

THE RIDER

MONDAY, MARCH, 6 2017

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VOL. 2 ISSUE 22



Spring Break

— ISSUE —

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SEX AND CONSENT

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MARIO GONZALEZ

Jesus Sanchez
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Alcohol, drugs, college students and parties all play a crucial role in the increase of sexual assault cases during Spring Break, officials say. South Padre Island Police Chief Randy Smith said he has seen an increase in sexual assault cases during the holiday period. “Definitely, [sexual assault cases] increase; there is no doubt about that,” Smith said. “Anytime your population increases and you have a certain amount of drinking

involved, that’s what’s unfortunate of it. So, we do have an increase in reports of sexual assault and subsequent investigations.” Douglas Stoves, UTRGV associate dean of Student Rights and Responsibilities, said alcohol during Spring Break is a primary factor involved in sexual assaults. “You have a period of time where you have a lot of college students together, there’s a lot of alcohol available. It’s almost an implied norm to get drunk and that always leads to problems,” Stoves said.

Cynthia Jones, director of the UTRGV Office of Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention and an associate professor in philosophy, said that in nationwide averages, 90 percent of college students who are sexually assaulted are victimized by somebody they know. “Certainly, incidents can go up during [Spring] Break in places like the Island, where people drink too much and go crazy,” Jones said. When it comes to sexual activity, there has to be consent.

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Stoves defined consent as a verbal or nonverbal agreement between two people participating in sexual activity. “For instance, if I am asking, let’s say, ‘Let’s go to lunch,’ and you say, ‘OK, I’ll go,’ you have given your consent. But if I say, ‘Do you want to go to lunch?’ and you are like, ‘No,’ and I’m like, ‘Come on, let’s go to lunch,’ and I coerce you into going, then that’s not really consent.” Jones provided *The Rider* with a definition of affirmative consent, which is also used by the university in its Handbook of Operating Procedures. “You probably grew up hearing, ‘No means no.’ Well, that’s not affirmative consent,” she said. “If you’re unconscious, you can’t consent, you can’t say no. Affirmative consent requires that there is active and ongoing participation of all parties in a sexual act.” The UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures also states that consent to one sexual act does not necessarily imply consent to another. Past consent to sexual acts or activity does not necessarily imply future consent. Consent can be withdrawn

at any time through either words or actions, as long as that withdrawal is clearly communicated. Any expression of an unwillingness to engage in any instance of sexual activity, whether through words or actions, establishes a presumptive lack of consent, according to the UTRGV handbook. Asked where the confusion lies when it comes to consent, Stoves replied: “I would say most of the confusion comes in just that issue. Somebody says yes and the two partners begin having intercourse and one says no and the other person just keeps going. ... If you see somebody that [is] drunk or stumbling around and they need help standing up or they’ve thrown up because they’ve had too much to drink, they cannot consent to sex and that can constitute sexual assault.” For the UTRGV campus community, the Office of Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention offers help to victims of sexual assault. “What advocates do is facilitate services and explain things to people,” Jones said. “We see way more cases than ever get reported to

“ Affirmative consent requires that there is active and ongoing participation of all parties in a sexual act. ”
Cynthia Jones
OVAVP Director

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Think before you party

Monika Garza
THE RIDER

The UTRGV Superhero Project will offer Spring Break safety tips to the campus community during its “Party Safe! Party Smart!” and “Consent Day” events this week. “Party Safe! Party Smart!” will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. today on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus. On the Edinburg campus, “Consent Day” will run at the same time Tuesday in the Student Union. The Superhero Project, a program under the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, is a universitywide initiative to promote the idea that students have the power to prevent high-risk behavior and harm, according to the UTRGV website. Alberto Escamilla, a peer educator at the Superhero Project in Brownsville, said the purpose of the events and activities is to inform students

about staying safe and alert during the weeklong vacation that starts March 13. “We want to give [students] tips on proper ways to be drinking or to be partying,” Escamilla said. The “Party Safe! Party Smart!” event will provide UTRGV organizations and departments an opportunity to promote themselves to the campus community. “We want to give the opportunity for organizations and departments to help us out and for them to give valuable information about what their department is about or what the organization is about as well,” he said. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to attend the event. Escamilla provided *The Rider* with several tips on how to party safe during Spring Break. “If you are going to be consuming alcohol, make sure you have a designated driver to take you to a place or you could look for another type of

transportation, like a taxi,” he said. If someone you don’t know offers you a drink, don’t accept it. “You never know what that drink is being tampered with,” Escamilla said. Prizes and snacks will be offered at today’s event, Escamilla said. Cassandra Zamora, a peer educator for the Superhero Project in Edinburg, will be at “Consent Day” Tuesday. “We want to bring awareness to consent, which means the ability to say ‘yes’ or to say ‘no’ with having sexual encounters,” Zamora said. “Let’s say you are passed out and you are drunk: You can’t give consent to have sex with someone.” Zamora said the Superhero Project will give out information and tips on how to have a safe Spring Break. On Wednesday, the Superhero Project and UTRGV Student Health Services will give out free condoms from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the Edinburg



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

campus. “We are going to be working with Student Health [Services] and we are going to have a condom cart and we are going to be driving around campus,” Zamora said. “We are going to be passing out condoms and [goody bags] and information on resources that we have here on campus.” In Brownsville, the Superhero Project will give out free condoms from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday throughout campus. Escamilla said the Superhero Project is an

organization in charge of bringing awareness to the community about the different resources on campus. “We always bring awareness every month,” he said. “For March ... we want to focus on bringing awareness about how to party safe and party smart. Our organization is about that, bringing awareness to the community about resources on campus and give [students] tips about a certain issue that we want to emphasize.” For more information about the events, call 665-7244 or email srr@utrgv.edu.



