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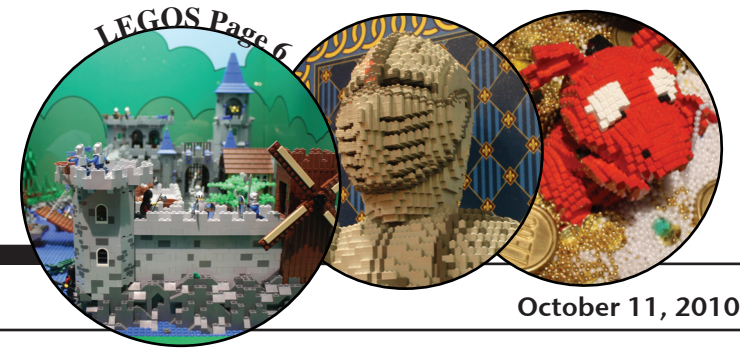
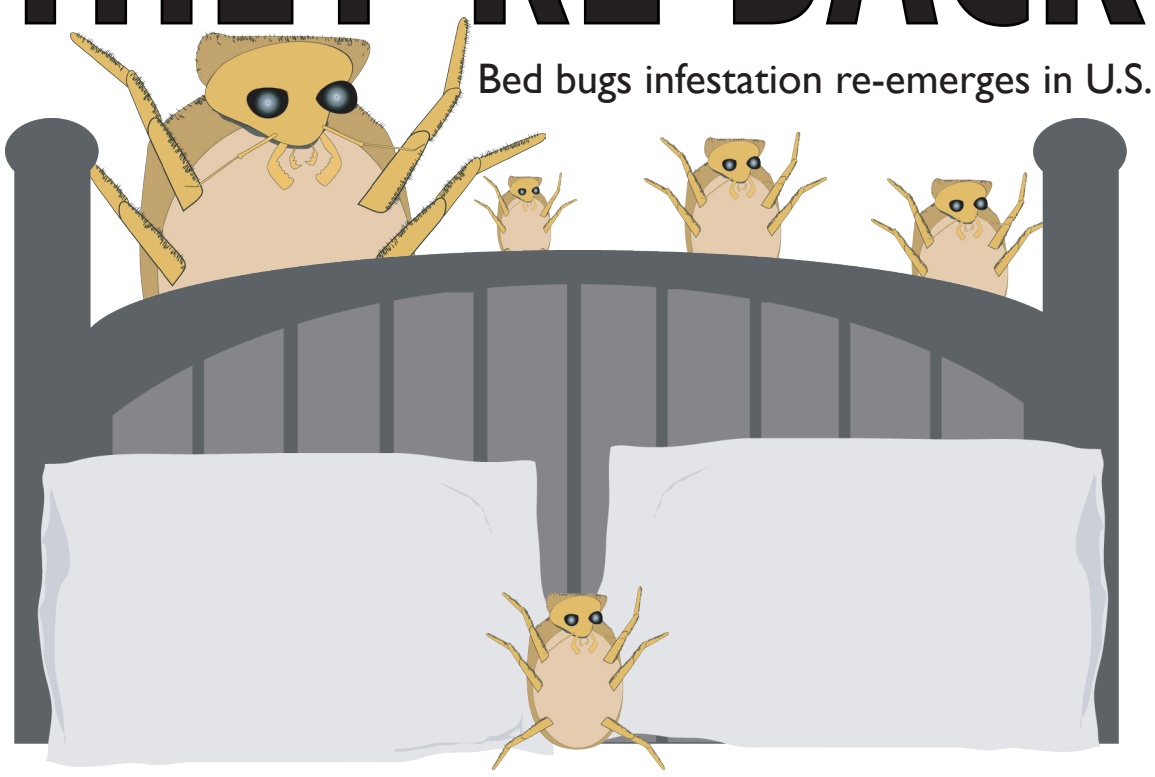


THEY'RE BACK

Bed bugs infestation re-emerges in U.S.



Jessica Faz
The Signal

Largely eradicated in the mid-20th century, bed bugs, small parasitic insects that feed on the blood of humans and animals, are back, and they are making their presence known across the country especially in multi-family dwellings.

The Environmental Protection Agency and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a joint statement, in August, warning that "the United States is one of many countries now experiencing an alarming resurgence in the population of bed bugs."

The widespread use of DDT, a synthetic pesticide, nearly eliminated the bed bug problem in the 1940s and 1950s but may also have contributed to their resurgence. The EPA and CDC noted bed bugs, which range in size from one to seven millimeters, have developed a resistance to many pesticides including DDT.

Andrew Sthipper, owner of AntSir Pest Control, said increased international travel, lack of public awareness and past over-reliance on pesticides such as Chlordane, which has been banned in the U.S. by the EPA, have contributed to the explosion of the bed bug population.

In addition to removing clutter and washing linens and clothes, the CDC and EPA recommend multiple visits by licensed pest control operators in order to eradicate the infestations of bed bugs, which are mainly active at night and can live for several months without a blood meal.

"In order to eliminate bed bugs, you have to have 100 percent control," Sthipper said. "Because they multiply so rapidly, you have to have complete elimination. Bed bugs are experts at hiding."

The CDC and EPA also acknowledge that maintaining control in multi-family homes is especially difficult because bed bugs can travel between units and municipal codes struggle to identify whether tenants or landlords are responsible for bed bug infestation control.

Texas Property Code Section 92.052a states that tenants have the right to demand the landlord repair any condition that materially affects the tenants'

Bugs: *continued on page 6*

Economy fails, enrollment sails

Terann Hilow
The Signal

Local colleges and universities have recorded record-breaking enrollments this semester. Students say a slow economy leads them in the direction of staying in or returning to school rather than searching for a job.

UHCL passed the 8,000 student enrollment mark for the first time in its history this semester. There are 8,111 students enrolled at UHCL this semester, surpassing last fall's enrollment number of 7,643 students.

The UH main campus also broke its enrollment record this semester, recording 35,850 students and raising more than $100 million in private support. Meanwhile, UH-Downtown reported 12,579 attending students.

UH System Chancellor and UH President Renu Khator explained in an interview with the Bay Area Citizen that a greater number of students are listing the university as a top choice.

"We are emerging as a first-choice university for increasing numbers of excellent students," Khator said.

