Islanders caught smuggling

Kappa Sigma member, nursing student and graduate student among University students caught in undocumented immigrant smuggling ring

According to the San Antonio Express-News, two University alumni were involved in a recent investigation of a local Corpus Christi-operated human smuggling ring.

It is imperative to note that there is a significant difference between human smuggling and human trafficking. According to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, the definition of human smuggling is limited to the transportation (and harboring) in Nueces County into the United States while deliberately evading immigration laws.

The article, written by news reporter Aaron Nelson, listed both former undergraduate student Jake Woerner and former graduate student Stephen Sluyter as willing participants in a locally run smuggling ring. Both men did not seem to fit the stereotypical mold of a smuggler.

“Woerner’s All-American façade was unlikely to raise suspicion among law enforcement...patrolling South Texas roads on the lookout for smugglers,” writes Nelsen.

Mapison in microbiology, Woerner was also involved with campus activities, becoming captain of the university soccer club and a Kappa Sigma fraternity member. Woerner also fit the mold of the ideal student having been a former U.S. Coast Guard engineer and pursuing a Master’s in Communication at the Island University.

The Corpus Christi operated smuggling ring was first brought to the attention of the authorities in Sept. 2012 when Woerner made his first smuggling run alone from the Falfurrias checkpoint to Houston. Woerner had been given an obscure route to follow however he deviated from said route and was stopped for speeding on Texas 77. Faced with a felony offense, Woerner negotiated a cooperative plea bargain with federal agents. With Woerner’s cooperation...

Coaches feel heat on field

In the world of sports it seems that the health of players is examined on a daily basis, but the health of coaches has largely been an afterthought. However back in November when NFL Denver’s John Fox and Houston’s Gary Kubiak suffered disturbing health scares, the intense pressure of NFL coaches is not the only one to feel the stress that comes with molding young careers, coaches of all sports ranging from pee-wee (well probably not pee-wee but who knows) to NCAA feel the pressure to achieve success.

The largest struggle for head softball coach Stephanie Hughes has been her transition from assistant coach to head coach. After coaching eight years at UTSA she will be starting her third year with Texas A&M Corpus-Christi this season.

“The decisions are all on my plate now, from the small ones to the big ones. You have to learn how to be the bad guy in most situations but also have to make the day-to-day decisions on and off the field,” Hughes said.

Hughes makes a point not to add extra pressure on herself during conference games or home openers but like all head coaches at A&M-Corpus Christi there are several other factors that add stress to the job off the field. “As a head coach everything comes back on you: team’s grades, graduation rates, recruiting the student-athletes in your program, how the community views your program, are your players developing as players and as people, and lastly are we successful on the field,” Hughes said.

In today’s world of 24-hour spotlight, a coach can easily go from most beloved to shark bait in a matter of a few misguided tweets.

Head coach and director of track & field program from ground zero in 2004 to the national spotlight.

The organization employs University students and utilizes volunteers to help create and distribute much of the literature (pamphlets, booklets, etc.). This literature is distributed at various health

Drugged driving addressed at TAMUCC

Safe Communities Project at A&M-Corpus Christi aims to decrease number of underage drinkers on the road.

According to Dr. Philip Rhoades, professor of criminal justice and current director of the Safe Communities Project, statistics collected from government agencies including TxDOT and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have shown that Nueces County on average has a higher rate of unsafe driving habits than the state of Texas’ statewide average. Some of these unsafe driving habits include speeding, drunk driving and drugged driving, all of which have high rates of serious injury and fatalities.

“People need to realize that drugged driving is a dangerous habit of drivers. The Safe Communities Project at the Island University was founded in 1999 by several faculty members including the current Dean of Nursing, Dr. Mary Jane Hamilton, nursing professor, Dr. Elizabeth Sefcik, and Dr. Rhoades.

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This past Friday, the 56th Grammy Award Nominations were announced, and disappointment followed, by a big pause of confusion, leading up to a moment of reconciliation and acceptance with a sprinkle of gratitude could accurately describe the emotions I experienced in the four minutes it took me to take in the list.

