

THE SIGNAL

Volume XXXVII, Number 6

www.uhcl.edu/thesignal

April 20, 2009



UNIVERSITY BUDGET PROPOSES A STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

Jenna Simsen
The Signal Staff

In a recent budget proposal from William Staples, the University of Houston-Clear Lake president announced his top priorities regarding the usage of funds for fiscal year 2010. One item on the list was the proposal for an on-campus Student Success Center.

Darlene Biggers, associate vice president for student services, originally proposed the student

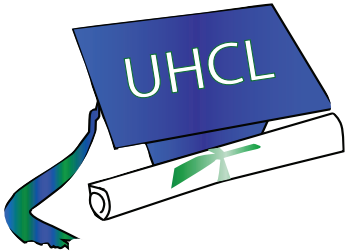
success center in March to Carl Stockton, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. The idea was taken to Staples who then publicly presented his goals to the university community.

With information gathered from the pilot program developed in the spring of 2008, the university was able to gauge the amount of student interest and desire to expand the success program in to a success center. The pilot program involved 100 students who participated in a tutoring program and 150 students

Student Success: continued on page 10

Decisions, Decisions

Overcrowding Issues
Plague Upcoming
Graduations



Brenda Cabaniss
The Signal Staff

Now that the Ides of March has passed, Easter is a mere distant memory of white rabbits and colorful eggs. The next thing to look forward to are May flowers, right? Well, for most people yes, but for many students and parents across the country--it's graduation. Included in that eager bunch are University of Houston-Clear Lake students. This year, graduates get a little added surprise.

Students planning to graduate spring 2009 have one more item to add to their never-ending, To-Do List. Now, UHCL seniors have the pleasure of deciding which family members get to partake in the graduation festivities because for this semester's ceremony graduates are being asked to "voluntarily restrict" their guest lists.

"This year, the university is asking that graduates limit their guests to five," said Paul Willingham, chief of police for UHCL.

The request is not to add another burden to students. Instead, school officials are requesting the limit as a safety precaution. They want to avoid overcapacity problems that have plagued UHCL graduation ceremonies in the past.

At last December's ceremony, for example, crowd control was an issue when Reliant Arena's maximum capacity limit was exceeded by 1,000 people. Under normal circumstances, the fire

marshal would have contacted the security guards at the gates of Reliant Park and had the guards notify arriving guests of the issue. Those guests would have been refused entry into the arena. However, that was not done because of a break in communication. Thus, the excess number of people posed a safety hazard.

In order to avoid similar circumstances for next month's graduation ceremony, UHCL officials are politely asking graduates to keep their invite numbers down.

"Approximately 1100 students have applied for graduation in May," said Yvette Bendeck, associate vice president for enrollment management. "Of those applicants, 900 students have chosen to participate in the commencement ceremony."

However, the problem is not with the number of graduates or their guests, but mostly due to the size of the venue. UHCL graduations are held at Reliant Arena. The arena has a seating capacity of 5,800 and an overflow room of 600.

To put things into perspective, take for example a graduate who has been waiting for this moment for 30 years. He is married, has three married children, 10 grandchildren and a few neighbors that have stood by him for the long haul. That alone would be 20 guests for one graduate. Multiply that number by 900 graduates and "Houston, we have a problem." Even if each graduate only invited 10 guests,

Graduation: continued on page 10

Cinco de Mayo Celebration



Jade Emanuel: The Signal

Because final exams fall on the week of May 5, the HACE student organization sponsored an early Cinco de Mayo celebration, where the Mexico Ballet performed and promoted Mexican culture through their high energy folklore dances.

UHCL Postpones Expansion Proposal

Luis Aceves
The Signal Staff

The proposed legislation regarding the downward expansion was originally set to have been introduced to the Texas Legislature in the 2009 session, however it has been decided that the proposal will be postponed until the 2011 session.

Many items of importance regarding downward expansion were taken into account concerning this decision. Some of these items include the further discussion of the needs among groups and organizations of key interest such as the local school districts and community colleges.

"Once the university obtains the authority for downward expansion, we will decide what year we will exercise that authority based on the financial condition of the university, among

other factors," said William Staples, president of University of Houston-Clear Lake.

UHCL's plans for downward expansion was approved by The University of Houston System Board of Regents last December. One of the plan's qualifications to be met was that UHCL would begin admitting freshman in 2012.

"Whether the downward expansion was proposed during the 2009 legislative session or the 2011 session, our original resolution was to admit freshmen by 2012," Staples said. "We are planning to be prepared for that date."

If there is an approval from the state legislature in 2011, "it is an approval to start planning but it is not required to act on it," said Dion McInnis, associate vice president for university advancement at UHCL

McInnis noted that this is a

very multifaceted subject and many factors go into account to determine the best strategy to address the planning of downward expansion.

"Fundraising is something that we are always going to be mindful of," McInnis said. "We know there is always going to be fundraising and we know we will always need scholarships. Fundraising never kicks in until the plan is approved."

"We first must obtain a clear understanding of what our donors are willing to support. From there on, we can then start to determine our needs. Then we can begin to examine our vision, value and needs and see how we may align ourselves with the interests of our donors and other fellow supporters. We both have visions, values and needs and depending on where those overlap will determine our options."

IN THIS ISSUE



WRESTLEMANIA
PAGE 6



HOOKS BASEBALL
PAGE 7

Success center proposal brings important issues to mind

Students’ success is directly proportional to the support a college or university offers to its students.

Recently, a budget proposal was presented that included a proposal for a Student Success Center. This center would serve as a hub that provides services for students so we can readily find help as we progress through college careers and beyond.

While our humble college has numerous services and offices to help students succeed, there is no centralized office to direct students when in need.

If a student needs help writing, go to the Writing Center. If a student needs help practicing for the GSP test, talk to one of the communication professors. If a student needs help with finding a book, ask a librarian. What if you just plain need help though?

Is there a genuine need for a center? I do not mean just a few scattered offices, but a genuine, honest-to-goodness office where the staff specializes in giving help to all students are able to direct efforts to help students.

You might as well ask if there is a need for a telephone book, or Google, or even a directory.

A Student Success Center that not only is dedicated to the success of its students, but also thrives-nay-survives on the success of the students would be a beneficial investment for the college.

What services would the center provide?

Other schools across the country have similar programs. One common goal of most centers is to help students realize and achieve their academic goals while maximizing their potential.

This would be an absolute boon for the students and faculty at University of Houston-Clear Lake. Students who have problems with a required class, for example Advanced Writing, can be sent to three places to start with: the teacher, the library and the Writing Center. From there, where can they go? If there are no solutions at any of those places, what is the student left to do?

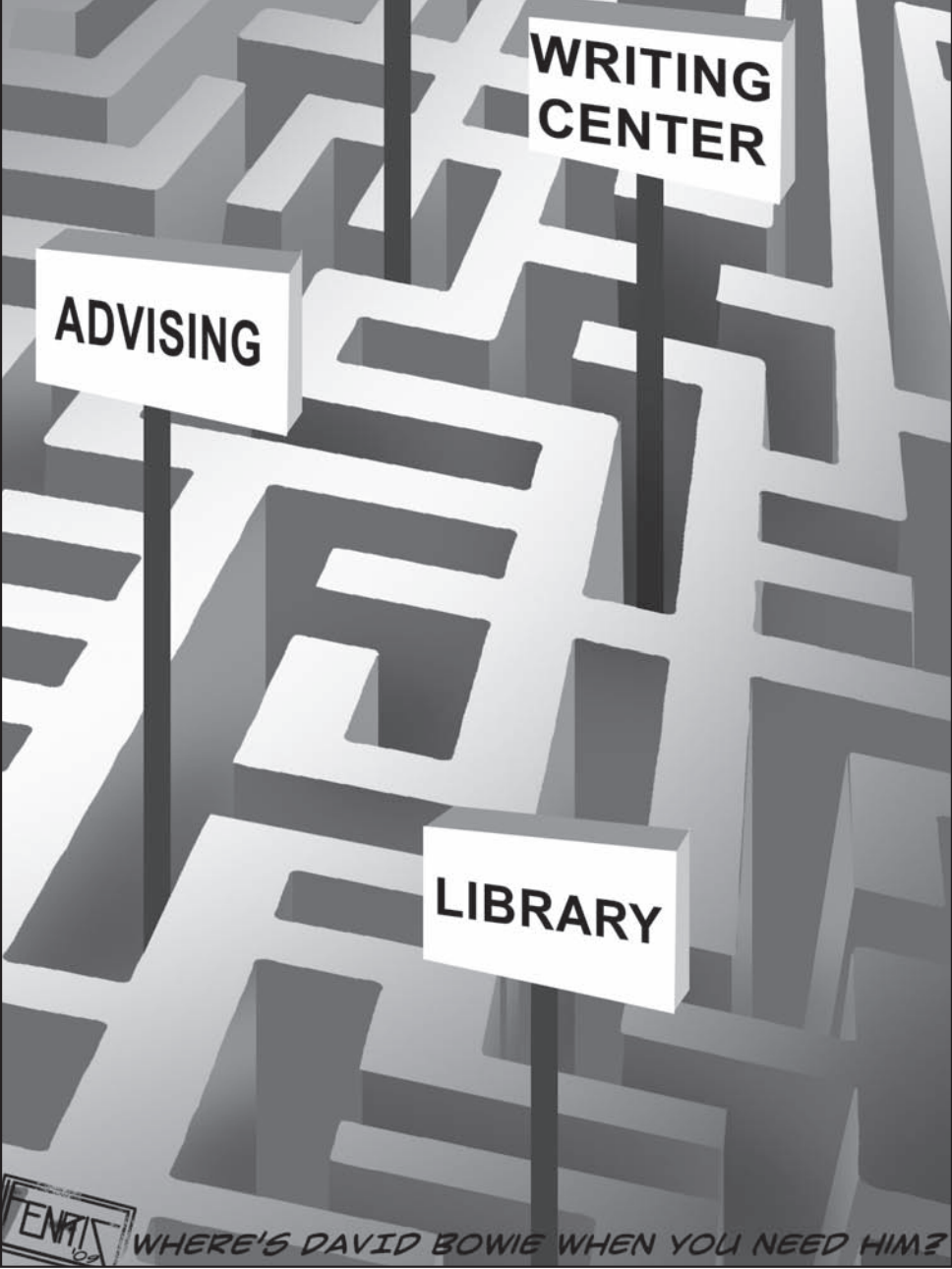
The help that will be offered at a Student Success Center will not only assist current students, but also those transitioning into our campus from other backgrounds. Potential incoming freshmen could receive classes and help in managing their time, balancing school life and other difficult tasks that we, as upperclassmen, overlook, but are vital to succeed in transitioning from high school to college life.

