sources for information involving the swine flu are the Web sites of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention the World Health Organization at www.cdc.gov and www.who.int, respectively.

Preparations for the potential swine flu pandemic are similar to hurricane procedures. Collect enough water and food for two weeks and keep vehicles topped off with gasoline. Also, keep cash money on hand in preparation of bank closures. Should the situation occur in which certain city facilities become shut down, it is important to be prepared.

GUNS ON CAMPUS

Mark Guillory
The Signal Staff

At Virginia Tech, April 16, 2007, a gunman went on a killing spree leaving 32 students and faculty members dead. The gunman, Seung-Hui Cho, also a student at Virginia Tech, killed himself afterward.

Less than a year later, Steven Kazmierczak opened fire on a geology class at Northern Illinois University killing five students. Kazmierczak, like Cho, was a student at the university where he gunned down his fellow students; he also committed suicide after his tirade.

These two tragedies sent shock waves throughout the country and people began to question what could be done to keep college campuses safe.

In the wake of the shooting, a particular bill has picked up steam in Texas House Bill 1893. The bill will allow a concealed handgun license holder to "carry a concealed handgun on or about the license holder's person while the license holder is on the campus of an institution of higher education or private or independent institution of higher education in this state."

An institution of higher education or private or independent institution of higher education in this state may adopt any rule, regulation, or other provision prohibiting license holders from carrying handguns on the campus of the institution.

The bill, sponsored by State Representative Joe Driver (R), received five ayes and three nays in a vote held by the Public Safety Committee. The bill will be scheduled to go before the whole house next.

Driver feels that House Bill 1893 can make school campuses safer without added danger.

"Gun-free zones' merely serve to disarm honest victims," Driver said. "Criminals who are intent on committing violent acts will ignore any campus policy restricting firearms or any state law banning them from university grounds. This bill levels the playing field for those who have demonstrated that they are law-abiding, responsible citizens. Allowing concealed handguns to be carried almost everywhere else in the state of Texas has not resulted in an increase in violent crime -- in fact, studies have shown the opposite. That will not change if we simply remove a geographical boundary that is currently off-limits to Texas concealed handgun licenses."

The state representative also feels that armed students who are CHL carriers would be a good defense against armed attackers such as Cho and Kazmierczak.

"I believe that a lawfully owned firearm in the hands of any law-abiding citizen is both a strong deterrent and often the only defense against a violent

Guns: continued on page 10

Teaching Evolution

Lucia Y. Rodriguez
The Signal Staff

The unabridged evolution theory and the concept of intelligent design will be incorporated in Texas public schools curriculums beginning in 2010.

The Texas Board of Education voted March 27 by a 13-to-2 margin to revise its science curriculum, which was last approved in 1998. The existing curriculum, states that students must be able to analyze the "strengths and weaknesses" of scientific theories such as evolution. The proposed new guidelines removes the "strengths and weaknesses" language, which has been in place since 1988, and state, "scientific theories are well-established and highly reliable explanations, but may be subject

to change as new areas of science and new technologies are developed." The measures adopted by the board may cause debate on key aspects of evolutionary theory such as natural selection and common ancestry.

"In CCISD we focus on strengths, weakness, and changes that have resulted from our improved technology, of all theories, not just evolution," said Terry Berry, secondary science coordinator for Clear Creek Independent School District.

The Theories

"We present the student to evolution as a biological concept," said Marvin Stewart with Hardin Independent School District.

Charles Darwin formulated the two theories: creationism,

Evolution: continued on page 10

Students Debate Guns on Campus

Tine Di Vora
The Signal Staff

Texas legislation may soon pass a bill that would allow licensed, concealed handgun carriers to bring their guns onto college and university campuses.

Some people may see this as a mistake that would allow guns to overrun campus grounds, that just about everyone would be ‘trigger happy.’ That is simply not true. Currently, the state allows students to carry a concealed weapon in their vehicle, but are prohibited from carrying it onto school grounds. If passed, the new bill would change the state law to allow licensed holders to carry concealed weapons from their vehicle onto campus.

Students who are licensed already carry their concealed handguns to the grocery store, movies, parks and other public places that have no restrictions on concealed weapons. This piece of legislation is coming about in light of the shootings at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University. In both cases, armed men walked into a classroom of unsuspecting, unarmed students and began shooting at will. More than 30 students/faculty were killed at Virginia Tech and six were killed at NIU. This bill is written to prevent similar situations from happening at Texas colleges and universities by allowing students the right to bring their handguns to class.

Many worry that if this bill passes all students will be carrying handguns to class, and this is not true. Texas has strict regulations on who can and cannot carry concealed weapons. First, before a person can apply, they have to be 21 years old. That means that most freshmen, sophomore and junior level students cannot apply. Teachers, staff and senior level students would be able to apply for the license. Then the individual must pass a complete background check, which means no criminal record, and no history of mental illness. A person who has defaulted on student or government loans is also ineligible to apply.

If the person passes all the requirements to apply, then they have to attend a class in which both a written and shooting test must be passed, be finger printed, and pay a fee. The normal wait time is 60-180 days depending on if there are any problems but with an increase in the number of people applying for a license it could be even longer.

There are some who will argue that these requirements are not enough, and they may be right. But look at the students and staff that you see on campus everyday. They are here because they want to learn and better their chances in the real world. They have the dedication to educate themselves.

The same applies to licensed concealed handgun owners. They are aware of what is right and wrong, they know gun safety for themselves and others around them and have an understanding of what would happen if they become negligent in their responsibilities as licensed holders. They also understand that if an armed man was to walk into class and start picking off students one-by-one, they have the chance not only to save themselves but their classmates.

On April 14, at the University of Houston, a male student was walking to his car when he was kidnapped, forced to drive to multiple ATMs to make withdrawals and then was released. What if he had a gun? Would the same thing have happened?

There are those who will never own a gun, those who believe this law would bring more violence on campus and those who think that anyone who applies will automatically get a license to carry a concealed handgun. The truth is not everyone will apply and not everyone will be approved.

Imagine you are sitting in your classroom listening to a lecture taking notes and then in walks what appears to be a student. He casually closes the door behind him and the pulls out a gun. He blocks the only exit, and there is no safe place to hide. What option do you want to have – to lie defenselessly on the ground and hope you are not shot or would you want to fight back and not become another school shooting statistic.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

We would like to address The Signal and the student body at large concerning the issue of concealed handguns on campus. This important piece of Texas legislation is currently pending before the public safety committee in the House. The Senate also has the bill appropriated in committee. While a majority of state representatives have expressed an opinion in favor of this bill, it has not yet come to a vote on the floor of either body.

This bill has been discussed by both the University of Houston–Clear Lake Student Government Association and the Texas Student Association. The SGA general council is currently divided on this issue with no clear majority of opinion. The TSA has also tabled issuing an opinion on this matter. It is the feeling of the TSA that all institutions of higher education discuss this bill independently as there are diverse needs throughout the state.

Students wishing to contact their state and local representatives to express their opinions regarding this, or any other matter, can locate their current state representatives contact information on the TSA Web site: www.TXStudent.org. When addressing this issue be sure to include the House Bill Number (HB1893) or the Senate Bill Number (SB1164) as appropriate. Additionally, if you are a student wanting your voice to be heard on this issue, please contact your SGA at sga@uhcl.edu. We look forward to hearing from you!

Best Regards,
The SGA Executive Council

Jenna Simsen and Lindsay Humphrey
The Signal Staff

You gather your things for any normal school day. You grab your bag, your books, your laptop and...your gun? Well-say you don’t bring your gun, but your classmate does. Sitting in class, you happen to look over at a fellow student pulling out a notebook and spot a glimpse of the little leather case in the bag. It is concealed, but you know exactly what it is. Had you not looked over at that exact moment, would you have felt as comfortable as if you hadn’t? If the House Bill 1893 passes, this hypothetical scenario could become a reality.

The Texas legislator who introduced the bill claims that lifting the ban on concealed handguns in university classrooms would enable students to protect themselves in life-threatening situations like the shootings at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University. While that’s acceptable in theory, in practice, lifting the ban does not ensure safety on college campuses.