A slow economy has led students to stay in school or go back to school for higher education in the hopes of obtaining greater job opportunities. Students working toward their bachelor's and

Enrollment: *continued on page 6*

Enrollment by School – Spring 2009 v. Spring 2010

	School of BUS	School of SCE	School of HSH	School of SOE
Spring '09 Undergrad	3259	2136	5254	2696
Spring '09 Graduate	2436	1143	1739	1850 *
Spring '10 Undergrad	3510	2323	5755	3026
Spring '10 Graduate	2629	1308	1888	1549 *

* SOE Graduate totals include Doctoral students

Information courtesy of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Watching WatchFire waste space

Amanda Anderson
The Signal

Three new electronic signs were installed this summer, an update that cost an estimated $1.2 million and was covered by the utility surcharge fee paid in addition to tuition.

With 30-year-old hand placed letter signs still being used to communicate messages to the community, the university felt it was time to update the obsolete signs.

"When the university realized that the fee took in more than it needed, it asked the students what should be done with the money," said Rebecca Smith, Student Government Association president. "The student body decided to purchase electronic signs to display campus information."

The university requested bids from many companies before deciding on the Watchfire signs.

"As is customary with any state entity, the university had to put out a call for bids and then make the decision based on the bids turned in for consideration," Smith said. The winning bid was WatchFire Media.

It took about eight months to get the signs, but they were delivered and set up quickly. The only problem is they did not work. There is one sign at Entrance #1 to the campus, and the other between the Bayou Building and the Student Services Classroom Building.

Many students thought it was faulty programming, but Daniel Wilson, director of planning, design and contract administration said that information was not true.

"Some special cables which connect the wireless transmitter to our computing system were found to be faulty and had to be replaced," Wilson said. "That has been done, and the message, WatchFire, is just a default setting when the signs have no other messages programmed into the system, and the cables were replaced by the vendor."

Wilson said the signs should be working as soon as the software is installed.

"Our technical people with University Computing say the transmitters and signs should be ready to start messaging," Wilson said. "All that remains now is for the software to be installed on the

WatchFire: *continued on page 6*

Stress takes toll on college students

Rose Pulido
The Signal

Colton J. Tooley, a University of Texas at Austin sophomore, opened fire with an AK-47 Sept. 28 before killing himself in the Perry-Castaneda Library. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students. Leaving family, friends and the community stunned, Tooley's death contributed to that statistic.

"It is believed that more than 1,100 college students die by suicide each and every year," said Alison Malmon, founder and executive director of Active Minds, Inc, an organization dedicated to mental health on college campuses. "Mental health issues are some of the toughest to acknowledge – it's hard to know when we're not feeling right, and often even harder to admit it when we are."

The JED Foundation, which advocates reducing the suicide rate amongst college students and bringing awareness to mental health issues on campus, released several statistics concerning college students and stress on its website, www.jedfoundation.org, including that 53 percent of students felt stressed to the point where they refused to hang out with their friends on one or more occasions.

Social withdrawal is a symptom of the effects of stress some college students may experience. Other symptoms may include, but are not limited to, anxiety, worrying, sleep problems, aggression, changes in eating habits and inability to concentrate.

If any student is suffering from one or more of these symptoms, there are licensed counselors and psychologists

Stress: *continued on page 6*

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ONLINE

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▶ Slide shows and more stories
▶ Social: Follow The Signal on Twitter and Facebook

Reuse. Repurpose. Recycle me

EDITORIAL

Universities face continued budget cuts

State tightens financial belt at students' expense

The economic woes of today's society have not bounced back from the Great Recession that began in December 2007 and officially ended June 2009.

An institution of higher education, such as UHCL, has no shield to protect against the dreaded state-mandated budget cuts. The proposed budget cut list can be found on the UHCL website and suggests that cuts be made from the 2010-11 General Revenue and General Revenue-Dedicated funds.

This is not the first state budget cut that UHCL has faced. In 2003 and 2004, it reared its ugly head. This fiscal year, which began Sept.1, saw a 5 percent budget cut with the possibility of an additional 5 to 15 percent next year.

Since budget cuts affected each department at the university, it stands to reason that students will somehow also be affected.

The funds have to come from somewhere, if not the state, or private donations. Therefore, these cuts leave students scrambling to find more money to pay for their tuition, student services, lab fees and parking permits.

The budget cuts must have affected the operating hours of the UHCL police department's business office because it has changed its operating hours to 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. That should shed a few staff-hour bucks for the budget cuts.

With an increase in student enrollment but no new parking spaces, a new intramural sport has developed on campus: PSS (parking space stalking). Are we all enjoying the $10 hike for parking permits?

Budget cuts trickle down to the students when enrollment is up but fewer courses are offered in order to fill classrooms, or the hiring of faculty is frozen.

UHCL prides itself on being creative with the handling of funds by not putting all the funds in one area, but spreading it around and choosing the project that is most in need.

It is great and even appreciated that the university is capable of handling the finances; however, money does not grow on trees and the bills have to get paid.

State legislatures should understand the investment of the future is through educated taxpayers.

The students of today will become the teachers, engineers, doctors, lawyers, state representatives, etc. of tomorrow, but only if they can get through school without having a debt as large as the state of Texas.

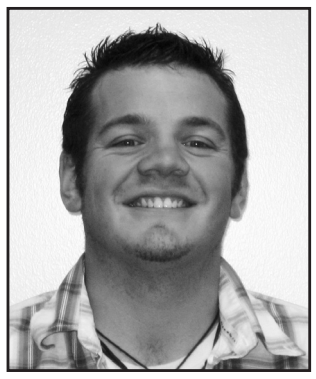
WANTNEEDO *by Kalan Lyra*

COLUMN

Houstonians hold high hopes for Astros' 2011 season

The 2010 baseball season has ended and the Houston Astros have missed the playoffs for the fifth straight year. Since being swept out of the World Series by the Chicago White Sox in 2005, fan attendance has steadily decreased.

The average attendance at Minute Maid Park has fallen to less than 30,000 per game for the first time since 1997.



Travis Smith
The Signal

It's hard to blame the average fan for not being interested in Houston's hometown nine - fan favorites Jeff Bagwell and Craig Biggio have left the game while Roy Oswalt and Lance Berkman were both traded in the middle of the 2010 season for younger prospects and payroll relief.

