

# THE SIGNAL

Volume XXXIV, Number 14

www.uhcl.edu/thesignal

December 3, 2007

How it used to be  
- page 4



## Student services report card gets high marks

**Emily Jaschke**  
The Signal Staff

With student enrollment on the decline at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, it has become imperative to retain the current student body as well as recruit new students.

Potential students and/or new students have a maze of services to wade through before they actually sit in a classroom. If they are treated rudely or made to feel that their needs are not important, it could hinder the decision to stay on campus. It has become increasingly important for the staff working at the service centers to make a good first impression.

How did our student service offices measure up? Pretty well, per my investigation of all major campus offices. I visited each one asking questions pertaining to their services. The investigation was based upon four categories: how I was greeted; were my questions answered adequately; did the individual go out of his or her way to offer additional help if those questions could not be answered; and, most importantly, did the individual seem interested in meeting my needs as a student.

The first stop was the Office of Admissions. The individual behind the desk stood to greet me. I asked what my next step should be as a soon-to-be undergraduate wishing to obtain a graduate degree. All of my questions were answered, but with very limited yes or no responses at first. The individual then warmed up, inquired as to my grade point average, and informed me that because it was above a 3.0, I would not need to take the GRE. I was also informed that my next step after submitting my application would be to see my academic adviser.

Next on the hot seat was the Office of Financial Aid. Upon entry, the next available student worker was engaged in what appeared to be homework and did not seem relieved at the prospect of a break from it. The attendant's attitude did improve as the conversation progressed.

**Report Card:** continued on page 10



**Dickinson Festival of Lights**  
- Read more on page 6



**Green no matter the season**  
- Read more on page 12



Emily Jaschke: The Signal

From left, Roland Enow, Yolanda Holiday-Garrier and Jocelyn Ronquillo help decorate the wish tree.

## Adopt through the Wish Tree: IISS making Christmas memories

**Josh Conwell**  
The Signal Staff

For the past 10 years, the Office of Intercultural and International Student Services has been teaming up with the Salvation Army to provide gifts to children and senior citizens throughout Houston and the surrounding areas for Christmas.

The Wish Tree program is open to everyone, on or off campus, and is a great way to make a difference in the life of a

special person.

"We try to get different cultures together and the Wish Tree is an integrated part of the culture," said Sameer Pande, assistant director of intercultural and international student services. "So I think it is a very good opportunity for our office to get, not just the domestic, but the international students and other faculty and staff together to do a project, which I think helps the people who really need

**Wish Tree:** continued on page 10

## SGA encourages students to be involved

**Monica Buchanan**  
The Signal Staff

There are 65 active student organizations at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. Each of these organizations has their own goals and agendas, but they all share one common thread – the Student Government Association.

SGA provides students with an outlet to become more involved on campus, elect students into leadership positions and establish a democratic decision making body for the campus. What sets UHCL's SGA apart is that it participates in a shared governance. This means that members of SGA serve on committees that are directly responsible for creating university policies, which gives the student body a voice in deciding those policies.

The SGA is comprised of four executive council members and one representative from each student organization on campus. The executive council, elected each spring to one-year terms, includes a president, vice president-outreach and communications, vice president-committee coordinator and vice president-administration.

"Part of our training is to look at everyone as a leader," said Nida Ajaz, the SGA vice president-outreach and communications. "Once you enter [an SGA meeting], we look at you as a potential leader, and we will try and build up your potential."

SGA is also responsible for the distribution and allocation



Richard Willis: The Signal

SGA executive council officers from left: Joyce Delores Taylor, president; Micheal Phillips, VP committee coordinator; Patrick L. Cardenas, VP administration; Nida Ajaz, VP student outreach and communication.

tion of funds for student organizations on campus. Funds are distributed to organizations by voting on what percentage of a previously allocated amount, determined by student fees, should be given and for what purposes. In order to receive funding from SGA, a representative from an organization must fill out the proper forms and make a presentation during

**SGA:** continued on page 10

## The 'force' is with this band

**Josh Conwell**  
The Signal Staff

You can call them emo, pop, indie-pop, folksy, punk rock, even soulful, but what makes the band Eisley so unique is their ability to not be stereotyped into one type of genre, but to come up with their own style of music.

Born and raised in Tyler, Texas, the family band Eisley is slowly maturing into a group focused on sculpting their artistic and musical talents. Their unique blend of intoxicating melodies and lyrical dreaminess gives this group's music a fresh and powerful edge that puts other popular band lyrics to shame.

Eisley consists of three sisters, a brother and their cousin. All share the same last name, Dupree, and all of them are musically gifted. Ranging in age from 17 to 26, band members include: guitarist/vocalist Sherri, keyboardist/vocalist Stacy, guitarist Chauntelle, drummer Weston and, their cousin, bassist Garron.

Forming the band back in 1997, the group spent many years playing shows throughout Texas, slowly building a large fanbase until they were finally signed to Warner Brothers. Records in 2003. Soon after that, Eisley was chosen to open for Coldplay's "Rush of Blood to the Head" 2003 summer tour. Since then, the band has toured with many other bands including Snow Patrol, New Found Glory, Switchfoot, The Fray and Taking Back Sunday.

After many successful tours, Eisley finally debuted their

**Eisley:** continued on page 12



# Retention is everyone’s responsibility

In the previous issue of The Signal, the staff covered an article about the concerns of student retention. Research for the article lead to a staff discussion about how students are treated in various offices on campus.

Colleges and universities are experiencing a decrease in the number of students attending school. Most of the blame seems to rest on increased tuition. Signal staff members questioned if some of the blame might also rest on the way students are treated in some of the various offices on campus.

As our discussion progressed, we found out that most of the staff had mixed experiences with the different offices on campus, experiences that ranged from “mean” to “ambivalent” to “wonderful.” The staff decided to investigate the situation by sending reporters to the different offices of University of Houston-

Clear Lake to ask a variety of questions and see how we might be treated.

As we walked into the different offices, we learned that some of the people with whom we spoke were very eager and willing to help us. Some people, when we walked in, seemed very dour, as if we had just interrupted their game of solitaire they were so diligently involved in on the computer.

When asking questions, legitimate to the services offered by each office, we found that some of the office staff met us with a smile and an immediate offer to help; some were less personable, but still offered help; a few seemed resentful of the interruption and only reluctantly offered help.

It is understandable that office staff sometimes gets tired of repeating the same information over and over again until it seems repetitive to them. It is important to

keep in mind that those same old answers will be brand new to the students asking the questions. If students are asking a question, it is because they do not know the answer; if they knew the answer, then more than likely, they would not be asking the question.

Students on any campus, whether it is UHCL or any major university, should be treated kindly and with respect in any of these student service offices and vice versa.

These various student service offices on campus are often the front line for new students. Enrolling and registering for classes is a tedious process that students have to face.

This process can be very nerve-racking and stressful to students who have never had to deal with these things. If students are discouraged in this process, there is a good possibility that they might not even make it to the first day of class.

Most student services here on campus are very friendly, willing to help and understand what students go through in order to get their college degrees. These offices should be commended. For those offices lacking professional interpersonal skills, administrators should be held responsible for the training of staff on customer service relationships in addition to the everyday skills needed to fulfill the job requirements.

Students are key to the existence of a college or university; without students, there would not be a need for student services and, therefore, there would not be a need for student service staff members. There can be many causes responsible for a decreased retention rate; the rising cost of tuition might not be the only problem.

## OPINION

### The encroaching career dilemma



Stephanie Wilcox  
Stef’s Static

A much anticipated day approaches as I board a Beech-18 light cargo airplane. I have prepared and trained vigorously for this day. The time is here. I hear the captain say we have reached 13,000 feet in altitude. The side door to the airplane opens. I stand and walk toward the opening.