ANA CAHUICHE/THE RIDER

A South Padre Island Police unit patrols Padre Boulevard last Tuesday.

The calm behind the storm

Local law enforcement ready for Spring Breakers

Jesus Sanchez
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As college students from across the country invade South Padre Island and Cameron County beaches for Spring Break, law enforcement officials are prepared to keep the weeklong vacation as safe as possible. “We hire in lots of extra personnel everywhere,” SPI Police Chief Randy Smith said. “At the police department, we’re hiring more police officers, more jailers, more dispatchers, more call takers, more traffic control people. ... We do some unified command planning meetings, strategic planning meetings with local, state and federal partners.” Smith said the SPI Police Department will also deploy aerial drones to

monitor beach activity from a bird’s-eye view. Cameron County Sheriff Omar Lucio said his department’s officers will work overtime “just about every day” during Spring Break. “When Spring Breakers are here, usually there is more traffic. So, what we do is we increase not only our patrol division, but also our traffic division,” Lucio said. “We travel very heavily on the main highway, especially Highway 100 and Highway 4.” More than 50,000 people are expected to visit South Padre Island during Spring Break, law enforcement officials say. Smith advises beachgoers to not leave valuables in plain sight, avoid

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THE RIDER

The Rider is the official, award-winning student newspaper of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The newspaper is widely distributed on and off campus in Brownsville and Edinburg, Texas. Views presented are those of the writers and do not reflect those of the newspaper or university.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY

Vaquero Ice Cream Bar

The **Student Union** will serve free ice cream with all the trimmings from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. in the Student Union. For more information, call 665-7989.

Tuesday

Mulic concert

Pianist Dino Mulić, a UTRGV lecturer in the Music Department, will perform at 7:30 p.m. in the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex in Edinburg. Mulić, a native of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, has performed in Austria, Canada, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, the United States and his native country. Tickets (\$10 for adults and \$5 for students with ID and senior citizens) can be purchased at <http://patron.utrgv.edu> or at the door. For more information, call 882-7025 or email patron@utrgv.edu.

My Plate: Facts vs. Fads

The **Student Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics** invites students to learn about healthy eating from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the University Recreation Center in Edinburg. For more information, email joann.martinez01@utrgv.edu.

Spring Career Expo

The **Career Center** invites students to attend the **Spring Career Expo** from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the UTRGV Fieldhouse in Edinburg and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday in El Gran Salón in Brownsville. Dress professionally and bring your résumé. A student ID is needed for registration. For more information, call **Career Services** at 665-2243.

Talk about it S'more

The **Student Union** will host a panel

of advocates, professors, and students organizations on women's rights from 7 to 9 p.m. in the University Center Ballroom in Edinburg. For more information, call 665-2660.

Free ASL classes

The **Deaf Education and Advocacy Foundation** will offer free **ASL classes** from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. in the Health Affairs Building West in Edinburg. For more information, email leslie.k.gonzalez01@utrgv.edu.

Wednesday

Trombone-piano concert

Music Assistant Professor **William Haugeberg**, who specializes in brass: euphonium, trombone and tube, and Lecturer **Eric Jenkins**, who specializes in piano, will perform in concert at 7:30 p.m. in the Texas Southmost College Arts Center in Brownsville. Admission is free. For more information, call 665-3471.

Nutrition presentation

The **Diabetic Sponsors** will present on **Fitness Nutrition** from 2 to 3 p.m. in the University Center's Cenizo Room in Edinburg. For more information, email monica.rodriquez01@utrgv.edu.

Texas Hold'em Tournament

The **Student Union** will host a **Texas Hold'em Tournament** from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Student Union Game Room in Edinburg. Participants will compete for V-Bucks. For more information, call 665-7989.

Thursday

'My People' concert

UTRGV Lecturers **Catherine Compton**, a soprano, and **Allan Armstrong**, a pianist, will present a recital of American composers and poets titled "**My People: Songs**

and Stories of American Lives."

The concert starts at 7:30 p.m. in the Texas Southmost College Arts Center in Brownsville. Tickets (\$10 for adults and \$5 for students with ID and senior citizens) can be purchased at <http://patron.utrgv.edu> or at the door. For more information, call 882-7025 or email patron@utrgv.edu.

DWI Awareness Jam

Tau Kappa Epsilon will host a workshop on drinking responsibly from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the College of Business and Entrepreneurship Building (Room 110) in Edinburg. Another workshop, "A DWI Story," will take place from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the Liberal Arts North Building (Room 125) in Edinburg. For more information, email anthony.ramos01@utrgv.edu.

Movie: 'Hidden Figures'

Student Involvement will show the Oscar-winning film, "**Hidden Figures**," at 7 p.m. in the Student Union Theater or the Chapel Lawn in Edinburg. This film deals with recognizing the extraordinary accomplishment of women in a patriarchal society. The screening is part of UTRGV's observance of **Women's History Month**. For more information, call 665-2660.

Sunday

Anderson Cooper live stream

The **National Society of Leadership and Success** will host a live stream event featuring CNN journalist and author **Anderson Cooper**. The live stream is from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Salón Cassia in Brownsville. For more information, call 607-7439 or email raul.leal01@utrgv.edu.

--Compiled by Marie Vallangca

POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Feb. 19 and 26.



Feb. 20

12:16 p.m.: A student fainted during a weight training class in the Health and Physical Education II building. Hidalgo County

Emergency Medical Services transported her to Edinburg Regional Hospital.

