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Innocence Project defends wrongly convicted



CHYNNA DEHOYOS:THE SIGNAL

Jimmy Fowler, criminology major, asks Jeff Blackburn questions regarding the Anthony Graves case at the speaker series event.

Chynna DeHoyos
The Signal

With more than 273 post-conviction DNA exonerations in the United States, the Innocence Project is committed to reforming the issues in the legal processes that allow innocent people to be wrongly convicted.

The Innocence Project is comprised of a small group of lawyers, students, teachers and volunteers around the country who look into cases where the convicted have some proof of innocence.

The Innocence Project's founder Jeff Blackburn came to speak at UHCL Sept. 27 about their latest

battle won, Anthony Graves who was exonerated in October 2010.

Graves was convicted in the October 1994 murders of Bobbie Davis, her daughter and four of Davis' grandchildren. Texas Monthly magazine described the killings as one of the most brutal murders the town of Somerville, Texas. The victims were bludgeoned, stabbed, shot and then set on fire.

Graves was brought in after the main suspect Robert Carter, a father of one of the children in the murders, named Graves as his accomplice in the murders. Due to the brutality of the murders, the police believed there was

no way one man could commit such an act alone.

Carter recanted his statement later in life and said that the only reason he gave Graves' name to the police is because they threatened to implement his wife as an accomplice if he did not provide a second name. Carter, who barely knew Graves, thought that it would be easy to prove Graves innocent. In Carter's statement where he named Graves, he calls him by the wrong name several times.

Carter was wrong. Despite lack of physical evidence, Graves was found

SEE INNOCENCE, PAGE 6

'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' repealed

LGBT population free to serve openly in military

Ashley Smith
The Signal

The military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," policy was officially repealed Sept. 20, giving homosexuals the right to serve in the military openly without risk of discharge.

"As of today, patriotic Americans in uniform will no longer have to lie about who they are in order to serve the country they love," President Barack Obama said in a statement released by the White House Sept. 20. "As of today, our armed forces will no longer lose the extraordinary skills and combat experience of so many gay and lesbian service members."

The Family Research Council

SEE DADT, PAGE 6



PAUL LOPEZ:THE SIGNAL

FINAL FOUR ON FINAL PHASE

UHCL close to selecting its first mascot

Ryan L. Hart
The Signal

After 37 years, UHCL is in the homestretch of landing its first-ever official mascot.

The nominations have been narrowed down from more than 1,400 to four: blue heron, hawk, buck and egret.

The buck was originally denied acceptance by the Mascot Leadership Team into the final choice list for being gender specific but was put back on the list after an overwhelming response from students to do so.

The bobcat and voyager choices were also highly popular but could not be used because of other schools having the same mascot.

The mascot nomination process consists of five phases: 1) submission of mascot ideas and the narrowing down by the Mascot Leadership Team; 2) submission of professional graphic images; 3) approval of professional refinement of graphic images; 4) one final vote from students, alumni, faculty, staff and university friends; and 5) the unveiling of the new mascot.

The process is currently in phase two.

SEE MASCOT SEARCH, PAGE 6

Budget cuts continue to plague UHCL as attendance rises

Debra Machemehl
The Signal

UHCL President William Staples addressed faculty and staff about budget cuts, downward expansion, and campus accomplishments Sept. 26.

The president's presentation was designed differently from previous years, allowing key administrators to be part of the presentation and speak about their areas of expertise.

Despite reaching a record enrollment, Staples recognized the recent cuts to state funding and the effect on the UHCL budget was on the forefront of everyone's mind.

"It is a serious issue," Staples said. "There is no two ways about it. It is not just a UHCL issue, it is not just a Texas issue, it is basically a national issue."

The university had a \$5.8

million reduction in state appropriation funds. This represents a 14 percent decrease in the fund formula, which calculates how much the state funds the university per credit hours.

"The university approached the budget decrease over a three-year budget period," said Michelle Dotter, vice president for administration and finance.

The university already implemented \$1.9 million cutbacks for the FY2011 and FY2012 budgets.

The university still must implement a 1.55 percent decrease for FY2013.

"This reduction does shift a greater impact on students," Dotter said.

Students felt the impact from cutbacks this fall from tuition increases voted on earlier this spring by the Board of Regents

for the UH System. Undergraduates had a 3.95 percent increase. Graduate students saw a 4.95 percent increase.

"At this time, we don't know if there will be a tuition increase for 2012-2013," Staples said. "Board approval of any increase for 2012-2013, if it were to occur, would not happen until Spring 2012."

Students are not the only ones impacted by the budget deficit. The university saw a 4 percent reduction in workforce with a loss of 32 positions.

Various UHCL departments have vacant positions, and all have to deal with a decrease in the managing and operational budget for the FY2012 as well as a 1.5 percent projected decrease to their FY2013 budgets.

While the university gained \$2.1 million in spending revenue

for FY2012 through increase in enrollment and tuition, this still left a shortfall of \$1.3 million for the university.

"Enrollment growth in FY2012 is one source that will assist in covering the \$1.3 estimated shortfall for FY2013," Dotter said. "We also plan to depend on the use of university reserves as needed, additional revenue estimates, reallocations and it may be necessary to make additional reductions. We have about six months to develop these items before we complete the FY2013 budget in the spring of 2012."

Students might be looking at another increase in tuition and even additional student fees beginning the fall of 2012.

"I am hoping this remaining deficit will not affect students," Hodde said. "Departments will

present proposed fee increases for next school year at the Nov. 8 SGA meeting. Students will also have an opportunity to hear about the budget in two town hall meetings."

The first town hall meeting is scheduled for Nov. 2 at 6 p.m. in the Forest Room with Staples and Carl Stockton, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. The second meeting, Nov. 3 at noon in Forest Room, will be with Staples and Dotter.

"Students are encouraged to attend and hear the presentations and make their voices heard," Hodde said. "It is not the students' fault the budget was decreased from the state. And to put the budget constraint on the student is not fair."

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 6

UNITED STATES INJUSTICE SYSTEM

EDITORIAL

Imagine you are relaxing at your parents’ home when you hear a knock on the door. Upon answering the door, you are met by police officers who arrest you, forcing you to go with them without explanation.

After a lengthy wait in a holding room, you are approached by a magistrate who informs you that you are being charged with capital murder. You have just been falsely accused. Anxious and scared, your mind becomes paralyzed, unable to process this information – this has to be a mistake, a horrible prank.

The truth is that falsely accused victims have indeed been pranked. Pranked by a system plagued by injustices such as eyewitness misidentification issues, racial intolerance and a politicized system that often leads to wrongful convictions.

This was the case for Anthony Graves, a man who believed in a criminal justice system that ultimately failed him at the worst possible time. Graves was arrested Aug. 22, 1992 and he was exonerated Oct. 29, 2010. Although he has been exonerated, the justice system robbed 18 years of his life, during which he missed nearly two decades of his mother’s life, his children’s lives, and his own life to be free in a country that pledges “...liberty and justice for all.”

The most common cause for wrongful convictions is eyewitness misidentification issues. Simply put, people, who often have trouble remembering details, are asked to identify or describe a suspect involved in a particular crime.