Suddenly, my legs began to tremor and my breathing becomes short, as if every muscle in my chest is constricting. I know it’s do or die. If I don’t jump, I could possibly miss the chance of a lifetime. If I do, I could fall to my death.

My mind races back and forth from one scenario to the next. Visions of my life play out in front of me, each with equally disappointing endings. But what happens when you’re not ready to embark on this new frontier?

For me, the jump is graduation.

As each day passes and the semester draws to an end, I feel a heightened sense of anxiety. An anxiety that stems from uncertainty. Uncertainty that is fueled by fear - fear of accountability.

Although I have often complained about the transitional plateau that comes from being a student, the simplicity of just being a student now, in hindsight, is appealing.

In fact, I have pondered returning to college next semester to begin a master’s program; however, the motivation is not genuine. The desire is prompted by the pessimistic side of my nature, which enjoys the flexibility that comes from being a student.

As a single mother of a son with disabilities, I have come to enjoy the fact that I can bring my son to his numerous doctor’s appointments without fear of the repercussions.

I find it hard to imagine my future employer being receptive of the idea that I have to leave early from work, at minimum, twice a week to take my son to an appointment.

The decision though, for me, is like trying to pick between the lesser of two evils. On one side I have economic vitality, on the other side family obligations. Trying to fathom how one can balance these two things seems unrealistic.

One thing that I do know to be true is when I do enter the workforce, my compensation will be less than my male counterpart.

In fact, women, on average, make 20-25 percent less than men with the same qualifications.

To some of you this may not sound like a lot, but the National Association for Female Executives Salary Survey indicates that the pay gap costs women \$30,000 a year on average. Over the course of woman’s career, this cost could add up to \$500,000.

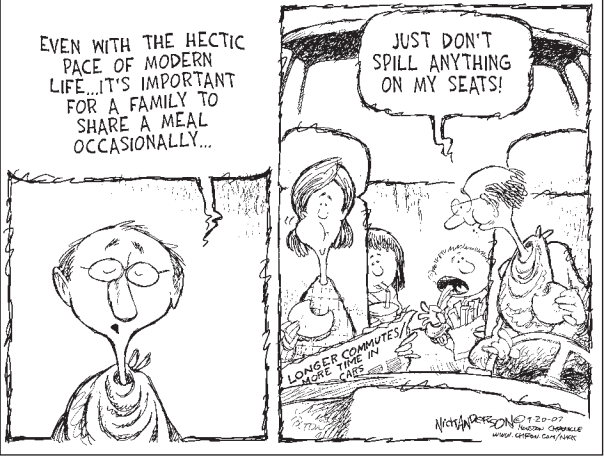
The U.S. Census Bureau reported that white females earn 24 percent less, African-American females earn 35 percent less and Latina women earn 45 percent less when compared to males in identical jobs.

Women have made strides in equality considering that the law allowing women to vote did not take effect until 1920; the Food and Drug Administration did not approve birth control pills until 1960; men could not be charged for raping their wives until 1976; women could be discriminated against because of pregnancy until 1978; and it wasn’t until 1967 that married women gained equal rights in the following areas: insurance, banking, real estate, deeds, contracts, divorce, choice of domicile, child custody, and property rights.

As each day nears an end, I must prepare myself for the countless possibilities of what tomorrow might bring. For me, the disparity in pay is a harsher reality than to some. Because there is not another income to offset my loss in compensation because I am a single mother of a child with disabilities whose health care cost a more than average. If I do decide to pursue my master’s degree, this will only elevate my compensation level to close that gap between myself and my undergraduate degreed male counterpart. It would still not close the gap between pay rates.

So, I stand here shaking and uncertain of many things, but ready to make that jump.

Cartoon by: Nick Anderson



Cartoon by: Nick Anderson



*The staff of The Signal wishes all of their readers a safe and happy holiday season.*

## THE SIGNAL STAFF

<b>Co-Editors</b>	Neesha Hosein Bret Newcomb	<b>Reporters/ Photographers</b>	Melissa Bird Angela Bolton Kim Boswell Monica Buchanan Josh Conwell Heather Frame Jamie Griffiths Emily Jaschke Kevin Kettle Ashley R. Marie Cassandra Spencer Lauren Taylor Nicole Wheatley Stephanie Wilcox
<b>Designer</b>	Richard Willis		
<b>Assistant Designer</b>	Kimber Roque		
<b>Videographers/ Video Editors</b>	Alicia Gutierrez Alana Pennington		
<b>Web Master</b>	David Kiss		
<b>Broadcast Reporters</b>	Heather Frame Nicole Wheatley		

## 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



# HOLIDAY MADNESS: Grandmas and dogs

Ah, the holidays – a time for food, fun and family. For me, it’s the family that gets to me. I come from a rather large, extended family and, year after year, the holidays get more and more interesting, not to say almost indecent.

In my family, we don’t always celebrate with the same side of the extended family. It all depends on my uncle’s schedule. If he’s off, then we celebrate with my mom’s side; if he’s not, then we grace my dad’s side with our presence.

This year was my mom’s year, and let’s just say I think I did more laughing than eating. I’m not sure why I found the comments funnier but, needless to say, they were. I was hoping to celebrate this family Thanksgiving with my boyfriend for the first time, but when the day was over, I was a little thankful that he was not present for the celebration.



**Jamie Griffiths**  
Word to the Wise

Thanksgiving Day started out normal, but then most holidays do. I was finishing the desserts that I had started the night before and, much to my dissatisfaction, my phone started ringing.

“Are you awake yet?” yelled my sister, who was only home from Baylor University for two days. “Are you dressed? Are you on your way?”

I am not a morning person and I had clearly explained the day before that I would be arriving between 10 and 11 a.m. It was only 9:30 a.m. and she was already starting in on me. It was not the way I wanted to start my day.

I had three loads of goodies that I needed to take to my car and guess what I forgot: the deer sausage. Yes, the deer sausage. The world almost fell apart when I arrived without the deer sausage.

My dad had been hunting in Nebraska with a friend a week prior. His friend gave everyone at work deer sausage and, for some unknown reason, it was my responsibility to bring it to my parent’s house on Thanksgiving Day. Obviously, there were other things on my mind and deer sausage was not one of them.

Unfortunately, that is not the half of it. To make matters more entertaining, my grandma wanted to read the past issue of The Signal. So I brought a few copies into the house for Mom, Grandma and my aunt to read. My story started out on page one and then continued on to page 10. The ad on page 11 caught the eye of my grandma. It was for egg donors. My grandma wanted to know if she could pass for a 35-year-old.

“I have a few good eggs,” my grandma explained. “And I guess they will be buried with me.”

I would not say my grandma is shy in any way. As soon as those words flew out of her mouth, I knew it would be a story I would tell over and over. I just laughed; we all just laughed.

The day had just started and we were already discussing those kinds of things. It does not stop there. In fact, with my family, it gets better.

The family was getting ready to start serving dinner, and my sister and I were getting everyone’s drink order. I thought she had gotten my dad’s drink order but, of course, she did not.

Everyone was gathering in the kitchen getting ready to eat while my dad waited on his drink.

“You have two good legs and you sure are thankful for them today,” my sister said. “You know where the cooler is.”

Most of us started laughing. However, my grandma did not hear the comment. As the loving granddaughter that I am, I repeated to her what was said.

Before I could even finish my sentence, my grandma started making off-color comments as to the number of legs my dad has; comments that made everyone laugh and most blush.

So everyone laughed and dinner went on as scheduled. Food was knocked over, the dogs were put outside, and everyone ate way too much.

It was a little while later, during the middle of the football game, when we were all gathered in the living room waiting for the halftime show. My cousin was marching in the band that was to perform with Kelly Clarkson. We were all patiently waiting when the dogs started fighting.