What is a fan to do when four of the greatest Astros of the last 20 years are no longer there? Have hope, that's what. The 2011 season will feature a plethora of players the average fan may not know. But here are the three major reasons the Astros will matter in 2011: pitching, youth and leadership.

The starting pitching will be solid. In years past, the Astros have gone into spring training with many questions regarding their pitching rotation. Barring injuries, the rotation is set: Brett Myers and J.A. Happ will be at the front end of the rotation, followed by Wandy Rodriguez and Bud Norris. The fifth spot will be a competition between Felipe Paulino, Nelson Figueroa and minor-leaguer Jordan Lyles.

Myers finished the 2010 season tying a career high in wins (14), a career low in ERA (3.14) and a streak of pitching into the sixth inning or later in 32 straight games, the longest streak in Major League Baseball since Curt Schilling in 2002.

Happ, 2009 National League Rookie of the Year runner-up, was acquired from the Philadelphia Phillies mid season in exchange for Oswalt. He pitched well for the Astros, posting a 5-3 record with a 3.00 ERA and should be even better in 2011 as he continues to learn.

Norris, in his second year with the club, struck out 158 batters while earning nine wins. Rodriguez, in his sixth season with the Astros, will be looking to improve on his 2010 season where he struck out 178 batters.

Leadership is something that the Astros have severely lacked since 2007 when Biggio and Bagwell were both out of the locker room. Oswalt and Berkman were left with the reigns, and they did not hit the ground running.

Sure, Oswalt and Berkman were great guys; however, demanding to be traded to more competitive teams, taking a "no worries" approach when your team is in the dumps and performing at career lows is clearly no way to lead.

Myers and Hunter Pence, the 2010 team leader in home runs (25), seem poised to take over the player leadership role, and they should do well. With lots of young players on this team, at the age of 27, Pence is regarded as a veteran Astro.

Leadership is one thing; young leadership is a completely different thing. The Astros could enter the 2011 season with a lineup featuring an average age of 25.8, compared to their 2008 roster, which featured a lineup with an average age of 35.75.

Youth is something the Astros have needed to push toward for many years, and they have finally done it through the draft and smart trades.

A young baseball team is not to be underestimated. With youth, a team has the potential to be full of future all-stars who are present-day unknowns.

I'm not saying bet your savings account on the Astros to win the 2011 World Series. What I am saying is: this team of young and hungry players has the potential to spark a little excitement in Houston.

Enjoy the off season; catchers and pitchers will be reporting to spring training before we know it and the Astros will be ready to make some waves.

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• Student Life • Student Life •

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Join us for SGA Day!

See your Student Government in action
Tuesday, October 19th, 2010
from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Attend the Student Government Association meetings every
Tuesday from 11.30 am to 12:30 pm
In the SSCB Lecture Hall 1.100.03.

For Details Contact The SGA Executive Council:

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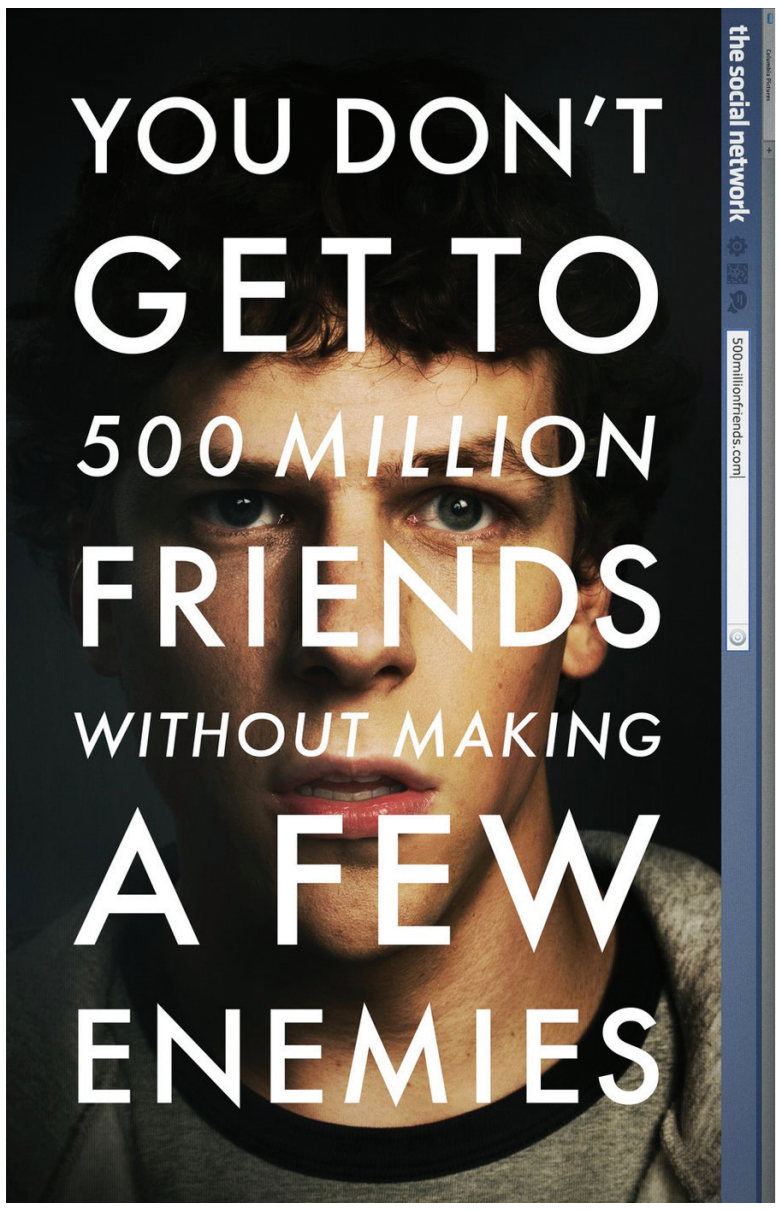
Facebook is THE Social Network

Review



Courtesy: Columbia Pictures

Anthony Nguyen
The Signal

One-in-14 human beings on this planet has a personal Facebook account. When a living species pays that kind of allegiance to a social network, one can't help but think – Social Contract?

At this year's New York Film Festival, movie director David Fincher rhetorically asked, "How many people in this room have Final Cut Pro?" in reference to the ease of making films today. Yes, the ability to make a feature-length movie has been made much more accessible in the last decade, but not just anyone can make a movie of such caliber as Finch's "The Social Network."