1:24 p.m.: A student reported that her \$90 bicycle was stolen on Feb. 19 from the Health and Physical Education I building on the Edinburg campus.

4 p.m.: A non-affiliated individual was making a staff member uncomfortable due to his numerous attempts to speak with her during working hours in the UTRGV library on the Brownsville campus. He was located and issued a criminal trespass warning.

7:38 p.m.: A student resident in the Unity Hall dorm on the Edinburg campus inadvertently texted a resident assistant, saying he had marijuana. The student was taken into custody on a charge of possession of marijuana, a class B misdemeanor, and was booked into the Edinburg Police Department jail.

Feb. 21

11:20 a.m.: A staff member reported that her \$1,000 tablet computer was stolen between 5 p.m. Feb. 20 and 8 a.m. Feb. 21 from her office in Cortez Hall on the Brownsville campus.

11:21 a.m.: A student reported his \$600 cell phone was stolen from a table outside the University library on the Edinburg campus.

1:34 p.m.: A staff member reported that a student broke a table at the University library in Edinburg. The student told the officer that the legs of the table came off. Further review showed that the screws holding the legs to the table top came off.

6:56 p.m.: Two students found a non-affiliated man lying on the grass breathing, but unconscious, near a sidewalk on Ringgold Road on the Brownsville campus. Brownsville Emergency Medical Services transported him to Valley Baptist Medical Center-Brownsville.

Feb. 22

8:11 a.m.: A faculty member reported that she lost two sets of university-issued keys on Feb. 7 or 8 on the Brownsville campus.

10:38 a.m.: A staff member reported losing her UTRGV ID on the Edinburg campus. Afterward, the ID was turned in to University Police.

11:12 a.m.: A student lost his wallet containing personal documents in the Academic Services Building on the Edinburg campus on Feb. 20.

3:20 p.m.: A Texas Southmost College Physical Plant employee reported that he shattered a window of Cortez Hall on the Brownsville campus while using a weed trimmer. The shattered window was replaced with a wooden board. The employee said TSC would replace the shattered window.

3:35 p.m.: A student reported her laptop computer was stolen from an auditorium in the Science Complex on

the Edinburg campus.

Feb. 23

10:14 a.m.: A faculty member lost the key to his university office on the Brownsville campus at a local grocery store.

7:06 p.m.: A faculty member reported water coming out of the ceiling into the auditorium in the Science Complex on the Edinburg campus. The water came from an activated shower in a chemistry lab above the auditorium. University Police is conducting a criminal investigation.

Feb. 24

7:49 a.m.: A gang member with a criminal history was observed walking though parking lot E19 on the Edinburg campus. He was issued a criminal trespass warning for all UTRGV property and escorted off campus.

4:29 p.m.: Information was reported that a student was assaulted by her boyfriend on the Edinburg campus. Contact was made with the student and she said no assault occurred.

Feb. 26

8:37 p.m.: Officers responded to a disturbance at Performing Arts Complex A on the Edinburg campus. A student stated that her ex-boyfriend assaulted her at the scene. The ex-boyfriend left the scene before the officer's arrival. The ex-boyfriend allegedly physically restrained the student from leaving the location during the incident. The case is under investigation.

--Compiled by Macarena Martinez

The Office for Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention is located in Learning Center Room 156 on the Edinburg campus. To make an appointment at the Brownsville campus, call 665-8287.

Stoves advised students to stay alert and look out for one another during Spring Break.

"We know that people are going to be out in the sun dehydrated," he said. "We know that alcohol is going to be everywhere. Other drugs will be everywhere. It's just about being smart about your own consumption, and also about looking out for your friends."

CONSENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

the university because lots of those people--students, faculty and staff--many of them don't want to report it [to the authorities]. We would like for them to report it [or to] file an official complaint. What people need to understand is that if something happens and they aren't sure what they want to do, the best thing to do is to come to our office or counseling."

She said advocates in her department accompany victims to talk to police if they want them to "because it can be

really intimidating to talk to police."

Jones also said students under 21 who are sexually assaulted and were drinking should not be scared to seek help.

"College students think, 'Well, I'm 20 and I was drinking. I guess I drank too much and I was raped, but I don't want to report it because I'll get in trouble,'" she said. "There are actually protections for victims that will allow, for example, them not to get prosecuted for underage drinking. A university will not prosecute a student if they were drinking and became victimized."

Campus Q&A

What is your most memorable Spring Break story?



“My most memorable Spring Break story is when I went to Monterrey ... to visit my family. The best part of the trip was that we visited ‘Plaza Sésamo’ and ‘Bosque Mágico.’ It’s like Six Flags, but in Mexico. And it was fun!”

Melissa Mendoza
Nursing freshman



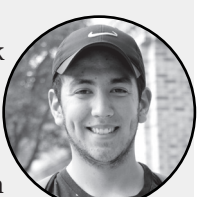
“Last year I went to--it’s not that crazy--it’s just the beach. Everybody does it. It was actually my first time, but the thing is I was sleep deprived because I thought that was gonna make me turn up even further. I learned from that because I fell asleep on a chair and I don’t remember falling asleep or even being returned home. My friends said that I was able to do it, like, they said, ‘See ya later, David,’ and I said, ‘See ya guys later,’ and somehow I walked to my front door. It’s crazy. It was just some kind of robot mode. It’s bittersweet because I did have fun and I did remember some of it, but the moment I fell asleep, I regretted it.”