“Jealous little [insert expletive here],” said my grandpa, who was extremely irritated with the dogs.

The dogs started fighting because the little one was sniffing around the bigger one’s stuffed bear that she uses in, um, private. Her man-friend bear was to be touched or sniffed by no one, not even other dogs.

It was shortly after that when I said goodnight. I had reached the point when I could not laugh another minute.

Everyone had to travel and was trying to get on the road before dark.

Holidays are usually celebrated with family and friends. Everyone has their own way to celebrate and, hopefully, you have as much fun as my family does. Food, fun and family, it is the perfect recipe this season.



**There are several techniques to avoid direct contact in the restroom. Germs are everywhere, so beware.**

Emily Jaschke: The Signal

# The battle of germs: We’ll see who gets the last laugh

Are you afraid of germs? Do you hate using a public restroom for fear of having to touch a door handle or discovering they’re out of toilet seat covers?

Well then you are in luck, because I have a few excellent tips for you germaphobes out there who are terrified of public bathrooms.

Number one, don’t use your bare hand to open the door. Most public bathroom doors swing open and shut and to avoid making contact with a germ-laden handle, just turn around and use your back to open the door. Now, what do you do when the door doesn’t just swing open? Well, doorknobs can be



**Melissa Bird**  
Word by Bird

tricky, but true germaphobes have tissues on them at all times, perhaps even wet wipes. Use one of these to open the door handle and once you’re in, throw it away.

Next, when picking a stall, be careful and examine the seat. You never know what may be lurking there for you, and even women somehow manage to miss the seat every once in a while.

After picking your stall, mainly if you are a woman, you must decide whether you will cover, hover or both. If you choose to cover then you will simply need to pull a pre-made toilet seat cover from the dispenser and carefully place it on the toilet. If the dispenser is out, just make your own from toilet paper. This method isn’t quite as effective as the pre-made version, but it is better than making direct contact.

The next option, the hover, is done by those who have carefully trained their leg muscles to hold them in the correct hovering position for the time needed. An amateur attempting the hover could cause damage to themselves and the toilet seat. This difficult move should really be left only to those with lots of practice. A true germaphobe will not only hover but cover as well, to avoid any contact and also to act as a safety net should their carefully trained muscles give out at a pivotal moment.

When you are finished, the next germ-filled task you must do is flush. There are a few things you need to consider: whether or not the seat has a lid, the occurrence of an automatic flush and the height of the handle itself. If your seat has a lid it is important to put it down before you set yourself up for the big flush. After all, bacteria in toilets can become airborne when you flush. Most public restrooms don’t have lids, which is why that makes them even

more of a breeding ground for germs. So, how do you go about shutting the lid without contaminating your hands? Use your foot. This takes grace and balance to do properly without disturbing your neighbors. You must tip the seat forward with your foot knocking it onto your shin and slowly let it down onto the bowl.

If you are in a bathroom with automatic flush toilets, then you are in business and there is no further need to strategize; however, not all bathrooms have these. The solution again is to just use your foot. Just lift your leg up and push the handle back with your foot, no need to touch it at all. If the handle is low this can be achieved easily, but if the handle is high, say above the waist, you’ll have to be ready to use some gymnast-like agility.

When washing your hands be aware of the soap. A study in Family Circle magazine states “unless the soap in a public bathroom is in its own sealed bag, it’s likely a breeding fiesta for bacteria. Rinse well with warm water and use your own sanitizer.” Knowing that you are the obsessive and/or dedicated germaphobe that you are, you probably already carry hand sanitizer with you anyway, so this part should be easy. If you do choose to wash your hands in the conventional way, spend a full 20 seconds on the job, something only 16 percent of people do properly, reports Family Circle.

Finally, you’ve finished 90 percent of the job and all you have to do now is leave, which brings us back to the door again. If you used your back to open the door coming in, then logic tells you that you can’t do the same going out. You are going to have to pull the door open but don’t let this get you down. The good news is that you have options. You can wait for an unsuspecting, less germaphobic person to come by and open the door for you. The down side to this plan is that if you are in a restroom with very little traffic, you may be waiting a while, and this could get ridiculous.

So what do you do? Take in a few deep breaths and just like you would have had the swinging door had a knob, you will bravely pull two or three or four paper towels from the dispenser to cover your hand. Then briskly grab the door handle and use your foot as a wedge to pry the door open. But alas, there are no paper towels or there is no dispenser due to the presence of hand dryers, this is where your stash of tissues comes in handy. If even the thought of that scares you, you always have your travel-size hand sanitizer to use after you leave the bathroom.

Congratulations – you’re finally free! You’ve just used a public bathroom and remained true to your germaphobicness. Don’t let anyone make fun of your bathroom methods because, with cold and flu season upon us, it just may be you germ-fearing citizens who get the last laugh.





The walk from the UHCL parking lot to the Student Services Building.



Do you park this far away for the exercise or the resale value?



Student Brittany Yeary uses her trunk as a mobile file cabinet.

# An inconvenient task: UHCL parking lot

Written and photographed by David Kiss

It is a big lot. It is a necessary evil for most of us. When you commute to the University of Houston-Clear Lake, you will deal with the concrete labyrinth known as the student parking lot. With the purchase of a parking pass, you now have the access privileges of a Hollywood star. You can park at UHCL 24 hours a day, seven days a week!

UHCL has a diverse student population and that translates into how and where they park. There are those who choose to bypass a parking pass altogether, paying the meter every day to monopolize the few close-up spots. These extravagant spenders could afford valet service if it were available. I have heard stories told in whisper about these beings but I have never seen them. Who are these independently wealthy ones? They have obviously found a pot of gold that eludes most of us.

If taunting us with expensive curbside parking were not enough, there are also the special visitor lots with barricades we are not allowed to enter. Those spots look much nicer than the spots available to us with our student parking pass. They should move that lot away from our jealous glances.

Now back to reality. The lot is still there and we must deal with it. There are about 3,700 parking spaces available to students. Where we park makes a statement about our personality and approach to life. For example, are you willing to wait ten minutes for that close spot or do you just park and get on with it? There are different approaches to determining parking lot personalities:

- Are you the far-away parker for the health benefits? If so, you are not worried about rain, sleet, wind or hail.
- Do you park in the distance far from anyone else because you have door-ding phobia?
- Are you the crawler/lurker slowly moving through the first rows of the parking lot following students like a shark tracking its prey? Just when you thought you found that person who was going to lead you to a parking spot close to the building, whoosh, like a crafty sea lion moving through the coral, the

person slips to that next parking row, a decoy all along! Finding that close spot is a must for you!

• Are you hiding at the back of the lot during the first few weeks of the fall semester because you haven't bought your parking pass yet? Many of us abuse that "grace period."

• Do you regularly park in one area of the lot so you can find your car after class or do you park anywhere and just get to class?

Then there is what becomes of your car once it is parked. Brittany Yeary's trunk becomes her office for the day.

"My fiancé makes fun of how much stuff I have in the trunk," she said.

It is organized with color-coded boxes and file folders for each class. A high-priced alarm system would not be out of order. It is packed pretty tightly, but you can sense an order to the documents held within.

As Yeary was finishing with her paperwork, a young man was exiting the campus as quickly as many of us enter it. The "escape artist" parker! Has a category been missed?

Steven Lambert quickly entered his Miata convertible and threw the car into reverse. The top is down, of course. He is parked pretty close to the building and his car is nimble for moving around the lot. No baby seat in the back of this two seat roadster. Lambert is heading off to Galveston in style.

Andrew Beem has a 90-minute commute from Brazoria each day. His late-model Toyota sedan provides basic transportation with good gas mileage for the long drive. He used to be a lurker trying to get that close spot early in the day, but since changing his schedule he just parks and heads off to the building.

"I can't open the sun roof because of a crack, but it gets me here every day," he said.