At this point having a Student Success Center would be where students could turn, but for now there is no place for students to go.

Investing in the center and setting aside precious funds so help for students can always be given would be a sound investment to make now for the long run.

When identifying the potential markup of tuition and other fees to counterbalance the funding for the center, students and other involved parties would have to identify and weigh the options, but the real question that needs to be addressed is simple.

Can we afford not to?



Rami Schindler:The Signal

CrossSignals

The Signal staff invites students, faculty and staff to visit our new blog via our Twitter site at www.twitter.com/uhclthesignal to voice your comments and opinions about anything involving UHCL campus life.

The editors will follow the blog dialogues closely as a way to track topics of importance for possible inclusion in the student newspaper.

We may even pull blog entries to post in our Cross Signals section of The Signal to emphasize these threads of conversation. The newspaper has always been a forum for student voices on campus. This new blog offers a more convenient way for students to find that voice.

We are now on



To Do List

- ☒ Sign up
- ☐ Log In
- ☐ Find “uhclthesignal”
- ☐ Become a follower
- ☐ Leave a comment

www.twitter.com/uhclthesignal

THE SIGNAL STAFF

Editor	Matt Griesmyer	Broadcast Reporters	Hayley Shaw Lindsey Lashway
Assistant Editor	Jenna Simsen	Reporters/ Photographers	Luis Aceves Brenda Cabaniss Derek Calhoun Tina DiVora Adolfo Gonzalez Mark Guillory William Humbird Nancy T. Nguyen Lucia Y. Rodriguez Dianna Shaw Hayley Shaw
Designers	Jade Emanuel Christi Minter	Editorial Cartoonist	Rami “Fenris” Schindler
Assistant Designers	Shawnie Boudreaux Britney Godfrey Aide Ramirez		
Videographers/ Video Editors	Savannah Drake Dustin Koch		
Web Master	Lindsey Lashway		

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.

Address letters to:
The Signal
UH-Clear Lake
2700 Bay Area Blvd., Box 456
Houston, TX 77058

Reach the staff:
Phone: 281-283-2570
Fax: 281-283-2569
E-mail: thesignal@uhcl.edu

**Ad Manager/
Production Asst.** Lindsay Humphrey

Faculty Adviser Taleen Washington

Pregnant And Not Sixteen



Savannah Drake
The Signal Staff

It all started about seven months ago. Hurricane Ike hit pretty hard, leaving us without electricity and more importantly, without anything to do for almost three weeks. Times were tough and my husband and I were forced to

entertain each other. As Forrest Gump would say “that’s all I have to say about that.”

Fast forward to a month and a half later and you can hear the phrase, “Hey babe, I think I’m pregnant,” coming out of my mouth. After the initial shock we became super excited about our new family unit. I took it as a personal opportunity to demonstrate to everyone that I had indeed grown up and was ready to become, not only a parent, but an adult in general.

Even at the age of 23, I felt like I was still being looked at and treated as a child. Now my 4’11” frame, freckles and hair ribbon may not have helped my cause, but things were going to change because I was going to become a mother.

We decided to go to Arkansas to spread the news to my husband’s family. Everyone was so excited and happy to hear of our announcement that my mother-in-law personally took my sister-in-law and I to celebrate. We pulled up to Chili’s restaurant and as I got out of the car, I began to feel that pregnancy glow everyone talks about.

We walked to our table and I could feel my radiance lighting up the room. We sat down and the waitress began handing out our menus. She then placed a child’s menu and crayons in front of me. Seriously. My pink pregnancy glow suddenly turned green with disgust and embarrassment; well, actually I turned green because I needed to vomit, but you get the idea.

A few weeks later I was once again mistaken for an underage teen. I ran to the convenience store to

get a lighter for some birthday candles we needed right away. I grabbed the first lighter I saw and waited in line. I smiled at the cashier who looked at me funny and said “I.D?” I stared at her in shock as she continued, “You need to be at least 18 to buy a lighter here.” I was so upset that I just walked out of the store. As I drove home I came to the conclusion that in a few months I was going to look like a pregnant teen, a statistic.

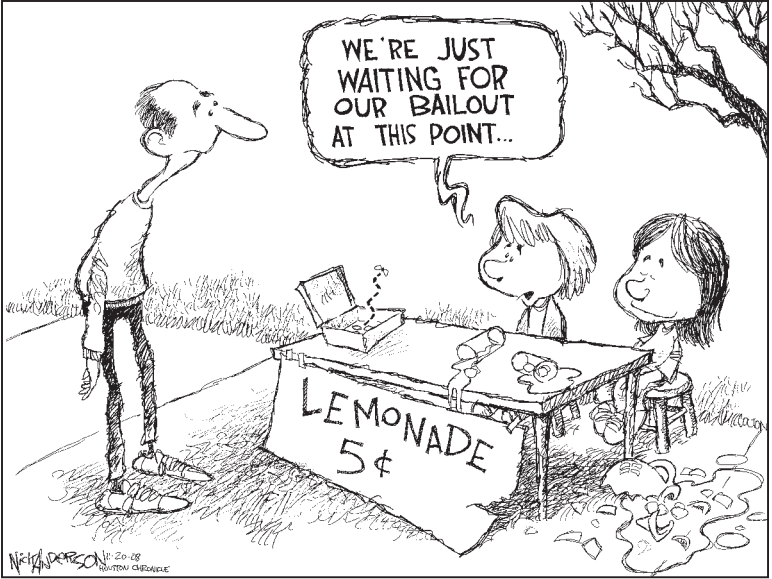
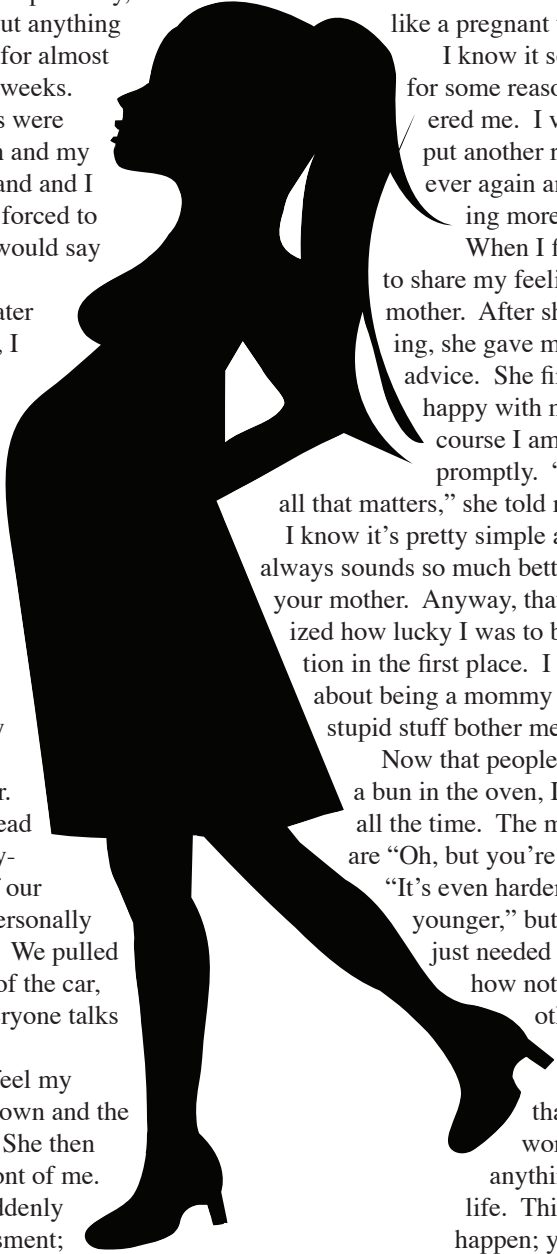
I know it sounds stupid, but for some reason it really bothered me. I vowed never to put another ribbon in my hair ever again and to start dressing more like an adult.

When I finally decided to share my feelings, I called my mother. After she stopped laughing, she gave me some good advice. She first asked if I was happy with my situation. “Of course I am,” I responded promptly. “Well then, that’s all that matters,” she told me.

I know it’s pretty simple advice, but it always sounds so much better coming from your mother. Anyway, that’s when I realized how lucky I was to be in my situation in the first place. I was so happy about being a mommy that letting stupid stuff bother me was ridiculous.

Now that people can tell I have a bun in the oven, I get comments all the time. The most common are “Oh, but you’re so little,” and “It’s even harder when you’re younger,” but I shake it off. I just needed a reminder on how not to care what other people think and just do what you do. I guess that advice can work in regard to anything concerning life. Things are going to happen; you just have to deal and make do with what you have or, you can look at it like

Juno, “I’m already pregnant so what other kind of shenanigans can I get into?”