David Vela
English senior



“The best Spring Break memory I have was when I visited Six Flags with my family. It was actually last Spring Break. There was a lot of us, a bunch of family members. It was really fun; we had a great experience. We only had the opportunity to get on like six rides because it was packed; it was super packed. It was really bad, but at the same time it was cool so it was a lot of fun. We went to Cheesecake Factory. I’m not the kind of person to go out to the Island with my friends and drink, but I really love spending time with my family and that was a really cool experience.”


Andrea Aleman
Finance junior



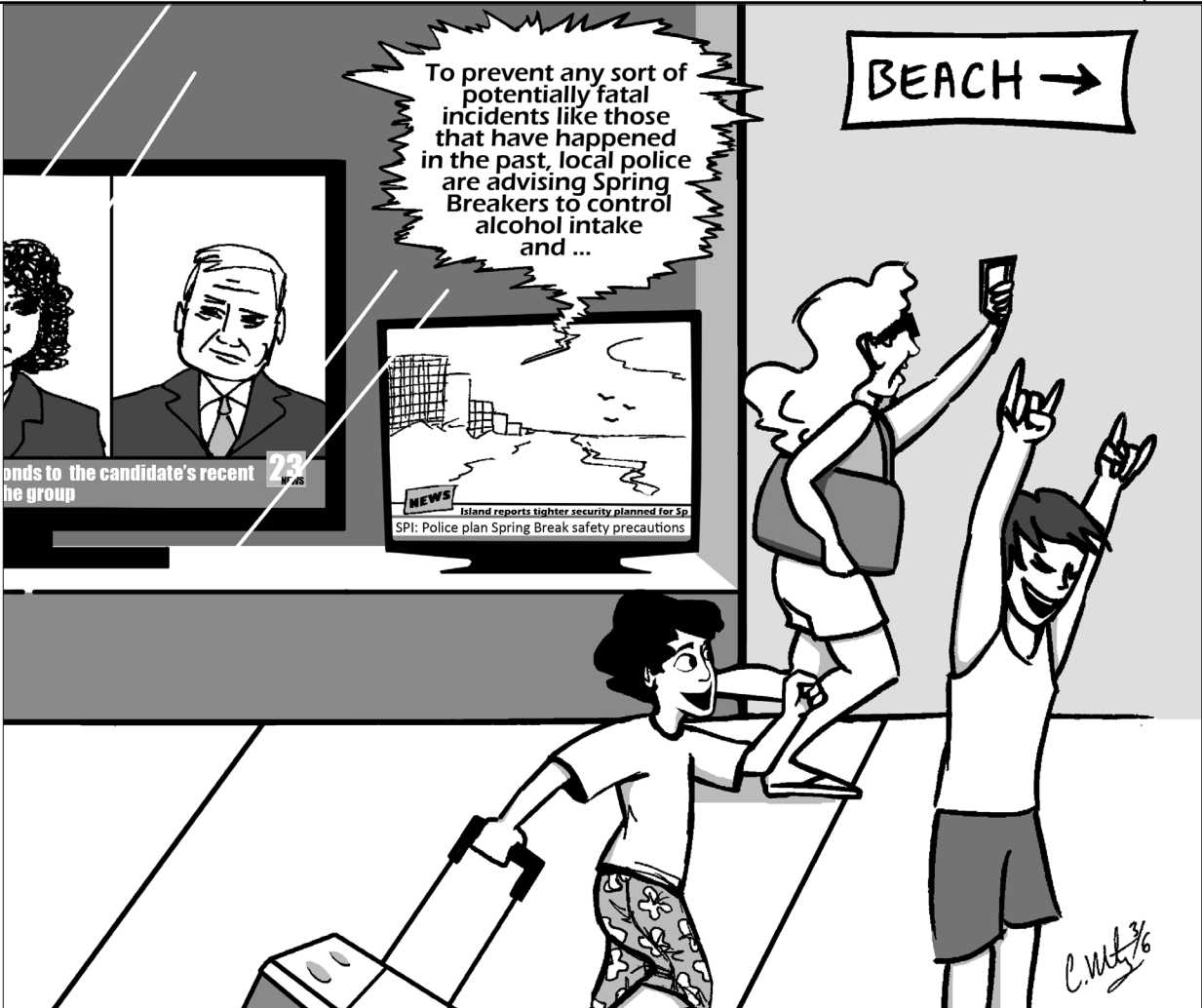
“My most memorable Spring Break story is when, this was back in 2007, I went on a camping trip with my dad’s side of my family. We went to the Grand Canyon, we went to Utah, New Mexico and then all the way straight to Indiana. And we went to this camping ground, I forgot what it’s called, but we stayed there for a whole week and it was pretty fun. I spent some time with my family and got to explore.”

Andrew Ryan Pachciarz
Nursing sophomore

--Compiled by Ana Cahuiche and Gabriel Mata



What do you want to see in *The Rider*?
Have a story idea?
Call us at 882-5143 or 665-2541



We should all be feminists



Nubia Reyna
THE RIDER

I grew up in a non-traditional Mexican family across the Rio Grande.

My dad would cook dinner, go to my school’s meetings and help me with homework while my mom would work all day.

When reaching puberty, I lost many friends because their moms thought I was a “bad influence” and had the mind of an older girl. Now that I have grown up with confidence in my beliefs and in the person I am, I can’t help but wonder: Was I being too much of a woman for traditional families?

I learned to read at age 4. My parents never limited my reading taste. I remember going to my dad’s bookshelf and picking up any book that caught my interest. By the time I reached adolescence, I had read so many things that most girls my age did not know about.

My dad, who has always been my biggest hero, along with my mom, of course, taught me to be whoever I want to be in life.