These are just some of the stories of the people who make their way to UHCL during the semester. They are just like you and me and they walk among us. Where do you park? Which category best represents you?



This is something you don't want to see when returning to your vehicle.



Student Andrew Beem stands proudly next to his Toyota after a 90-minute journey to campus.



Student Steven Lambert leaves the UHCL parking lot in his Miata.

# Evolution of communication

Written and photographed by Cassandra Spencer

We use some sort of communication on a daily basis. Communication devices have evolved within the last century so much that devices from 50 years ago seem primitive.

Think back to a time before cell phones and laptops. Think back to a much simpler time that consisted of families gathered together in front of the television watching their favorite shows. Back to a time when house phones were attached to the wall and you could only walk around a couple of feet as far as the cord would reach.

"I remember when we didn't even have computers at work," said Sandy Penaranda, a retired administrative assistant. "We used Mylar paper and had to transfer information by hand. The working generation today is so spoiled."

Now, let us think back even further. Back to a time when we did not even exist. How did the early forms of communication develop?

Prior to the 15th century, the world was mostly illiterate. The printing press, which was established in 1450 by Johann Gutenberg, marked the beginning of written communication as we know it today in our society. This invention allowed the distribution of books to reach the masses, the creation of magazines and advertising, as well as the dispersion of news.

Before the printing press, books were handwritten and very expensive. Only the elite could afford them. Very few people knew how to read at all. In today's society, one must be able to read in order to overcome daily obstacles. Not only are books relatively cheap today, they also exist in paperless form via the Internet.

In 1875, Alexander Graham Bell patented the telephone. The first transmission was sent in 1876, it had a radius of only a few miles. The telecommunications of the world have grown to capacities that greatly exceed Bell's dreams. In today's society, cell phones that merely work as a telephone are becoming a thing of the past. Now we have phones that play music and videos, surf the Web, connect to other phones around the globe and store up to 4GB of memory.

The radio was invented by Nathan Stubblefield in 1890. Stubblefield never patented his invention, so the legal inventor of the radio is Nicola Tesla. The radio took the world by storm. The radio was the transmitter for Morse code signals, news broadcasts, entertainment shows and even Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidential "Fireside Chats." The radio also introduced commercials. Though the radio is still used as a form of mass communication, today it is geared more toward musical programming. With XM, Sirius and HD radio, consumers have more choices than ever.

In the early 1900s, Thomas Edison was credited with the invention of the first camera. Soon after, films were introduced to the population as a form of entertainment. The film industry has boomed immensely in the last century. Now, our society uses cameras to capture daily life.

Philo T. Farnsworth invented the first television set when he was only 14 in 1920. By the age of 21, he had made the first working model. Thirteen years later, in 1939, with a screen size averaging five inches, televisions began to enter homes. Back then it was very expensive to buy a television set, but by 1950 more than half of the American population

owned a black and white set. On average, Americans in today's society own a TV set for each person in their household.

The first computers ever made were invented to perform mathematic functions. The first computer was invented in 1939 by Hewlett-Packard. It was called the 200A Audio Oscillator; many other types soon followed. The first personal computer in the home, called the Scelbi, appeared in 1974 it costs \$565 and had 1K of memory. The first prototype, with the mouse, high-resolution screen, and software was invented in 1974 and was called the Xerox Alto. The first laptop, called the Osborne 1, appeared in 1981. Since then, computers have changed drastically. They are smaller, hold more memory, have better graphics and, of course, are Wi-Fi capable.

So why is it so important to preserve our communication history? Christine Rowland, visitor of the Museum of Printing History in Houston says that it allows new inventors to create bigger and better things. How would they know where to go if we do not know where we came from? We have to make sure that we move forward.

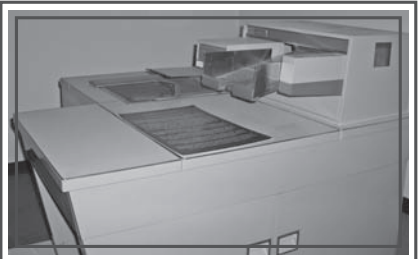
The evolution of communication is easily visible. In the early 1900s, it would have taken weeks or even months to receive a letter by post mail. Nowadays, correspondence is instantaneously at your fingertips. Even 15 years ago, computer users were operating with MS-DOS, now we have Windows Vista. With the help of many inventors, technology has molded our society to the fast-paced highway that has no intention of slowing down in the future. Imagine what communication will be like 25 years from now.

1450 Gutenberg Press



1850 Oliver #3 Typewriter

1980 Xerox Copy Machine



2005 Desktop Computer

2006 Cell Phone





# \*\* Student Life \*\* Student Life \*\* Student Life \*\*

## Student Organization Expo

Wed., January 23 ■ Bayou, Atrium II ■ 10 - 6 p.m.

**Find out how YOU can get involved on campus..**

**Visit the following tables and feel free to ask questions or pick up any materials!**

- Student Organizations
- Student Government Association
- Student Leadership Institute
- Student Services Offices
- Other Campus Services



**Free Popcorn & Lemonade!**

Any student requiring an accommodation for a disability to participate in the Fair should contact the Student Life Office.  
Student Life Office: SS/CB 1.204 Phone: 281-283-2560

## SGA – FALL 2007



The SGA Executive Council would like to thank all students and our SGA representatives for making Fall 2007 such a successful semester! From record breaking Parking raffle sales, to engaging SGA Day presentations, to participating in the Student Leadership Conference and much, much more!

To those who are graduating, we wish you much success in your future endeavors and to those new and returning student reps, we look forward to seeing you in the Spring. Our first Spring meeting is, Tuesday, January 15, 2008 at 11:30 in the SSCB Lecture Hall!

### CONTACT THE SGA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:

**Joyce Delores Taylor**, President  
**Michael Phillips**, VP-Committee Coordinator  
**Nida Ajaz**, VP-Student Outreach & Communications  
**Patrick Cardenas**, VP-Administration  
 SGA@uhcl.edu (281) 283-2556 www.uhcl.edu/sga



Mercury Baroque Ensemble performs

## Handel's Messiah

Saturday, December 15  
7:30 p.m. in the Bayou Theater



General Admission:  
\$12 presale/\$15 at the door

With UHCL ID:  
\$8 presale/\$10 at the door

The Houston Chamber Choir joins Mercury Baroque Ensemble for Messiah, a moving tribute to the holiday season. Hear Handel's masterpiece as it would have sounded in the day—the uncut “1743 Covent Garden” version.

For tickets or information, call Student Life Office at (281) 283-2560 or visit the Cultural Arts Web site at [www.uhcl.edu/culturalarts](http://www.uhcl.edu/culturalarts). Complimentary reception will be held after the concert.





# Festival of Lights

The Dickinson Festival of Lights will be celebrating their 10th Anniversary. The Festival began in 1998 in Dickinson, Texas. It was originated by two neighbors, John Montgomery and Robert Morgan. Not long after their concept was formed, the idea began to take shape and soon those ideas were transformed into steel shapes wrapped with lights, creating some of the very displays that you see at the Festival today.

The display of Christmas lights can be seen nightly from Nov. 24 through Dec. 31 6-9:30 p.m. There is no cost to stroll through the Festival of Lights, although donations are greatly appreciated to help keep the lights shining.

The Festival began with 100,000 lights and encompassed the property where the gazebo sits at U.S. Highway 3 and 44th Street.

As Montgomery and Morgan's idea evolved, the festival was moved to Paul Hopkins Park in 2003. The new location was chosen to accommodate the growing popularity and provide room for new displays that are added to the festival each year.

The Dickinson Festival of Lights is all about the community. Retirees, businessmen and women, housewives, teachers and high school students get involved with setting up the festival. This group effort shows the wonderful, giving nature of the citizens of Dickinson.