Poor policing procedures are partly to blame for faulty eyewitness accounts. Most departments use lineups, which are often

biased. Sometimes, it is not even disclosed to witnesses, who feel pressured to choose a suspect, that the suspect may not even be a part of the lineup. Another questionable technique that some departments use is suggestive questioning, in which they may show the witness a picture of a man in handcuffs and ask “did he commit the crime?”

In Graves’ case, no one witnessed the crime take place, and the only eyewitness account was from a night clerk who was hypnotized in order to give a description of one of the two black men she believed she saw carrying gas cans the night of the murders.

When did hypnosis become an acceptable identification method? Other faulty identification methods include voice matching, scent matching (in which a dog “sniffs” out the suspect), and body-part matching (attempting to match ears, lips, or other strange body parts to alleged suspects).

Another widely used, yet questionable method, is the use of polygraph, or lie detector, tests. Polygraph tests measure increases in an individual’s breathing rate, heart rate, blood pressure and perspiration, which are also symptoms of nervousness. It is difficult to detect if someone is nervous out of guilt or if he is nervous because he has just been falsely accused of committing a horrific crime.

Perhaps Graves’ number one mistake was being a black man in small town America – Somerville, Texas, to be exact. Texas was a Jim Crow state and these racial tensions still exist, especially in some of its smaller, rural areas. In fact, Graves’ case was moved to a larger county because of mounting tension in Somerville.

Black Americans only represent 12 percent of the U.S.

population, yet make up more than over half of the U.S. prison population. In Texas, black men are seven times more likely than whites to go to prison.

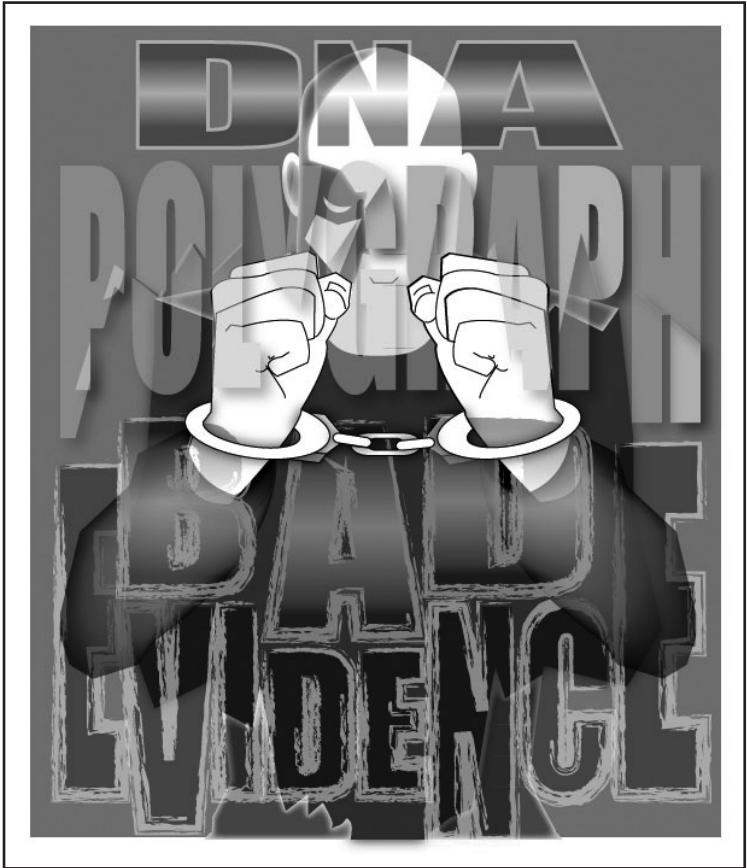
Surely these numbers indicate blacks commit more crimes, right? Wrong. Studies by such groups as the Human Rights Watch and the Department of Health and Human Services found whites use more drugs than blacks, yet black males are sent to prison on drug-related charges 13 times more than white men. The reason – simple economics. Whites often have more money to afford better representation and more resources to conduct their “business” off the streets.

While on trial, Graves experienced the harsh realities of racial injustice. In the United States, individuals are supposed to experience a trial by peers. In Graves’ case, there was only one black member on the jury, which may not have been an accident. A study of felony cases in Dallas County found that blacks were “systematically excluded” from juries.

Juries are made up of people, who, unfortunately, are prone to biases based off of their own values, beliefs and prejudices. When people are selected to join a jury, these beliefs often follow them into the courtroom, especially when the suspect is of another race. What is the result? Verdicts based off of the color of one’s skin instead of the facts of the case.

Although there was no physical evidence or motive to reasonably charge Graves, it took the jury less than two hours to choose his fate – death. The one witness who could have spared his life refused to testify because, as a white woman, she did not want her parents or the community to know she was involved with Graves’ brother, a

WANTNEEDO by KALAN LYRA



black man.

Another flaw in the system is that it is politicized, which may drive some district attorneys to focus on winning cases without regard to the defendant’s fate, just to boost their “numbers” for election purposes. It also does not help that public defenders are underpaid, overworked or simply uninterested in challenging the current system.

However, before we point our pitch forks toward seemingly “corrupt” district attorneys or “lazy” public defenders, we must understand that these individuals are a reflection of society at large. As a society, we want to hear that the bad guys are locked up, never to threaten our precious society again; therefore, we do not question the current system.

It is up to us to hold ourselves and those we put into power accountable. We can take

action by writing to Congress to reform eyewitness identification procedures to exclude unreliable scientific methods. We can demand reform for jury selection to increase juror diversity. We can demand that suspects who proclaim their innocence be given post-conviction DNA testing. We can demand that interrogations are recorded and kept on file. We can work with organizations like the Innocence Project to help overturn wrongful convictions.

Racial intolerance, eyewitness misidentification and a politicized system are to blame for our failing justice system. Ironically, all of these issues call into question our own character and values as a society. Who are we to let our justice system crumble to the point where innocent people are sent away for life...or even put to death?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am thrilled to read any article that touts the successes of Latinos, particularly at a time in our history when we are subject to such extreme racism and xenophobia. The article was very well written, but spoke mainly to the reasons why our pursuit of higher education has been lacking rather than why the rate of college enrollment is increasing. Personally, I think the former makes for a more interesting and productive conversation, but it is one that would require a whole

SERIES of articles. There are too many variables to place all Latinos under one cause and effect blanket. Of particular interest to me would be an article addressing not the romantic struggle of first generation Americans finding better lives for themselves in a promised land, but of the millions of poor Latinos who have grown up in barrios and ghettos across this country and what growing up in a world of poverty and dysfunction does to their sense of self worth, ambition, and hope for

their own futures. The Signal’s article touches briefly on the idea that finances and lack of awareness with regard to resources are issues, but does not address the deep seeded damage poverty and a lack of a solid educational foundation does to one’s psyche, particularly when it comes to something as complicated, demanding, and foreign as attending college.

Jose Castillo
Community member

THE SIGNAL

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‘Project VALET’ offers low-cost mammograms

Cindy Marquez
The Signal

October is breast cancer awareness month, but for many, especially women, awareness and prevention cost money they don’t have for a problem they can’t afford to fix even if they know they have cancer.