And my mom taught me that education was the most important thing I could ever get. When girls my age had to do laundry and dishes to go out, all I had to do was to be in the top five of my class.

When my parents got divorced, they told me I had to focus on my education so I would never ever need a man to support me.

To me, that was and still is the best advice a girl could ever get from her parents. And I grew up like that. Growing up with that mentality was never an issue, until I started dating.

A few years ago, I moved out of my dad’s house. I wanted to become “independent.” I started working and going to school full time. I would buy myself most of the things I wanted to buy and go to concerts and on trips with my friends.

A few months later, I met a guy who was raised by a “traditional” family. And by traditional I mean the type of family that expects girls to be dependent on a man.

He did not work and still lived with his parents. Everything was going great until one day he said: “I can’t do this anymore. You are never going to be the

girl that needs me to buy her something she wants. You work too much, you study too much.”

And then, in that precise moment, I knew there was something wrong with the way we are raising our daughters and sons.

How much happier would the world be if boys and girls were raised to not link masculinity and money? What if their attitude was not “the boy has to pay,” but rather, “whoever has more should pay?”

In her book, “We Should All Be Feminists,” Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie writes, “We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller. We say to girls, ‘You can have ambition but not too much. You should aim to be successful but not too successful, otherwise you will threaten the man. If you are the breadwinner in your relationship with a man, pretend you are not, especially in public, otherwise you will emasculate him.’”

So what does feminism really mean?

When the Women’s March on Washington took place Jan. 21, I thought all the women of the country, and the world for that matter, would be happy to see

so many women raising their voices on things that matter.

Until I saw several women on social media asking questions like: “What kind of rights do women want now? We do not need more rights,” or “If you really want to be

equal to men, then start learning how to change your car’s oil,” or “I love my life, I love being at home all day with my kids while my husband works to provide for us.”

If you are a woman who loves to stay at home all day, good for you! But not all women are the same.

Let’s not limit the rights of other women because you do not need them.

Feminism is all about equality, gender equality. Some people have this misconception that feminism means that women are better than men, but no. Feminism is about women and men being equal.

Let’s give the opportunity to have an equal-gender family to future generations. Let’s raise our kids to be truer to themselves. Let’s stop teaching girls to worry about their weight and what boys think of them.

So many magazines and books tell women how they should look, how they should behave and how they should be in bed in order to attract or please men. But there are few guides telling men how to behave to keep a woman.

If you are a woman, or if you love a woman, you should be a feminist.

We should all be feminists.

Spring Break

Bryan Ramos
NEWS EDITOR

The time of the year is here for students to kick back, relax and enjoy a week off as Spring Break approaches. South Padre Island, one of the Rio Grande Valley’s biggest attractions, will be the destination for thousands of college and high school students in search of a good time, good music and good people. Texas Week is March 13-17. “South Padre Island is very inviting to everyone,” Mayor Barry Patel said. “The Rio Grande Valley is our bread and butter. We are a very welcoming community. ... We want them to come here, we want them to have a good time and we want them to be safe.” Clayton’s Beach Bar and Grill, which boasts the title of “The Biggest Beach Bar in Texas,” will host many top artists in hip-hop and electronic dance music all Spring Break long. The action at Clayton’s Beach Bar and Grill kicks off Saturday when Russ takes the stage. On March 13, DJ Skribble will headline

Inertia Tours Party. Lil Wayne and special guest Migos will be live in concert on March 14 for Lil Wayne’s Spring Break Beach Bash. Kodak Black and 21 Savage are scheduled to perform on March 16. Kodak Black is due in court on Friday. Published reports say the rapper was arrested for allegedly violating probation. On its Facebook page last Thursday, Clayton’s announced: “We have confirmed with management that he “Will” get out and his situation does not affect Spring Break South Padre 2017.” Rae Sremmurd and Clinton Sparks will perform March 18, Lil Yachty on March 19, and Lil Uzi Vert closes out the action in concert March 25. Tickets range from \$20 to \$135 and can be purchased at claytonsbeachbar.com. As part of its Mega Beach Party, which began last Saturday and runs through March 26, Clayton’s Beach Bar and Grill will host



Springing into action

Marie Vallangca
THE RIDER

Spring Break can be the most fun or the most boring week of a college student’s experience. Alternative Spring Break can make it a productive one. Alternative Spring Break is a project that universities across the country host, allowing college students to take part in various community services. UTRGV Student Involvement has been sponsoring Alternative Spring Break since the institution began, a program it inherited from legacy institutions University of Texas Pan American and University of Texas at Brownsville. Raul Leal, UTRGV program coordinator for Leadership and Social Change, said this project makes sure students learn the importance of giving back to the community. “The project is a really beneficial way for students to get back to the community and to really learn a little about their own potential and skills in a unique way,” Leal said. Leal is finalizing the details along with his

counterpart in Brownsville regarding the different community service sites. “We are reaching out to the Rio Grande Valley Food Bank and several other agencies across the RGV to make sure that we have various opportunities for our students to participate with,” he said. The program will provide housing, transportation and meals to participants. Students will stay on campus and be taken to different service locations either on or off campus. “There’s an educational component that is tied to each of the service opportunities, so we want the students not only draw something about giving back to the community but also the impact that the giving back has,” Leal said. Last year, the group volunteered with the Rio Grande Food Bank. The students sorted various donated foods into bags to be given to families in need. The group also made shoes by cutting up old jeans and milk cartons for children in Uganda. Students also made pillow covers for a nonprofit agency that works with children in intensive care units and also worked with the UTRGV Food Pantry. The students helped by removing weeds and planting different vegetables and fruits in the community garden.