Adapted liberally from Ben Mezrich's 2009 nonfiction(-ish) book "The Accidental Billionaires," the film is an overdramatized telling of the creation and ensuing (pun intended) tensions surrounding Internet juggernaut/way-of-life Facebook.com.

Fincher orchestrates a concerto of brilliant writing (Alan Sorkin), wondrous acting (Jesse Eisenberg, Andrew Garfield, etc.) and affecting score (Trent Reznor) into a story of how an invention, intended to bring friends together, ultimately tears its creators apart.

In doing so, Fincher reasserts his idiosyncratic style and impeccable instincts.

One of the most intriguing aspects of watching "The Social Network" is the knowledge that we, the overwhelming majority of the audience, have had, and continue to have, such a heavy hand in shaping its very subject.

Prior to its current ubiquity in so many aspects of our culture, however, the website was born from the idea of exclusivity.

Hatched at Harvard University by Mark Zuckerburg, his dormmates Chris Hughes and Dustin Moskocitz and best friend Eduardo Saverin in 2004, Facebook was originally only available to students with an '@harvard.edu' e-mail. It soon branched out to college campuses nationwide in the same tuition-paying fashion.

"I remember joining Facebook because I had a psu.edu (Penn State) e-mail in 2005," said Andrew Robinson, UHCL social work senior. "It was this hotbed of student activity that was a great alternative to the tacky MySpace."

"All my friends at the University of Houston main campus were talking about joining Facebook in 2005," said Omar Sanjak, UHCL graduate student in engineering.

As the effects of reality set in, Facebook became open to the public in 2006.

The general consensus with students and Facebook users was that the more content-driven format of Facebook was preferred over the waning, increasingly gaudy MySpace. Whoever created glitter art should be charged with treason.

"Because of Facebook, we are able to get the most out of our social lives," Sanjak said. "Heck, I've even discovered family members I never knew I had through Facebook."

Talk about a family reunion.

"Sure, Facebook gets a bad wrap for its 'frivolity' and its administrative policies," Robinson said. "But it continues to be an invaluable way of staying in touch with friends and family. It's hard to imagine life without it now."

The official UHCL Facebook page started status updating in June of 2009.

"We really started seeing the value of being able to interact with students online and providing them with the information in the format that they want to receive information," said Haley Hedderick, coordinator of web communications. "It's quick and we can get information out rapidly to them. It's something they're gonna check on a pretty regular basis."

Eighty-five percent of U.S. college students use Facebook. Hence, approximately 6,800 UHCL students regularly frequent this vortex of chronicled visages.

There's a scene toward the end of "The Social Network" where a law associate sees Zuckerberg on his laptop and asks what he is doing. After informing her that he is checking to see how things are going in Bosnia, she replies "Bosnia – they don't have roads, but they have Facebook."

How astute. Like

Indecent exposure: online profiles reveal private lives

Hannah Pietsch
The Signal

In the beginning, MySpace brought the world together and started the phenomenon of social networking. As tweens began to take over MySpace with clutter and glitter art, college students turned to Facebook. Originally developed exclusively for college students, today Facebook dominates the world of social networking.

While social networking fans continue to use their online profiles to connect with friends and family, they are also devising innovative ways to use Facebook as a way to job hunt. No, job seekers aren't using Facebook to search through classifieds, but they are cleaning up their profiles to make themselves more marketable to curious employers.

Mottie Cato, human resources director for the Harris County Sheriff's Office, explained how the sheriff's office uses Facebook as a screening tool.

"As a part of the application process, candidates fill out a questionnaire," Cato said. "We look at their Facebook profiles to determine if they answered questions truthfully. It is all about credibility."

When looking at an individual's Facebook profile, Harris County Sheriff's Office background investigators focus on pictures posted by the user. Cato explained that investigators are looking to see who an applicant is associated with and where they are spending their free time.

While using Facebook as a screening tool might be expected from law enforcement agencies, it has become a common practice throughout industries.

Katherine Justice, director of the UHCL Office of Human Resources, said that the use of social media has become a topic at conferences for human resources professionals.

"I would say there are many other industries that use Facebook, but we do not at UHCL," Justice said. "However, we do encourage people to think about what they post. Make sure what you put out there is a good representation of you as a person."

But Facebookers beware – it isn't just what the user posts, but what their friends are posting. Pictures posted by someone else are what got a former employee of Poseidon Pools Ltd., in a lot of trouble.

"A former lifeguard called in sick saying he had strep throat," said Leo Castillo, south zone director. "The next day, another lifeguard posted pictures on Facebook of them drinking the night before the other employee called in sick. Needless to say, the lifeguard who called in sick was fired."

While the lifeguards' pictures might have been enjoyed by their friends, the photos were not appreciated by their employers. Now that social networking users can update their Facebook friends from anywhere and about anything, the lines dividing work and home are becoming blurred.

Reflecting on the content of their posts is not a novel concept for savvy social networking users. Kristi Shipley, UHCL undergraduate business major, said she always considers what information is viewable on her Facebook profile.

"I always think about what I post because I know that an employer might look at it," Shipley said. "I wouldn't post any pictures that show people at a party, contain nudity or could be considered racist. I think that is just common sense."

Stephani Brown, UHCL business administration graduate student, recalled a friend who kept her Facebook friends updated on her love life.

"A friend that I went to high school with had recently gotten married," Brown said. "Her husband left for the war about three days after the wedding. He had left his cell phone behind, and a girl that he had done his original tour of duty with began sending him inappropriate pictures. My friend posted these pictures on Facebook and has since kept us posted on her love life."