The U.S. Census Bureau report, “Small Area Health Insurance Estimates,” indicated that for 2007, there were 168,910 women, aged 40 – 64 years, with no insurance.

I understand what it’s like to need medical treatment, but not be able to afford the ridiculous costs. In 1997, I was diagnosed with a chronic condition at the age of 20, and I was uninsured. Knowing that I would need proper health care the rest of my life, my mom researched some private health insurance carriers.

After finding out most of the carriers wouldn’t cover me with a pre-existing condition and the ones that would, I couldn’t afford, my gastroenterologist recommended that I apply for the Harris County Gold Card. Fortunately, I was approved.

Unfortunately, many people



STAFF COLUMN

fall through the cracks and never receive the medical attention they need.

Uninsured women living in the U.S. don’t get the necessary preventative screenings due to the lack of affordable private insurance or do not qualify for medical assistance programs.

The alarming fact is there will be an estimated 39,520 female deaths caused by recently diagnosed breast cancer in 2011-2012, indicated on The American Cancer Society (ACS) website.

I’m sure the availability of health care for these women will vary, if any was provided at all. It’s very frightening to think about the potential loss of

a woman’s life that could have possibly been prevented simply by accessibility to the appropriate health care.

Patients screened through the Project VALET (PV) program deeply express how grateful they are for the chance to have a screening mammogram, who otherwise may never receive one or receive one when it’s too late.

With such a high volume of uninsured women, there is clearly a need for programs that offer preventative screenings such as PV. With initial funding from the National Breast Cancer Foundation, development began in January 2008 to create PV, a program formed to address the needs of Houston Department of Health and Human Services patients (HDHHS).

PV provides mammograms at no cost to patients of HDHHS who are 40 - 65 years old, do not have health insurance or the Harris County Gold Card, and are referred for a screening mammogram by their doctor or nurse practitioner.

PV arranges for MD Anderson’s Mobile Mammography unit to regularly visit several of the

city’s participating health centers. Participating clinics that provide a pap and clinical breast exams are La Nueva Casa De Amigos Health Center, Northside Health Center and Sunnyside Health Center.

In order to receive a no-cost screening mammogram, a pap test and a clinical breast exam must be scheduled at an HDHHS Family Planning and Pap Clinic. The appointment phone line is 832-393-5428, and the cost is \$3. This is the only cost patients incur in the entire screening process.

Eligible participants attend an educational session at one of the city’s health and multi-service centers to learn what to expect on the day of the mammogram screening and the importance of early detection for breast cancer.

Follow-up diagnostic evaluations are provided by PV and coordinated through The Rose, a Houston non-profit breast cancer organization that provides services to low-income and uninsured women. Women diagnosed with breast cancer will receive assistance in obtaining treatment from navigators from The Rose,

along with PV personnel.

Currently, only four out of 890 women who have received a mammography screening through PV have been diagnosed with breast cancer and received treatment for their breast cancer through either the Harris County Hospital District or at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

ACS states on its website that although breast cancer in men is a rare disease, it accounts for approximately one percent of breast cancer cases in the U.S. The death rate for male breast cancer has decreased by 3.3 percent per year since 2000.

Other facts and figures from ACS point out that only 28.6 percent of uninsured women 40 and older received a mammogram and a clinical breast exam in Texas during 2010. Additional programs such as Project V are crucial for uninsured woman in order to have the opportunity to receive these types of preventative screenings, who may not be able to afford it otherwise.

“I hate when teachers cancel class but make you get on blackboard during class time to do work. smh, what’s the point”

- Jerry McGrath, in response to “Log in, drop out” by Valerie Russell, published Sept. 26, 2011

“Academic research gives both professors and students to collaborate more and develop ideas....The best solution would be to implement research-based curriculum and add into the courses itself so that both requirements are satisfied.”

- Saurav, in response to “Professors defend academic research” by Debra Clark and Keith Parsons, published April 25, 2011

SIGNAL FEEDBACK

“It is absolutely important for UHCL to have free printing services for students. Students need a lot of referral materials and lot of web sources is imperative and mandatory in a student’s career, irrespective to the faculty they are in.”

- Saurav, in response to “Tuition and fees rise, student services fall” by The Signal staff, published Sept. 12, 2011

“Your interview at UHCL was so enjoyable I completely forgot about the time and was late for my own book launch! Great reporting, Wardah! Thanks for one of the best interviews I’ve ever been privileged to receive.”

- James Houston Turner, in response to “Alumnus kicks off book tour at UHCL” by Wardah Ajaz, published Sept. 26, 2011

Have something to say about a story? Go to UHCLTheSignal.com and leave us your comments.



The Adventures of Tony & Ash

By: Kelvin Goodings Jr.



You know what I don’t understand?
All my life my parents have been
telling me things like: “Stay away
from strangers...”



Watch the company you keep, and flee
from immorality. Stating that they tell
me these things because they love me,
but now that I’m here in college...



I don’t know...I find it a little
hypocritical that such loving parents
could drop me off in an atmosphere
full of lust, surrounded by strangers
with only a box of ramen noodles and a
few \$\$ and tell me they love me and
good luck...





Footloose

Audiences, be prepared to cut loose once again

Ashley Smith
The Signal

Hit by the tragic loss of five teenagers, a small Southern town fights to prevent future deaths by outlawing dancing and loud music. Relocating from Boston, high school protagonist Ren McCormack experiences culture shock and decides to take on the town leaders to end the Puritanical law.

“Black Snake Moan” and “Hustle and Flow” director Craig Brewer updates the 1984 classic story of “Footloose.”

When Brewer took on the remake of “Footloose,” in theaters Oct. 14, he didn’t want to make just a dance movie, but pay true homage to the Kevin Bacon film he fell in love with in the 80s.

“I wanted it to be respectful to the original,” Brewer said. “I wanted people who love the original to have a great experience listening to it, but I also wanted it to be slightly different, slightly more contemporary and, hopefully, more relevant.”

The idea for a remake of the film has been floating around for years, with “High School Musical” alumnus Zac Efron and director Kenny Ortega set to take the helm. When Efron dropped out, Chace Crawford of “Gossip Girl” took on the role of McCormack. Ortega, also of “High School Musical” fame, ended up backing out of the film, as did Crawford. The studio still wanted to remake the film and went to Brewer, who turned it down twice.

After several director, writer and actor changes, Brewer finally decided to take on the project, but on the condition that he would make the movie on his terms.

“The head of studio called me and he said, ‘you really need to consider doing this your way,’” Brewer said. “And I was like, ‘well, my way would be ‘Footloose.’ You know, my way would be what Dean Pitchford did with the original movie.”

Brewer’s way included focusing more on the story and the issues the fictional teens go through rather than focusing just on dancing, as was the original intent for the remake. When Ortega was attached to the film, the concept closely resembled “High School Musical,” and Brewer worried “Footloose” would become a spoof of itself.

With Brewer on board and the script re-worked,

the time had come to choose a cast, especially the two central characters, McCormack and his love interest Ariel Moore. “Dancing with the Stars” regular Julianne Hough had auditioned for and won the role of Ariel back when Ortega was still directing, but once the film changed hands, she had to decide whether the role was still right for her.