Right off the bat—with the most nominations, Jay-Z with nine. This year he released his twelfth smörgåsbord studio album “Magna Carta, Holy Grail.” Not his best work, especially considering he’s nominated against Odd? This is just one of the snubs that didn’t really deserve this much recognition. For Song of the Year, we get Katy Perry’s “Roar.” Now, clarification, “Roar” is nominated along with their writers, not just the artists. Perry’s “Roar” is nominated for Best Record, Best Song, and Best Pop Solo Performance. For Song of the Year, we get Katy Perry’s “Roar.” Now, clarification, “Roar” is nominated along with their writers, not just the artists. Perry’s “Roar” is nominated for Best Record, Best Song, and Best Pop Solo Performance. This year’s awards are in January instead of February to accommodate for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi but nevertheless, you should expect stellar performances and some monumental upsets.

Speaking of Justin Timberlake, he comes in second place for most nominations with seven—however none in the major four categories listed below? Odd? This is just one of the snubs that had me scratching my head, especially considering that not is this Timberlake hadn’t released new music since 2006—and “The 20/20 Experience—The Complete Experience” was phenomen- nal. Despite the snub, he’s done the pop and R&B categories, and I say he has a pretty good shot at leaving with a few more Grammys under his belt.

One of the more notable snubs on this list is Miley Cyrus who received zero nominations. While her twerking partner in crime, Robin Thicke took a Record of the Year nomination for his tragedy “Blurred Lines,” the Grammys did not show the same kind of love for Cyrus’ “We Can’t Stop.” Love it, or hate, that tune definitely impacted radio this summer and was poised for at least a “Record of the Year” nomination.

But speaking of snubs, we could write a story off all the artists that have been left out following the Grammys reorganizing their categories making them stricter and more competitive, leaving these artists that deserve some accolades in the dust. Case in point, the alternative music category reads like a free for all with only five nominations, but so much good music goes into consideration when pulling for that category.

The major four categories this year, listed below, also puzzled and confused me. One of the more notable snubs on this list is Lorde. The freshly turned 17-year-old from New Zealand took the message home with her record “Royals.” Lorde took four nominations this year, and considering her age in the music industry, she is a force to reckon with. Nabbing two major categories though, Record of the Year and Song of the Year, she was forgotten for Best New Artist, a snub that is going to take some time to get over.

For the last few years, the music industry has been stuck in the Tumblr universe about true love and being “Brave,” but nevertheless, you should expect stellar performances and some monumental upsets.

This year’s awards are in January instead of February to accommodate for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi but nevertheless, you should expect stellar performances and some monumental upsets. For Song of the Year, we get Katy Perry’s “Roar.” Now, clarification, Record of the Year is for actual songs nominated along with their writers and performing musicians. Song of the Year is purely for songwriting and music. Now look at “Roar,” a song composed of so many clichés, it’s almost an insult to put it next to fellow nomi-nees Pink and Bruno Mars.
Associate professor in the College of Nursing and Health Science Sarah Baldwin has been appointed to the CHRISTUS Health Plan Board of Directors. The CHRISTUS Health system is made up of more than 40 hospitals in the United States and Mexico. The assets of the company are worth over $4.6 billion dollars.

Math professor Blair Sterba-Boatwright has established a scholarship fund with wife Sandra Sterba-Boatwright to help students who are primary caregivers for their families. The scholarship was made in honor of Sterba-Boatwright’s mother, who was unable to attend college due to the fact that she had to provide for her family. Students can apply for scholarships at scholarships.tamucc.edu.

Julie Bryan and Adam Eliff’s final project for their Spanish project became a hit on the Internet. The students’ mock telenovela, titled “El Amor De Mi Amante” featured heavy product placement for Doritos Locos Tacos. After being mentioned on reddit.com, the video became viral and has received over 900,000 views on YouTube. The students received an A for their project.

Crime
UPD Activity Log

1. Dec. 3
   Police responded to Felony places weapons prohibited in Miramar 400 building at 7:30 p.m. The case is still active.

2. Dec. 4
   Police responded to a Class B possession of marijuana less than 2 oz at the Miramar 400 building at 3:30 p.m. The case is still active.

3. Dec. 4
   Police responded to a class C disorderly conduct at Miramar 300 building at 10:25 p.m. The case is cleared.

4. Dec. 5
   Police responded to a class C possession of paraphernalia at Bayside Hall 7:11 p.m. The case is still active.

5. Dec. 8
   Police responded to a class C criminal mischief less than $50 at Bay Hall at 8:27 p.m. The case is still active.

On the island at a glance

Students join McNair Scholars
Nine students were accepted into the McNair Scholars this semester. The program is designed to help first generation college students get into graduate school. To be eligible for the program, students must have a 3.0 and be going to college full time.