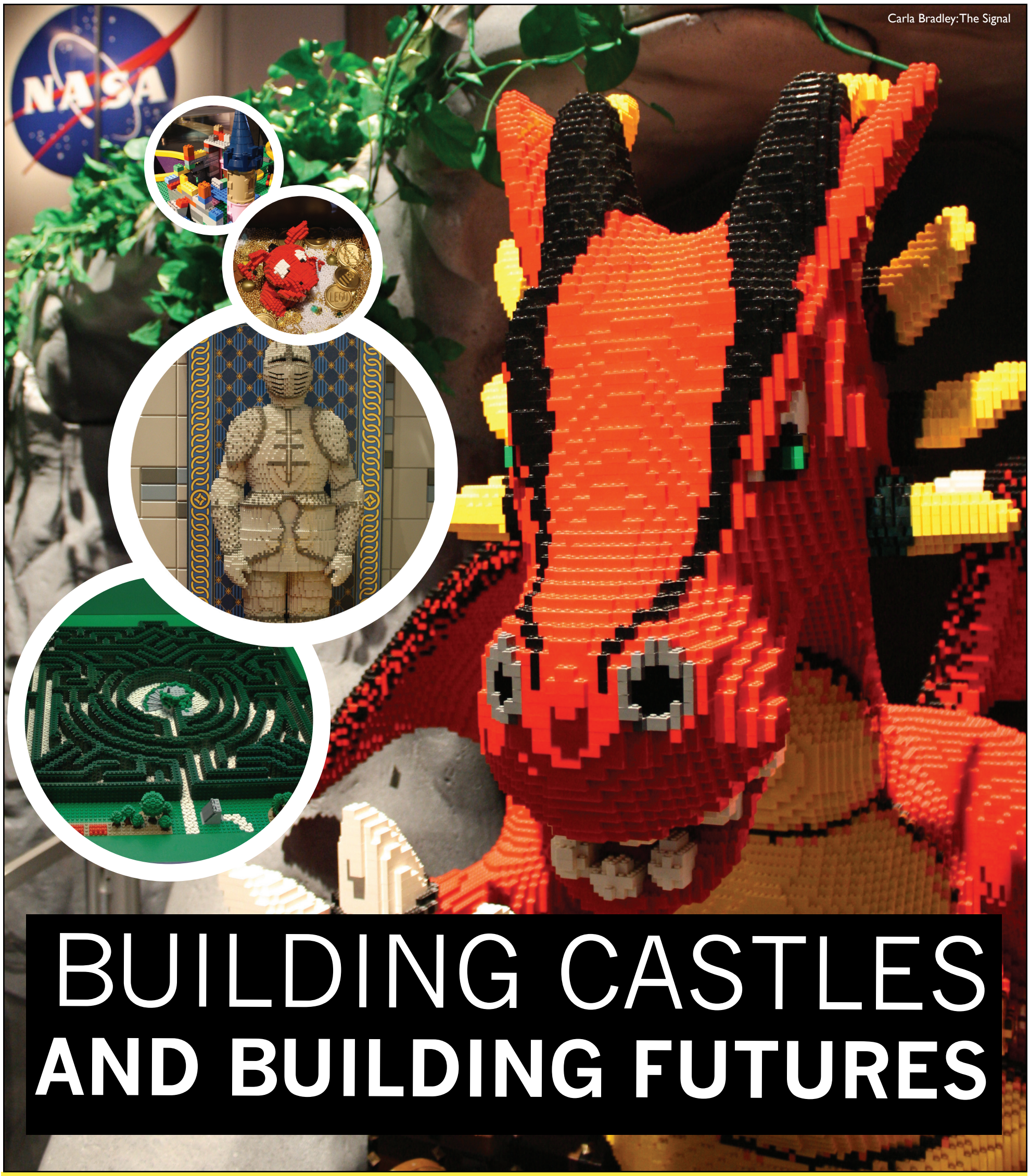
Some social networkers are looking for ways to bring the blurry lines separating home from work back into focus. Boris Epstein, founder and CEO of the professional search firm BINC in California, discussed solutions for the separation issue in an article for Mashable, a technology and social media news website.

In his article "HOW TO: Use Facebook for Professional Networking," Epstein provided instructions for creating friend lists to separate personal and professional Facebook friends.

"I think that as much as the lines are becoming blurred between personal and professional, people still like to maintain individuality and have some personal space," Epstein said. "If an employer takes the step to look at someone's profile, they will look at everything that has been posted."

If using a Facebook profile for both private and professional networking becomes too time consuming, social media users can create a professional profile on LinkedIn. LinkedIn was designed for professionals to connect with colleagues and search job postings.

So before Facebook users post their next party picture or an inappropriate status update, perhaps they will think about who is viewing their profile. If it's NSFW, think B4 U post. (Translation: If it's not safe for work, think before you post.)



BUILDING CASTLES AND BUILDING FUTURES

Constructing imaginations at Space Center Houston

Corey Benson
The Signal

Space Center Houston unveiled its fall exhibit, LEGO Castle Adventure Sept. 26, where visitors can dress up as medieval royalty, tour the LEGO kingdom and even build their own castles.

"We're really excited to have the LEGO Castle Adventure here because it has over 7,000 square feet of fun for all ages – ranging from toddlers to children anywhere from nine to 99 years of age," said Jack Moore, public relations specialist for Space Center Houston.

Space Center Houston, the official visitor center for NASA's Johnson Space Center, hosts three traveling exhibits each year in addition to its permanent collections and exhibits.

"Once we received LEGO Castle Adventure, it took us about a week and half to install," Moore said. "Luckily, we were not tasked with the hard job of piecing together all of the intricate models that consist of thousands and thousands of individual LEGOs."

LEGO Castle Adventure is an international traveling exhibit built by the Children's Museum of Indianapolis.

"LEGO Castle Adventure gives visitors to Space Center Houston the opportunity to test their planning and constructing skills," said Charity Counts, associate vice president of exhibit design and traveling exhibits for The Children's Museum of Indianapolis. "This unique exhibit created in partnership with LEGO Systems, Inc. is another great opportunity for children and families to learn through play with one of the most-loved toys of all time."

Space Center Houston will host a LEGO building contest Nov. 6.

"You can build your own LEGO creation based on the theme of space exploration," Moore said. "Bring it to Space Center Houston and you can be eligible to win more than $2,500 worth of prizes."

All entries are due by 2 p.m. and will be divided into four categories based on age: ages 6 and under, 7-10, 11-14, and 15 and older.

In addition to viewing the LEGO kingdom castle and a full-scale suit of LEGO bricks armor, visitors can build a castle wall, pull back the catapult and fire a projectile at it.

"This is something we actually have to think about in orbit," Moore said. "When we build the International Space Station, we have to protect it from micrometeorites. The exhibit is designed to encourage the development of a child's creativity through playing and learning. When children play with LEGOs, they must problem solve and search for creative solutions. This simple playtime helps to develop the rudimentary thought processes that are essential to engineering and design."