“So, once Craig joined on and I read that script, I was like, ‘whoa, this is – this is way different,’” Hough said. “This is actually going to be a movie that will show the acting side of me, rather than just the dancing and the singing.”

Because Brewer had the choice to find his own cast, Hough decided to fight for her role and again auditioned for Ariel.

“I auditioned twice for this movie, and I’m so glad I did,” Hough said. “I’m so proud of this movie.”

Brewer then cast newcomer Kenny Wormald as McCormack in the role made famous by Kevin Bacon and rounded out the main cast with Hollywood veteran Dennis Quaid as Ariel’s father, Reverend Moore, originally played by John Lithgow.

With the recent popularity of remakes and the fatigue and animosity audiences have felt toward them, Brewer knows the tough road his movie has ahead, but he feels, if given the chance, lovers of the original “Footloose” will be pleasantly surprised.

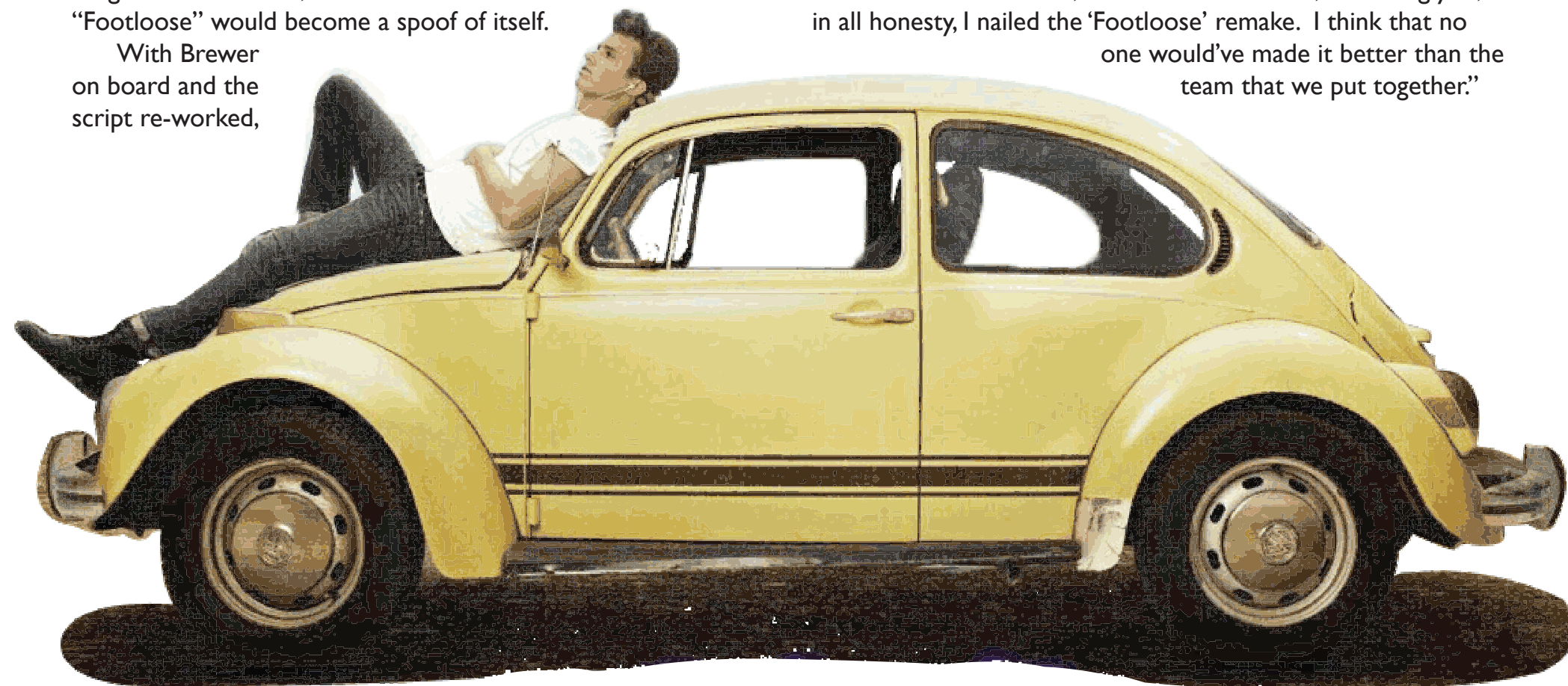
“I had to make peace with the fact that there was going to be a wall of hate coming my way,” Brewer said. “I’ve been reading the reports of it playing around the world. And people love it. People feel like they got to celebrate the original again.”

Even though recent remakes have done poorly in the box office, Brewer points out that remakes are not a new phenomenon and even beloved classics themselves are remakes.

“I know that there’s a backlash at remakes, but everybody needs to take a breath,” Brewer said. “Hollywood has a history of this. You know, ‘The Wizard of Oz’ is a pretty good remake.”

Whether “Footloose” hits No. 1 in the box office during its opening weekend or becomes another “Fright Night,” another remake of a cult classic with a poor reception at the box office, Brewer feels like he did the job he set out to accomplish.

“I have never been more confident in my life as a director that I nailed a movie,” Brewer said. “I mean, I’m telling you, in all honesty, I nailed the ‘Footloose’ remake. I think that no one would’ve made it better than the team that we put together.”



AWARDS, FILMS **Dazzle** at the **GULF COAST FILM FESTIVAL**



Padmashree Rao
The Signal

Talent and love for films had a rendezvous at the 13th annual Gulf Coast Film and Video Festival, which celebrated the art of independent filmmaking and honored actress Marsha Mason with a lifetime achievement award.

With screenings that showcased and encouraged emerging talent, and opportunities to interact and learn about artists and upcoming film projects, the Gulf Coast Film and Video Festival (GCFVF) took place in Kemah Sept. 22-25.

“We are a little festival that know we can,” said Hal Wixon, director and founder of the festival, referring to how the GCFVF was praised several years ago as “the little festival that could” by Indie Flick, an independent film magazine. Though the festival is small in stature, it has a big impact for being recognized as a noteworthy, internationally juried event.

“We get films in every genre with totally different running times, from two-and-a half minutes to 90 minutes long,” explained Wixon, who also acts. “We accept drama, action, musical, animated, foreign, student projects, horror and so on.”

Wixon plans to add a special feature every year to keep the festival interesting and innovative. This year, the new add-on was the Producers and Directors Forum, which enabled creative discussion on filmmaking trends.

The spotlight in this year’s festival shone on Mason, a four-time Academy Award nominee and two-time Golden Globe winner, who was honored with the Cascade Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mason received Golden Globe awards for her roles in “The Goodbye Girl” and “Cinderella Liberty” and was an Oscar nominee for her appearances in the above-mentioned films, as well as in “Chapter Two” and “Only When I Laugh.” She also received an Emmy nomination for her role as “Sherry,” the banjo-playing girlfriend of Frasier Crane’s father in the humorous sitcom “Frasier.” Currently, she stars in a guest role as the mother of Frankie Heck, played by Patricia Heaton in the ABC sitcom “The Middle.”