The shooter at Virginia Tech managed to obtain a concealed handgun license, and the two semi-automatic pistols he used were purchased legally and legitimately, even though Virginia courts prior to the handgun purchase deemed him “mentally unsound.” The fact is, determined individuals like the VT shooter will always fall through the cracks, no matter how thorough the background checks and screenings, in order to accomplish what he or she sets out to do. But does that mean everyone else needs to be armed in the off chance that they will encounter such an individual on a college campus?

Let’s say for argument sake, the bill passes and guns are allowed in classrooms. What are the implications of that?

If there were an incident at UHCL like the Virginia Tech shooting, anyone on campus with a gun could theoretically take out the shooter. In that situation, innocent bystanders could be shot by friendly fire, and first responders would have no guaranteed way to differentiate between the good guy and the bad guy.

Furthermore, accidents involving guns are not uncommon. On a college campus, where students toss their backpacks around carelessly, and rush from class to class leaving belongings unattended, the likelihood of an accidental shooting is much more likely than a shooter on campus.

Accidents involving guns are even more common when drinking is involved. Traditionally, most college students are 18-22 years old and live in on-campus housing, where drinking – and underage drinking – is popular. UHCL may soon become one of these campuses through downward expansion. Do we really want to find out how guns would fit into that equation as well?

As it is now, however, UHCL is not a traditional university. The median student age is 35 and very few students live on campus. But many students, faculty and staff bring their children to campus with them. Elementary school children participate in special programs and Clear Lake High School students park their cars in the lots on our campus. The parents of these children feel safe allowing their children on our campus now, but can we expect that to continue if House Bill 1893 passes?

With the allowance of handguns inside classrooms, the feeling of safety that we take for granted would be shattered. University police as well as students, faculty and staff would have to assume that everyone is carrying a gun. Who can tell what kind of lasting affect that would have on our university? Universities have long been held as places where freedom of thought reigns supreme. Is this something we are willing to lose?

Licensed handgun carriers already have the right to have a gun in their car in campus parking lots. But, individuals also have the right to feel safe where they go to school, work and live. Whose rights are more important?

The school should not have to succumb to an ultimatum regarding handguns on college campuses. There are other options available to universities to protect students from incidents like the VT shooting, such as metal detectors, alarm systems and the P.I.E.R. system (which UHCL has in place).

We have too much to lose to not consider other options before responding with a kneejerk reaction that will endanger rather than protect us.

Contact your state legislators
to voice your opinion about
guns on campus at
www.texas.gov.

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LETTERS POLICY

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

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Danger: Hysteria May Be Hazardous to Sheep

Hmm ... I just coughed ... and my nose ... it just won't stop running. Oh no, my forehead ... it feels hot. I must have the ... you know ... sheep flu.

Someone better call the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. We need those guys in the green plastic spacesuits now. I really should be in a plastic bubble before I start infecting people's loved ones.

Maybe I already have. After the CDC, I need to remember to call someone in the administration of University of Houston-Clear Lake. They need to know a student has contracted sheep flu. I am sure that they will have to close the school and cancel finals.

After all, it is an institute of higher learning. We all studied for our finals. We were all going to get an A on them anyway, so I am sure that all the professors would be more than willing to just mark that letter down in the grade book and not risk catching the dreaded sheep flu.

Wait ... you've never heard of the sheep flu? Have you not been paying attention to what is going on in the world around you? What do you mean it hasn't been all over the media? Yes, I know they have been going on and on about swine flu, but this is completely different. And well ... you are reading this in a newspaper, so there ... the media is now talking about it.

Speaking of that, why are you still sitting here reading this? Go to the doctor or make a break for the pharmacy. If there is some elderly man blocking your way to the antihistamines, just bowl him over. You need to stock up on Tylenol Flu, Alka-Seltzer Flu, Advil Cold & Sinus, Robitussin and Thera-Flu. Wait till the pharmacist starts asking questions about you running a meth lab, which is when you will know you have enough medication to get you through this latest outbreak. Oh ... and get some Echinacea too while you're there. Just grind the pills up into a powder and pour it on your cereal, or snort it. I am sure it would help.

Okay ... that's under control. Your immune system is rocking, and the disease is beaten down. Come join me back at my plastic bubble.

Now ... who is to blame? Well, it's called sheep flu, so I guess that means it all started with a sheep. What's that you say? You don't recall seeing a sheep wandering around the University of Houston-Clear Lake campus. Have you really looked? The sheep are out there; they are just hiding from all the predatory animals on campus.

I know who is to blame. It has to be those dirty Aussies. It has to be them ... with their weird accents and their miles and miles of pastures. I bet it was some group of Aussies that snuck into our country illegally and infected the good people of this great nation with the dreaded sheep flu.

We need to build something to stop those dirty Aussies from sneaking into the U.S. before our purple mountain majesties becomes another big red rock. I propose we build a fence to prevent them from coming over.

Okay, I will admit that a fence in the Pacific Ocean probably won't stop Australians from coming here and bringing their sheep flu with them. We should step up security check points at all the airports and ship docks where these people are entering. I say give everybody at the check points an AR-15 and a bunch of syringes with penicillin or whatever the new super antibiotic is.

"Welcome to the United States. Now drop your pants. You should just feel a little bit of pressure and the injection spot might be sore for the next few days."

I still can't believe I caught the sheep flu. Hey wait, why is my plastic bubble gone, am I no longer contagious? Hmm ... according to the guys in the green spacesuits, I do not have sheep flu. The coughing, running nose and elevated body temperature all seem to be linked to the incredibly hot wings Pizza Hut brought me. The wings were at one point attached to a chicken, which is a kind of bird. Oh God, I have bird flu...

Sarcasm aside, I am aware of the concerns about the swine flu, but if you put aside the media's sensationalism over the disease, you can hear the real message that the CDC and other government agencies want you to hear. Their message is simply be concerned, but do not panic.

Mexico City's original posted death toll of 150 from the swine flu is an impressive number, but let me add a bit of perspective to it. During the week ending April 18, the CDC mortality report on the top 122 cities stated that 820 deaths were linked to pneumonia and influenza. Influenza is simply the flu

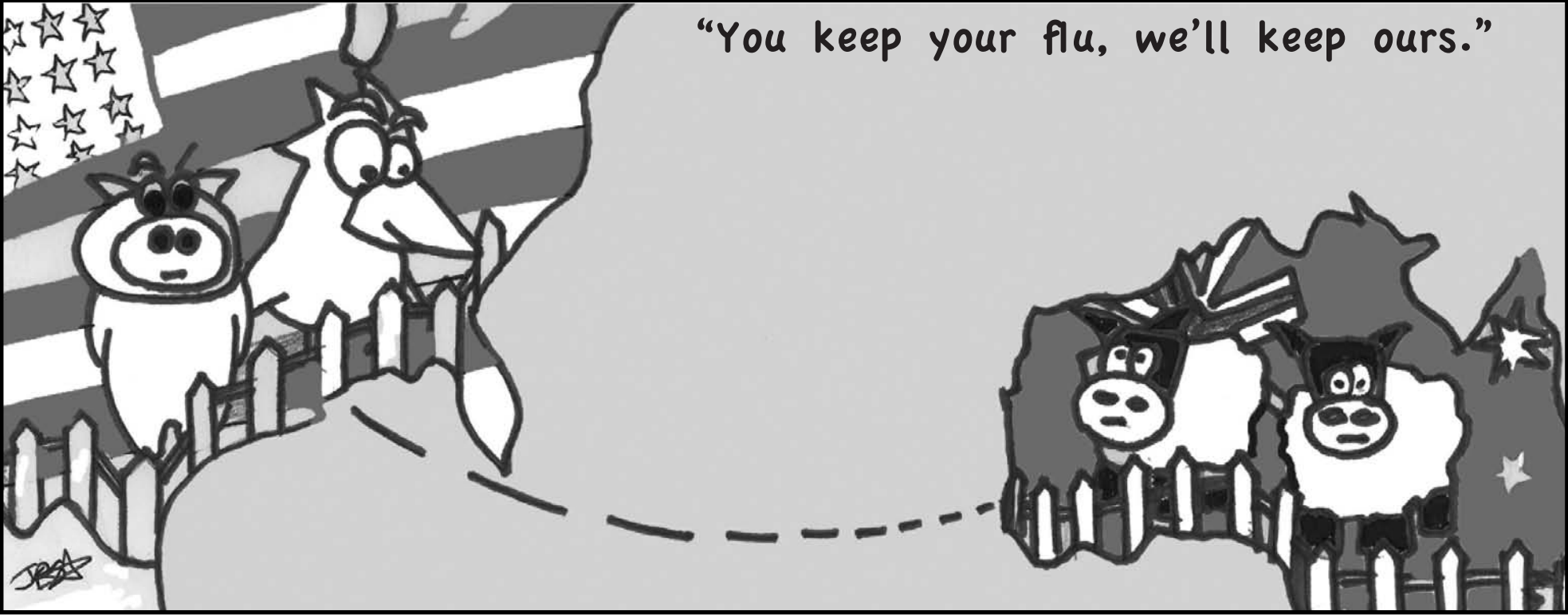
with no type of animal attached to it.