Hazardous Duty



Mark Guillory
The Signal Staff

It is a topic that makes a lot of people uneasy. As many people who are employed now are walking around on egg shells. There will probably not be workers on television boycotting their wages any time soon now with the present economy.

One employee’s supervisor flat-out told him the railroad just had a huge layoff and those terminated employees will be looking for jobs.

This type of behavior from upper management is probably not helpful to a work environment and can be downright dangerous.

Demeaning people who are already worried about losing their jobs can cause an uneasy work environment.

Another employee tells the story of how a co-worker was

released from his job and drove around in the parking lot for 30 minutes afterward. Other employees were scared to even go outside.

Companies have the right to hire and fire who they want,

but sometimes the outcome can be dangerous, especially when handled the wrong way. So with a rising unemployment rate, businesses should remain as professional as possible.

A hostile work atmosphere lowers the morale of its employees, and this hurts production. Companies should always remember those employees who were loyal to them because the economy will rebound. Companies who mistreat good employees will stand a good chance of losing them when the economy gets better.

The United States is facing difficulties it has not experienced since the Great Depression of the 1930s; at least that is what the news tells us. Watching television it seems that job opportunities are vanishing by the minute.

It is true that the unemployment rate is up to 8.5 percent – the highest it has been since 1992 when it was 7.5 percent.

This growing statistic seems to have a lot of out-of-work people concerned, but it also has some who are employed concerned.

Many people now feel trapped and obligated to a job they may not like out of fear of being unable to find another.

Not only does this seem to be the harsh reality for employees, it also seems to be an advantage for some employers. With a soaring unemployment rate, some businesses that seem recession proof may have too much power.

The concern is that industries exempt from the massive job layoffs have started treating their employees more ruthlessly. Knowing that other companies are laying off their employees who will actively be looking for work, makes their present employees more expendable.

“It is true that the unemployment rate is up to 8.5 percent – the highest it has been since 1992 when it was 7.5 percent.”

- Mark Guillory
The Signal



I'M CHOOSING POOP, VOMIT AND SLEEP DEPRIVATION OVER THE GREATEST RELATIONSHIP OF ALL TIME. AND THIS MAKES SENSE TO ME.

The Real Basis of Civilization

William Humbird
The Signal Staff

“Life is too short to drink tasteless beer,” a simple motto that Saint Arnold’s owner, Brock Wagner, uses to begin the tour of his brewery off Highway 290 in north Houston.

Saint Arnold is Texas’ oldest craft brewery, as the awning outside their office proudly claims, with its 15-year anniversary taking place this summer. Wagner left his job in investment banking to start the company in 1994.

Wagner named the brewery Saint Arnold after the Bishop of Metz, who was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church as the patron saint of brewers.

A story that Wagner used to recant during his tours, and now simply posts on Saint Arnold’s Web site, tells the tale of St. Arnold’s final miracle.

“In 641, the citizens of Metz requested that St. Arnold’s body be exhumed and ceremoniously carried to Metz for reburial in their Church of the Holy Apostles,” tells the story from Saint Arnold’s Web site. “During this voyage a miracle came to pass in the town of Champignuelles. The tired porters and followers stopped for a rest and walked into a tavern for a drink of their favorite beverage. Regretfully, there was only one mug of beer to be shared, but that mug never ran dry and all of the thirsty pilgrims were satisfied.”

Wagner tells a simpler story of why St. Arnold was so beloved by his parishioners.

“St. Arnold used to walk around and tell people to drink beer; it’s a gift from God.” Wagner said. “Needless to say, he was extremely popular with the villagers of Metz.”

St. Arnold had legitimate reasons for promoting beer over water. At that point, villagers had not discovered how to separate drinking water from sewage, and beer is boiled during the brewing process, so it was safer to drink.

In its 15 years of operation, the Saint Arnold brewery has grown in popularity, paving the way for a \$6 million expansion.

By the end of the year, Saint Arnold will be moving into its new home at 2000 Lyons Ave, in a former Houston Independent School District Food Services Building. The date of the actual move is still unknown because of delays in construction.

Wagner hopes the new brewery will allow for increased brewing capacity, as well as, more amenities for people going on the tours.

“The new building will have A/C, which is nice in the summer months,” Wagner said. “And a lot more restrooms.”

The restroom issue grew as the popularity of the brewery tours grew. The number of visitors at the tours used to range from 20 to 30. Volunteers like Peet Bighorse, who has been coming to the tour for 14 years, estimated the number of people on the April 11 tour to be more than 600.

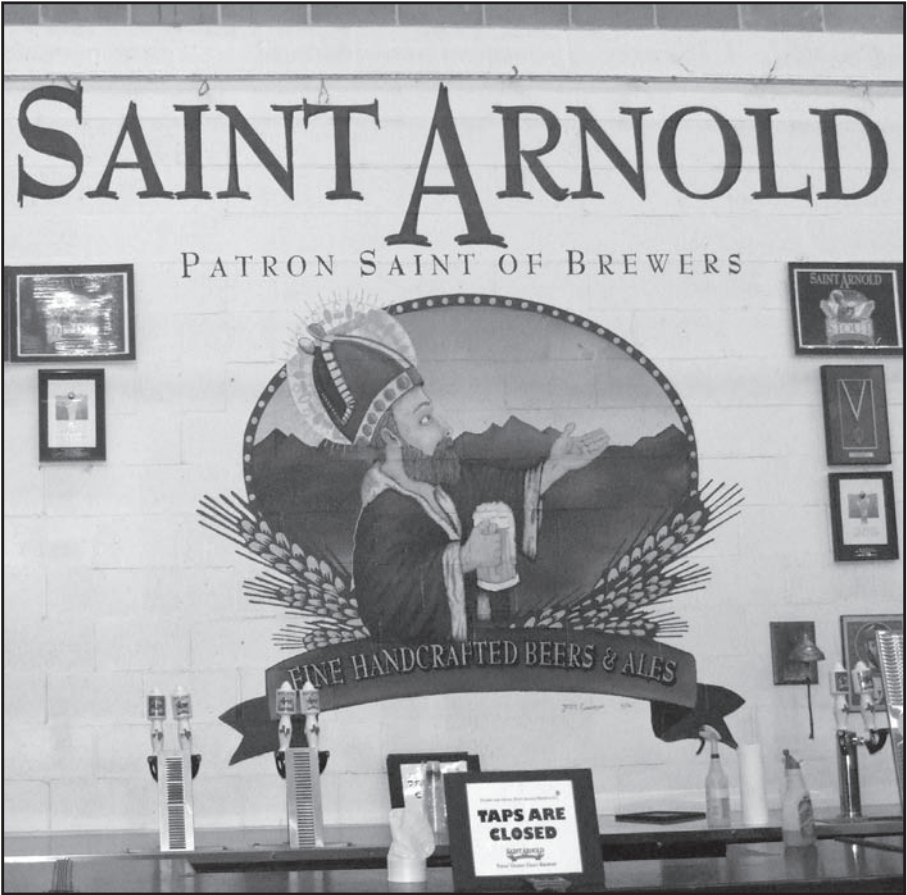
“It’s great,” Bighorse said. “Where else can I go to meet new people and try great beers for free?”

The brewery tour used to be free, but because of the overwhelming number of beer fans who show up, Saint Arnold charges \$5 per person to go on the tour. The tour does come with a pilsner-style tasting glass and four wooden nickels that individuals can trade in to have their tasters filled.

The tours start at 1 p.m., but plan on arriving early, since the line was out to the street by 12:45 p.m. For information on the tour and a map to the brewery, visit Saint Arnold’s Web site at www.saintarnold.com.



Photos by William Humbird: The Signal

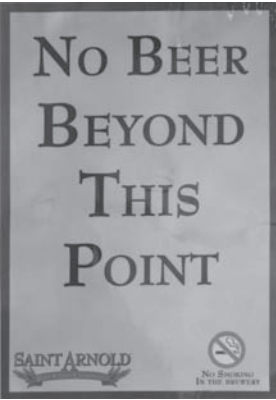


Top Left: Saint Arnold employee Mark Boguslavsky loads bottles of Saint Arnold’s Amber into boxes for shipping to local stores.

Top Right: The mural of St. Arnold resides over the tasting bar at the Saint Arnold’s brewery.

Bottom Right: People wait outside of Saint Arnold’s to take a tour of the brewery.

Bottom Left: Pallets of kegs and cases of Saint Arnold beer are lined up before being placed on trucks for shipping. Saint Arnold brewed 660,000 gallons of beer in 2008.



UPCOMING EVENTS



Galveston County Fair and Rodeo
April 17-25
Jack Brooks Park
www.galvestoncountyfair.com



Golden Dragon Acrobats: China’s Premiere Acrobatic Troupe
April 24
Miller Outdoor Theatre
281-FREE-FUN



Senior Art Exhibit
April 13-June 11
Bayou Building Art Gallery



Clear Lake Greek Festival 2009
April 24, 25, & 26
Clear Lake Park, Landolt Pavillion
www.clearlakegreekfestival.com



STUDENT PUBLICATION AWARDS RECEIVED: SPRING 2009

Student Publications won 33 awards for work produced during the 2008 school year: 23 state and 10 national. Newspaper won 14 awards at state and 2 at national. Magazine won 9 awards at state and 8 awards at national competition. Plus, one student won an on-site competition while attending the conference – for a total of 34 awards.