“We are having a woman, an actress, who has won or been nominated for just about every type of award that you can win in film, TV and theater. She is even a Grammy nominee for a record she and Richard Dreyfuss made. She is very masterful at her trade and very deserving of the Cascade Lifetime Achievement Award,” praised Wixon as he talked about the best moments of the GCFVF this year.

At the Festival Mix and Meet, held at the Tabella Clear Creek Winery Sept. 23, Mason shared her memories and future plans. Her career started with the theater. After two decades of movies and life in Los Angeles, Mason moved to New Mexico 17 years ago. Today she manages her 273-acre organic farm and produces a beauty line called “Resting in the River.” She also authored her memoir, “The Journey,” which was published last year.

“These 17 years are very important because they helped in my

personal maturation,” Mason said. “My personality, my humanity is more fully realized. Acting is my passion, something I love to do.” Mason explained how she has returned to her roots with her renewed love of theater.

“What reignited my love for the theater is that it offered more challenging roles as I got older,” shared Mason. “I have done several readings of plays with some new directors in New York and I am excited about that.”

Mason is appreciative of the independent film industry.

“I also get excited when I see someone do something creative within just a \$30,000 budget,” said Mason praising the indie filmmakers. “The independent film industry has to be supported. It is where all the great creativity is coming from.”

The same sentiment was echoed by Candice Michelle Barley, an emerging actress who acted in the film “Where I Begin,” judged the best of the festival this year.

“I have worked both in big budget films and indie films,” Barley said. “My experience is that doing independent films just blows out of the water the big films. There is just so much heart, so much passion. Everyone is there for the love of the project.”

Barley described how “Where I Begin” was filmed in Oxford, Miss., last summer. With the summer heat, she recalled how the actors had to change their sweaty clothes every 20 minutes as they could not use air conditioning during filming. Still, Barley calls it the best filming experience she had so far.

Another participant in the film festival, Vince Privitera, is an indie film director with close ties to UHCL, having earned a master’s degree in humanities from UHCL. Privitera described his movie ventures as having incorporated both his learning and his career as a psychiatrist and filmmaker.

“All of human behavior is explorable,” Privitera said. “My movie ‘The Disappointed Sniper’ talks about hidden, narcissist rage. The boundary between reality and fantasy is a fine one and I want the audience to think about that.”

Privitera explained how his cast and crew have worked with such commitment, only to be paid with pizza, gas money and potluck dinners.

What stood out at the Gulf Coast Film Festival was the love for the art of filmmaking, despite the hardships in the process. That is the inspiration Wixon drew upon in his message exclusively to the UHCL students:

“I’d like to see films entered from UHCL next year,” Wixon said. “Don’t be afraid to do it. Like Steven Spielberg said to his kids, ‘Pick up a camera and start filming everything you can think of.’ Nothing like OJT – On the Job Training. Don’t wait until the day when you turn around and say, ‘Gee, I wish I had tried that.’”



Marsh Mason, actress and honoree.



Candice Barley, actress



Vince Privitera, director and UHCL alumnus



Hal Wixon, director of GCFVF

DADT: continued from page 1

fought to uphold the DADT policy and, now that it has been repealed, feels that negative consequences are on the way.

“Putting soldiers in positions of forced intimacy, in bathrooms showers and barracks for example, with homosexuals can only lead to an increase in sexual tension, sexual harassment and sexual assault,” said Peter Sprigg, senior fellow for policy studies at the Family Research Council.

On the other hand, those against the DADT policy see the beginning of a new era where all service members can freely serve their country.

“The repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ is an historic milestone along the journey to achieving LGBT equality in America’s military, and is a monumental day for our service members and our nation,” said army veteran Aubrey Sarvis, executive director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network.

Before DADT, individuals who wanted to serve in the military were subjected to questions about their sexual orientation, and if they truthfully disclosed their homosexuality, they were not allowed to serve. The policy, enacted by President Bill Clinton in December 1993, became a compromise to allow homosexuals into the military without being asked about their sexual orientation. In an interview with Katie Couric, Clinton later spoke out against the policy and his want to see it repealed.

“The reason I accepted it [DADT] was because I thought it was better than an absolute ban,” Clinton said in the CBS interview. “Because I was promised it would be better than it was.”

Those in favor of the policy

feel that DADT was important to have in order to maintain discipline and morale.

“Many of its critics are people without military experience who do not understand that the military cannot operate under civilian rules of conduct but must hold to a higher standard,” Sprigg said. “We are working to ensure that freedom of religion and freedom of speech are protected for service members, particularly chaplains, who sincerely disapprove of homosexual conduct.”

Robin Hartley, San Jacinto College nursing student and seven-year Army veteran, feels sexual orientation has no impact on how well soldiers perform their job. She sees the DADT policy as both a blessing and a curse, protecting those from prying into others’ personal lives, but also keeping them from fully being themselves.

“People forget that these military men and women put their lives on hold and at risk to give Americans the freedom to be who they are, and they themselves are not allowed the same freedoms,” Hartley said.

Now that DADT has been repealed, organizations on both sides are continuing their fights.

“Our work is far from done, but today we pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of our patriots as we look forward to a new era of military service – one that honors the contributions of all qualified Americans who have served or who wish to serve,” Sarvis said.



MASCOT SEARCH: continued from page 1

UHCL is offering the 2011 Mascot Artwork and Name Contest, a creative contest for students, faculty, alumni and staff.

The contest is awarding \$300 to the design winners of each of the four mascot options and awarding \$100 to the best name given for each of the options.

The contest ends Oct. 19 at 6 p.m.

Interim Dean of Students and a member of the Mascot Leadership Team David Rachita explained that while the process is serious to the university, it is supposed to be fun.

“Research says students that feel more connected [to their school] are going to be more satisfied,” Rachita said.

Ron Klinger, associate director, organizational development and former mascot of Bowling Green State University is optimistic about the UHCL mascot.

“Serving as Freddie Falcon was one of many great experiences of my life’s journey,” Klinger said. “I look forward to being able to support that experience for other students who attend UCHL.”

There is no official word as to when or if UHCL plans to branch

out into sports and costumed mascots; however, Klinger and Rachita are hopeful that both will happen and believe the possibilities are endless with a new mascot.

This is not the first time UHCL has been close to selecting a mascot.

In 1990, the university was mere moments away from being called the UHCL Hurricanes after former student Scott Martin submitted the \$500 winning idea.

However, the university was forced to put the implementation of the mascot on hold to search for a new president and deal with budget cuts from the state.

While the Hurricanes faded into a memory, the remaining wind was caught by Blockie’s sails in 1999.

Blockie, a cubed figure made up of UHCL’s logo, was created by students to promote events at the school and has since been used as the school’s unofficial mascot.

The unveiling of the new mascot is scheduled to be revealed Spring 2012.

More information regarding the mascot selection and contests can be found at www.uhcl.edu/mascot.

INNOCENCE: continued from page 1

guilty and served 18 years in prison before the Innocence Project interceded on his behalf.

“We are fighters in my group, and we fight to get innocent people out of prison; we don’t fight for guilty people,” explained Jeff Blackburn, founder and chief counsel to the Innocence Project of Texas. “We represent people for which there is proof of innocence.”

That is what the Innocence Project found to be true with Graves when they decided to take his case.