If you are still deeply concerned about catching swine flu, just be cautious. Drinking orange juice can help, since it will help your immune system. After that, wash your hands often, and if you have to cough, be courteous and cover your mouth with your cough, but try to cough into your elbow and not your hands. And if all possible, you should try to avoid contact with anyone you suspect may be ill, and if you are feeling under the weather, please stay home.

To any Australian students we have at the campus, I apologize for any offense this article may have caused. Australia is a lovely country whose people aren't the least bit dirty. They just happen to have a large sheep population and, hopefully, a nice enough sense of humor to realize that I don't think we really need a fence in the Pacific to keep them from coming over.



William Humbird
The Signal Staff





The Signal staff would like to congratulate and wish the best to the Spring graduates!

There are two types of education. One should teach us how to make a living, and the other how to live. -- John Adams

Galveston County Fair and Rodeo

Britney Godfrey
The Signal Staff

The mouthwatering smell of barbeque filled the air at Jack Brooks Park in Hitchcock, Texas, during the 71st annual Galveston County Fair and Rodeo, which ran April 17-25.

The Galveston County Fair and Rodeo was filled with events ranging from a student art exhibit to rodeo events to cook-off competitions.

This year marked the 34th annual cook-off. With the aroma of beans and ribs flowing in the air, the 272 cook-off teams competed in hope of winning first place.

"We are probably the largest county fair cook-off in Texas," said volunteer Lew Benham who supervises the tasting competition contest.

Although the fair is jam-packed with carnival rides and food, there is a serious side to the Galveston County Fair and Rodeo that many people forget.

Scholarships are a huge part of the Galveston County Fair and Rodeo. Graduating 4H members, FFA members and Summer Series participants are eligible for the scholarships.

"4H and FFA seniors fill out an application and turn it in by deadline where a committee reviews them and scores them," said Fair Coordinator Melondy Bender. "Then we take it before the executive committee with only scores and they determine the money amount. This year we had 23 applicants, and we gave something to every one of them."

Galveston County Fair and Rodeo is unique in that almost every person working at the fair is a volunteer; these volunteers make giving scholarships possible.

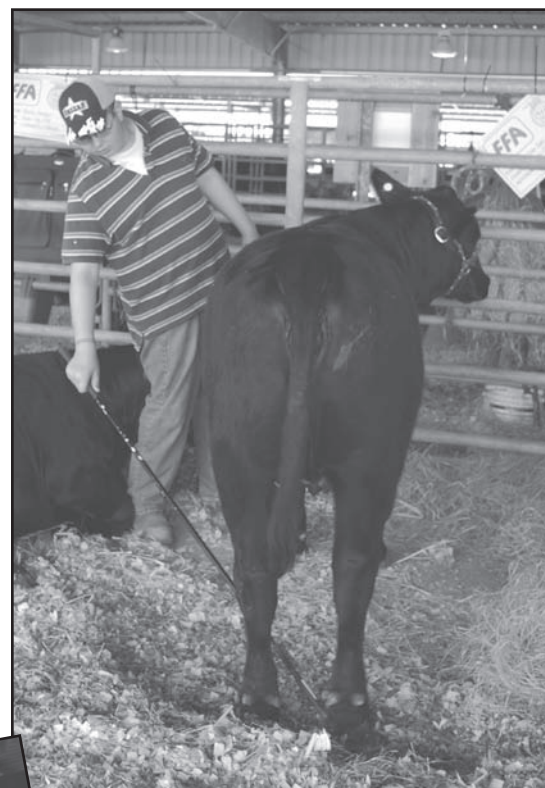
"We are not county or state funded," Bender said. "We are a nonprofit organization so everything that is done here is raising funds for scholarships and making improvements."

The fair also reaches out to the community with special discount days such as senior citizens day and special kids day rodeo.

"A lot of people don't know we have special days such as senior citizen days where there is no charge to them to come in, and we have things for them to do," said Galveston County Fair and Rodeo President Paul Tibaldo. "We also have special kids day where we had a little over 1,000 special needs children come out and ride rides and do rodeo activities such as steer riding."

Although the Galveston County Fair and Rodeo ended April 25, one can still enjoy a few upcoming events. There will be a fundraising fishing tournament on August 22, and the Summer Series will begin in June.

For more information about the Galveston County Fair and Rodeo and to register for upcoming events, visit www.galvestoncountyfair.com.

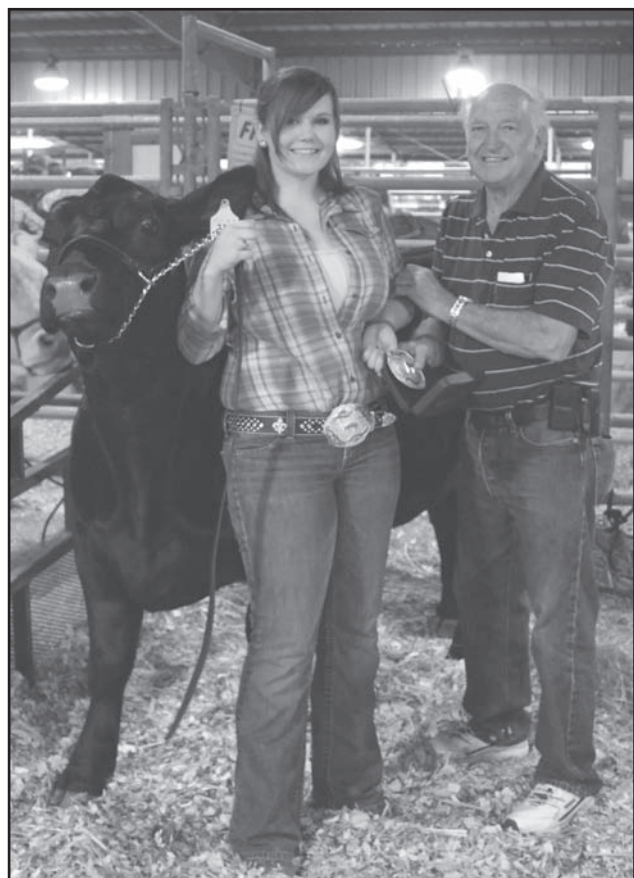


Photos by Britney Godfrey/The Signal

Top Left: Carnival rides light up Jack Brooks Park Friday, April 14.

Top Right: Tyler Conti, a member of the Texas City Junior FFA, practices with his heifer "Fancy" before Saturday's commercial heifer showing.

Left: The 2009 Rodeo Queen Cori Merryman and a fair queen contestant ride around the arena before the start of the rodeo events Friday, April 24.