New scholarship for students with family responsibilities

Spanish project gets A, goes viral

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And safety fairs throughout Nueces County in conjunction with awareness programs and other activities to promote safety and bring awareness to drugged driving.

Drugged driving is a term associated with the criminal offense of Driving While Intoxicated. DWIs are defined by law as driving whilst under the influence of any substance that either physically or mentally impairs the driver including alcohol, illegal, prescription or over-the-counter drugs, and any sort of ingested chemicals.

"Drugged driving has become an issue of interest because of recent studies that have been done," says Rhoades. "They indicate that there are probably more people on the road at night that are driving under the influences of other substances, rather than under the influence of alcohol."

According to a National Roadside Survey conducted by the NHTSA, approximately 16 percent of night time drivers tested positive for drugs in comparison to only 2 percent of drivers who were intoxicated with alcohol.

The effects of drugged driving can be just as dangerous as drunk driving. Both prescription and illicit drugs can have negative side effects: while illicit drugs can cause hallucinations that distract drivers, prescription or generic medication can cause severe drowsiness.

"Any prescription drug that says you should not use heavy machinery and drive—people still take it and drive," says Rhoades. "Or [the label warns] ‘this may make you drowsy’, and people nod off while trying to drive.”

The efforts of the Safe Communities Project seem to be having a positive effect on the community. According to Rhoades, in the past year the organization has distributed approximately 147,000 individual pieces of safety literature, and presented to nearly 500 community members.

For more information about the Safe Communities Project or volunteer opportunities with the organization please contact Dr. Philip Rhoades.

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**SMUGGLER**

Agents discovered the complex smuggling ring run by another imperceptible couple.

The smuggling ring was led by the Balado family, a local family who run a party rental business entitled Ambition Entertainment alongside their illicit activities. The family had been operating for years strictly adhering to the rule of no more than six immigrants per trip to avoid suspicion and the wrath of federal prosecutors.

"The family's eldest son, Miguel Bolado Jr., 25, and his father [have] been arrested on separate trips," writes Nelson, "Both were released and not charged."

Since habitual repeat offenses do tend to attract investigations, the Balado family began outsourcing smugglers to do runs for them. The family brought in Maxwell Bocanegra, 27, an aspiring photographer Miguel Bolado Sr., met at a strip club in Houston. Bocanegra became the new front man and recruiting agent for the family smuggling operation.

"Corpus Christi's club scene was fertile ground for new recruits," Nelson reports.

It was, indeed, at local clubs that both Woerner and Slijkey were recruited to join the covert operation. It has been speculated by federal agents that the two college students joined purely for the monetary benefits. According to Homeland Security Agent Tom Roddy, Woerner managed to pay for his college education with his cut of profit from the smuggling ring.

Investigators discovered that the family operated ring had made quite a profit over the years. They had smuggled over 1,000 immigrants within mere months, each one costing $2,000 for transport.

At the conclusion of the investigation in Sep. of 2013, Woerner had been cleared of all charges, and Slijkey, though not charged, did provide testimony against the ringleaders. Both men finished their education and graduated from the University. Daniel Bolado, Miguel Bolado Jr., Bocanegra and other elite members of the ring plead guilty, receiving jail sentences ranging from two to four years.

The official leader and mastermind, Myriam Bolado, the family matriarch, is still a fugitive believed to be hiding in Mexico.

When asked about the incident, University officials commented that they had no knowledge of the event.

"The bottom line is, all we know is what we read in the San Antonio paper," replied Dr. Don Albrecht, Director of Student Engagement & Success, in an e-mail, "The University is rarely notified while an investigation is ongoing, especially if the situation is not related to the campus."

Alex Heatherley, Alumni Advisor to the Kappa Sigma Fraternity—of which Woerner was a member, was also reached out to for comment.

"I have no clue what you are referring to," Heatherley replied in an e-mail.

Both representatives were given a copy of the article to peruse when contacted. For more in-depth details about this federal investigation, visit expressnews.com.

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**DRUGGED DRIVING**

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports higher rates of drivers under the influence of drugs at night compared to alcohol

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**SMUGGLER**

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Islanders men’s basketball fall to Falcons in last nine seconds of game play

by ALEXIS DE LEON
sports editor

The Islanders men’s basketball team was defeated by the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi Dragons 82-77 on Sunday at the American Bank Center. Game time will be against Cal State Fullerton in the 14th minute. The Islanders will be off for the next two weeks as they focus on final exams. The next contest will be against Cal State Fullerton on Friday, Dec. 20, at the Dugan Wellness Center. Game time is set for 7 p.m.