State Competition: Texas Intercollegiate Press Association (TIPA)

NEWSPAPER	
First Place Winners:	
Special Section/Edition	Staff (Election Edition)
Picture Story	Staff (Hurricane Ike)
News Feature Story	Krystin Hewitt (NASA–50 Years)
Sports Feature Story	Cryss Godoy (Roller Derby)
Headline	Staff (Tangled Web)
Second Place Winners:	
Sports Action Photo	Cryss Godoy (Roller Derby)
Sports Feature Photo	Jorge De La Garza (Selvin Velasquez)
Third Place Winners:	
Editorial	Jeff Meier (Possible tuition relief)
News Feature Story	Jenna Lewis (Eyewitness)
Feature Photo	Karen Raney (Oscar)
Honorable Mention Winners:	
Sports Feature Photo	Laurie Vaesa-Perez (Chris Gamez)
Feature Story	Laurie Vaesa-Perez (HipHop)
Overall Excellence	Staff
Online, General Excellence	Staff
On-site Feature Photo	Laurie Vaesa-Perez (Downtown Dallas)

MAGAZINE	
First Place Winners:	
Cover Design	Scott Turnbough (Spring 08-Canoes)
Feature Photo	Lona Cain (Pursuit)
Third Place Winners:	
Essay	Jimmy Franks (Sting of betrayal)
Poem	Donna Pauley (English Teacher)
News Photo	Joel Carter (Southbound Delay)
Photo Essay	Donna Cox (Self Redemption)
Literary Package	Richard Willis, Kourtney Pace and Joel Carter (Ima, The Taxi Sage)
Overall Excellence	Staff (Spring 2008 Issue - Canoes)
Honorable Mention Winner:	
Feature Story	Joel Carter (Ima, The Taxi Sage)

National Competition: Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA)

NEWSPAPER	
Honorable Mention Winners:	
News Photo	Laurie Vaesa-Perez (Ike-Yacht Club)
Single Subject Package	Wendy Westmoreland (Texas)
MAGAZINE	
First Place Winners:	
Cover Design	Scott Turnbough (Spring 08-Canoes)
Second Place Winners:	
Cover Design	Richard Willis/Kourtney Pace (Fall08)
B/W Photo	Donna Cox (Self Redemption)
Third Place Winner:	
Page Design	Richard Willis/Kourtney Pace (Ima)
Honorable Mention Winners:	
Free Verse Poem	Donna Pauley (English Teacher)
Illustration	Miguel Herrera (Somewhere Out There)
Literary Single Spread	Scott Turnbough (Taking Note)
Overall Design	Scott Turnbough (Spring 08-Canoes)

EXTRA! EXTRA!

UHCL communication students set new record,winning 34 awards in state and national collegiate competitions

Dianna Shaw
The Signal Staff

Sometimes the hardest part is the waiting; communication majors from the University of Houston-Clear Lake anxiously awaited the results of their hard work at the awards ceremony the100th Texas Intercollegiate Press Association convention April 9-11.

“This year student publications won a total of 34 awards at both the state and national level,” said Taleen Washington, faculty adviser for student publications. “Each year our students compete against the best in their field, and each year our students more than hold their own.”

A total of five UHCL communication students attended the convention: Matt Griesmyer, The Signal editor; Jenna Simsen, The Signal assistant editor; Amy Garcia, current Bayosphere editor; Laurie Perez, Bayosphere designer and Lindsay Humphrey, production assistant. Awards were given for on-site competitions as well as for previously published works. Entries are evaluated by expert media representatives from around the country.

“The best feeling ever was how proud I felt of myself and my school,” Simsen said. “We were surrounded by many other schools, some with teams of ten or more. We were able to shine with our elite handful of five students who represented our school with pride.”

University of Houston-Clear Lake communication majors generally spend one semester on the staff of The Signal newspaper or Bayosphere literary magazine while enrolled in either the newspaper or magazine publication classes. In contrast, many of the other students entered in the competitions spend up to four years in these types of positions.

“It’s a testament to the quality of education the students receive thanks to the collaborative efforts of all the faculty who teach in the Communication program and the high caliber of students who are attracted to UHCL,” Washington said.

TIPA is the oldest and most prestigious press association in America. It was established by students at Baylor in 1909 with the objectives: to advance journalism on college campuses, to elevate standards of college publications and to unite college editors.

“On-site contests are conducted under a deadline,” Griesmyer said. “This makes them very difficult.”

Perez received an honorable mention for the on-site feature photo contest. She also received numerous other awards including a certificate of Merit from Columbia University of New York for a single spot news photograph, a national award.

“It really was unexpected since I was going up



Laurie Vaesa-Perez:The Signal

Laurie Vaesa-Perez’s feature photo of Dallas resident Daniel Crider earned her an honorable mention award for On-site Feature Photo at this year’s TIPA convention.

against such prestigious universities,” Perez said. “Winning only amplifies the truth that photography is my calling. I have my family and friends to thank for being so supportive and letting me practice on them all these years but, mostly, I have God to thank for giving me the eye and the talent. I will take this experience into my future knowing that this is my calling.”

In addition to the competitions, workshops were held at the convention to educate attendees on selected topics, such as how to properly prepare your resume, Hispanics in the media, editor’s round table and many others.

“I attended a workshop on how to get a job in television,” Simsen said. “Listening to other student’s reactions and questions within the workshops led me to believe that I was getting the best quality education in the room. I felt like I was more versatile than most other students because I had a more diverse and well-rounded education.”



Royce Walker: Courtesy

The communication students who attended the TIPA conference in Dallas jump with glee after the awards banquet April 11. From left to right: Matt Griesmyer,Amy Garcia, Laurie Vaesa-Perez, Lindsay Humphrey and Jenna Simsen.



Adolfo Gonzalez:The Signal

ABOVE:WWE Superstar Rey Mysterio takes time to sign autographs for his loyal fans. FADED CENTER:WWE Superstars meet in the ring for the THQ Superstar Challenge.

WrestleMania Fever Hits Houston

Adolfo Gonzalez
The Signal Staff

The anticipation was over and the time had finally arrived. World Wrestling Entertainment's WrestleMania Axxess had finally arrived in Houston. Wrestling fans from around the world gathered for this incredible event taking place at Houston's Reliant Center.

WrestleMania Axxess is an event held every year where fans have the opportunity to interact with their favorite superstars at autograph signings and photo sessions. Fans can also experience unique activities including the chance to be filmed creating their own ring entrance and take home a DVD of the experience, call classic WWE matches, walk the Undertaker's Graveyard, test their skills at WWE trivia, compete in the SmackDown vs. Raw video game challenge and have a chance to win a championship belt.

This event is held annually for four consecutive days leading up to the pay-per-view event known as WrestleMania. This year it ran from Thursday, April 2, to Sunday, April 5.

For the second time in eight years, wrestling fans gathered outside the Reliant Center, waiting with joy and eagerness for the doors to open. Enthusiastic fans waited in a long line discussing everything and anything about wrestling. As soon as the doors opened, many fans let out the famous Rick Flair "WOOOO!" chant while walking through the doors.

Some of the WWE Superstars on hand signing autographs the first day were Goldust, Christian, Shelton Benjamin, William Regal, The Great Khali, Kane, Jesse and Festus, Cryme Tyme and WWE Hall of Famers Gerald Brisco and Pat Patterson. WWE Divas Maryse and Layla were also signing autographs while ECW Interim General Manager and Diva Tiffany took pictures with fans throughout the evening.

The show was hosted by WWE Hall of Famer "The Mouth of the South" Jimmy Hart.

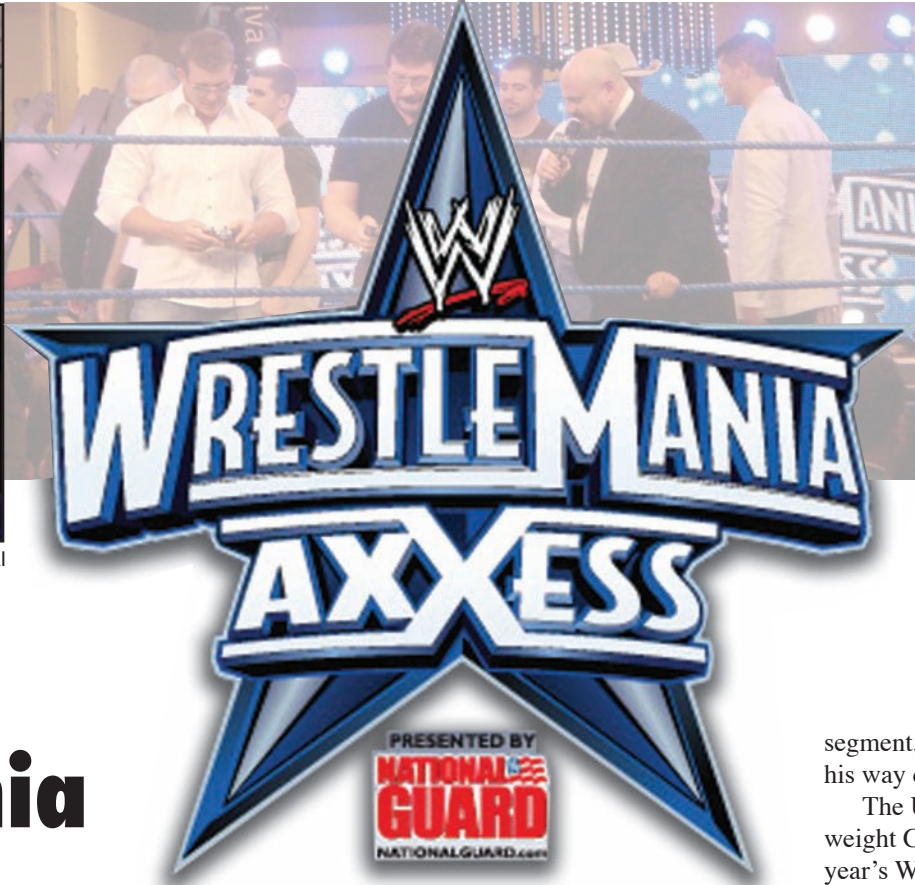
The first WWE superstar to come out for the question-and-answer session was Rey Mysterio, who defeated John "Bradshaw" Layfield for the Intercontinental Championship April 5 at WrestleMania XXV.