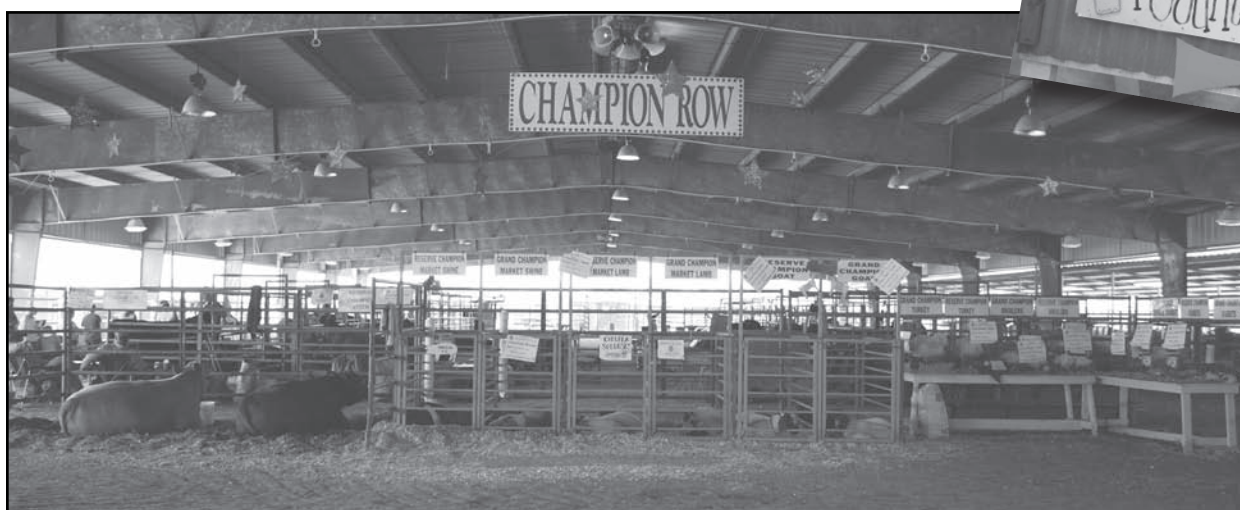
Top: Anthony Cargile scoops his team's chili into a cup that is headed to the judging table.

Left: Chelsea Trosclair stands with her 1st place heifer and belt buckle sponsor Bob Burk.

Right: A bull rider is strapped on a bull at the Galveston County Fair and Rodeo.

Bottom Right: FFA and 4H students show off their artwork ranging from photographs and drawings to sewing.

Bottom Left: Grand champion and reserve champion animals rest on Championship Row.



** Student Life **

Student Government Association



Welcome to the incoming Executive Council and best wishes to the outgoing Executive Council.

Congratulations to our very own Patrick Cardenas, elected as the new Texas Student Association Chair 2009-2010



SGA summer meetings
SSCB Lecture Hall 1.100.03
11:30am-12:30pm
Tuesday, June 9th
Tuesday, July 7th
Tuesday, August 4th

For Details Contact The SGA Executive Council:

Patrick Cardenas - President
Steve Steiner - VP Committee Coordinator
Amanda Schoolcraft - VP Outreach & Communications
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City Escape

Brenda Cabaniss
The Signal Staff

Just slightly northwest of downtown Houston lies a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of the city skyscrapers on Main Street and Capitol. If you ever want to get away, but lack the funds for a vacation in Jamaica, try the Bayou Bend Gardens located at 1 Westcott St.. at Memorial Drive in Houston. The gardens provide a silent retreat without the expense. In fact, tickets start at \$3 for adults and children over 9 years old; children nine and under get in free.

Just getting to the garden grounds is an adventure in itself. In order to reach the house, visitors have to cross a suspension bridge that hangs over the murky waters of Buffalo Bayou. After crossing the bridge, guests arrive at a glass walled gazebo where an attendant is ready to exchange your money for admission tickets.

Just beyond the gazebo is a beautiful two story colonial style home overlooking the 14 acre gardens. The home belonged to William, Michael and Ima Hogg, children of former Texas Governor James Stephen Hogg. It was built in the late 1920s by famous Tennessee architect John F.. Staub.

The eight gardens are made to resemble rooms, each with different characteristics. Each garden is accessible by golden speckled pathways. The garden rooms consist of the Clio Garden, Woodland Trails, Diana Garden, Euterpe Garden, Carla Garden, East Garden, Butterfly Garden and the White Garden.

Just beyond the gazebo lies the Clio Garden, an ode to the Greek mythological muse Clio, whose statue sits in the middle of the garden room surrounded by azaleas and pansies. Pathways extend from the far side of the Clio Garden into the Diana Garden.

The Diana Garden is a symmetrical outdoor garden room with a rectangular water fountain in its midst. Jets of water shoot from one side of the fountain to the other in an arching motion. A statue of the Goddess Diana is featured at the end of the fountain.

The Euterpe Garden is a spacious garden encircled by azaleas and is home to a second statue of Clio.

The Carla Garden is the result of damage sustained by Hurricane Carla on the Euterpe Garden. The hurricane ripped out trees leaving bare

spots, so the garden now features a sitting area. The East Garden has an aire of the English countryside with hedges all around and azaleas and camellias lining its sides.

The Butterfly Garden is a small garden room shaped as a butterfly. First time visitor to the gardens, 9-year-old Kiana Rivera says she was excited to see the gardens.

“My favorite part was the butterfly garden,” Rivera said.

The White Garden is a rustic garden that features various types of white flowers. The smell of gardenia flowers fills the air while amazingly huge magnolia flowers shift crazily in the breeze.

The Topiary Garden has statues of various small woodland creatures throughout, reminiscent of a fairy tale.

The gardens are an amazing and relaxing experience, especially when all the plants are in bloom.

“During the summertime, the gardens are mainly green,” said Bart Brechter, curator for the Bayou Bend Gardens. “The best time to see the gardens is February and March.”

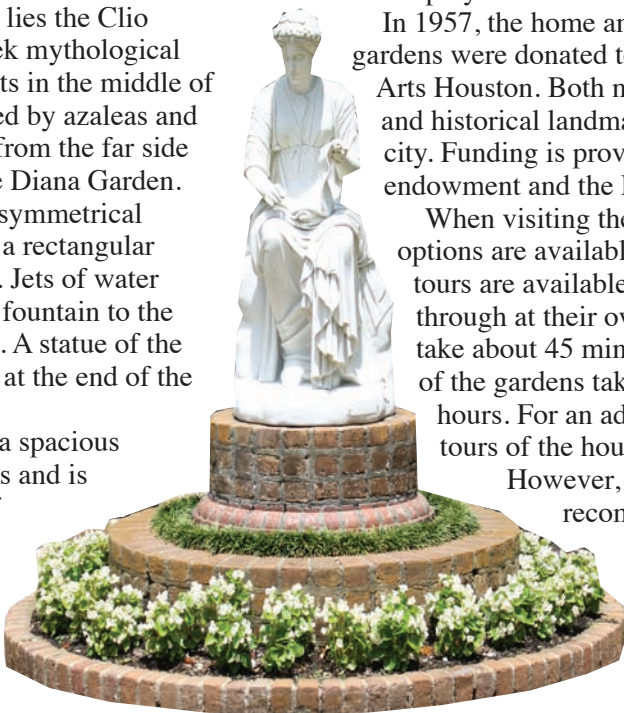
Still, with 14 acres of land and nine acres of cultivated gardens, it seems a daunting task to figure out which flowers to plant in each garden. However, Brechter says “a historical master plan exist that states which flowers Ima Hogg wanted planted in each garden.” He added that a crew of five full-time employees maintains the gardens.

In 1957, the home and its surrounding gardens were donated to the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. Both now serve as a museum and historical landmark in the middle of the city. Funding is provided by the MFAH, an endowment and the River Oaks Garden Club.

When visiting the gardens, several options are available to guests. Self-guided tours are available for people to wander through at their own pace and usually take about 45 minutes. Guided tours of the gardens take approximately two hours. For an additional fee, guided tours of the house are also available.

However, advance reservations are recommended.

For more information on the Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens, call 713-639-7750 or visit <http://www.mfah.org/bayoubend>.



The Gardens of Bayou Bend



Brenda Cabaniss:The Signal



Brenda Cabaniss:The Signal



Brenda Cabaniss:The Signal

View of the creek that runs through Bayou Bend Gardens.

The home of Ima Hogg, original home owner of Bayou Bend.

Flowers outside the greenhouse at Bayou Bend.