It was a hard second half for the Islanders as Falcons’ star player Anthony Rees scored 24 points and Texas-Permian Basin went 23-for-27 in the first second-half to defeat the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi men’s basketball team on Sunday at the American Bank Center.

Junior guard John Jordan scored 22 points and Freshman forward Beverly match a career-high with 22 points. Sophomore forward Zane Knowles added five rebounds and five assists for the home team.

The Falcons started up with a 6-2 lead early on, but the Islanders answered back with a Beverly layup and a jumper by Jordan to go ahead 7-6. From there, the team went possession-for-possession over the next several minutes, with the Falcons holding a 16-15 lead at the 10:38 mark.

At that point, the Islanders went on a 9-0 run to gain a five-point lead. Junior guard Hammed Ali was the key catalyst, making steals on consecutive possessions that both led to baskets and knocked the Islanders over the water. However, UTPB caught fire from the outside, knocking down three straight threes to regain a 29-26 lead on a trey at the 9:29 mark.

Beverly banked a solid three right back to tie the score, though, and it sparked a 6-1 rally that put the team up 18-10 on a senior forward Zane Knowles layup. From there, the teams traded points into the locker room, with Jordan’s two free throws at 3.7 seconds left the Islanders up 37-35.

Out of the break, the Islanders pushed the lead to eight, with a senior Joy Williamson layup putting A&M-Corpus Christi up 49-41 at the 14:24 mark. But the visitors were six, missing an 8-4 run to trim the deficit to just one at 0:49. After a pair of free throws from Jordan, a triple from the Falcons tied the score at 52 apiece with 10:47 remaining.

The visitors and guests went back and forth, with a pair of free throws from Williamson putting the Islanders up 57-56, that was followed by a 7-0 run, though, as the home team went ice cold both at the line and from the field. A three-point play and a jumper by the Falcons were the key plays in the rally.

Foul shots became the name of the game at that juncture, with teams trading trips to the stripe for a 66-60 UTPB lead with five minutes left. For every Islanders punch, the Falcons had a counter, in particular knocking down their free throws when needed.

The Islanders got within three on three occasions in the final two minutes, but each time the Falcons were able to convert it back to a two-possession game. A defensive rebound by Dees with nine seconds left, sealed the victory for UTPB, as his two free throws with 3.7 seconds left resulted in the final score of 82-77 in favor of the visitors.

The Islanders men’s basketball team will also take a break from the hardwood for about two weeks as they focus on finals. The next contest will be against Cal State Fullerton on Friday, Dec. 20, at the Dugan Wellness Center. Game time is set for 7 p.m.

American Bank Ctr. (Corpus Christi, TX)

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<td>Ast: 2 Players (#03, #23 - 3)</td>
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Stats courtesy of ISLANDEX.COM

GOISLANDERS.COM

by ALEXIS DE LEON
sports editor

After a miserable record last season, the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi women’s basketball team wins a bounce back effort in second half.

A Mbamalu three extended the Islanders lead back out the 10, but A&M-Corpus Christi managed to bounce back and dominate the Islanders as Falcons’ star player Anthony Rees scored 24 points and Texas-Permian Basin went 23-for-27 in the first second-half to defeat the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi men’s basketball team on Sunday at the American Bank Center.

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Fuentes are looming over us like a bully on the playground. With day in day out in high school, we are told, “recite this, memorize this, build this and so on.” It would be easy to get burned out. Things can be especially tough when the holidays roll around and instead of spending time with the family books are your only source of communication.

A study by Daniel Gould and Meredith A. Whitley recently published in the “Journal of Intercollegiate Sport” examined reasons for and ways to combat burnout in college athletes. The study stated that it takes about 10 years or 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to develop one’s skill. I personally have never spent 10 years deliberately trying to develop a skill (even if my undergraduate career has felt like 10 years) but just imagining such dedication gives me the overwhelming urge to take a nap.

The study talked about things that seem like an impossible when it comes to burnout. Things like not meeting goals, working too hard and not resting properly and losing sight of the end goal. These are all causes for burnout. However to me burnout happens is not what you should trouble yourself with, because something tells me regardless we all experience burnout at some point.