Reyna Chavez, a senior majoring in environmental science, participated in last year’s Alternative Spring Break. She enjoyed her experience with the project and looks forward to signing up again rather than lying around the house and binge-watching TV. “It’s a really good experience to do community service and give back to the community,” Chavez said. “And it’s a great way to meet people, socialize with your peers.” One of her favorite activities from last year was decorating pillows for hospitalized children, but what impacted her the most was writing letters to veterans. “It made me realize that people forget about [the veterans]. It’s just so good to show my appreciation worded in a letter to a veteran,” Chavez said. The Student Involvement Alternative Spring Break is looking to accept 12 UTRGV students. The community service is a four-day event starting March 13 and ending March 16. Students may register for Alternative Spring Break on the Student Involvement V-Link page. For more information, call 665-2660.

Kin' it down

a series of free concerts and events featuring various artists. The daily event lasts from noon to 6 p.m.

Ultimate Music Experience 2017 (UME) runs from Wednesday through Saturday at Clayton's. The action starts with a pre-party March 15 headlined by BORGORE, followed by Marshmello headlining on March 16, Tiesto on March 17 and Zedd will close out the show as the final headliner March 18.

The complete lineup for UME 2017 is stacked with heavyweights from around the globe, according to its website.

UME offers daily tickets as well as three-day tickets. Single-day tickets cost \$40 to \$50, while the three-day tickets range from \$129.95-\$249.95. Tickets can be purchased at umesouthpadre.com.

Last Wednesday, the South Padre Island City Council conducted a workshop in which some residents called for stricter regulations on Spring Break activities.

However, Clayton Brashear, the owner of Clayton's Beach Bar and Grill, said students have been studying and deserve the 10-day break that is Texas Week.

"They've been studying for four months. They need to go out there and sow their oats on the beach," Brashear said. "When you guys were younger, you did it, too; this is regular stuff. There's 10 days of Spring Break. That's what it's about, except it brings \$30 million to South Padre Island. That's how we live."

2017 Rock Star Beach Club is one of the events looking to draw crowds this Spring Break. Located behind Isla Grand Resort, formerly the home of the Coca-Cola Beach Party, the beach club will host daily events, celebrity guests, DJs and performing artists with contests and giveaways from noon to 5 p.m. 2 Chainz is scheduled to perform on Wednesday, Cole Swindell will perform March 15 and Cash Cash will take the Rock Star Beach Club stage March 22.



Party hard, party smart

Karina Aguirre
ONLINE EDITOR

Does school and work have you stressed? Are you ready to make your way down to the beaches of South Padre Island for Spring Break 2017? If so, keep these safety guidelines in mind so your vacation is safe and 100 percent enjoyable.

South Padre Island Police Chief Randy Smith provided the following information.

Top laws to keep in mind:

- Do not consume alcohol if under the legal age of 21
- Do not drink and drive
- Do not carry glass containers on the beach

Safety recommendations:

- Keep a close eye on your drink
- Always stay in a group
- "It's nice to be with a friend or two when walking from place to place, just for your own safety."
- Have at least one sober person in your group

South Padre Island is expecting about 50,000 people during Texas Week. In order to maintain a safe environment for everyone to enjoy, the city plans to ramp up its forces.

"All of our people are on duty," Smith said. "We pipe in multiple other agencies. Local, state and federal partners help us. We bring a whole lot of extra people. ... Every division in the city basically steps up."

Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) officers will also be present on the Island enforcing the laws.

"We want people to come and enjoy themselves and have fun," Smith said. "We just don't want them to take it too far and, unfortunately, find themselves on the wrong side of the law."

Parking and transportation

The City of South Padre Island regulates parking on residential side streets that are east of Padre Boulevard. You must obtain a residential parking permit to park on these streets. All four tires must be off the main road pavement and avoid blocking or parking in private driveways.

SPI provides safe transportation options for everyone to enjoy Spring Break. There are options available to fit each person's needs:

"The Wave," a free bus service, operates daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Padre and Gulf boulevards.

For more information about the schedule or a map of the routes, call 761-2447.

Licensed service providers:

- A Cab/A Taxi, 761-2222
- Airport Taxi, 761-1040
- BB's Taxi, 761-7433
- JJ's Taxi, 761-9292
- Padre Cab, 761-2525

--Compiled by Ana Cahuiche



Nubia Reyna / THE RIDER

El profesor de UTRGV y pianista Dino Mulić, nativo de Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, interpreta “Variation II: Poco allegro” de Ludwig van Beethoven en su presentación del 16 de septiembre del 2016 en el Texas Southmost College Arts Center.

Rebeca Ortiz
EDITORA DE ESPAÑOL

A partir del martes, estudiantes y miembros de la comunidad del Valle podrán deleitarse con una serie de conciertos y recitales ofrecidos por miembros de la facultad de Música de UTRGV.

Dichas presentaciones comenzarán a las 7:30 p.m. y continuarán hasta el sábado y tomarán lugar ya sea en el Texas Southmost College Arts Center de Brownsville o en el Performing Arts Complex de Edinburg.

Comenzando con el pianista, cofundador y codirector del festival de música de cámara de Sarajevo, Dino Mulić, quien el martes en el PAC de Edinburg presentará un recital escrito para piano y fagot, este último interpretado por su invitado especial, Scott Pool, profesor de fagot en Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

El recital que se compone de siete piezas de diferentes compositores abrirá con “No cantes hermosa” del compositor y pianista ruso Sergei Rachmaninoff.

“Cuenta la historia de una alma rota que al escuchar a la hermosa cantante le suplica ‘no cantes más mi hermosa’ porque no puede soportar el recuerdo de su amor perdido”, dijo Mulić.