Dianna Shaw:The Signal



Dianna Shaw:The Signal

Dianna Shaw
The Signal Staff

The Houston International Festival 2009 was a delightful display of the blending of many cultures. It is a good way to experience an array of foods, entertainment and ways of life from around the globe.

Roaming the fair, one could scarcely tell that they were standing on an often-busy street of a downtown metropolis. Everywhere one looked was a representation of different cultures; there was the African/ Caribbean Zone, the Jamaica Zone and the Ireland Zone, to mention a few.

“I have loved every minutes of watching my culture demonstrated,” said James O’Connor, festival attendee. “I am a proud Irishman and this presentation is lovely. My personal favorites would have to be the line dancers and the bagpipes; just wonderful entertainment. The Jameson Irish Whiskey is not bad either.”

The focus country this year was Ireland, and Celtic Menagerie, Cass Irish Dancers and Bayou City Pipes and Drums entertained audiences. One could visit McGonigel’s Mucky Duck Pub & Stage and enjoy the fine cuisine of the Irish.

“The first hundred dollars always goes so fast,” said college student Randy Jackson, while standing at an ATM. “I have to get more money, all I want to do is eat, eat and eat. The food is marvelous: sausage, potatoes and funnel cakes. I can’t stand it!”

Whether watching exhibitionists demonstrate calligraphy, blacksmithing or participating in the interactive displays, visitors could learn about the way other societies interact. Those in attendance experienced plenty of different accents in people’s language skills and could learn much this day.

Is it well known that coffee originated in Ethiopia? Aster Eyob, a teacher from Sharon Elementary, and Jennet Kassa, a teacher from Knox Jr.. High, established for audiences the Ethiopian Coffee Ritual. The coffee is prepared in a stone bowl over an open fire. The rich

aroma fills the air; it is not the normal coffee smell Americans have come to recognize, but much stronger.

“It is a part of our culture to stop and enjoy the company of one another, while preparing and drinking the coffee,” Eyob said. “It is much like the English who drink tea. I came today to share my culture so others could understand and enjoy it as well.”

Art items from a variety of artistic styles were in view up and down every isle. Laurence Walden, known as the man behind the mask, showed his unique skills in turning old silver utensils and plate ware into beautiful art. He designs jewelry, paintings and sculptures.

“I purchased a ring from Mr. Walden because I have never seen anything like it before,” said teenager, Samantha Rinehart. “I plan on buying more from him at a later date. I think he will be famous for his work one day.”

The diversity of music was another high point of the occasion. The sounds ranged from jazz, reggae, funk, gospel, zydeco, Latin, mariachi and more. One of the favorite entertainers was Big Sam Funky Nation; with their New Orlean flair, they worked the crowd into a frenzy. Another pleasurable band was Los Arrieros mariachi band.

“We came from Mexico to enjoy the fun, music and art,” said Mexican citizen Sabina Delgado. “We are big fans of Los Arrieros; we follow them when we can. We are proud for others to hear their music.”

Local channel KIAH, 39 had a booth to promote their upcoming season of shows and to receive feedback about what viewers think about the line-up. In the booth they hung flags with pictures representing the different TV shows on 39.

Participants stood under the flag of the show they liked best. In Wheel of Fortune style, there was a wheel that contained the programs. The booth representative spun the wheel and if it landed on the show they were standing under they won a T-shirt. Photographer Brain Pfeifferberger won this particular round.

TOP: Milan Jackson, 12, karaoke’s to Alicia Keys’ “No One”.

LEFT: Tony Jones of Bayou City Pipes and Drums demonstrates the longing sounds of the bagpipes.



Dianna Shaw:The Signal

Laurence Walden displays his unique art of turning old utensils into jewelry, paintings and sculptures.

“I love Stewie,” Pfeifferberger said while holding-up his prize. “I am having a great time; it is Houston; it is great weather; it is culture at its best. To experience great photography, please visit my Web site [www. iphotoweddings.net](http://www.iphotoweddings.net).”

In the markets one could purchase clothing, musical instruments, art and much, much more. There were carvings of almost every animal one could think of, and woven baskets of all sizes. Jewelry displays were in abundance. Shoppers could purchase anything from cruises to hand rolled cigars.

“The smell of a cigar always reminds me of my grandfather,” Mexican citizen Hulda Rojas said. “He would smoke one every evening while he sat on the porch drinking his iced tea. Good memories, those were good days. He would have enjoyed today.”

One choice booth was Karaoke 4-KIDS, where kids of all ages could sing karaoke for fun, or make a personal CD for \$10. They had large crowds all day, as the young ones and not so young ones, entertained crowds.

The I-Fest was filled with adventure and learning. Attendance is definitely something one should consider.

UHCL

VASE

Tina Di Vora
The Signal Staff

The University of Houston-Clear Lake hosted the 2009 Visual Art Scholastic Event April 17-18.

VASE is a statewide competition comprised of enrolled high school students grades 9-12 in both private and public school systems. This year, 3,000 students submitted approximately 9,000 pieces of art for judging.

“This venue supports the goal of recognizing the academic and creative achievement of high school students who have excelled in fine arts,” said Sandria Hu, professor of fine arts.

Artworks, which are on display in the Bayou Building, were to be comprised of artwork ranging in different styles from jewelry, sculpture, drawing to print making. Each student was judged on originality, technical expertise, understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, and interpretation of the student’s intentions for his or her piece.

There were 60 jurors present at the event who judged the artworks at the competition. The jurors rated the artworks on a scale from 1, being below average, to 4, being a superior

rating. Winners of the superior rating received a regional medal and artworks that qualified for state competition will get an area medal.

This year’s invited international component presenter was Bedrich Kocman. Kocman is an assistant professor of art and design at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czech Republic.

He did a series of workshops on Saturday in silk-screen techniques with VASE students. In workshop, students sketched out a design and cut it out, Kocman then assisted the students with silk-screening their sketches.

“I am glad to be here, this refreshes my mind,” Kocman said. “I hope to show the possibilities [on] silk screening.”

A break from the routine of teaching to his older students in Bohemia, Kocman said this trip for VASE was like a big test for him to see how well he can pass his knowledge of silkscreening technique to the students he will only see for one hour, rather than one semester.

Kocman will also have his *Metamorphoses of Print*, on display on the second floor of the Bayou Building, Atrium 1.

For more information about VASE, visit their Web site www.taec.org/vase.



Tina Di Vora:The Signal



Tina Di Vora:The Signal

Bedrich Kocman sets up the silkscreen workshop with his assistant Steven Willis.

Steven Willis, along with Bedrich Kocman, give a short lecture to students on what they will be doing.

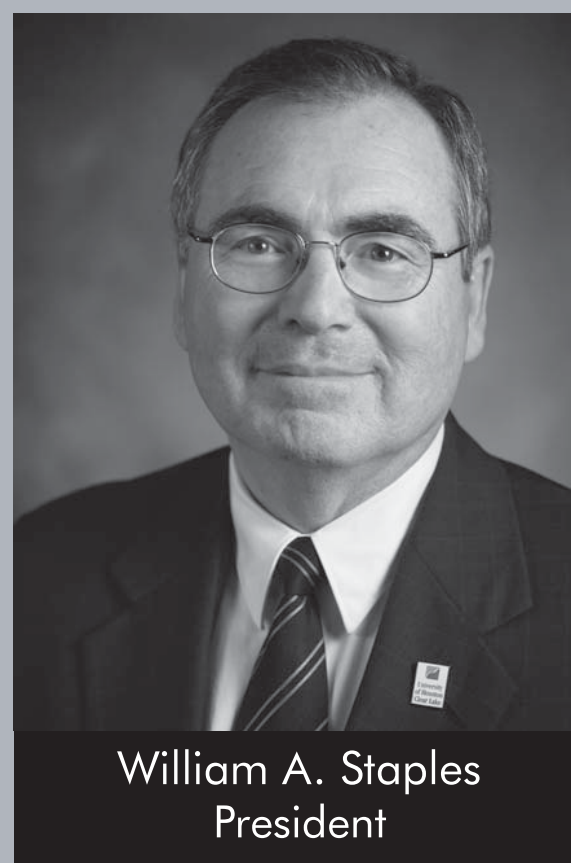


LEFT: Bedrich Kocman helps Julieta Hinojosa add her pattern to the collage of silkscreen prints.