A member of the staff passed out note cards to the fans so they could write their questions for Mysterio.

"The best match I've ever had," Mysterio said "was without a doubt, '97, Halloween Havoc, Eddie Guerrero versus Rey Mysterio, Las Vegas, Nevada."

Mysterio was referring to a pay-per-view match he had with the late Eddie Guerrero, who passed away in November of 2005.

Mysterio left when he was done with his question-and-



answer segment, but still took the time to sign autographs for fans who were gathered out back waiting for him.

The next WWE Superstar to come out for his question-and-answer session was none other than John Cena, who defeated both Edge and The Big Show for the World Heavyweight Championship April 5 at WrestleMania XXV.

"Toughest match for me is going to be Sunday," Cena said. "The reason why it's the toughest, not only is the Big Show the world's largest athlete, but the third wheel in there, Edge 'The Rated-R Superstar,' is one of the best at being in the right place at the right time."

A triple threat match, like the one Cena participated in, involves three wrestlers set against each other where whoever scores the first pin wins the World Heavyweight Championship. The catch is that the current champion does not have to get pinned in order to lose.

After the question-and-answer sessions, there were two live wrestling matches. The first was R-Truth versus Chavo Guerrero, Jr., where R-Truth came out on top. The second match was Jimmy Wang Yang against Paul Burchill with his sister Katie Lea Burchill standing in his corner. Yang came out the winner of this match.

The second day of the event was even better than the first. More WWE superstars and divas made appearances and there were more activities in the ring that was set up dead center of the arena.

The first WWE superstars to come to the ring were Triple H and Shawn Michaels. What was unique about their introduction was that instead of coming out separately with their own music, they decided to come out as Degeneration-X, one of the greatest wrestling stables of all time.

After Triple H and Michaels completed their short



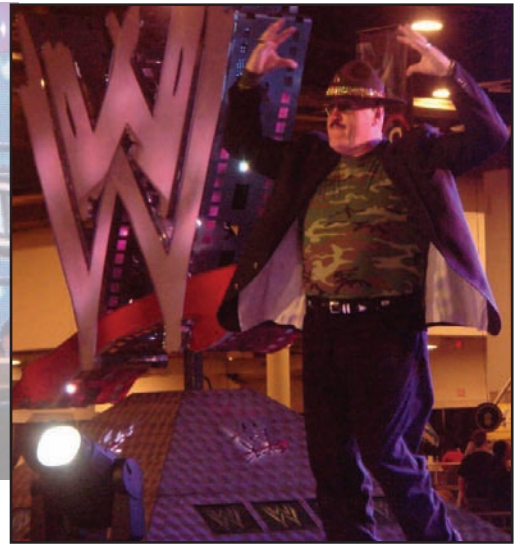
Adolfo Gonzalez:The Signal

WWE Divas Eve Torres and Candice Michelle on their way to pose for pictures with the fans.



Adolfo Gonzalez:The Signal

WWE Superstar R-Truth pouncing away on Chavo Guerrero, Jr. during their live match at WrestleMania Axxess.



Adolfo Gonzalez:The Signal

WWE Hall of Famer Sgt. Slaughter mocks Beth "The Glamazon" Phoenix's entrance pose.

segment, the World Heavyweight Champion Edge made his way down into the ring.

The Undertaker defeated Edge for the world Heavyweight Championship and his 16th consecutive win at last year's WrestleMania XXIV in Orlando, Fla.

"Wow, I've got nothing against Shawn, but I think Undertaker is going to come out on top," Edge said.

The Undertaker has a 16-year winning streak at WrestleMania. If Shawn were to win, he would be the only wrestler to ever defeat the Undertaker at WrestleMania.

Jeff Hardy, Mark Henry, Vladimir Kozlov, Hurricane Helms, Ted Dibiase, Jr., Cody Rhodes and Matt Hardy were some of the WWE Superstars signing autographs at their booths.

The main event of the night was the annual THQ Superstar Challenge where 16 WWE Superstars, Legends and Divas, are pitted against each other to play WWE Legends of WrestleMania video game.

The first round included WWE Hall of Famers "Million Dollar Man" Ted Dibiase, "The American Dream" Dusty Rhodes and Sergeant Slaughter. WWE Superstars participating were Ted Dibiase, Jr, Cody Rhodes and CM Punk, along with WWE Divas Michelle McCool and Beth "The Glamazon" Phoenix.

The second round included WWE Superstars Kofi Kingston, Finlay, Hornswoggle, The Brian Kendrick, Ezekiel Jackson and Evan Bourne, along with WWE Divas Brie and Nikki Bella.

Kofi Kingston emerged triumphant out of the 16 participants after beating Cody Rhodes. Out of nowhere "The Golden Standard" Shelton Benjamin came out to congratulate and challenge Kofi, intending to show that Kofi's win was a fluke.

Needless to say, Kingston beat Shelton using himself as the wrestler in the game and was named THQ Superstar Challenge 2009 Champion.

For a true wrestling fan, nothing could top meeting and watching your favorite WWE Superstars up close and personal. This is a once in a lifetime experience.

What better way to top off an amazing weekend than the event which made WrestleMania Axxess possible?

Houston, the Reliant Stadium and 72,744 fans from around the world welcomed WWE's 25th Anniversary of WrestleMania with open arms, cameras and lots of fan-made signs to hold up during the show.



Adolfo Gonzalez:The Signal

WWE Superstar Paul Burchill poses for a picture after his match with Jimmy Wang Yang.

Hook it up Corpus Christi Style

Jenna Simsen
The Signal Staff

With a population of approximately 300,000, Corpus Christi has been home to the Houston Astros' double A affiliate, the Hooks, since 2005.

Originally from Memphis, the franchise was founded in 1968 and was the affiliate for the New York Mets. Since then, the franchise moved from Tennessee as the Memphis Blues, to Texas as the Victoria Toros, to Mississippi as the Jackson Mets. The team was bought out by Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan in 1998 and moved from Jackson, Miss., to Round Rock, Texas, to become the Round Rock Express. There, well-known professional players Roy Oswalt and Morgan Ensberg coached the team. After just one season in Round Rock, they worked their way to the Texas League title.

In 2004, Ryan announced his intention to move the club to the Gulf Coast. In 2005, the club was renamed the Hooks and moved to Corpus Christi. Whataburger Field was built that same year and became the official stadium of the Hooks.

Over the past four years, the Hooks have employed many players who have since advanced to Major League Baseball teams. Current MLB players who were once Hooks players include: Hunter Pence of the Houston Astros, Charlton Jimerson of the Seattle Mariners, Hector Gimenez of the Pittsburgh Pirates and Jason Hirsh of the Colorado Rockies.

In 2006, the Hooks won their first Texas League Championship in a win over the Wichita Wranglers, marking the 10th championship win in franchise history. In the four seasons



Jenna Simsen The Signal

BELOW LEFT: Astros catcher Humberto Quintero stands in the Astros bullpen and autographs baseballs for the fans through the fence. BELOW CENTER: Large crowds of people gather outside of the Astros' warm-up area hoping to snap a photo or get their souvenirs autographed. BELOW RIGHT: A mix of Astros' and Hooks' fans fill nearly every open seat in Whataburger Field at the Exhibition game April 2. A record-breaking crowd of 9,118 attended.



since 2005, the Hooks have advanced 23 total players to the major leagues.

The team has also seen many famous Astros grace the greens of Whataburger Field. Jeff Bagwell, Wandy Rodriguez, Humberto Quintero and Brandon Backe have all appeared in

Hooks jerseys while playing with the team as they recovered from injuries.

The team's colors are light blue and dark blue, which are said to represent the endless

ocean and sky of the gulf. Rusty Hook and Sammy Seagull are the official mascots for the Hooks and can be seen at any home or away game.

The 2009 season began in April at Whataburger Field where the Hooks played an exhibition game against their MLB affiliates, the Houston Astros. The game drew a crowd of more than 9,000 fans, shattering a record previously held in a game against the San Antonio Missions with special guest Roger Clemens pitching for the Hooks.

Residents of Corpus Christi and the greater Gulf Coast area attended the game to see the Astros play in Whataburger Field. In an outcome that may have been surprising, the Hooks beat their 'big brother' affiliates with a final score of 6-5.

"They're [the Astros] a great organization to work with," said Ken Schrom, Hooks president. "They're quality guys, and that means something ... we've got a great relationship."

From the sounds of the crowd, it seemed as if most fans were elated to see the Hooks win in their hometown. However, several fans were seen in a mixed attire of light blue Hooks jerseys and brick red Astros caps, cheering for both sides.