It's "an enchanting stroll through a wonderland of holiday lights on the banks of Dickinson Bayou," said Larry Armstrong, one of the volunteers.

Montgomery and Morgan's goal was to provide a family-oriented event that would bring the spirit of the holidays into people's lives.

"These two gentlemen left a wonderful legacy to Dickinson, a tradition that we can all be proud of and one we can hope to continue for years to come," said Jack Neal, another volunteer.

**For more information, visit their Web site at [www.dickinsonfestivaloflights.com](http://www.dickinsonfestivaloflights.com). Donations can be mailed to: Festival of Lights, P.O. Box 184, Dickinson, Texas, 77539.**

*Written, photographed and designed by Kimber Roque*

**Clockwise from left:** Camden Moore, 5, mesmerized by the bright lights; the children's train set that was added to the display in 2004; one of the latest additions is the "Joy is the Spirit of Christmas" tree; Traditional Christmas tree originated in 2003.



*"Merry Christmas! Come back and see us,"* say the volunteers who help set up and maintain the Dickinson Festival of Lights. Pictured left to right, Larry Armstrong, Michael McCown, and Jack Neal.





# The gift of giving this holiday season



*Written and photographed  
by Lauren Taylor*



*Above 1:* A volunteer gives a visitor extra change to use the pay phone.  
*Above 2:* Diamond Hagan, 6, shares a kiss with her grandmother, Ophelia Valdez.

*Below clockwise from left:*  
Tammy Bohon, chairwoman and event organizer; Kristine Rinaldi, volunteer; Thanksgiving Superfeast volunteers; Barb Henderson and Mark "Pin Man" Perez; volunteers cleaning up after helping nearly 16,000 Houstonians.

Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks for what you have. It is also a season to give. This past Thanksgiving more than 4,000 Houston area volunteers gave up their time and holiday to help others in need.

Forty-one percent of Houston's homeless population consists of families with children. The streets of Houston are home to more than 17,000 adults and children in need.

Ophelia Valdez is currently living in her daughter's home along with another one of her daughters and her three grandchildren. Valdez lost her home and everything she had to a fire two days before Thanksgiving.

"I am so thankful for anyone who is willing to give their time and help my family and me," Valdez said.

Houston's Waste Management's annual Thanksgiving Houston Superfeast assisted more than 15,000 underprivileged people. Approximately 2,000 volunteers gave up the chance to spend Thanksgiving with their families to help make a stranger's holiday special. The volunteers came in shifts from 4:30 a.m. until 6 p.m.

The volunteers came from all spectrums of the community. They were: men, women, mothers, students, teachers, doctors, minimum wage workers and any other profession you can think of. There is no criterion to be a volunteer. The only requirement is having a huge heart, which all of them do.

"Volunteering is the way you should live your life," said Tammy Bohon, the Superfeast chairman and event organizer. "It's something normal and something that I don't think twice about."

Bohon's son, who was on Thanksgiving break from college, had already been to the event to volunteer his time as well.

Another volunteer at the Superfeast was Kristine Rinaldi. Rinaldi is a teacher in the Aldine Independent School District. She stays

very busy at work but says that since there is such a need for volunteers, she will gladly give up her time off to help.

"We were able to help out so many people in need and it was a great feeling," Rinaldi said.

The George R. Brown Convention Center hosted the City Wide of Houston Thanksgiving Day Event. The event had volunteers from various companies across the Houston area. They were able to help the needy by giving out clothing, blankets and canned goods.

Barb Henderson is another person who gave her time on Thanksgiving. Henderson works for Shell Oil Company and is a member of the Peace Corps. She said that she volunteers whenever she can.

"Volunteering is a part of life and there is nowhere else I would rather be," Henderson said.

The City Wide event was able to help more than 5,000 people in need. All of the volunteers who helped were given Thanksgiving pies.

Mark Perez is originally from New Orleans. When Hurricane Katrina affected him and his family, he came to volunteer at the Super Dome because he "had nothing else to do." Since then, he has made volunteering a part of his life. He collects pins from all the various places he has volunteered, which is why he calls himself "Pin Man." He even met his wife at one of the places where they were both volunteering. He teaches pre-kindergarten at a local church and also works for the Special Olympics. He said that volunteering is just in his nature.

"I just love to volunteer," said Perez. "When you volunteer you help three people: the person you help, yourself and God."

Volunteering is one of the most selfless acts. The holidays are a time for giving not only gifts, but of your time as well. There are many opportunities in Houston for people interested in volunteering. To find places in need of volunteers visit [www.volunteerhouston.org](http://www.volunteerhouston.org).




*Designed  
by Kimber Roque*



**JSC Federal Credit Union Wants**

**YOU**

VISA Check Cards and Credit Cards • 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

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

**Get FREE Checks\*** **Get FREE Checks\***

**JSC**  
Federal Credit Union  
www.jscfcu.org

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

**A Quality Full-Service Automotive Center**  
*just around the corner*

**Space Center**  
**TIRE AUTO**

*Giving Auto Service a Good Name*



- Courtesy shuttle to/from UHCL
- Expert in all makes and models
- Free towing in Clear Lake with mechanical service
- State Inspections
- 2 year/24,000 mile local warranty
- 1 year/12,000 mile nationwide warranty

Monday-Friday: 7am to 7pm  
Saturday: 7am to 5pm  
Sunday: Closed for family time

**(281)286-8473**

Located behind Sonic, off Bay Area Blvd, at 16439 Moonrock  
www.spacecentertireauto.com



**University Forest Apartments**

University Forest Apartments is UHCL's on-campus housing community. Among the finest campus housing facilities in the nation, University Forest offers the best of both worlds:

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



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

**Save GAS!...Walk to CLASS!**

**AMENITIES INCLUDE:**

- FREE INTERNET
- Poolside Wireless Internet
- Financial Aid Deferment
- Pool & Spa
- Sand Volleyball Court
- Barbecue Pavilion
- 24 hr. On-call Staff
- 24 hr. Maintenance
- Clubhouse with Big Screen TV
- Free Video Checkout
- Free Movie Checkouts
- Free Photocopying
- Free Faxing
- Board Game Checkouts
- Social & Educational Programs
- Limited Access Gates
- Full Service Laundry Facilities
- And Much, Much More...

For more info call:  
(281) 286-5959  
e-mail:  
uhcl@campushousing.com



### CAMPUS CALENDAR

**December 3-6**

Underground Bookstore,  
noon-7 p.m., Bayou Atrium II

**December 3-8**

Fall final examination period

**December 10**

Official closing of the  
Fall 2007 Semester

**December 11**

Workshop: CareerLink  
Step-by-Step, 10 a.m., SSCB 3.101  
\*Registration recommended

**December 14**

Fall 2007 Commencement,  
7 p.m., Reliant Arena

**December 15**

Cultural Arts Event:  
Mercury Baroque Ensemble  
presents Handel's Messiah,  
7:30 p.m., Bayou Theater  
Tickets \$8-15

**December 20**

Fall grades available on E-Services

**January 10**

New International Student  
Orientation, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.,  
Bayou Atrium I  
\*Registration recommended

**January 12**

New Student Orientation,  
8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.,  
Bayou Atrium I  
\*Registration recommended

**January 15**

First Spring 2008 SGA Meeting,  
11:30 a.m., SSCB Lecture Hall

**OPEN REGISTRATION**  
for Spring 2008 semester is  
ongoing through January 11,  
Fee payment deadline at noon  
**LATE REGISTRATION**  
begins January 12

# FINALS AND HOLIDAYS:

## How to survive the season's stresses

**Amy Parnell**  
The Fitness Zone

It's that time again, Final Exams and Winter Break. On the surface the pairing appears complimentary, after dedicating countless hours studying, preparing, or grading final exams a long leisurely break follows. However, as we all know, appearances can be deceiving.