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William A. Staples
President

University of Houston  Clear Lake

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UHCL Who's Who in American Universities

The selection process to Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges occurs each spring semester when nominations are solicited from faculty, SGA and Student Life staff members. Each nominee is sent an application and the Student Life Council considers each application based on:

- * Scholastic Achievement
- * Participation and leadership on campus
- * Citizenship and service to the university and community
- * Potential for future achievement

The students recognized for this award are those who enhance the positive image of UHCL. College students are the reservoir from which the nation draws its leadership strength. This feeling about students is the guiding principle behind the Who's Who Among Students in America Universities and Colleges program and its efforts to proudly continue to aid campuses in honoring students who demonstrate consistent excellence.

Who's Who Recipients

Jenolyn Alexander	Marcia Henderson	Ryan O' Connor
Kyle Alexander	Robert Hill	Damian Ottley
Marcus Alvarez	Lindsay Humphrey	Christopher Padron
Jessica Attocknie	Roberta Huston	Prashanti Pandit
Fiona Burke	Mary Anne Kane	Melissa Prentice
Alexandria Burley	Deborah Kent	Cody Rabb
Nicholas Burns	Linda Kissack	Melissa Raymond
Patrick Cardenas	Constance Lafayette	Andrew Robinson
Dana Chitty	Petranella La Fleur	Doyle Rodrigues
Danielle Crossen	Huong Le	Brenda Ross
Ashley Doyle	Daniel LeSage	Parakh Singhal
Shevonne Dyer	Martha Lujan-Ripoll	Rebecca Smith
Abigail Fabian	Sabiha Mahmood	Steven Steiner
Shawn Fojtik	Ashitra Megasari	Joyce Taylor
Amanda Goodner	Jason Miller	Tonya Tipton
Ritesh Grover	Lisa Miller-Traniello	Du Van Tran
Swati Gupta	Stanley Mukundi	Dung T. Vo
Shayla Habibi	Anurag Nagar	Stephanie Walters
Christina Hall	Aniket Negi	Jessica Williams

HSH Honors Its Own

Hayley Shaw
The Signal Staff

The School of Human Science and Humanities gives awards to students for honors and leadership.

Twenty-eight students in the school of HSH were recognized as outstanding students of the year in their major at the reception held April 20.

The reception "is to recognize students who are selected by their faculty for outstanding student awards," said Howard Eisner, associate dean of students. "Over the years one of the things I've noticed is that the awardees are truly remarkable."

Many students are considered when faculty decides who get the awards. "Faculty members consider all possible candidates," said Vivian Atwater, associate professor of art history and one of the faculty presenters. "Who stands out in terms of academic excellence? Who stands out for academic and artistic excellence? The candidate with the most faculty votes is chosen. The students who receive outstanding student awards work very hard and maintain terrific attitudes throughout their academic careers. To receive acknowledgment as outstanding students is an encouragement of a very special kind for them."



Hayley Shaw: The Signal

Bruce Palmer, dean of HSH, greeted everyone who attended the reception. Awards were given to the outstanding students of HSH for the 2008/2009 school year.

CAMPUS CALENDAR

May 7
CLASP's "Vision in Our Midst"
Speaker Series, 5:30 - 7 p.m.,
Bayou Garden 1510

May 8 & 9
Flag Football Tournament
TBA, UHCL fields

May 13
Memories to Memoirs: Turning
life's experiences into anthologies
of treasures, 4 - 6 p.m.,
SSCB 1100

May 15
Commencement Kick-off
Celebration, 5:30 - 7 p.m.,
Bayou Atrium I

May 16
"Congratulations Graduates"
Commencement Ceremony
7 p.m., Reliant Arena

May 17
Mercury Baroque Ensemble
Performance
2 p.m., Bayou Theater



Dianna Shaw: The Signal

Attendees observe the posters and projects prepared by University of Houston-Clear Lake 15th annual Student Conference for Research & Creative Arts. The event was held April 22-23 in the Bayou Building.

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San Jacinto Central
Department of Theatre and Film
Pasadena, TX 77505
Phone: 281-542-2039 Fax: 281-542-2040
Jerry.Ivins@sjcd.edu

Graduation Application Updates

The application deadline for UHCL Summer graduation is June 1- July 2.

The application deadline for UHCL Fall graduation is August 17- October 9.

Additional information on the May 2009 commencement will be mailed to students in the coming weeks. There is also information online at www.uhcl.edu/records.

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Modern Day Slavery In U.S.

Jenna Simsen
The Signal Staff

Every semester, the Intercultural and International Student Services have offered information to students and the community to educate and expose certain details of society which are generally unspoken.

Usually, a series will cover a topic for the span of a semester; however, some topics tend to be more complex than others and will cover multiple semesters with multiple speakers.

This semester, IISS chose to spotlight women in law. During the course of the spring semeser, IISS has invited three women lawyers to visit the university to speak about different but very particular topics suggested by students and faculty.

Over the semester, speakers have presented information in workshops educating others about the truths about human embryos, discrimination regarding employment and the most recent topic on human trafficking.

“We’re wanting people to understand that there are segments of society that aren’t often talked about,” said Linda Contreras Bullock, assistant dean of student diversities. “We want to expose unordinary topics.”

Bullock emphasized that the unordinary topics are intentionally chosen, so that those soft subjects are exposed to the community, and spoken of so that others are educated about what really goes on within certain societies.

The human trafficking seminar given by Diana Velardo, a topic of which is very passionate about was discussed and exposed in a workshop open to the university and community. Velardo, a clinical instructor and the crime victim’s coordinator at UH-Law Center, was the third speaker asked to give a presentation because of her vast knowledge of human trafficking and her desire to help those who are victims.

The topic discussed was officially introduced with the slogan “Have You Met a Slave Today?” As claimed, the answer was sure to surprise many. The information Velardo presented was meant to educate others the truth regarding modern-day slavery.

In short, human trafficking is the legal and illegal commerce or trade of people for use in legitimate labor as well as forced labor. This sometimes



Jenna Simsen:The Signal

Diana Velardo, clinical instructor and crime victims coordinator at UH - Law Center, gives a presentation over human trafficking in the Forrest Room on April 8.

evolves into involuntary servitude or slave-like situations with no escape. Often times, women who fall victim to human trafficking find they are being forced into sexual servitude or prostitution. Victims usually cooperate with involuntary exploitation when faced with threats of violence or exploitation. Exploitation is not limited to women, as many children are also victims of human trafficking, with similar exploitations occurring. Exploitation can be defined anywhere from rape, slavery, and forced prostitution.

“What happens is, people think they are getting into a smuggling agreement.” Velardo said. “But then find themselves victims of human trafficking, victims of slave-like conditions or victims of involuntary servitude.”

Velardo says that Houston is a large arena for human trafficking. She has assisted with several cases involving the topic. She also serves as the executive director of the Artemis Justice Center, a nonprofit organization she founded to help victims of domestic violence.

It is the objective of Bullock and IISS to expose and educate students and faculty about issues going on in our area that are generally unheard of and kept under the radar. Bullock says they are always taking suggestions or feedback as to what topics should be selected and discussed every semester.

Any student with information, feedback or suggestions can contact Bullock at 281-283-2574 or visit www.uhcl.edu/intercultural.

and Democrats, on the other hand, voted 61 and 57 percent, respectively in favor of evolution theory.

Christian fundamentalists protest the teaching of evolution in schools and support the teaching of biblical creationism.

“Because intelligent design is based on belief, not science, we have not included it in our curriculum,” Berry said.

Advocates of intelligent design desire to have it taught in U.S. public schools alongside the Darwinian theory of evolution.