Ticket prices range from $15.95 to $19.95 and can be upgraded to a full-year membership for an additional $3.

"Not only are you going to learn about castles, but you're also going to learn about the history of manned space flight," Moore said.

LEGO Castle Adventure will exhibit through Jan. 23, 2011, at Space Center Houston, located at 1601 NASA Pkwy. For more information, visit www.spacecenter.org.

Bugs: *continued from page 1*

health and safety. In addition, SB 1448 (81st Regular Session), effective Jan. 1, grants justices of the peace authority to order landlords to remedy conditions affecting a tenant's health and safety.

However, Texas Property Code Section 92.052b states that the landlord does not have a duty to pay for or make repairs if a tenant or tenant's guests cause an unsafe or unhealthy condition through negligence, carelessness, abuse or accident. Landlords are also not legally bound to disclose if a property has or has had bed bugs.

"Tenants who have questions about the issue can refer to the Tenants' Rights Handbook," said attorney Heather Kubiak. "Tenants may be able to pursue a constructive eviction."

While bed bugs are not believed to transmit diseases, their bites can cause allergic reactions with effects ranging from a small bite mark to anaphylaxis, a life-threatening type of allergic reaction. Bites can also lead to secondary skin infections such as impetigo, a highly contagious bacterial skin infection.

Additional signs of infestation include exoskeletons of the bed bugs after molting, bed bugs in mattress folds or folded sheets, a sweet musty odor and rusty-colored blood spots from their blood-filled fecal material that is often excreted on the mattress.

If tenants feel the landlord will not make repairs needed to protect their health or safety, the Tenants' Rights Handbook says the tenants may be entitled to end the lease, have the problem repaired or remedied and deduct the cost from the rent or get a court to order that the repairs be made only after following all procedures required by law. The Texas Bar Association recommends consulting with an attorney before taking any of these actions.

The procedure for obtaining repairs as stated by the Tenants' Rights Handbook is to first send the landlord a dated letter by certified mail or by registered mail outlining needed repairs. Tenants should keep a copy of the letter and keep rent current.

Next, give the landlord a reasonable time to make repairs, usually seven days. In addition, though it is not required, the handbook recommends calling a city inspector to determine if the condition violates local ordinances.

Finally, give a second notice and request explanation. This is not necessary if the first notice was sent via certified mail, return receipt requested.

For more information on tenants' rights go to www.texasbar.com and navigate to the Tenants' Rights Handbook or www.texastenant.org.

"Bed bugs do not discriminate between rich and poor and have no preference for climate or environment," said Missy Henriksen, vice president of public affairs for National Pest Control Management Association in a July press release outlining the first comprehensive global bed bug study.

Stress: *continued from page 1*

available in the UHCL Office of Career and Counseling Services who will work with students regarding their issues.

"Our ultimate goal is to try to help students succeed with their career goals or their academic goals and graduate," said Betty Brown, counselor and testing coordinator. "That's kind of the idea that we're trying to address, whatever's interfering with a student's success."

Students who choose not to seek help when they begin to experience symptoms of stress run the risk of having those symptoms evolve into something more serious.

"As soon as you feel sad, or upset, or otherwise not yourself, talk to someone about it," Malmon said. "Seek counseling from the counseling center; let your friends know how you're feeling. Let others support you and know that there is always hope."

Tooley's family said they did not know he was depressed or have any indication that he may have been contemplating suicide. No students were injured or killed during Tooley's attack; however, other campus shooters have succeeded in taking multiple lives before killing themselves.

UHCL has a Crisis Awareness Response Emergency team that consists of staff from the University Police Department, Office of Student Life, Intercultural and International Student Services and Counseling Services. This team was created as a source of contact for anyone on campus who has witnessed unusual behavior or is concerned for any individual.

"If you think there is a student in crisis, whether it is a student or staff member who thinks so, they can submit that [as a referral]," said UHCL Police Chief Paul Willingham. "We will review the situation and, hopefully, talk to the people that are around that student, do some investigative work to see whether or not that student is indeed in some sort of crisis or if there is some other issue involved there."

There is a link and a phone number on the UPD and office of the Dean of Students website for the CARE team, where an anonymous referral can be submitted.

"It's not for creating problems for someone," said Interim Dean of Students David Rachita. "It's about being concerned."

UPD also offers an Active Shooter/Critical Incident survival class to faculty, staff and student groups who are interested. The class consists of a training video, classroom instructions and discussions and concludes with a question and answer session.

There is also an active shooter incident survival video on the UPD website. For scheduling information regarding the survival class, contact Detective Allen Hill at 281-283-2224 or e-mail him at hilljr@uhcl.edu.

"You are more likely to be assaulted in the parking lot of your local grocery store than you are on a university campus," Willingham said. "The likelihood of a gun assault on a student or anybody is still very minimal at this point, despite the media coverage."

Enrollment: *continued from page 1*

master's degrees cite similar reasons for cracking the books versus hunting for a job.

"I would be willing to take a lower salary and a lot of hours if it was the right job and had good opportunities for advancement," said Matt Crouch, UHCL accounting graduate student. "I have yet to find that, so I want to better myself while the economy remains terrible. It will cost a lot of money and be a lot of hard work, but a master's degree these days get you a lot further than a bachelor's degree."

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that a college degree almost doubles the yearly earnings of workers. Workers 18 and older who have bachelors degrees will earn an average of $51,206, while those with a high school diploma will make $27,915. Workers with advanced degrees earn an average of $74,206.

"I went back to open up more opportunities in the job world," said Ryan Mast, San Jacinto College student. "I'm good at sales, but without a degree you can only achieve a certain amount of success in that field. I had a window of opportunity to give school another shot so I jumped all over it."

State Representative Ryan Guillen wrote on his blog, www.ryanguillen.com, that Texas colleges and universities are also seeing greater diversity among students, paired with higher enrollment numbers, which he partly attributes to legislation.

"Legislation offering a spot at any Texas public university to students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their class at public high schools has increased diversity at many college and universities," Guillen wrote. "So many [students] chose UT that the legislature allowed it to take fewer top students, limiting guaranteed admission to the top 8 percent for the 2011-12 school year."

Yvette Bendeck, associate vice president of enrollment management at UHCL, said that among the undergraduate degrees that are being pursued by students, the most popular are education, accounting, psychology, behavioral science, fitness and human performance, and biological sciences. For graduates, MBAs, psychology programs, educational management, computer science and counseling are most common.