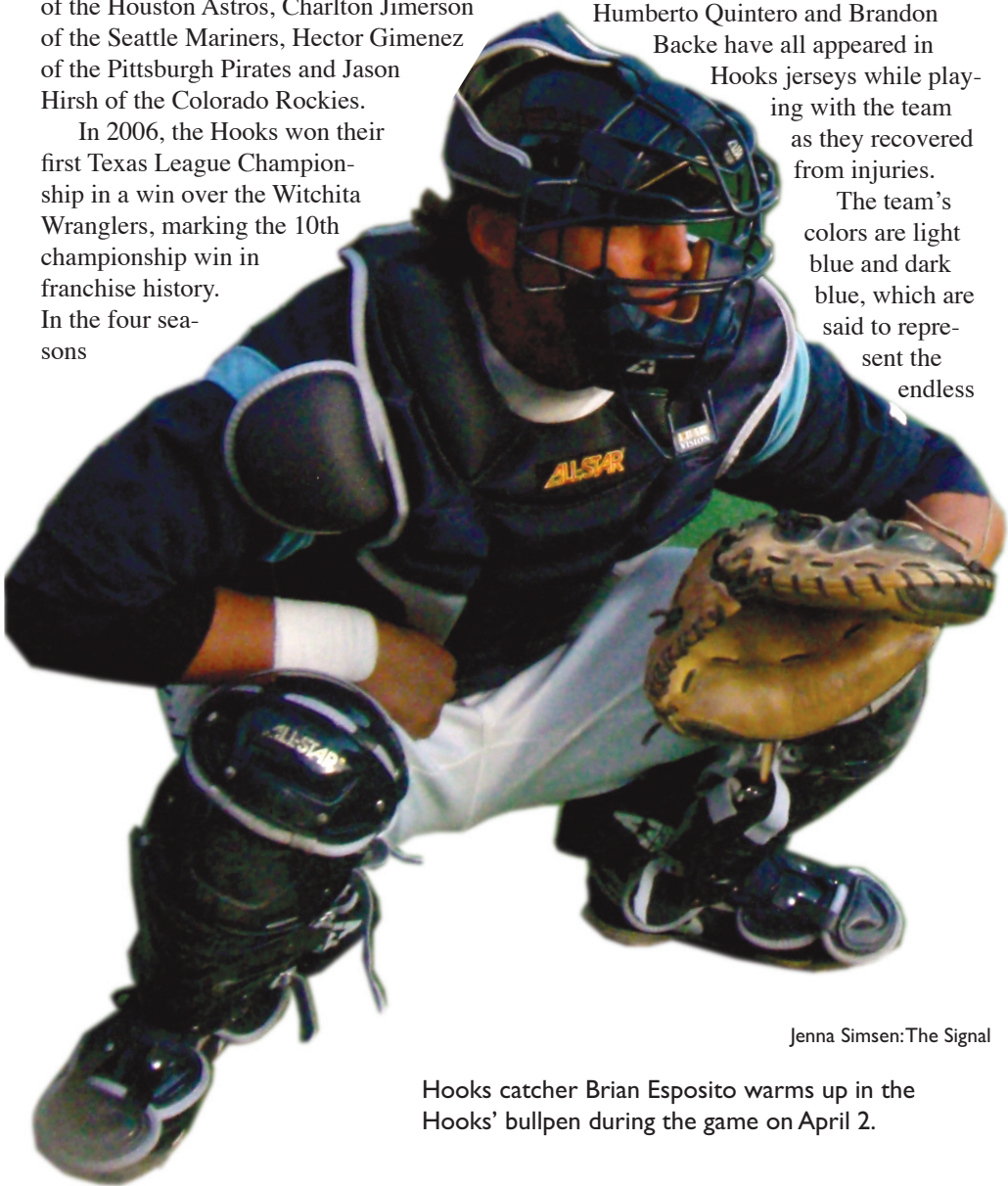
"I was excited to see the Astros, but my heart was torn," said Katherine Garrett, Houston native and biology major at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. "I cheered every time someone scored."

The Hooks have a goal to impact

the community through their "Hooks Help" campaign. They plan to better the community by helping to renovate baseball fields in poor condition with their "Field of Dreams" campaign. The team also hosts several special event fundraisers with intentions to honor talented local players as well as raising money for the Hooks Help campaign.

"You've got to give something back," Schrom said. "It's something we believe in; it's just part of our fabric."

The regular season will run through September. For more information on the Hooks, visit www.cchooks.com.



Jenna Simsen: The Signal

Hooks catcher Brian Esposito warms up in the Hooks' bullpen during the game on April 2.



Jenna Simsen The Signal

A look at the scoreboard at Whataburger Field, home of the Hooks.

Catch the latest

NEWS SIGNALS

about what is happening

ON CAMPUS AT

www.uhcl.edu/TheSignal

Also check us out on

twitter

→ www.twitter.com/UHCLTheSignal

** Student Life **

Student Government Association

Congratulations

to the newly elected
Shared Governance Committee
Representatives
2009-2010



From left to right: Rebecca Smith, Facilities Support Service Committee, Connie Lafayette, Planning and Budgeting Committee, Prashanti Pandit, University Life Committee, and Candice Tucker, University Life Committee.

Attend the Student Government Association
meetings every Tuesday at 11.30am at SSCB Lecture
Hall 1.100.03.



For Details Contact The SGA Executive Council:

Patrick Cardenas - President
Steve Steiner - VP Committee Coordinator
Jessica Williams - VP Outreach & Communications
Connie Lafayette - VP Administration

SSCB Rm.1.205 * 281-283-2556 * SGA@uhcl.edu * www.uhcl.edu/SGA

Don't wait until the last minute...



EARLY REGISTRATION for Summer & Fall semesters is now available!

Summer & Fall OPEN REGISTRATION begins April 24th

For more information go to
www.uhcl.edu/records

CAMPUS CALENDAR

April 20
2009 Physics Seminar Series,
“Plasma Physics Applications for
Aerospace Technology”
7 p.m., Bayou 1211

April 22-23
Career Week Presentation:
Successful Interviewing,
time TBA, Bayou Atrium II

**Ongoing through
April 24**
Early College Campus Visit Week

April 23
Last Day to Drop/Withdraw
8-week II Classes

April 25
Film Screening ‘The Wrestler,’
7 p.m., SSCB Lecture Hall

Prep Course for the Gifted
Supplemental Certification, 8:30
a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Arbor A176

April 27
2009 Physics Seminar Series,
“The 200 kW VASIMR Experi-
mental Engineer (VX-200): Design
Challenges and Recent Results,”
7 p.m., Bayou 1211

April 30
Alumni Award Nomination
Deadline

**Ongoing through
June 5**
Summer 2009 Open Registration

**Ongoing
through
August 21**
Fall 2009 Open
Registration



Showcase: Reaching New Heights

Britney Godfrey
The Signal Staff

Much like the student body, the faculty of University of Houston-Clear Lake represents its own body of diverse people from mixed backgrounds. These professors offer vast amounts of information to their students pertaining to their curriculum while offering real-life experiences. Despite the appreciation of the university's full-time faculty, The Signal would like to spotlight those educators who teach in addition to holding down full-time jobs – the adjunct professors. The Signal will be profiling an adjunct professor from each school to be acknowledged for their dedication to education as well as the real-world experiences they bring to the university. This is part four of a four-part series.

From adventurous mountain climbing, to working at NASA, to gardening with his wife, adjunct Ken Goodwin brings adventure, knowledge and experience to his students.

Goodwin started his education by receiving a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Tufts University. He then went on to receive a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering from Northeastern University in Boston, and did postgraduate work in electrical engineering, computer science and business from the University of Houston and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Goodwin has been an adjunct in the UH system since 1977 starting at the main campus then moving to UHCL in 1981. Goodwin credits the move to University of Houston Clear Lake to former science and computer engineer Dean Charles McKay.

“Mr. Goodwin has more than twenty years of specialized

experience appropriate to teach Fault Tolerant Computing and has recently retired from Charles Stark Draper Laboratory (formally MIT Instrumentation Laboratory) at NASA/JSC and is now consulting with NASA on the space shuttle,” said Jim Helm, Engineering Division Chair. “The space shuttle onboard computers are required to be fault tolerant. Basically this means that if an instruction fails, the onboard computer logs the failure and keeps running.”

Goodwin has no shortage of “real world” experience to bring to the classroom. Goodwin says he would like to think his classes are interesting to UHCL students because he tries to bring his “outside world” experience to the classroom while remembering his own personal challenges as a student.

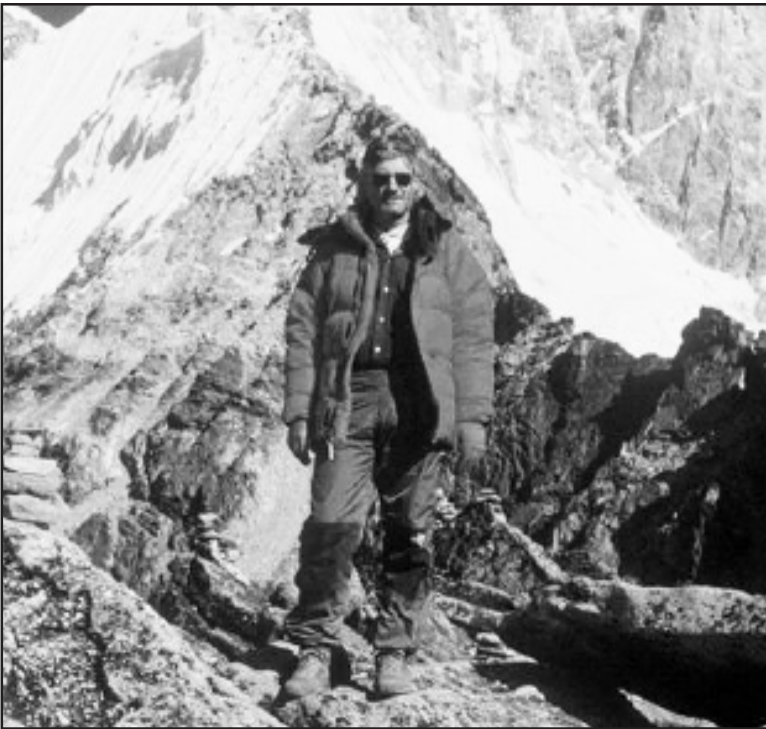
“Since my ‘day’ job was with Draper Laboratory at NASA (retired in 2003), I’ve been involved in both the industry and academic sides in my dealings with the university,” Goodwin said.

Goodwin is currently a member of the Computer Systems Engineering Industrial Advisory Board and prior to that was a member of the Industrial Advisory Group of the Research Institute for Computing and Information Systems and the Computer Science Program Advisory Board. He has also been associated with the university through a membership in the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.”