The Opinions

According to a Gallup poll, since 1982 there has been very little change in the views of adult Americans on this issue. Between 43 percent and 47 percent of Americans during this period supported the creationist view that God created human beings pretty much in their present form

“Between 35 percent and 40 percent have agreed with the alternative explanation that humans evolved, but with God guiding the process as in the case of intelligent design while 9 percent to 14 percent have chosen a pure secularist evolution perspective that humans evolved with no guidance by God.” the Gallop Poll survey states.

These new standards in Texas School curriculums are meant to last over the next ten years and will have a great impact on the classroom education in Texas, its test materials and content of science textbooks.

Guns: continued from page 1

attacker,” Driver said. “As good a job as they do, first responders are often just that: responders to a crime or crime scene that has already taken place.”

The issue of accidental gun discharges is a circumstance that Driver dismisses as unlikely to occur.

“We’ve had concealed carry in Texas for 13 years now and I’m not aware of incidents involving accidental shootings among the 300,000-plus licensees we have in this state,” Driver said. “The bill has immunity for the schools built into it, although that was done at the request of the schools and not because I thought it was necessary for the bill.”

Many critics feel that House Bill 1893 is an overreaction stemming from the Virginia Tech shooting After the Virginia Tech shooting, many people questioned gun laws that allowed a mentally ill person to purchase guns. Cho, despite having a record of psychological problems, was able to buy his guns legally. Driver, however, does not see it that way.

“The shootings at Virginia Tech and other institutions across the country may have served to spark the debate and media frenzy on the issue of concealed carry on campus,” Driver said. “But I’m carrying this bill because I believe that licensed, law-abiding adult students, professors or employees shouldn’t be denied the right to protect themselves from any random criminal act just because they study, work or live on a college or university campus.”

House Bill 1893 has recently sparked debate among colleges in Texas. Students from the University of Texas walked out of class April 16 to protest outside the capital. The protest was held on the two-year anniversary of the Virginia Tech shootings.

Patrick Cardenas, president of the UHCL Student Government Association, believes each university should be responsible for campus security.

“Each public university has the capabilities to ensure campus safety by issuing policies of their own without such a policy as allowing a concealed handgun,” Cardenas said.

Anthony Jenkins, dean of students, believes that House Bill 1893 stemmed from the Virginia Tech Shootings but does not agree with Driver about allowing concealed handguns in the classroom.

“All of this is a kneejerk reaction to my alma mater, Virginia Tech, and that tragedy has spawned a lot of people to have conversations about weapons on campus,” Jenkins said.

Jenkins considers the bill to be what he calls a “feel good bill” aimed at making people feel good. However he believes that this bill would take away from what a college institution is intended to be.

“It disrupts the fundamental purpose of higher education, we should be in the business of helping young men and women become scholars and critical thinkers,” Jenkins said. “Move them to a point to where they add to an educated citizenry and not resort to violence, intimidation and threats.”

Unlike Driver, Jenkins doesn’t believe that armed CHL carriers will bring about more peace on college campus. He thinks colleges should use more preventive approaches.

“What we need to do is focus on more prevention, tighter admissions policies, looking at backgrounds of students, creating more of a safety net rather than simply carrying more guns,” Jenkins said.

Jenkins, an army veteran, feels that the training required to receive a CHL may not be enough for an individual to perform in an intense situation.

“With an M-16 assault rifle I’m considered an expert; I can hit 40 out of 40 targets out to 400 yards OK,” Jenkins said. “I was trained to do that, and the repetition made me better. To take an individual who may have to certify with a hand gun once a year and now throw them in a crisis situation where their adrenaline is pumping, they’re nervous, there is chaos and confusion and you want an individual be it 18, be it 35, to compose themselves and take out someone who is firing at them. That’s not easy, and I think that is what will open us up to more serious injuries, fatal injuries and liabilities, and that is not where we should be moving in higher education.”

Police Chief Paul Willingham, like Jenkins, also questions the training of those who are CHL carriers. He believes some CHL carriers could help, but some may make dangerous situations worse.

“Some who have advanced military and law enforcement training; I would not have a problem with,” Willingham said. “Those without this type of training and experience would be useless in a fire fight and would likely be severely injured or killed themselves.”

Willingham acknowledges that deciding who is allowed to carry a handgun into the classroom is out of law enforcement hands.

“I’m not opposed to every student carrying a firearm, but there are no checks and balances,” Willingham said. “The inability know what you’re getting causes a lot of anxiety. I hate to leave it to a ten hour class.”

Even with the VT and NIU shootings,Willingham insists that college campuses are still safe.

“Campuses are far safer than the cities around them,” Willingham said. “Look at the comparison of crimes on the campus, the fraction is so low.”

Colleges have had less shooting deaths than schools K-12. Jenkins wonders if the next step is to start arming people on this level of education who are over 18 years old.

Students who have questions about House Bill 1893 can find contact information on Joe Driver and all the other State Representatives at www.house.state.tx.us.

Evolution: continued from page 1

which holds that God created all living things as stated in the Bible; and the theory evolution, which holds that different species have evolved naturally from a common ancestor. Darwin concluded that the creation theory could not be true, and thus opted for the theory of evolution put forth in his book “On the Origins of Species.” The evolution concept supports the belief that animals and plants have developed or ‘evolved’ gradually through various existing forms.

Intelligent design theory is another theory of origin that claims there is evidence of complex biological structures and other aspects of nature having been designed by a superior intelligence. Their complexity level is so high that these structures could not have just gradually evolved as per Darwin’s Theory. Intelligent design theory does not rely on the biblical account of creation like creationism; it does acknowledge a belief in God.

The Politics

The issue of evolution is one that is tinged with politics, religion, science, legislation and educational curriculum.

Democrats have supported the evolutionary theory and most of the Republicans have opposed it in favor of the creationist theory. From a Pew Poll taken between May 21-24, 2007, it was found that 68 percent of Republicans favored the idea that God created human beings about 10,000 years ago, while only 30 percent believe in evolution. Independents

Moving On Saying Goodbye:

Two charter members prepare to retire after 35 years of service to UHCL

Eisner get ready to tackle life’s next adventure

Savannah Drake
The Signal Staff

After 35 years of dedicated work to the university, Howard Eisner, associate dean for the School of Human Sciences and Humanities, will be retiring this summer. Eisner, who was a member of the founding 40 faculty members that began this university in 1974, has been associate dean of HSH for the past 10 years.

Eisner, who was born and raised in Philadelphia, began his career at UHCL unexpectedly. While at Duke University, he came across an announcement for job openings at a brand new school in Texas, that school being UHCL. He applied for

the position not thinking much about it. Later, he received a call from the founding dean of the university. Eisner, having no plans to go to Texas, figured he would be honest and told the dean what he felt philosophically. The dean replied by saying that if Eisner had been able to read his mind, they could not have not been more on the same page.

Eisner has a lot of memories to share about the university and the changes he has seen. At the beginning, the entire faculty was blended together in the small space they had to share. The school did not have traditional degrees; each degree was designed for each individual student. He recalls the majority of the population

of the university being adult females who had children and were really excited to return to school. He says that the approximate age of the students was two years older than the average age of the faculty, which was 29 at the time. We have a much wider age range of faculty now. We now also have a very diverse student population, with a much greater age range

One of his favorite memories was being a part of a great bunch of people working together to create new programs with a great passion. Now, he is proud of the fact that the university has done what it

has set out to do. Eisner says the school now has all different types of departments and a wonderful faculty.

Eisner’s decision to retire was a family decision. His wife retired about three years ago, and he has grandchildren on both coasts. He loves traveling and wants to be able to travel before he gets too old to do so. He also has found that after 35 years of being at the university, it has been hard to continue to be passionate when a lot of paper work has been added to the curriculum. He adds that a lot of the people who began this journey with him have already retired and tell him they are enjoying retirement. He wants the chance to do the same.

Eisner said his plans after retirement include becoming “A combination of a bum, a traveler, a returning student and a volunteer.” By this he means taking time to read, traveling with his wife, maybe returning to school to take classes he is interested in and volunteering at the United Way.

Eisner says that he will miss the people here at UHCL the most. He enjoys the “neat” people he gets to work with on a daily basis.