Regarding growing job fields and opportunities for students looking at pursuing a degree with more secure opportunities, Roger Moncarz, projections economist for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, lets the numbers do the talking.

"Health care dominates the group of occupations right now," Moncarz said. "It's projected to be the fastest-growing group within the next 10 years. Seven out of the 10 fastest-growing job markets are related to health care, and that growth comes from an aging population."

For further information about job statistics and projections, visit www.bls.gov.

Knowledge is green: what students need to know about FAFSA

Crystina Arnold
The Signal

Paying for college is a common worry for students at colleges and universities across the U.S. For those who do not have the financial resources readily available, options include scholarships, grants and student loans.

Brannon Lloyd, president of College Financial Advisors, explores these options with students and parents in a series of monthly workshops. Although his individual services are fee-based, Lloyd and his colleagues conduct four to six workshops each month at no cost to educate parents and students on how to save money when paying for college.

Lloyd held a workshop at the Pearland Library Sept. 30 for a small group of parents of high school students. College Financial Advisors intern Alyssa Jimenez, a Houston Baptist University freshman, attended with Lloyd. Jimenez first met Lloyd after her parents attended one of his workshops last year.

"My mom cried every time we came to his office," Jimenez said. "I'm going to a private college for less than $4,000 a semester."

While the workshop is mainly geared toward high school students and their parents, Lloyd provided information and tips that can be utilized by UHCL students regarding the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The FAFSA must be filed for students seeking any type of federal financial aid.

Lloyd stressed knowing the right time to fill out the FAFSA. Since financial aid is offered on a first-come first-serve basis, a common misconception is that Jan. 1 is the most opportune time turn in the completed form. This, however, may not be the case.

Applying too early may cause students to get lost in the large piles of applications, Lloyd explained. When colleges and universities are bombarded by large numbers of FAFSA forms after returning from winter break, they don't have time to go through each application with scrutiny. The goal is to simply get through the pile as quickly as possible. Lloyd related this process to Halloween.

"What happens when the first trick-or-treaters come to your house?" Lloyd asked. "You reach into the large bowl of candy and give each person one piece. Three hours later you are shoveling handfuls of candy into bags of children because you just want to get rid of it."

Students should not wait too long, however, because grants are the first type of aid to go. Students who apply too late may find themselves with less grant money and more loans. The best time to start applying for federal aid is around Jan. 18.

Applicants do not have to wait until their taxes are completed to fill out the FAFSA. They can check the "will file" box on the form. Lloyd's advice on this is to not use last year's tax information if income for the current year will be less. In that situation it is better to estimate the current year.

Another tip Lloyd offered is to pay attention to base-year earnings. A "base-year" is the tax year for which Estimated Family Contribution will be calculated. EFC is the dollar amount a family is expected to contribute to the cost of higher education. Financial aid is calculated by subtracting the EFC from the total estimated expenses of attending a particular college or university.

Students should use caution when considering a second job as a means to pay for school. Acquiring too much extra income during a base-year may cause the student's EFC to go up and hurt financial aid eligibility.

Bonuses are another factor to consider. Working students who receive a bonus at the end of the year may be able to talk to their employer about holding the bonus until January. This will keep the extra income off the student's base-year and help financial aid availability. Students must be aware, however, that the income will be counted on the following year's taxes and should weigh this option carefully if they plan on applying for financial aid the next year.

Interested students can find more information and a list of upcoming workshops at www.thecollegemoneyguys.com/

The most important thing, Lloyd stressed to workshop attendees, is the importance of planning ahead and applying for financial aid, regardless of income level. He cautioned to parents and students not to rely solely on scholarships that may or may not come through.

"Hope is not a plan," Lloyd said.

WatchFire: *continued from page 1*

PC's of the designated users and for them to start programming their messages."

The problems with the signs are being corrected by the facilities management and Construction team under Ward Martaindale, associate vice president for facilities, maintenance and construction.

"We should soon see the signs in operating order as the facilities management team is working on the issue," Smith said.

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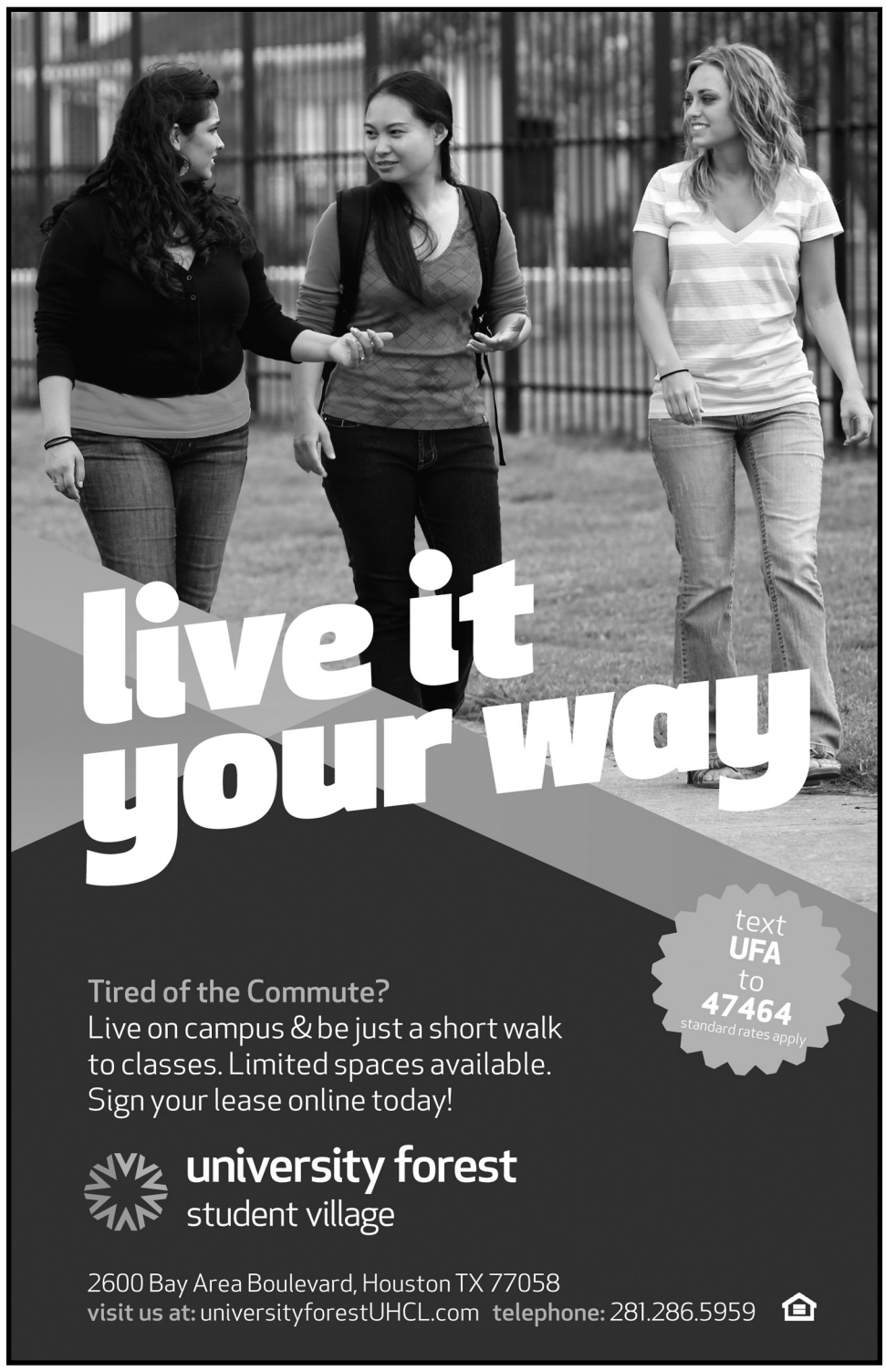