Pool, quien por primera vez participa como artista invitado en uno de los eventos de Patron of the Arts, interpretará junto con Mulić piezas recientemente descubiertas para piano y fagot del compositor croata Boris Papandopulo.

“Me moría de ganas de aprender las piezas, así que esta fue la oportunidad perfecta para poder encontrar a alguien con quien las pueda tocar”, dijo Mulić.

Los boletos de adulto tienen un costo de \$10 y \$5 para estudiantes y personas de la tercera edad.

De igual manera, William Haugeberg, profesor de instrumentos de viento metal, ofrecerá un recital de trombón acompañado del pianista y profesor Eric Jenkins el miércoles en el TSC Arts Center de Brownsville.

Haugeberg presentará una variedad de eras en la literatura del solo del trombón.

“Básicamente, esto es una representación de mi investigación escolar y trabajo que he realizado en el año”, dijo Haugeberg.

Durante su presentación, él y Jenkins interpretarán piezas para trombón realizadas por compositores alemanes, americanos, franceses y belgas. El recital finalizará con un solo del compositor estadounidense Arthur Pryor que data alrededor del 1904 y conforma uno de los trabajos de



Mario Gonzalez / THE RIDER

Performing Arts Complex ubicado en el campus de Edinburg donde algunas presentaciones de miembros del profesorado de la facultad de Música tomarán lugar.

trombón de cambio del siglo.

“Arthur Pryor fue uno de los primeros solistas que tuvimos, así que vamos a ir a través de todas las eras y toda la literatura así”, dijo Haugeberg.

Este evento no tiene costo alguno y es abierto al público.

El jueves a la misma hora y en el mismo lugar, la soprano, profesora y ex coordinadora del programa de Patron of the Arts, Catherine Compton y el pianista Allan Armstrong, presentarán un recital de compositores y poetas americanos titulado “Mi gente, canciones e historias de las vidas americanas”.

Durante el concierto se proyectarán fotografías y trabajos artísticos de diferentes artistas que contribuyeron a darle forma y a reflejar la experiencia americana.

“¿Qué significa ser americano? Para la mayoría de las personas significa ser de otro lugar, así que vamos a atravesar por distintos compositores y poetas cuya música y cuyos textos serán representados ya sea hablando o mediante fotografías, algunas de sus jornadas acerca de ser o hacia ser americano”, dijo Compton. “Una de nuestra poetisas es Emma Lazarus, quien escribió el famoso poema, ‘Dadme tus cansados, tus pobres’ que

está en la estatua de la Libertad.

“Otro de nuestros poetas es Langston Hughes, quien tiene hermosa poesía que refleja la experiencia americana, así que nuestra meta es celebrar la riqueza de la cultura americana y su diversidad”.

El trabajo principal del recital es una pieza para voz y orquesta de Samuel Barber con textos de James Agee titulada “Knoxville: verano de 1915”.

“Es una obra maestra, un poema muy hermoso y evocativo con música espléndida hecha para orquesta pero que estamos haciendo con voz y piano”, dijo Compton.

Otras compositores incluidos en el programa son Amy Beach, Charles Ives, André Previn, Jake Heggie, Ricky Ian Gordon y Lee Hoiby.

La mezzo-soprano y ex profesora de UTRGV, Nicole Asel, será la invitada de honor quien cantará una canción a dueto con Compton y posteriormente interpretará un par de canciones de Gordon. Armstrong acompañará todas las piezas.

Los boletos de adulto tienen un costo de \$10 y \$5 para estudiantes y personas de la tercera edad.

El viernes en el TSC Arts Center, se presentará la también soprano Stephanie Beinlich en un recital de

voz donde será acompañada por el director de opera e instructor de voz de University of North Dakota (UND) y el pianista y miembro del Red River Trio, Wesley Lawrence y Keith Teepen en una celebración por el arte de la canción. Durante el recital se alternarán temas de Robert Schumann, Claude Debussy, Richard Strauss y Tom Cipullo.

Finalmente, el sábado en el PAC de Edinburg, la profesora Diana Seitz ofrecerá su recital de violín titulado “De Barroco a Blockbuster” y en el cual se interpretará música de J.S. Bach, H. Ernst, B. Bartok y J. Corigliano.

Ninguno de estos dos eventos tiene costo alguno y ambos son abiertos al público.

Patron of the Arts fue fundada en 1984 en Brownsville con el propósito de proveer a la comunidad y los estudiantes del Valle del Río Grande oportunidades para el aprendizaje y enriquecimiento al asistir a eventos en vivo de músicos profesionales y artistas visuales, así mismo que proporcionar un lugar para las actuaciones de su profesorado y estudiantes.

Desde la fundación de UTRGV, Patron of the Arts ofrece eventos en los campus de Brownsville y Edinburg.

March Madness starts in Vegas



SARAH CARVAJAL/THE RIDER

Junior Guard Nick Dixon goes for a layup in practice earlier this season.

Nathaniel Mata SPORTS EDITOR

Accompanying the calendar’s turn to March is the most important basketball weekend for UTRGV. The 2017 Western Athletic Conference tournament will again be held in Las Vegas and both Vaquero teams are revving up to make a run at a title.

Women

Larry Tidwell’s team is in its third consecutive season of being legitimate WAC championship contenders. In 2014-15, its breakout season, the team reached 19 wins for the first time in program history. This year, Tidwell matched the program record of career victories with 70 wins. He’ll hope to break it and extend the team’s season.

This year has been more turbulent, with the injury bug affecting the team early and players being dismissed from the team in the midst of conference play.