The weeks following Thanksgiving can become a time of endless stress and the Winter Break seems less a time to rest as a time to catch-up on all the things left undone. If you decide to have a holiday job than time for rest becomes time for more work. Poor eating and sleeping habits combined with stress and an overwhelming feeling of "get it over with," it is easy to find yourself physically ill or depressed during finals and the Winter Break.

This year, try a couple of wellness tips to reduce stress and hopefully boost your immune system, insuring a happy and healthy finals week and Winter Break.

**Sleep, Sleep, Sleep!**

If you attend and/or work on this campus you are in the age bracket which requires 8 to 9 hours asleep per night. Sleep is essential to our physical and emotional health. Without the required amount of sleep people experience reduced cognitive and physical abilities. In other words, when we decide to stay awake in order to "catch-up" on our studies or work we are in fact, becoming less productive. If 8 to 9 hours of sleep the night before a final try to schedule 6 hours of sleep to maintain short-term cognitive productivity.

**Water, Water, Water!**

In order to hydrate the body, clean the kidneys the human body needs 10 to 12 glasses of water daily. Although, we are tempted to grab the nearest soft drink instead, if you really want caffeine drink coffee or tea instead; green tea contains

caffeine and is good for your immune system. If you really want a soda then simply plan to drink water immediately following.

**Eat Well, Eat Well, Eat Well!**

In this hustle and bustle, grab and go world many times we are tempted to eat what is convenient rather than healthy. The weeks leading up to finals and Winter Break are even more challenging because of the presence of food our fellow students, or staff members prepare and present as a way to "get in the mood" and "celebrate" the end of the semester. Try to eat at least one more serving of fruit and/or vegetables during the day, you are less likely to crave unhealthy foods and more able to enjoy in moderation those treats your friends prepared.

**Breathe, Breathe, Breathe!**

Seems simple enough, however, a common reaction to stress is holding shallow inhalations, a feeling which can mirror panic or anxiety for some of us. Take 5 minutes a day to sit in a quiet area, remove any distractions, close your eyes and breathe through the nose only. As you continue to breathe count slowly to 3 with each inhale and again count slowly to 3 with each exhale. You will be amazed what a difference five minutes can make to help reduce stress and strengthen focus.

**Schedule, Schedule, Schedule!**

Write down a 'Things To Do' list and schedule for each day, allow plenty of time for sleeping, eating, and socializing. By creating a schedule you can promote feelings of stability rather than chaos. Create a study group with peers who you know will contribute to the group and promote a positive atmosphere this isn't the time to isolate yourself completely from peers or family.

I wish everyone the best as we begin to finish the semester and prepare for a much needed and deserved break.

Peace, Amy

# UHCL student

## will be missed by all who knew him

Donald Lynn DeBlanc, 47, of Houston, passed away Nov. 18. He was a 23-year Houston Police Department veteran officer and student at the University of Houston-Clear Lake.



DEBLANC

DeBlanc is survived by his wife, two daughters, grandchildren and other family and friends. Funeral services were held Nov. 27 at Sugar Creek Baptist Church in Sugar Land. Interment was at Houston National Cemetery.

At his funeral Tuesday, as well as during discussions in Wednesday night's Advanced Juvenile Delinquency course, in which he was enrolled, DeBlanc was remembered as a teacher, mentor and leader. He served others while he continued his learning, having earned a B.S. in criminal justice from the University of Houston-Downtown and a doctorate of jurisprudence from Texas Southern University. Before his death, DeBlanc was pursuing a master's degree in criminology from UHCL. His service as a teacher influenced many lives at Texas Southern University as well as at the Houston Police Department.

DeBlanc often volunteered on Thanksgiving to serve meals to the homeless. Recently, he volunteered on several occasions at the Emergency Aid Coalition near the Houston Medical Center with Everett Penn, associate professor of criminology, and several other UHCL students.

In his memory, students, faculty and staff will make a donation to the Emergency Aid Coalition to aid the homeless during this holiday season. If you would like to make a donation in honor of DeBlanc, call the Emergency Aid Coalition at 713-528-FOOD or visit [www.eachouston.org](http://www.eachouston.org).

### CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Do you love makeup?  
Do you keep up with the latest fashion trends?  
Merle Norman  
Baybrook Mall  
hiring beauty advisers  
part time.  
Great pay!  
Apply in person.

**FOR SALE!**  
96 Ford Explorer LTD  
Clean. Runs Good.  
Auto, A/C,  
New Tires. New Brakes.  
\$3,200. For info call  
281-283-5804.

For information about placing a classified advertisement, call 281-283-3975.



### D'Caribbean Curry Spot

Cuisine & Catering

\*Menu items\*



2548 Broadway, Pearland, TX 77581  
Store: (281) 412-0849/Moh: (713) 584- 9211/Sherry: (713) 584-9201  
[dcaribbeancurryspot@yahoo.com](mailto:dcaribbeancurryspot@yahoo.com)

Authentic Caribbean Cooking  
\*All food halal\*  
Catering for ALL Occasions!

GET IN  
ON THE  
DISCUSSION!

CHECK OUT  
THE SIGNAL'S  
NEWS BLOG  
ONLINE AT:  
[www.myspace.com/  
signal\\_uhcl](http://www.myspace.com/signal_uhcl)

OR VISIT  
[www.uhcl.edu/  
thesignal](http://www.uhcl.edu/thesignal).

## Dolce Tanning

16840 Highway 3  
Corner of Bay Area and Hwy 3  
Next to Salon Ambiance  
(281) 557-3309

BRING THIS AD AND GET  
\$5.00 OFF ANY LOTION  
EXPIRES 12-07



### KASEY'S HAIR DESIGN

17064 SATURN LANE, HOUSTON, TX 77058  
281.282.0180





Report Card: continued from page 1

All of my questions regarding entering a new semester as a graduate candidate were answered and another attendant was even called over for verification purposes. The individual seemed interested enough and showed it by giving me a business card and suggested I apply for next semester’s aid online.

“The Financial Aid Office is not always smiles, but have been very helpful to me when I have needed their service,” said Lona Cain, undergraduate communication major.

The campus police department was then paid a visit regarding an actual ticket. When I approached the window, my presence was not immediately acknowledged. Enough time passed that I had an impulse to call out to get the staff member’s attention. A simple “I’ll be right with you” would have been welcomed. Every single question was answered, but never once with a smile. The individual did, however, offer an extension on the ticket.

Perhaps this was because the department only accepts cash or check, neither of which was on my person at the time. The individual behind the counter proved interested enough to offer said arrangement, and left me with no doubt that it would be strictly enforced.

I did not have official business at the Office of Student Life, so I opted to have another student ID made. Considering I lost mine the week before, the request was at least legitimate.

I was greeted with a smile, but the attendant did not immediately look up from the personal laptop resting beside the work computer. I expressed my interest in having my new picture be more interesting than the last and, although reluctant to permit me to cross my eyes and stick out my tongue, a new picture was taken.

Since I had given the attendant a hard time, I then tried to make amends by asking how one would go about starting a student organization. The individual was incredibly helpful and well versed in the process. Interest was duly noted in the fact that I was physically shown, then handed, the proper forms.

Next on the list was the Office of Intercultural & International Student Services. I approached the person behind the desk with the intention of learning more about the Wish Tree Program and what type of services they offer through their office.

I was greeted the moment I entered the door with warmth and a smile. I was told everything about anything concerning services, clubs and programs. This particular attendant went completely out of the way, thus proving to be a true ambassador of the IISS office.

The Cashier’s Office was the next to be tested. Here I inquired as to tuition extensions, the extra cost to do so, and potential penalties for non-payment. At first the cashier was not too friendly and the information given was not clear.