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Worship - 10:30am

I ♥ UHCL

James Jones
The Signal

The second annual "I Heart UHCL Day," a day to celebrate school spirit and pride, will be held Oct. 14 in Atrium II from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. all students, faculty and staff to attend.

"I Heart UHCL Day" will provide a wide variety of activities and events throughout the day. Several school-affiliated offices and departments are planning to participate, as well as most of the student organizations.

"With the displays and activities planned that day, it will be a great way to see and learn about why our students and staff really love being a part of the UHCL community and family," said Allison Scahill, coordinator of student life for activities and student organizations.

Allison Scahill: Student Life

Blockie reads The Signal.

"I Heart UHCL Day" will include activities such as: an office decoration contest, UHCL's unofficial mascot "Blockie" gallivanting around the school for picture opportunities, an Alumni Association coffee table where alumni will be handing out free snacks and coffee, a UHCL historical display from University Archivist Shelly Kelly, student organization-planned endeavors and displays from the President's Office, Office of University Advancement, Office of Human Resources and the Neumann Library.

Decorated offices showcasing their UHCL pride will soon be seen throughout most of the school. As of now, the list of offices participating in the office decoration contest includes Human Resources, Academic Records, Financial Aid, the School of Education Advising, Admissions and University Computing and Telecommunications.

"Everyone's really going to try and make this place colorful and inviting," said Prem Siddharth Gunamalai, the chosen Student Assistant Office decorator for this year's "I Heart UHCL Day." "This time it's a competition so everyone's trying to make it big."

Student organizations will host events such as: the Ping Pong Club will have a tournament, the Sport Association will host 4 square, the Bilingual Education Students Organization will organize a hula hoop game with prizes, the American Marketing Association will arrange a spin the wheel type of game with prizes, the Team Houston Weightlifting Club and the Muslim Student Association will have displays and the Indian Student Association will draw henna tattoos.

"UHCL may not be the biggest school, but it's still a good school," said Shine Lin, president of the Ping Pong Club and the Sports Association. "Everyone should get involved in I Heart UHCL Day because anything one can do to enrich and evolve their college experience is good."

Not only can students, faculty and staff demonstrate school spirit and pride by wearing blue, green or a UHCL shirt that day, but "I Heart UHCL Day" is also about celebrating the college experience.

"Students should go and show some school pride," said Christina Bautista, student life for activities and student organizations graduate assistant. "Students often get caught up in school work. They do not take the time to enjoy the college experience. We need to remember that we are blessed to be able to receive an education from a great institution."

For more information, contact Allison Scahill at Scahill@uhcl.edu or call 281-283-2650.

Get 'LOST' in the library

Melissa Waller: The Signal

Reference and instruction librarian Ashlynn Wicke helps Lori Johnson, accounting major, submit her raffle ticket during the Alfred R. Neumann Library's annual open house Tuesday, Sept. 28.

This year's theme was Island Oasis. Students were encouraged to participate in a treasure hunt throughout the library to become more familiar with the staff and services available as well as earn a chance to win a Barnes & Noble Nook.

Students who attended were provided a variety of baked goods and beverages.

Today is National Coming Out Day

Courtesy : IISS

NCOD is sponsored by Intercultural and International Student Services and Unity, Noon-1 p.m., today, Oct. 11, Bayou Building Garden Room.

Maria Gonzalez, a scholar on Mexican-American literature, sexuality and pedagogy, will discuss coming out for members of varying ethnic groups and cultures and the double discrimination they face.

MID-TERM MADNESS

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
10 Art Exhibition Begins, Bayou Atrium I, Second Level	11 National Coming Out Day, Noon - 1 p.m., Bayou Garden Room	12 Lights, Camera... Leadership Workshop, 6-8 p.m., SSCB 1202.07	13 Reading, Writing, Spelling and Study Skills Tutoring, 4:30-6 p.m., Arbor Suite A190	14 Late Registration Begins for Fall II	15 Career Eploration Workshop, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., SSCB 3103 & 3109	16 Film: Home, 7 p.m., SSCB Lecture Hall
17 Celebrating Our Elders, 7 p.m., Bayou Atrium II	18 Counseling Services Outreach: Gender Communication; He Said, She Said Begins	19 Late Registration Ends for Fall II	20 Women's Health Expo/ Love Your Body, noon-5 p.m., Bayou Garden Room & Atrium I	21 CLASP "Vision in Our Midst" speaker series on Battleship Texas, 5:30-7 p.m., Bayou Garden Room	22 Reminder: Last Day to Drop a Class or Withdraw is Oct. 26	23 Autism Speaker: Increasing Appropriate Mealtime Behavior, 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., SSCB Lecture Hall