Now as for ways to combat burnout once your reached that point is what I found helpful and while the study was for college athletes I found it relevant to college students. Basically individuals have three psychological needs: free will (or at least the perception of free will) competence and a sense of relatedness to others.

So next time the professor tells you to write that 30 page paper, study those 200.flash cards or study the next Statistic of David. Remember that just because you have to do the assignment doesn’t mean you can’t add your own flavor to it. Competence should be the easiest motivation to find, though often is isn’t. So a terrible test grade has you thinking dropping out would be the easiest option or you can’t seem to wake up for that 8 am class, don’t panic.

Try to wake up ten minutes before everyday even on the weekends, and before you know it, you’re making it to that 8 am class with coffee in hand. And for that test grade test your self a little bit every day. Ask your self three questions about what your professor said in lecture, what you read in the last chapter or what the lab instructor mentioned while you were wading through wasn’t deep sleep. The key to coming back from burnout is baby steps.

As for feeling connected to people, just look to the person to your left or right. We are all going through the struggle, regardless of the major. We all want to know our connected when in actuality everyone understands all too well and it just tired of thinking about it.

In those last few weeks of the semester we have to remember why we made the decisions we made, and take each situation one at a time. Just remember what Bruce Wayne was always told, “We fall down, so that we can get back up.” Get up.

To cut kids from the team because they were not talented enough even though they work hard and do well in school,” Planagan said.

The “Los Angeles Times” wrote an article on some legendary stories of pressures faced by professional coaches throughout the years.

One story focused on one of the first pieces of advice that future Hall of Fame coach Joe Gibbs received after being hired as an assistant for the St. Louis Cardinals.

The advice was to watch out for the locksmith’s truck. If it was in the team’s parking lot, somebody was on their way out. The Cardinals changed the locks on coach Jim Hanifan and his staff by halftime of their 1985 season finale.

Similarly but perhaps a little less harsh, rumors have been running rampant about the Longhorns seeing their last season with head football coach Mack Brown.

There has been a running joke that Mack Brown is the only coach to keep playing for a conference championship while skipping questions about his future coaching career. Reports about fans painting shirts in burnt orange saying “Saban 2014”, referring to Alabama’s coach Nick Saban, went viral over the web.

Sometimes, keeping your job is harder than being shown the door.

After 16 years of coaching, seven of which have been with A&M—Corpus Christi, head baseball coach Scott Malone recalls his greatest struggles.

“Going through the growing pains of changing the culture when we arrived at TAMUCC. The results on the field were not good, the performance in the classroom was not up to par and the perception in the community of Islander Baseball needed improvement,” Malone said.

“Over the course of the last seven years we have made quality strides in all of these areas, but making the initial changes in the first years were a daily struggle.”

When the team is winning the coach is winning, but as the old saying goes winning isn’t everything, especially when the joy of winning lasts only one game while the bitter taste of defeat lingers.

“Being the head coach at the Division I level there are daily pressures,” Malone said. “The players in our program need daily direction and off the field and they are a constant reflection of our program. I think any coach who wants to run a program at the highest level feels daily pressures to meet high expectations. We have to meet certain expectations off the field and we are being judged by wins and losses on the field.”

While each coach at the Island University feels various pressures some relatable some not, they all agree that exercising and getting out of the office is a key component to keeping both their physical and mental health.

Malone said the greatest pressure on his job came from within. “You want to be great and do something that has never been done before. There is also the outside pressure of perception which comes from everyone from administrators to faculty to recruits to opponents and we are trying to raise that perception which can be daily struggle.”

Hughes agreed the most stress put on by the job is from herself, “I hate to lose more than I like to win, so I want to make sure everything I do in making my team and program better. I want my players to have the best possible Division 1 experience so I push myself to prepare them both on and off the field to accomplish that.”

...continued from PAGE 1
Movies coming out soon:

Dec 6th
Khumba, Rejected by his superstitious herd, a half-striped zebra embarks on a daring quest to earn his stripes; but when he discovers a tyrannical leopard on his trail, he must find the courage and self-acceptance to save all the animals of the Great Karoo.

Dec 13th
The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug, Bilbo and his companions reach the Lonely Mountain, where they encounter the fearsome dragon Smaug.