As the conversation progressed, the staff member’s attitude greatly improved. The cashier then went out of the way to make sure I had all of the proper forms and even smiled at the end. Most impressively, the individual did not even seem bothered that I asked for change from \$5.

I then traveled over to the Student Assistance Center. Considering this center is usually the first stop for many students in need of direction, the experience was not that great. The attendant failed to make eye contact, mostly looking at the computer. The answers I was given were limited and no additional effort was put forth to ensure that I had been properly helped.

Next I walked across the hall to the Health and Disability Office and I have to say that this was my most positive experience on campus. The entire staff was cheerful, friendly and eager to help right then and with any of my future needs.

I ended up with a flu shot and a Tylenol to ease the soreness in my arm. Additionally, I received a plethora of knowledge concerning health services offered by this office.

The last office on my list to be investigated was the Office of Career and Counseling Services. I was greeted with a big smile and “hello” before I was able to get both feet in the door. All of my questions were answered regarding services offered for a graduate embarking upon the career world.

The attendant even rose from the chair to hand me brochures regarding upcoming career-related workshops. The individual spoke very highly of all the advisers in the office and offered available appointment dates.

As a whole, everyone in all of these offices measured up per the criteria they were being judged. Some even rose above and beyond the call of duty. However, I am just one person. How does the student body rate these services?

“I have never had a problem; every service on campus has been helpful,” said Beth Warner, an undergraduate applied design and visual arts major. “However, having business taken care of over the phone is more difficult, opposed to in person, because there is not a smiling face in front of you.”

The majority of the student body seems to agree. There is a state-mandated survey conducted every fall on even years that randomly samples 12 percent of the enrolled student body. The survey is divided into three parts, and each of the approximate 1,000 students are given a portion of the survey via e-mail and paper to fill out. Per survey results, 907 students responded.

“We try to get a good response by sending multiple reminders using the student’s preferred e-mail listed and their school e-mail,” said Miriam Qumsieh, research analyst II for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The survey asks the students to rate all services provided with service-specific questions. On a scale of one to four in terms of service provided, not one area was rated below a 3.21.

A downloadable PDF of the Academic and Support Services Assessment for Spring 2006 can be found under the university surveys tab on the main page of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at <http://www.uhcl.edu/oie>.

Global cuisine can be found at local restaurants

Kim Boswell  
The Signal Staff

Familiar foods soothe the soul in a stressful environment. Wouldn’t it be nice to have a touch of home-style cooking during finals week and over the holiday break?

Attending college far away from one’s home can be challenging. Sometimes it is not feasible to return home between semesters. Enduring long periods of time without traditional comfort food can produce a hunger only the real thing can satisfy.

Fortunately, University of Houston-Clear Lake has many fine restaurants with varied global offerings not too far from campus. D’Caribbean Curry Spot and Korean BBQ Restaurant are two great local eateries to visit.

D’Caribbean Curry Spot in Pearland has only been in business for two months, but the rhythmic cadence of some of the customers enjoying their fare proves the eating establishment has been discovered by fellow islander expatriates.

Owners Naseer Mohamed and Sherida Ali moved to the States from Trinidad 14 years ago. They soon found themselves running a food booth at the Caribbean Festival held each year at Tom Bass Park. Their dishes were so well received they went into catering and eventually opened the restaurant.

Roti is a popular specialty on the menu. Flat bread, similar in taste to a flour tortilla, arrives in a pillowed cushion, plump with a pungent curry-infused mix of meat and potatoes. On the menu are chicken, duck, shrimp, goat, beef and vegetable roti. Pelau, a browned-rice mixture with savory beef added, is delicious. Tamarind, mango and habanera sauces, delivered to the table by personable and friendly staff, perfect the flavor.

Besides the vegetable roti, vegetarian options include saheena, a fried spinach patty, and phalourie, the islander equivalent of hushpuppies, all of which benefit from the yummy sauces. Coconut tarts and currant rolls make for a sweet, contented ending to the meal.

“If you want to try our most popular item, you must come back on Saturdays and enjoy our ox tail, bean and rice specialty,” Ali said.

The restaurant is located at 2548 Broadway in Pearland. The phone number is 281-412-0849.

Korean BBQ Restaurant occupies a cozy location in a shopping center in Webster. The tables are limited and one may have to wait a moment

during the busiest times, but it is well worth the wait.

Owners Mia Velez and her husband Don Wallace make it apparent from the time one enters their establishment that they are welcoming someone into their home. Greeting guests with smiles and hearty welcomes, they can quickly assess if you are new to the cuisine. They make it their first job to ensure that customers understand the menu and feel comfortable submitting an order.

Mia’s daughter, Flora, arrives at the table with several tiny dishes that will accompany the meal. Two variations of traditional cabbage kimchi relish appear, along with root vegetables, broccoli, and saucy, roasted potatoes.

There is one particularly tasty dish that has patrons guessing as to what it is. Inquiries to Flora first result only in smiles and a word that sounds like “tempoor.” When questioned further, Flora confesses.

“It is really what we call fish cake and everyone loves it,” Flora said. “We use the term ‘tempoor’ initially when people ask us because often they won’t try it if they hear the word, ‘fish cake.’ As soon as they take a bite, they like it.”

The most popular item on the menu is bim bam bop. Served in extremely hot stone bowls, this savory rice, vegetable and meat mixture arrives at the table with admonitions not to touch. Not to worry because the crackling and sizzling of the concoction makes one thoroughly aware that this is not just a serving vessel - this is a cooking instrument still in operation. The popcorn aroma that wafts up is that of the rice getting all nice, crusty and brown on the bottom of the bowl. The first bite is sheer bliss.

Wallace arrives at the table mid-meal with a tea pot of ginger-honey tea and an encouragement to partake of the hot offering. A sip tastes like a walk in an herbal garden. Gratitude for the meal and appreciation for the service is felt by those dining.

Korean BBQ Restaurant is located at 435 El Dorado in Webster. Their phone number is 281-218-7661.

Students at UHCL are fortunate to have many fine restaurants in the area serving global cuisine at reasonable prices. For more restaurant listings, contact the Intercultural & International Student Services Office at 281-283-2575 or e-mail at [IISS@uhcl.edu](mailto:IISS@uhcl.edu).

Wish Tree: continued from page 1

that assistance through the holiday season.”

To participate in the Wish Tree Program, all you have to do is stop by the IISS office and choose a name off of the Wish Tree, displayed in their front window. Once you have chosen a name tag, take the name to the front desk and fill out your information. You can choose from a wide range of ages for both boys and girls. For example, there is a name tag for a Johnny who is four years old. His wish list shows his clothes size in shirts, pants and shoes, and what toys he wants. Johnny has asked for Hot Wheels.

Other examples of gifts that would be on a child’s wish list include: clothes; toys, such as action figures or dolls for the younger children; and slightly more expensive electronic games for the older ones. For seniors, wish list items might include: clothes, books and quilts. You are not required to buy everything that is on the wish list.

After you have bought your gifts, you have until Dec. 7 to deliver them to the IISS office. Make sure you include the name of the person and the corresponding IC number with your packages. Also, it is encouraged that you do not wrap the gifts, but rather provide wrapping paper and tape so that the parents or caregivers can wrap the gifts themselves.

“They do ask that you buy the wrapping paper because a lot of the families don’t have the resources to buy the extra paper and tape,” said Linda Bullock, assistant dean of intercultural and international student services. “And that way the parents get to see what they are giving their children, and it kind of gives them ownership as well.”

To learn more about the Wish Tree, call 281-283-2575 or stop by the IISS office.

SGA: continued from page 1

an SGA meeting explaining why the organization wants a specified amount. Funds are given for special events, workshops, travel to attend educational programs and other academic pursuits.