When Graves was arrested for the crime, he was given a polygraph test and failed. Polygraph tests are considered to be unreliable and not admissible in court. The failed polygraph test in Graves’ case was used to create evidence for a conviction. This is an example of the “junk science” that the Innocence Project is trying to do away with.

Junk science is considered to be any science that is not validated through scientific peer review. Statewide DNA tests, and outdated arson policies are also being reviewed.

“Sometimes we are trying so hard to put the criminals in jail that we don’t always make sure we have the criminal,” said Joyce Delores Taylor, adjunct instructor in criminology.

Graves sought out the help of the Innocence Project through the University of Houston Law Center’s Innocence Project and University of St. Thomas’ Innocence Project.

Graves credits his release to Nicole Casarez, secretary of

the Innocence Project, and her students at the St. Thomas’ Innocence Project who worked on his case for six years and only achieved Graves release through a lucky break.

Unlike most cases that the Innocence Project works on, Graves’ case was overturned by research, not by DNA exoneration. When Distinct Attorney Charles Sebesta was taping a 2000 Geraldo Rivera NBC special, Sebesta admitted Carter told him the night before the trial that he committed the murders by himself.

The courts allowed for Graves’ case to be reopened based on the fact Sebesta had not told the defense attorney this knowledge, which might have changed the outcome of Graves’ case. This allowed the conviction to be overturned in the 5th circuit, which paved the way for a retrial.

Graves was exonerated when Burleson County dropped the murder charges against him.

The Innocence Project members believe that the Texas legal system is flawed, which is the main reason why they are out there fighting to bring justice to the wrongly convicted. For one thing, the Innocence Project is trying to reform the way the legal system does eyewitness identification.

With the way the state currently carries out eyewitness identification, the Innocence Project has been able to overturn 75 percent of eyewitness testimonies.

“There are too many people

in prison and on death row who are innocent” said Steven Eggers, associate professor of Criminol.

“One of the reasons for this is the procedure most police departments use to conduct eye-witness lineups, which are biased. Eyewitnesses are notoriously inaccurate and unreliable. There has been a great deal of research to back up this statement.”

Alpha Phi Sigma wanted to bring the Innocence Project onto campus to help students understand a system in which innocent men like Graves could possibly be put to death.

“We take crime very seriously, but in doing so I don’t think we take the time to actually look at the information, and actually hear the individual that’s being prosecuted,” said Taylor, who is also the Alpha Phi Sigma alumni representative.

Eggers has formed an Innocence Project here at UHCL so that criminology students will have the chance to have an effect on the real world of criminal justice. The Innocence Project is always looking for more volunteers because they are overwhelmed with thousands of cases; right now they can only look into a few.

For more information on the Innocence Project, go online to <http://ipoftexas.org>.



BUDGET: continued from page 1

The university saw its highest enrollment this fall with 8,099 students, an 8.9 percent increase from the 2008 fall semester.

“UHCL has the highest enrollment ever in its 38 years of operation,” Staples said.

Students are taking more accredited hours per semester as a result of a university initiative that began two years ago during which the university encouraged students to take nine hours instead of six.

“Universities and community colleges see rises in enrollment any time unemployment rises and in particularly in times of such a severe recession,” stated a Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions representative. “Advanced degrees help individuals stay competitive, while others seek additional training to qualify for positions.”

During the meeting, Staples also updated attendees on the university’s next step on downward expansion since getting approval to add freshman and sophomores to UHCL.

“The question on everyone’s mind is when do we do it,” Staples said. “I can only give you a tentative answer, the earliest we will have freshman on campus is fall 2014.”

Visits to the UH-Victoria campus will also be planned to see their implementations of downward expansion.

“We are going to look to see what went well for them and what did not,” Staples said. “We will not put UHCL at risk before a detail plan is in place before having freshman and sophomores on campus.”

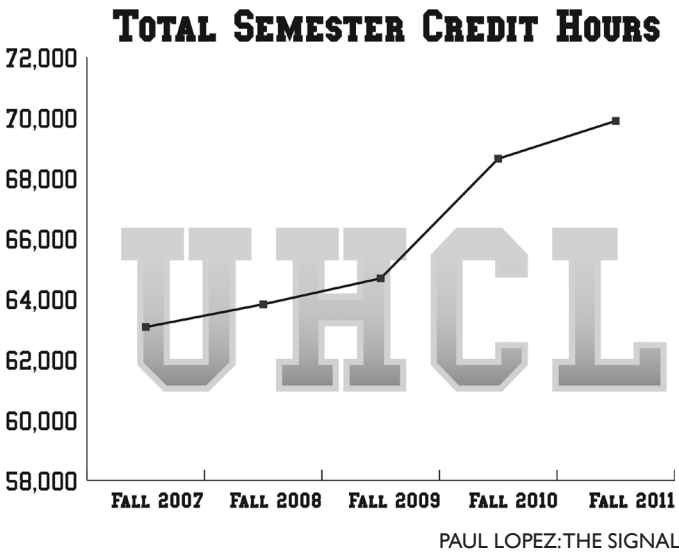
Staples pointed out that despite budget cuts and challenges faced for downward expansion, UHCL remains a “very good university.”

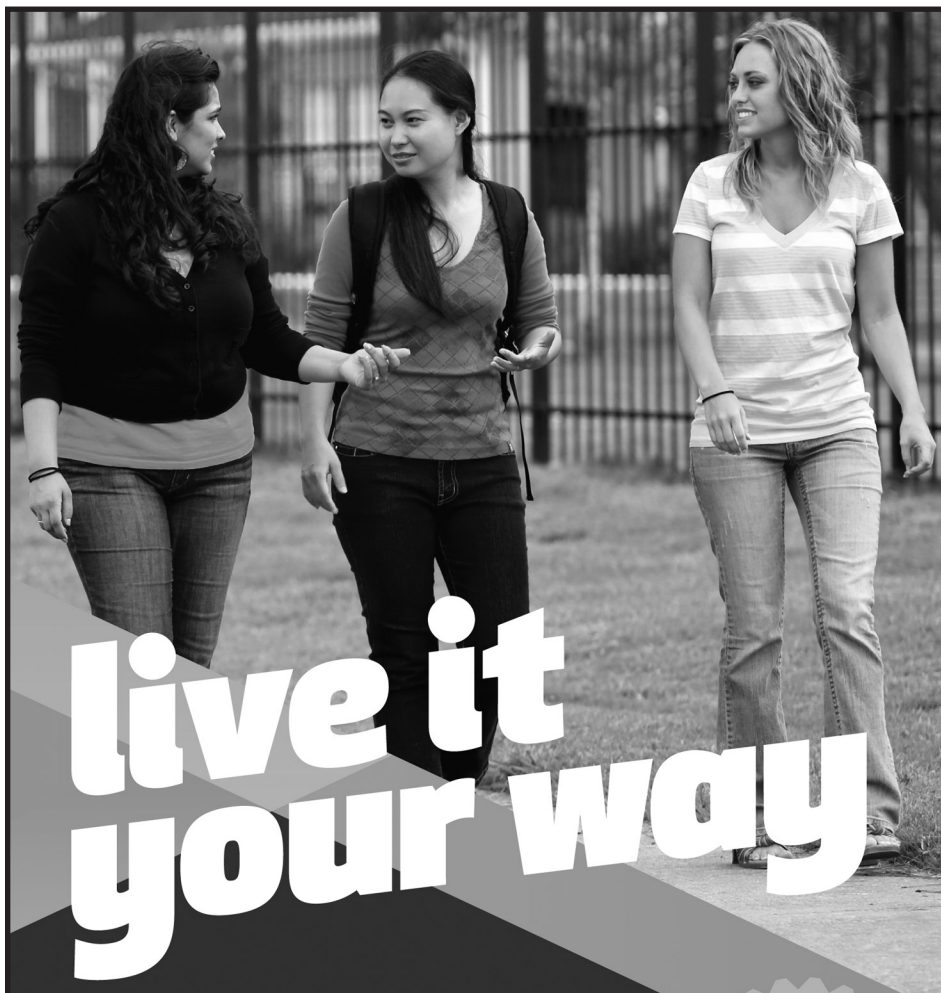
“UHCL provides 40 undergraduate and 45 graduate programs geared to both full-time and part-time students, including many students who must juggle school, work and family responsibilities,” Staples said. “By working with our area community colleges partners, UHCL is able to provide a seamless transfer for students making the transition from a commu-