“He’s a pretty remarkable fellow; I think in some ways HSH is what it is because of him,” said Bruce Palmer, dean of HSH, who is also a charter member of UHCL. “I can’t think of anybody else in the last 35 years that has had such an impact on the way that the school works; he’s always been an extraordinary partisan for the school.”

Division Chair of Humanities and Fine

Arts Deborah Griffin also had stories to share about Eisner.

“Often, he is asked to make difficult and unpopular decisions,” Griffin said. “When doing so, he always thinks of the people who will be impacted by those decisions and does all he can to mitigate the challenges.”

Griffin is also impressed with his love for UHCL.

“He is proud of this institution, and he has dedicated his professional self to serving it, nurturing it, and helping it grow,” Griffin said. “He is quite the role model—for students, for faculty, and for administrators. We will miss him very, very much.”

Eisner will officially retire Aug. 31. Robert Bartsch, associate professor of psychology, will serve as interim associate dean while a formal search is conducted to fill the position.

“He has a huge amount of institutional memory, hopefully throughout our work this spring and summer I’ll be able to learn enough of it to have a relatively smooth transition,” Bartsch said. “In taking over as an interim associate dean, I feel honored to be selected and awed at the responsibility the job entails. I know I’ll have some huge shoes to fill and I’ll do the best job I can.”

Eisner sums up his experience here as “a wonderful one.”

“When you take someone who has just finished a Ph.D. and say to him, a 29 year old, ‘go start a university,’ that is something that is remarkable,” Eisner said.



Britney Godfrey: The Signal
Howard Eisner, associate dean for the School of Human Sciences and Humanities.



Mieszkowski bids farewell to the school she saw come to life

Nancy Nguyen
The Signal Staff

University of Houston-Clear Lake faculty, staff and students will be saying farewell to one of their charter professors, Gretchen Mieszkowski who retires this May.

Mieszkowski, professor of literature and women’s studies, will be retiring from UHCL after 35 years.

Dean of Human Sciences and Humanities Bruce Palmer reflected on Mieszkowski and the first year UHCL opened.

“She has been here 35 years and was one of the three senior people hired in HSH that first year,” Palmer said. “She led the program and has also been one of the most dedicated teachers and faculty members the school has ever had.”

The Bayou Building was under construction and the second atrium was almost complete when she first started her career at UHCL.

One thing that Mieszkowski will miss is sharing her knowledge of Literature and Women’s Studies with her students.

Mieszkowski is passionate about modern and contemporary writers such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton and women writers of the 19th, 20th, and

21st centuries.

As the founder of the Women’s Studies Program at UHCL, Mieszkowski has many published articles including a monograph, *The Reputation of Criseyde: 1155-1500* that focuses on medieval literature and gender issues.

“I love to talk about the marvelous material I get to teach,” Mieszkowski said. “It’s a great pleasure to talk about material as wonderful as this with students who find it interesting.”

The passion that Mieszkowski has brought to the university has helped shape the way the Women’s Studies Program of UHCL has grown over the years.

“HSH would not be what it is today without her,” Palmer said. “I would say she has had as much impact on HSH as any faculty member or administrator has since the beginning of the UHCL.”

Mieszkowski has fond memories of UHCL.

“My fondest memory takes some explaining,” Mieszkowski said. “Our first dean in HSH, Calvin Cannon, was splendidly into promoting the arts in Houston and, along with Chancellor Alfred Neumann, loved contemporary music. The second atrium had just been built.

“The second half of the Bayou

Building wasn’t yet in operation. Chairs were placed around the edges of the atrium and four wooden tower-like structures were built in the four corners of the atrium. On those structures were positioned two excellent singers, one man and one woman, a trumpet player, and one other instrument player. With the lights extinguished and the stars shining through the top of the atrium, they premiered ‘Sirius,’ a piece by Karlheinz Stockhausen, a famous contemporary German composer. I will never forget the magic of that trumpet in the night as this new university came into being.”

“Perhaps the best I can do to describe [Mieszkowski] is to describe her as an intelligent, gracious person who has given a great deal to her students, HSH and UHCL,” Palmer said.

Mieszkowski is the only UHCL Piper Award Nominee to win at state.

Mieszkowski leaves behind a note of advice to all students about the importance of education.

“Never forget that what the university can give you is an education,” Mieszkowski said. “Not simply training for a position, but an education: exposure to the thought

and experience of many cultures; a taste of many different ways of thinking; the ability to think critically and express your thoughts.”

Then Now



Britney Godfrey: The Signal

Gretchen Mieszkowski, professor of literature and women’s studies, and Angela Howard, professor of history.

Crawfish Carnivores Crawl to Crawfish Festival

Matt Griesmyer
The Signal Staff



Matt Griesmyer: The Signal

TOP LEFT: Erin Dellinger (left) and Vickie Dellinger enjoy freshly boiled Cajun crawfish at the Texas Crawfish and Music Festival held Apr. 19. TOP MIDDLE: Tomasz and Agata Srokowski of Poland partake in a bucket of freshly boiled crawfish.

ABOVE: Paul Mostyn, cook from the Loose Caboose, raises a boiler cage full of steaming crawfish.

BELOW: Patrons of the Texas Crawfish and Music Festival enjoyed buckets of boiled Cajun crawfish with cobs of corn, and plenty of tall, frosty beer.



Red, lifeless carapaces alongside empty beer bottles and clean-picked corncobs fill trash can after trash can as the faint smells of smokehouse mesquite and Cajun seasoning waft through the air. In the distance, the wails and passion of zydeco music cry their unique and pleasant sounds. It is that time of year again. The Texas Crawfish and Music Festival has arrived.

Old Town Spring hosts the Southern United States' largest crawfish festival that has been going on for 23 years, and this year's was a sight to behold.

Vendors from around the Houston area and beyond came to sell their oh-so-secret recipe crawfish buckets, complete with the standard boiled new potato and cob of corn. The prevailing flavors immolate the mouth with cayenne and black pepper, overtones of cinnamon and garlic tickle the palate but mingle oh-so-well with a tall, frosty beer.

This festival boasts as much as 50,000 pounds of crawfish being cooked, all to serve a very special purpose.

Normally, the festival profits benefit the organizations that are charged with preserving Old Town Spring, a railroad town dating back to the early 1900s. This year, however, the funds are going to assist those who have been hit hardest by Hurricane Ike.

The first weekend of the festival was looking almost as dim as Ike did, with a storm forcing the closure of the festival early on Saturday and not reopening the doors to the public until 5 p.m. that day. The festival opened up the next day, much to the public's applause, despite muddy field conditions and a bit of standing water.

Manning the gate of the festival and much of the volunteer posts were members of the local Knights of Columbus Council 6557, a Catholic organization of men who volunteer within their society. Among the volunteers was Bob Bensfield. Bensfield's spirits were high despite the aforementioned rainstorm.

"We have been doing this event for six years," Bensfield said. "It's always fun. This year's festival is going pretty well, considering the rain we had yesterday."

The festival, which happens every year in the springtime, not only features spicy Cajun crawfish, but music acts from around the area and country. This year's acts included Leroy Thomas & the Zydeco Roadrunners, LT Roberts & the Zydeco Mob, KISS tribute act Destroyer, Glass Intrepid, Cory Morrow and numerous others playing on any one of three stages set up throughout the festival.

Comments from the public were hard to hear over the sounds of the bands, boiling crawfish pots and gnashing of teeth as crawfish tails were devoured, but this reporter was able to make out a single word from patron Damon Kothmann of Houston.

"Great," Kothmann said, summing up how he felt this year's festival went.

As this spring comes to a close and we all go our own directions for the summer, make sure to raise a toast and observe a moment of silence for those crusty crustaceans we all crave. Mudbugs, crawdads, crayfish and crawfish – whatever the region may call them – Texas calls them delicious.



Matt Griesmyer: The Signal

Bob Besfield of the Knights of Columbus Council 6557 pours beer from a tap at a drink tent.



Matt Griesmyer: The Signal

ABOVE: Jan Johnston of the Loose Caboose scoops a bucket of spicy Cajun crawfish.

BELOW: George Esparaza of Phydeaux's Flying Flea Circus and Wahoo Medicine Show entertains patrons and volunteers alike.