When Goodwin is not teaching, one can probably find him on any number of adventures.

One of Goodwin’s many hobbies is amateur radio.

“I’ve been a ‘ham’ since I was 15 years old and I think the only reason I went to college was so that I could have a job that would pay me enough



Courtesy

Ken Goodwin, on a previous trip to Nepal, stands at the peak of Kala Patar in the Mt. Everest Region.

to buy amateur radio equipment,” Goodwin said.

Goodwin also helps his wife, Camille, with her hobbies.

“I also attempt to assist my wife Camille with her interests in gardening,” Goodwin said. “I usually provide the manpower for her garden projects so even though it isn’t an engineering type of activity, I must enjoy it. I did instrument her gardens with wireless moisture and temperature sensors so the sprinkler system only provides the necessary water during the year.”

Currently, Goodwin is on a 26-day adventure in Nepal. He is on his fourth trip with International Mountain Guides to the Himalayas.

Goodwin is part of the IMG trekking group that will attempt to climb Lobuje, the nearest village to the trekking peak, then to Island Peak before heading back to Lukla for the aircraft ride back to Kathmandu.

“I will trek to the Everest base camp and then on the way back to Kathmandu, attempt to climb two trekking peaks that are both above 20,000 feet,” Goodwin said.

“He is fantastic,” said Jeanne Leslie, suite secretary for SCE. “He is interesting to students because of his unique personality, his work with the space center and his many mountain climbing adventures.”

Take the survey, win the prizes!

The Signal Staff wants you to take a survey to see how much technology has changed the way students and teachers interact in the classroom.

- ☒ Go to the Web site.
- ☒ Take the survey.
- ☒ Fill out the raffle ticket.

Prizes:

- Ipod Shuffle
- USB Drive
- \$20 gift certificate with Amazon
- \$15 gift certificate to Whole foods
- \$10 gift certificate to Starbucks
- \$5 gift certificate to Ben & Jerry's

WIN AN IPOD!

Deadline to take the survey is April 20th!

www.uchl.edu/thesignal

UNIVERSITY FOREST APARTMENTS

On-Campus Convenience with the benefits of Apartment-Style Living

All three custom floor plans are designed exclusively for students' use:

- Efficiencies
- 2 bedroom/ 2 bath
- 4 bedroom/ 2 bath

Roommate Matching Program
Individual Leases for Roommates
Full-Service Kitchens

TONS OF AMENITIES, INCLUDING:

- FREE INTERNET
- Poolside Wireless Internet
- Financial Aid Deferment
- Pool & Spa
- Clubhouse w/Big Screen TV
- 24 hr. On-call Staff & Maintenance
- Free Video, Movie & Board Game Checkout
- Free Photocopying & Faxing
- Social & Educational Programs
- Full-Service Laundry Facilities
- And Much, Much More...!

Ask about our Free Rent Specials & Financial Aid Payment Plans!

For more information, call (281) 286-5959
or e-mail uhcl@campushousing.com

Graduation: *continued from page 1*

the arena would still exceed the capacity limit by 2600 people.

Nevertheless, UHCL has a solution to the problem. Next month’s graduation ceremony will be streamed live on the Internet. So, people unable to attend the ceremony due to the voluntary restriction, or because their plans did not allow for travel to Houston or for whatever reason, they still have the option to view the ceremony via the World Wide Web. Bendeck says testing is in progress to ensure the feed works properly for the May 16 event.

Although the issue has been somewhat resolved for next month’s graduation, overcrowding remains an even bigger issue for the December graduation, which includes 350 summer students and 1,400 fall students.

Still, Bendeck says Reliant Arena is the best location to hold the UHCL commencement ceremony. In the past, UHCL used the University of Houston’s Hofheiz Pavilion and Moody Gardens, but those venues are now too small. Other venues in the area such as the Toyota Center, Minute Maid Park and Reliant Stadium are unavailable due to conflicts with sporting events.

A committee of faculty, staff and Student Government Association members is currently evaluating the problem. Instead of just appealing to students to keep the guest list to five, two solutions being reviewed are hosting

multiple graduation ceremonies and restricting the number of guests per graduate by providing a limited number of tickets to each graduating senior. The committee is asking the SGA to submit their preferences to UHCL President William Staples. Staples will make the final decision.

A decision is expected soon, since the application deadline for UHCL Fall 2009 graduation is in June. Additional information on the December 2009 commencement will be mailed to students in the coming weeks.

Luckily, spring 2009 graduates will not have to face those decisions. Instead, students will be asked to voluntarily restrict their guests to five. Information regarding the voluntary restriction will be mailed along with other graduation material later this month.

In the meantime, guests planning to attend the May commencement should arrive early. The doors of the arena will open at 5 p.m.

“The police department and fire marshal’s office will be more proactive in dispersing dangerous crowding situations and keeping people from saving banks of seats.” Willingham said. “Once the arena reaches its capacity, the entry doors will be closed.”

UHCL Spring 2009 Graduation will be held at Reliant Arena, One Reliant Park, 8400 Kirby Dr., at 7 p.m., on May 16. Parking is \$8.

Staff Holds Town Hall Meeting

Nancy Nguyen
The Signal Staff

At the joint meeting of the Professional Administration Staff Association and Support Staff Association held April 9, the groups discussed the current and future endeavors of the university. These meetings are held once a year and are open to all staff, faculty and students of University of Houston-Clear Lake.

The topics ranged from budgets and funding to job security and campus safety, as well as ongoing developments in student services. One of the topics that many attendees were concerned about was how the economy has affected the school and its funding.

In this tough economy, many employees are concerned about pay cuts and losing their jobs. President William Staples assured those in attendance that the university would not be cutting jobs.

“Our number one priority is compensation,” Staples said. “Not that we don’t value other priorities.”

Staples talked about how the Texas Legislature could change state laws, possibly affecting future funding for the school.

“We do not know what is going to happen,” Staples said. “This is important for two reasons, at present our funding comes from two sources. It comes from formula funding from the state based on credit hours and from disciplines, such as education, business, and science, by degree levels, like bachelors and masters.”

Staples spoke of how stimulus money from the government will help stabilize concerns for now; however, he also noted that this is a one time endowment. He also mentioned how steadying sales taxes will help the overall economy, therefore, benefiting the university and other businesses.

In speaking about downward

expansion, Staple reminded the audience that it had been shelved until 2011, but not stopped permanently.

“The four-year expansion could be reality in fall of 2012,” said Richard Adams, director of operations.

Staples spoke about this being important to the university’s growth and increasing its status in the Clear Lake community.

“Another issue that I was pleased to see included was the fact the rumors about layoffs are not true,” Adams said. “I will retire from UHCL.”

Another concern was for the safety of employees and students. There has been an increase in crime in the area including events at UHCL.

“If you think you see something suspicious, call the police department,” Staples said. “We are safer than most places in this region, but due to events that have happened, I ask all of you not to become complacent.”

Carl Stockton, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost, spoke about changes in the spring that will introduce reverse articulation.

“To remind you what reverse articulation means is basically when a students comes to our university before completing their associate’s degree,” Stockton said. “Let’s say they have six to ten hours left to complete that degree and they come to the university and take the hours. Those hours can then be articulated back to the community college and



Nancy Nguyen: The Signal

Carl Stockton, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost, Michelle Dotter, vice president for administration and finance and President William Staples spoke at the annual town hall meeting.

they will receive their associate’s degree.”

On another note, Michelle Dotter, vice president for administration and finance, plans to work with the school’s Risk Management Department on different environmental projects such as planting trees and flowers on the campus. She also spoke about leadership programs and culture changes that will be taking place on the UHCL campus.

“In helping with the environment our campus is making moves towards a paperless campus,” Dotter said.

She informed employees about new training programs currently on paperwork that is being converted to computers. Dotter reassured employees not to worry, the change would be as painless as possible.

“Over all I think the meeting went very well,” said Fran Davis, president of the support staff association. “I may be sounding bias, but I am a big fan of Dr. Staples because he honestly shows his concern for everyone here at the university.”

Student Success: *continued from page 1*

who participated in an academic support referral program. The pilot suggested that students found the program to be truly beneficial to their academic standing with the university. More than 50 percent chose to remain in the program upon completion of the pilot program.

The Student Success Center would assist students of all age groups and college education levels with several different needs. It would include, but not be limited to: students who have never attended higher-level education, students with gaps in their education, and students who have never attended the university. The center will also implement emphasis on first-year experience programs and transition programs for students new to the university.

Aside from the tutoring already in place, the center will also offer assistance for more specific courses that the general tutorials do not currently cover. Tutorials for particular courses would include one-on-one help with difficult classes such as managerial accounting.

“Everyone wants to do the best that he or she possibly can,” Biggers said. “That’s our goal, to

help the students be the best that they can be.”