nity college to UHCL. UHCL has also committed additional funding for scholarships while maintaining an overall tuition rate below the state average for public universities. UHCL also offers programs and courses on-campus, off-campus and online to meet the various needs of our student.

Staples points out this is not the first time UHCL has faced tough times naming the years 1985, 1991, and 2003 specifically. Although he does admit, “This is a little worse than previous times.”

“Let me assure you, we will get through this,” Staples said. “We are a strong enough university, and we will adapt and respond like we have in the past. That is why we are a successful institution.





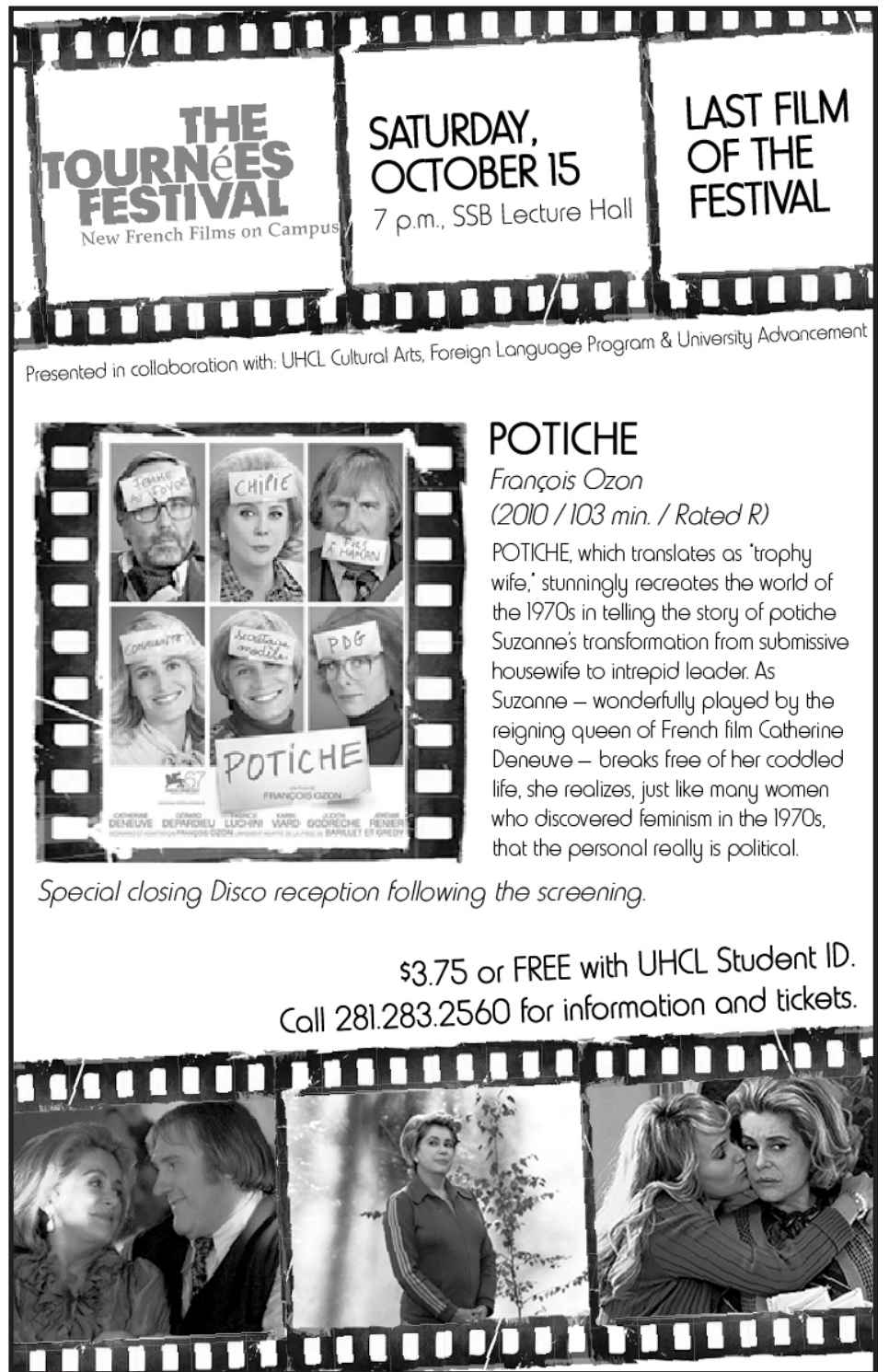
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THE TOURNÉES FESTIVAL

New French Films on Campus

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15
7 p.m., SSB Lecture Hall

LAST FILM OF THE FESTIVAL

Presented in collaboration with: UHCL Cultural Arts, Foreign Language Program & University Advancement

POTICHE

François Ozon
(2010 / 103 min. / Rated R)

POTICHE, which translates as "trophy wife," stunningly recreates the world of the 1970s in telling the story of potiche Suzanne's transformation from submissive housewife to intrepid leader. As Suzanne – wonderfully played by the reigning queen of French film Catherine Deneuve – breaks free of her coddled life, she realizes, just like many women who discovered feminism in the 1970s, that the personal really is political.

Special closing Disco reception following the screening.

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Deadline to apply is **Monday Dec 12, 2011**
applications are available in the Student Life Office (SSCB 1.204)
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Applicants must be available
Wednesday, January 11, 2012 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm on .
Friday, January 13, 2012 from 1:00pm to 4:00 pm
Saturday, January 14th, 2012 from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm
(If your interested in volunteering at Pearland campus-Thursdays, January 12, 2012 from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.)
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S Student Government Association



Denny's serves up UHCL special

Kevin Aguilar
The Signal

UHCL students, alumni, faculty and staff have a new "home" to get their breakfast, lunch or dinner fix.

The Denny's on Bay Area Boulevard, across the street from the university, has updated its décor in a select area of the restaurant to pay tribute to UHCL.