Each organization requesting money must provide a detailed list on how the funding will be spent. Depending on the amount the organization is requesting, a second presentation might be necessary. The SGA then votes on whether the organization will be given the amount requested or if the issue needs further consideration.

“We look at several different factors when voting,” SGA president Joyce Delores Taylor stated. “We have to consider the merit of each benefit, whether it will enlighten students and bring to light a different culture, and if it will benefit the Clear Lake community.”

The SGA holds each organization accountable by only allowing funds to be distributed by reimbursement once receipts have been turned in and checked. This accountability is extremely important since the funds originate from the student services fee paid by each student who registers at UHCL.

The SGA office, located in the Student Life Building in room SSB 1.205, has an open door policy for any students who have questions regarding SGA, other student organizations, or just about the UHCL campus. The SGA holds meetings every Tuesday at 11:30 a.m. in the Lecture Hall. Meetings are open to all students and faculty.

For more information on UHCL’s Student Government Association visit them on the Web at [www.uhcl.edu/SGA](http://www.uhcl.edu/SGA).



# *Congratulations & Best Wishes*

to the fall 2007 graduating class of  
University of Houston-Clear Lake

We salute your academic achievements  
and celebrate the promise of your  
future accomplishments.



William A. Staples  
President

University of Houston  Clear Lake

## Don't wait until the last minute...



**OPEN REGISTRATION  
for Spring 2008  
is now available!**

**PAYMENT DEADLINE:  
by noon on  
January 11, 2008**

For more information go to  
[www.uhcl.edu/records](http://www.uhcl.edu/records)



# Serenity in all seasons

**Angela Bolton**  
The Signal Staff

Visitors become lost in the tranquil sounds of nature and exquisite scenery as they walk along trails that swirl around Cypress Creek.

There are pine trees and ponds full of vibrant green moss, lavish plants from around the world and unique artwork from local artists.

Quietly nestled in the suburb town of Humble is Harris County's own secret garden. Its landscape embraces nature while capturing the beauty of several native, cultivated and endangered plant species.

Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens is an environment where visitors can experience year-round serenity. Totalling more than 260 acres, the land was purchased and preserved by Harris County Precinct 4 from

original owners Thelma and Charles Mercer.

The Mercers had a passion for gardening and transformed their land into their own personal paradise. Upon their retirement, the Mercers did not want to leave their property without knowing it would be protected from a developer's bulldozer. In the late 1940's they sold the land to Harris County to be used as a park and thus preserved it for the public's eye.

"The original house of the Mercer family is still located on the property," said Suzanne Chapman, horticulturist for the park.

She further explained that a biography of the Mercers' history is presented on the wall of the visitors' center and in brochures about the park.

Among the amazing sightseeing adven-

ture that awaits all its visitors, this park is also known for its multitude of activities that take place throughout the entire year. Activities range from self-guided group tours, gardening classes and volunteer programs to the famous March Mart Plant Sale, memberships with the Mercer Society, and the Botanical Arts Travel Program.

These are only a few of the ongoing programs that interested patrons can take part in to satisfy their gardening appetites. Chapman noted they have more than 300 volunteers for gardening alone; some of them are students.

"They even have an entire program specifically for both junior and senior gardeners," Chapman said. "We also have special needs students who volunteer from the Aldine School district."

There are many plants that thrive throughout all the seasons in Mercer's botanic gardens. Some of the gorgeous plants vary from the Texas bluebonnet in spring, ginger in the summer, camellia in the fall, and magnolia in the winter.

"There are 360 days of growing, with March being the peak season," Chapman said.

While visiting the arboretum and botanic gardens at different times of the year, patrons can experience artwork by local artists. For example, the most recent works on display are the breathtaking sculptures

made of scrap metal by American Industrial Folk Artist Andre Gandin.

Some people view Mercer as pleasant getaway.

"It's an escape from the everyday hustle and bustle, into a different world of peace, harmony and natural beauty," said Matthew Kedzierski, a visitor of the park. "Its preservation allows visitors to experience the change of seasons."

This treasured place is a jewel yet to be discovered by thousands more patrons throughout the Houston area and beyond.

To experience a local paradise, visit Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens at 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble, Texas, 77338-1071. Additional information can be found online at [www.hcp4.net/mercer](http://www.hcp4.net/mercer).



Angela Bolton: The Signal

**Benches are conveniently located alongside the pond so that visitors can sit back and enjoy the view.**



Angela Bolton: The Signal

**Garden art is by folk artist Andre Gandin.**

## Eisley: continued from page 1

long-anticipated first album called "Room Noises" in 2005, followed by their sophomore album released earlier this fall called "Combinations." The second CD shows a slightly grittier side of Eisley fueled by experiences that the band has gone through. As this article is being written, Eisley's MySpace site has been viewed 2,503,558 times and their songs have been played 5,711,744 times. Not bad for a small band from a small east Texas city.

Coming through Houston on the final leg of their tour with Mute Math, before they make the long way home, the band gave a sit-down interview backstage at Warehouse Live Nov. 11. They discussed how they became a band, what inspires them to write those unique lyrics, and how, exactly, they came up with such an interesting name for their band.

For any Star Wars fans out there, the name Eisley might sound familiar. The name is from "Mos Eisley," which is a spaceport town on Luke Skywalker's home planet. Early on they named their band Moss Eisley, but changed it once they were signed by Warner Brothers because they were afraid that George Lucas might come after them.

"A friend suggested that we should name our band Moss Eisley because he was a Star Wars freak, and so we were like OK," Weston said. "And then, when we got signed, they were like you might should

not steal Mos Eisley, so we just hacked off Moss."

The decision to form a band in the first place may not be for the reason that you typically associate with a young aspiring group.

"I think a lot of kids grow up wanting to be rock stars so they start bands," Sherri said. "But we were just bored and liked music enough to write our own songs."

"We didn't really decide, 'oh we are gonna be a band, let's make a band,' it sort of happened cause we were bored and we didn't have anything to do in life," Chauntelle said. "So we started playing guitar, and right when we started playing guitar we started trying to write songs with it and it was just something to do."

For anyone who has listened to their albums, the songs are full of catchy melodic words that you cannot often find in current music. Even the band members are not quite sure how they come up with their lyrics.

"I dunno, you just kind of sit there until your brain puts together something that sounds good," Sherri said.

"You just think about your thoughts," Weston adds.

This "think about your thoughts" writing process is one of the main reasons why Eisley's two albums can be seen as quite different. The band did not have as many experiences to draw from on the first

album.

"The first was really kind of 'fairy tale' inspired just because we didn't have a lot to write about, because we were so young. And so it kind of just feels like a lullaby album to me now," Sherri said.

The new album shows deeper emotion because "we grew up and had more to write about and more experiences," Sherri said.

Over the past few years Eisley has had many wonderful moments, but one of the best moments that they have experienced is being the opening act for Coldplay.

"They were one of our favorite bands at the time, so it was really exciting for us and they were so nice to us," Chauntelle said. "They would watch our show every night whenever they could, and they thanked us all the time for being on the tour with them. So I think we were just real scared that we were going to mess it up, so we tried really hard to be professional."

"But we didn't know what professional was, so we really just tried hard to do something," Weston added jokingly.

As Eisley is slowly growing and maturing, the band just wants listeners to know that they are not just another "dumb girl band," but a band that is focused on speaking to people through their music.

"A lot of people who don't know our music or don't know what kind of band we are just see three girls in the front and they think 'O brother, a dumb girl band,'

so I ask those people to look past that," Chauntelle said.

To learn more about Eisley and their music, visit their Web site at [www.Eisley.com](http://www.Eisley.com) or on MySpace at [myspace.com/Eisley](http://myspace.com/Eisley).



Josh Conwell: The Signal

From left, Sherri and Garron play to a soldout show at Warehouse Live.