Tyler Perry's: A Madea Christmas, Madea gets coaxed into helping a friend pay her daughter a surprise visit in the country for Christmas, but the biggest surprise is what they'll find when they arrive. As the small, rural town prepares for its annual Christmas Jubilee, new secrets are revealed and old relationships are tested while Madea dishes her own brand of Christmas Spirit to all.

Dec 18th
Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues, The ongoing adventures of San Diego's top-rated, legendary newsman.

Dec 25th
47 Ronin, Outcast samurai seek revenge upon a treacherous overlord who killed their master and banished them.

August: Osage County, The dark, hilarious and deeply touching story of the strong-willed women of the Weston family, whose lives have diverged until a family crisis brings them back to the Midwest house they grew up in, and to the dysfunctional woman who raised them.

Walking with the Dinosaurs 3D, This family adventure story centers on an underdog dino as it triumphs to become a hero for the ages.

Jan 10th
The Adventurer: The Curse of the Midas Box, Mariah Mundi’s life is turned upside down when his parents vanish and his younger brother is kidnapped. Following a trail of clues to the darkly majestic Prince Regent Hotel, Mariah discovers a hidden realm of child-stealing monsters, deadly secrets and a long-lost artifact that grants limitless wealth – but also devastating supernatural power.

Jan 13th
Paranormal Activity: The Marked Ones, Supernatural events plague a California family.

Jan 17th
Devils Due, A newlywed couple finds themselves dealing with an earlier-than-planned pregnancy. As the months pass, it becomes evident that the dark changes to her body and mind have a much more sinister origin.

The Nut Job, Surly, a mischievous squirrel, and his rat friend Buddy, plan a nut store heist of outrageous proportions.

by ANDREW LIGUEZ
entertainment reporter

Movies coming out soon:

Dec 6th
Khumba, Rejected by his superstitious herd, a half-striped zebra embarks on a daring quest to earn his stripes; but when he discovers a tyrannical leopard on his trail, he must find the courage and self-acceptance to save all the animals of the Great Karoo.

Dec 13th
The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug, Bilbo and his companions reach the Lonely Mountain, where they encounter the fearsome dragon Smaug.

Tyler Perry’s: A Madea Christmas, Madea gets coaxed into helping a friend pay her daughter a surprise visit in the country for Christmas, but the biggest surprise is what they’ll find when they arrive. As the small, rural town prepares for its annual Christmas Jubilee, new secrets are revealed and old relationships are tested while Madea dishes her own brand of Christmas Spirit to all.

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ISLAND WAVES

entertainment

COCOA

The best hot chocolate for the holidays

by MARINA CANTU
entertainment reporter

It doesn’t always get cold in Corpus Christi, but when it does we run for hot chocolate. Whether it’s with marshmallows, whipped cream, or plain, hot chocolate is a go-to drink when the temperature starts to drop. I’ve sampled and reviewed some of the hot chocolates around town and here are the outcomes.

COFFEE WAVES

Regular Hot chocolate: Four Stars, $2.84-$4.84

This is called regular hot chocolate was delicious. Tasted so natural and not weighed down with super sugary syrups. Every sip was delicious and making it down to the last drop was easy to do. The foamy decorative leaf on top was a plus and made my whipped cream and floating marshmallows a bit more fluffy. The salted caramel flavor was delicious.

HEB BRAND

Salted Caramel Hot Chocolate: ThreeStars, $2.49

Whoa caramel. This hot chocolate was very yummy, but extremely sugary and syrupy. After drinking it, you will get an outstanding sugar high and then run to the bathroom half an hour later. After I finished the hot chocolate the bottom of the cup was just covered in sugar and caramel. The hot chocolate has a very good taste and unique flavors it just needs to be toned down on sweet side because my stomach cannot handle another sugar high and then run to the restroom a half an hour later.

STARBUCKS

Hot Chocolate: Three Stars, $2.75-$3.65

This hot chocolate was good, but nothing special. It tasted similar to the kind that you can get at HEB. However, with whipped cream on top it definitely makes it taste better. I prefer to have their Peppermint Hot Chocolate.

It is so much better than the regular. I have sampled and reviewed some of the hot chocolates around town and here are the outcomes.

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What was your most memorable gift you received during the holidays?