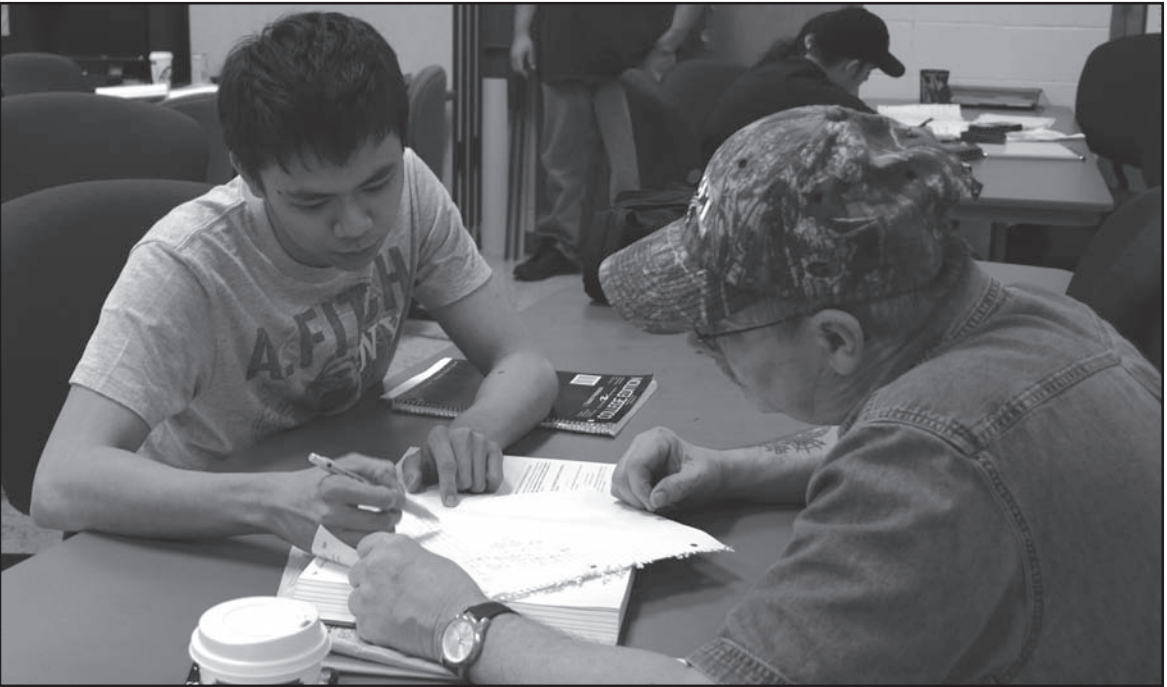
Although it was not at the top of the university’s priority list, Anthony Jenkins, dean of students, has great intentions for the center and high hopes that it will become of the upmost importance to the university.

“If UHCL is ready to be considered one of the major universities in this area, we have to have the components of a major university,” Jenkins said. “We should be doing everything to make sure students have in place all of the mechanisms to be successful.”

Jenkins summarized that a center dedicated to the success of students is necessary if the university wants to be considered one of the major universities in the area. He believes the center will contribute to the overall improvement of the citizenry of the university.

If created, the center will be housed on the third floor of the Student Services Building, where the tutoring center currently resides. He noted that the area would expand and be designated as the official location for the Student Success Center.

The next step in the proposal



Lindsey Lashway: The Signal

Trung Huynh, a nursing major at San Jacinto College–Central, tutors Charles Cole, a general studies major, with algebra in San Jacinto College’s Student Success Center. “I see the need for tutoring at UHCL outside of writing and mathmatics,” said Tanya Stanley, learning lab supervisor at SJC’s Student Success Center and literature graduate student at UHCL.

will involve the idea being reviewed by the planning and budgeting committee, which will meet in June.

Biggers explained that if the funding was provided for the center, it could be established for the fall semester. The center would focus on the current tutoring services and the academic referral support programs in hopes of building on these programs with additional funding as it is provided. The center would also hope to grow in strength and size with the university as it enters the opening stages of downward expansion.

“Students asked for it, students wanted it, students love it,” Jenkins said. “This needs to be in place to make sure our students have the type of support that they not only deserve, but that they are paying for, and that every institution in the surrounding area has.”

Something New, Something Old

Downtown Houston's legendary Rice Hotel houses more than history

Lucia Y. Rodriguez
The Signal Staff

On the eve of Nov. 21, 1963, President John F. Kennedy had dinner at The Rice Hotel. The next day Kennedy would be assassinated while riding in a car as it passed a grassy knoll near Dealey Plaza in Dallas.

The legendary Rice Hotel in Houston now the site of The Post Rice Lofts and is home to some Houstonians. This historic landmark is located downtown on 909 Texas Ave. and is listed in the National Register of Historical Places.

"The historical component has huge appeal to potential leasees," said Monica Duarte, property manager.

The Capitol of the Republic of Texas from 1837 to 1842, which housed the Texas Congress from 1837 to 1839, was located on this ground site.

The original building was razed in 1881 and the five-story Capitol Hotel was built. The building was purchased in 1883 by the founder of Rice University, William M. Rice, and it was renamed the Rice Hotel.

Rice University then sold the building to Texas politician and businessman Jesse H. Jones. The building was demolished and a new 17-story hotel was built. It opened in 1913 boasting the first air-conditioned public room in Houston.

The Rice Hotel was the site of many public events and notable guests including the 1928 Democratic Convention. In 1928, an Anti-Prohibition faction called The AntiDry Movement made its headquarters at the Rice Hotel.

The hotel's underground Rice cafeteria was famous for its delectable Rice Pudding. The Flag Room was known for fine dining and was frequented by powerbrokers and oilmen.

Presently the Flag Room and cafeteria are used as storage facilities. The basement pool that was concreted for many years has been refurbished. Adjacent to the pool is a workout area with state-of-the-art fitness equipment.

The still-functioning, elegant Crystal Ballroom, with its high ceiling, murals, and classic chandeliers, is still the site of



Lucia Y. Rodriguez: The Signal

The original sign for the Rice Hotel advertised its excellent cuisine.

many weddings and social functions.

"The Crystal Ballroom maintains a very active social calendar and is a very popular social activity venue," Duarte said.

Residents of the lofts now socialize on the once famed "Rice Roof," where past hotel patrons danced to live performances from the Tom Dorsey Big Band. The modern-day conveniences located near the Rice Hotel include Azuma, Sambuca, Chipotle restaurants and Sunset Body Works beauty spa.

"I work downtown and love downtown," said Travis Baker, a Rice Lofts resident. "The Rice Lofts are close to work and have so many amenities available and the historical value is just incredible."



Lucia Y. Rodriguez: The Signal

At the Post Rice Lofts, residents can enjoy the convenience of the METRO rail.



Lucia Y. Rodriguez: The Signal

The Post Rice Lofts' modern-day sign references the building's past incarnation as the Rice Hotel.

JSC Federal Credit Union Wants

YOU

VISA Check Cards • and Credit Cards • LOCATIONS

FREE Checking Accounts • FREE Online Banking & Bill Pay • 32,000 Surcharge Free ATMs • 24/7 Account Access

University of Houston Clear Lake
Students, Faculty and Staff

You are eligible for membership with

JSC
Federal Credit Union
www.jscfcu.org
281.488.7070 800.940.0708

Clear Lake • League City • Ellington • Friendswood
Galveston • Texas City • Mainland • Park Place • Bay Colony

9 Convenient Branch Locations

Open A JSC FCU Checking Account Today & Get Free Checks!

Get **FREE** Checks*

JSC
Federal Credit Union
www.jscfcu.org

Get **FREE** Checks*

*Coupon Good for 1 Free Box of Space Style Checks Only and is Redeemable at any JSC FCU Branch

\$50,000

PAID **ON YOUR**

COLLEGE LOANS

TEXAS

NATIONAL

GUARD

www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com

A PENGUIN ENCOUNTER

Christi Minter
The Signal Staff

The pitter-patter of little feet and shrilling screams from the distance made me think of children. At four feet tall, clothed with tuxedo-like feathers and equipped with large beaks, I was not experiencing children. I just had a penguin encounter.

Going to see the penguins located in the Aquarium Pyramid South Atlantic Exhibit at Moody Gardens is one of the most unique adventures I have ever experienced. Although the temperature is a chilling 45 degrees and currently dropping for their winter, the penguins were warm and friendly.

Marine biologist T’Noya Thompson and trainer was my tour guide around the premises to witness the penguins and their caretakers.

“I couldn’t imagine doing anything else,” Thompson said. “Ever since I was young, I always wanted to work with marine animals.”

With 104 penguins, a lot is involved in their feeding and care; the more helping hands, the better. As two volunteers washed down the kitchen area, I was enlightened on food preparation.

Just like any other kitchen, cleanup is necessary to make sure the area stays sanitary.

In a nearby freezer, iced buckets of apelin (Mallotus villosus),

silversides (Menidia menidia), herring (Clupea harengus harengus) and the occasional mackerel (Scomber japonicus) await for mealtime.

I left the feeding to the experts and as a journalist, I got special permission to go further behind the scenes. I slipped on some rubber boots and stepped through the gate to enter the land of penguins. To the left, people stood watching the penguins through glass. I stood engulfed by walking tuxedos.

In awe of the squawking birds in my presence, I quickly learned they go by different names and portray distinct personalities. Some were very excited to see me and some were skeptical of me inside their territory.

In the penguin habitat, water submerges a dry area giving the penguins the luxury to swim, dive or just relax. Among this penguin group were five out of 18 species found around the world including: King, Chinstrap (because of the line under their chin), Gentoo, Rock Hopper and Macaroni.

I then joined a family of four in another room to experience the real penguin encounter. The door opened and in entered Watson, a King penguin. Thompson started off by explaining about the exhibit and sharing her knowledge about the penguins. As Watson got comfortable with everyone, Thompson prepared him for the art show. With water-based paint on his feet, Watson performed his walk of art on a canvas, which was later given to a guest.

“The penguins were my favorite part,” said Christi Woung of Lakewood, Colo., who visited Moody Gardens, while on vacation with her family.

From seeing the penguins play with bubbles to mealtime craziness; the penguins were extraordinary to watch. The exhibit is heart-warming, full of laughs and educational.

Visitors can choose from a 45-minute Public Penguin Encounter Program for \$40 each or a Private Penguin Encounter Program for \$300 per group of up to four people. For more information, call 800-582-4673 or visit moodygardens.org.



Left: Journalist Christi Minter enjoys King penguin Watson.



Top Right: Faly Nwoung pets Watson as biologist T’Noya Thompson holds him during the Private Penguin Encounter.



Middle: Watson makes a piece of art for the audience.