The restaurant has been at the Bay Area location for almost two decades serving patrons and the local community, but now the restaurant managers want the UHCL community to know they are available day or night, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The walls of the UHCL room inside the restaurant are adorned with UHCL T-shirts, flags and a banner welcoming everyone from the university.

"We want to make this an extension of the campus, an atmosphere where students can feel relaxed and they can study," said Ayobami Awe, Denny's area manager. "There's Wi-Fi, extra outlets to plug in a laptop and there's food at the same time."

The idea for the UHCL room came from Senior Area Manager Jeff Edwards, who tried the concept at a Denny's restaurant in College Station, Texas, which embraced the energy and branding of the Texas A&M Aggies. Edwards saw a positive reaction with students and faculty at College Station and that is why he and Awe decided to try to recreate that same atmosphere with UHCL.

"College can be expensive, so we're offering a 20 percent discount to all students, faculty and staff when they present their UHCL IDs," Edwards said.

There's no minimum order required and the size of the dining party is no factor whatsoever. Students are free to use the room to study, grab a bite to eat or just sit and drink a cup of coffee.

The UHCL room at Denny's can also be reserved for organizations and groups on campus who would like to hold their meetings or events in a different setting, just as long as they give a 48-hour notice.

The restaurant is currently looking for more UHCL memorabilia and other campus related items to fill the room. The UHCL community is encouraged to contribute anything from T-shirts to photos that represent the university and its student body.

"I would like to put up more UHCL items, even pictures from students and organizations on campus," Awe said.

Awe wants to make an impact on the UHCL population as a whole and leave the door open for future generations to benefit from their homage to the university.

Denny's has always been a part of the culture at UHCL and now the restaurant wants to play a bigger role at UHCL.

Dion McInnis, associate vice president for university advancement, recalled a story from one of the university's distinguished alumni he had interviewed several years ago at the restaurant.

"My family and I are going to Denny's for coffee. That is where this began and it will always be special," she told McInnis.

"I am grateful that our Denny's has opened its arms to the UHCL family in this special way," said Charity Ellis, UHCL director of alumni and community relations.



COURTESY: UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT
Restaurant manager Ayobami Awe opens his heart and restaurant to UHCL.

"The room will become part of the culture here, a place to study over warm breakfast in the middle of the night, a place to connect, a place for memories to be made and new traditions to be created."

Taking action for the cure



WARDAH AJAZ :THE SIGNAL

SGA representatives participate in The Signal's version of the Pink Glove Dance during the weekly SGA meeting.



RACHEL MIRANDA :THE SIGNAL

Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure was held Saturday, Oct. 1 in downtown Sam Houston Park.

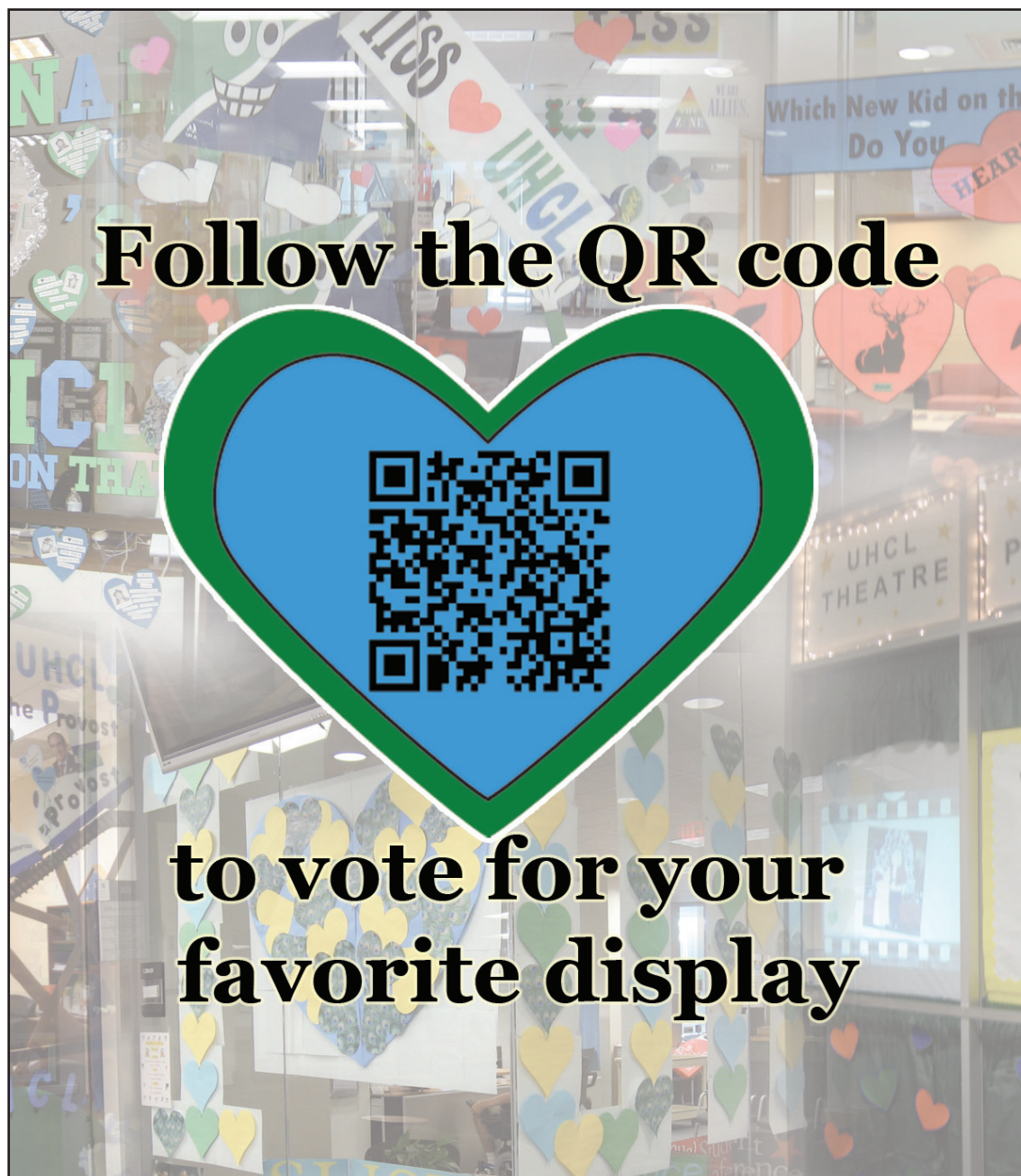


Scan the QR code above to see UHCL's version of the Pink Glove Dance.



Scan the QR code above to see a slideshow of the Susan G. Komen Race.

UHCL ♥'s school pride displays



Follow the QR code

to vote for your favorite display

ASHLEY SMITH :THE SIGNAL

Last month UHCL departments throughout campus were asked to participate in the office decoration contest for I Heart UHCL Day. Offices were encouraged to show their "love" for UHCL by decorating their area in a blue and green theme. Students, faculty and staff were also encouraged to dress up and participate in a school spirit contest. The deadline to vote is Tuesday, Oct. 11, at noon. The winner will be announced at I Heart UHCL Day, Wednesday, Oct. 12.