"My favorite gift is a horseshoe charm that I got from my dad. It was my first necklace from Tiffany’s, and it brings me luck. I wear it all the time."
- Elizabeth Whitworth, Psychology major

The best gift I’ve received was a lalaloopsy doll from my daddy. It was last Christmas, he and I were having problems, and I almost didn’t go see him. I decided to go, and when I got there he gave me the doll I wanted, and I started crying. It just made me happy that he remembered what I wanted even after we were fighting. To this day, I still have the doll; it’s in a box on my shelf.
-Diamond Rose, Criminal justice major

The best gift to me has definitely got to be the last Christmas I got to spend with my dad. We knew he didn’t have very much time left, he had cancer, and so we sang him a song on Christmas Eve and played a Christmas ornament exchange game with my family. When then he let him see my little brother and sisters open their presents, and while they were opening them his eyes sparkled. I know he was happy in that moment, which made me happy, so that in itself was the best gift I’ve gotten for Christmas.
- Erica Garcia, Art major

Make it or break it
Students plan their New Year’s Resolutions

Every year, for some people, New Year’s resolutions are made, and broken. Whether it is to lose 50 pounds or gain self-esteem, New Year’s resolutions are a promise to yourself to make the upcoming year a brighter one.

A lot of students around campus are taking their New Year’s resolutions seriously and will do whatever it takes to keep it. When asked what his New Year’s resolution was sophomore Jose Sanchez says, “I am aiming to get a 4.0 next semester. I plan on doing it by dedicating more time to studying and school, and set a study schedule and attend every class. I think it will be hard, but I’ll stick to it.”

Other Islander students are taking a more fulfilling approach with their New Year’s resolution in order to find their place at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Many have spent their first year, or couple of years, blending in and going day to day with the same routine.

Sophomore Chris Gomez says, “My New Year’s resolution is to be more active. What I mean by that is to make more friends, and do things (legal things) I wouldn’t normally do. As it is I’m already looking for clubs to join for next semester. I believe I’ll stick to it. We have to prioritize that which is important to us.”

Some students who are finishing their last leg of college, or who think they have a good grasp on life, are blowing off resolutions altogether.

When asked if he had a News Year’s resolution yet for 2014, Nick Hunt, Senior, says “No I’m already perfect, by being who I am.”

New Year’s resolutions have been made by Americans since the end of the Great Depression. A study done in 2007 showed that 88 percent of people who made New Year’s resolutions failed them. The most common and popular New Year’s resolution is to improve physical well-being by eating better, exercising more, drinking less alcohol, and quit smoking. The second most popular New Year’s resolution is to improve their mental well-being by laughing more and thinking positive. The third most popular New Year’s resolution is to improve finances by getting out of debt, saving money, and making small investments.

Despite if you have a New Year’s resolution or not the New Year is coming. Your promises may not be written down, but in most cases there is an unspoken goal. If you decide you don’t want to make a New Year’s resolution that is OK because you will not have to worry about breaking it. Happy New Year Islanders.
Dr. Vanessa Jackson has spent over twenty years teaching at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi but says it was an adventure she hadn’t originally planned on. Jackson came to the US to pursue creative writing, but met Robert Jackson, and was then married a couple of years later.

“I had just intended to have a short adventure in the states,” said Jackson, “one year or maybe two, but that was nearly thirty years ago.”

Despite her change of plans, Jackson said “I had just intended to have a short adventure in the states,” said Jackson, “one year or maybe two, but that was nearly thirty years ago.”

When asked about what she would miss about teaching, Jackson said, “I shall miss the students.”

Jackson used her role as a teacher to encourage students to grow through learning. “Bring a teacher is helping students to mature and grow. It’s making sure you give them food for their intellect, to grow— to nurture their intellect,” said Jackson. “But I think part of it is also inspiring your students.”

The creative writing professor has been teaching for many years and said that she hopes she’s gotten better over the years. Jackson said that being a professor has taught her a lot over the years, but not just about literature and teaching.

“It’s taught me a lot about caring for people. It’s taught me a lot about how to help people, and it’s taught me that I want to help people. It’s taught me to be a better person,” said Jackson.

Even though she is leaving, Jackson hopes she has left something with her students and that her students found enjoyment out of what she taught them and that it encouraged them to go out and learn more on their own.

“If it’s a literature class,” said Jackson, “I hope they come out with a real enjoyment of the literature and want to go read more on their own, and if it’s a writing class I hope I have inspired them to go on writing.”

Jackson has one final thing that she wants to tell students. “Never give up,” Jackson said. “You can always do more than you think you can.”

It’s Christmas time, and along with the multicolored lights and chilly weather comes a bombardment of holiday music. From now until the Dec. 25, no matter where you go, you won’t be able to hide from those inescapable holiday tunes, your feet and singing. Plus, who wouldn’t love a fresh take on a song that’s sure to get you off your feet and singing. Plus, who wouldn’t love a fresh take on a song that’s sure to get you off your feet and singing.

This song is perfect for those listeners looking for something a little different this Christmas season. Have you grown tired of listening to the same old Christmas songs year after year? You know, the same 10 songs that seem to get sung every year by every possible type of artist on the planet for the last 80 years? If that’s the case, then “Elf Creep” is for you. Told from the perspective of one of Santa’s elves, “Elf Creep” is about an elf who develops a crush on a girl after visiting her house one Christmas Eve. This song is perfect for those listeners looking for something a little different this Christmas season.

Emily Burns Red

August Burns Red turns this holiday favorite into a rocking Christmas song in this cover. While the song contains no lyrics, the grand rock-inspired orchestral makes this song a must have for anyone’s holiday playlist.
First year students display disappointing effort

A s the semester comes to a close, I’ve been doing a lot of grading, and I find myself wondering, “What compels the first-year student to pursue higher education?”

This question is at the forefront of my thoughts as I finish grading the last reading quiz for my intro class.

When I first started teaching here, in 2002, I didn’t give reading quizzes. But, a few years ago, I found that unless I “threatened” students with a quiz, they wouldn’t read. So, reading quizzes became part of the introduction to Sociology routine, and grades got better for a while. Over the past few semesters, reading quizzes seem to have lost their effectiveness, at least for my intro students.

I’ve spoken with other colleagues, and they have similar concerns: students don’t read, they skim, or the students’ work suggests they are only reading the headers.

I understand first-year students exhibiting this behavior at the beginning of the fall semester. After all, the vast majority of you are coming into the University from public schools—where you could make A’s without cracking a book or with simply doing “homework” in another class or between passing periods.

That kind of behavior won’t, or shouldn’t, get you a passing grade here. Yet, here I am, after three hours of grading the last quiz for my Intro class, looking at my grade distribution and concluding that most students didn’t read or didn’t read carefully or only read the headers or the first and/or last paragraphs of the reading assignment. For the record, the grade distribution can be found in a chart on the right.

As we near the end of the semester, I know schedules get hectic, but that is not a valid excuse for not doing what you are expected of you. Higher education is not a right; it is a privilege. Those of you who are here are privileged, privileged to have the opportunity to learn, to think critically, to expand your understanding of yourself, others, and the world around you.

And, some of you seize this opportunity—I see that. That sustains me as I work with a sea of underprepared students who all-too-often appear to be just trying to “get through it.”

For those of you who see going to class as a waste of time or “homework” in another class, I can’t help feeling disappointed. The knowledge and information faculty share with you, perhaps you need to ask yourself if higher education, right now, is right for you.

As someone who cares passionately about her discipline and what it has to offer you, it saddens me to see the absence of engagement and the resistance to engaging with new material, new ideas. It makes me wonder: What are your reasons for coming to university? Where do “reading thought-provoking material” and “challenging/expanding your understanding of the world around you” rank in your list of reasons?

-Isabel Araiza, Associate Professor of Sociology

Private prisons for profit

Money-not rehabilitation- is the incentive to keep facilities open and people locked up for longer

O ne of the stated purposes of prisons is to prepare the concerned this comes into conflict with people sent to prison for rehabilitation and the and reintegration into the community. But with private prisons you have they have the incentive to assist people not to return to prison. This the is because the private prison industry actively support institutions that lobby for harsher sentencing laws, which make increase the populations need to rehabilitate the prisoners. They cut corners by reducing the pay and wages in order to protect their profit margin.

With the private prison industry, prisoners are seen as units from which profit is derived, there is a tendency to see them as commodities. Time has taught us that, once people are dehumanized, they are more likely to be exploited, abused, and violated becoming more violent themselves.

With over population and reduced staff we can put pressure on to do this much harder sentencing laws, which make increase the populations need to rehabilitate the prisoners. We can put pressure on governments to crack down on the private prison industry as long as they exist. To send independent monitors systematically to make independent monitors operate appropriately.

-Anthony Lee

-Isabel Araiza, Associate Professor of Sociology

Private prison facilities across Texas

Source: Private prison facilities across Texas.