Despite those roadblocks, the women have managed to stay near the top of the standings, never losing more than twice in a row in conference.

Nichele Hyman, a sophomore guard, said the season should be reason enough to believe they can make a run.

“I would say you have to

have a strong mentality, you have to come in thinking you’re going to win,” Hyman said. “You got to take it one game at a time, you can’t really look ahead, especially when it comes to the tournament, just because anything can happen.”

Hildur Björg Kjartansdóttir is a junior forward who has settled nicely into her role as a captain and leader. The 6-foot-2-inch player has had an excellent season rebounding the ball.

It will be her third trip to the Orleans Arena. In her first two, the team reached the championship game, falling to New Mexico State both times.

“It’s a lot of fun going to Vegas because every game matters, anybody can beat anyone,” Kjartansdóttir said. “It’s just one game and you’re in or out.”

She has surpassed 200 rebounds for the second season in a row. She’s also started



LESLEY ROBLES/THE RIDER

Sophomore Guard Nichele Hyman protects the ball in the game against California State University, Bakersfield at the Fieldhouse earlier this season.

in every game for her second year in a row.

“I have way more experience now than last year and definitely the year before,” Kjartansdóttir said. “So I think the biggest thing is for everyone to add on, to get better every year. I’m really happy that’s what I’m doing.”

Hyman said she wants to help senior guard Shawnte’ Goff win the conference championship. “To help Shawnte’ out and win the

WAC Championship would mean the world,” she said. “She’s actually like my best friend. I came here, she put me under her wing. So, for me, that definitely means a lot to win for her last year.”

UTRGV’s opponent was not set as of press time Friday. Its possible opponents are Utah Valley University or University of Missouri-Kansas City. UTRGV has a 4-0 record combined against those teams.

Men

The men’s basketball team will have a more uphill battle in Vegas, just based on its season and seeding. Men’s hoops are sitting on just two conference wins this season.

A quick glance at the record might seem like regression from last year’s four-win conference record. A closer look at the Vaqueros will reveal many narrow defeats.

Five of UTRGV’s 12 conference losses came by 10 points or less.

In its two matchups against first-round opponent UMKC, UTRGV lost by four and 13 points. The closer loss was on the road. At halftime, the Kangaroos led by only two points.

Head Coach Lew Hill said his team can do better with details that impact the final score. UMKC scored 21 points off Vaquero turnovers in an 83-79 loss on Jan. 7.

“We just felt that both times we had a chance to win the game,” Hill said. “It was the things we *didn’t* do to finish the games. UMKC has something to do with that, but sometimes it’s self-damaging and not the opponent.”

Hill is taking plenty of positives in his first year courtside as a head coach. The Vaqueros are not just undergoing

See **WAC**, Page 11

“I think the biggest thing is for everyone to add on, to get better every year. I’m really happy that’s what I’m doing.”

Hildur Björg Kjartansdóttir

Women’s Basketball Junior Forward

Zapata wins conference gold



LESLEY ROBLES/THE RIDER

Jennifer Zapata

Nathaniel Mata

SPORTS EDITOR

UTRGV junior and Los Fresnos High School alum Jennifer Zapata’s work has paid off. In her third year with the program, she earned a first-place finish Feb. 25 in the 3,000-meter run during the Western Athletic Conference Indoor Championships.

Zapata, who runs cross-country in the fall, said the year-round training does a good job of preparing for important runs.

She said Assistant Coach Parker Cowles, who works with distance runners, informed her that she was seeded as one of the top runners moving into the conference meet.

“I knew beforehand. Coach told me about the rankings

and their times. I knew I was close but anything can happen,” Zapata said. “Anybody can have a good race, anybody can have a bad race. During the beginning of the indoor season, I knew I wanted to win. That was my goal since the beginning.”

Zapata’s time of 10:08.30 narrowly edged out New Mexico State University’s Cristina Amberg’s 10:08.52.

The third-year collegiate runner said she was too locked in to check her opponent. She didn’t know until after the race that her win came by less than a second.

“To be honest, I didn’t even know she was close to me. I just ran. I didn’t look back. I wanted to, kinda, but then I knew I was going to lose time there,” Zapata said.

The RGV native praised lo-

cal talent, hoping more athletes will stay as she did.

“There’s talent here; it takes time. Hopefully, more high schoolers from here in the region can see that this is actually a good school,” the former Los Fresnos Falcon said.

Zapata earned First Team All-WAC honors for her efforts. She was joined by junior Antonio Salinas, who finished second in shot put. His 16.15 meters was a personal best and a program record. Sophomore Paul May finished fourth in shot put at 15.36 meters, enough to earn First Team honors as well.

Track and field will now move into the outdoor season. The Vaqueros will prepare until May, when they host the WAC Outdoor Track and Field Championship.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



SARAH CARVAJAL/THE RIDER

Name: Jose Garcia
Sport: Baseball
Position: Outfielder
Classification: Senior
Major: Multidisciplinary studies

Age: 21

Hometown: San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora, Mexico

Who is your favorite athlete? “I think my favorite athlete is “Big Papi,” which is David Ortiz from Boston. I like the way he’s very humble. I like Jose Reyes from the [New York] Mets. They both work hard. One is a contact hitter and one is a power hitter, but I think the humbleness that they play with makes them look good out there.”

Who is your role model?

“It would be between my dad and brother. They have both supported me since I moved to the United States. My dad has trained with my brother and me since we were little. We would go weekends and just go and do stuff. My brother has been with me four years and he’s been giving me a lot of advice of college and DI and how to play and academics. Just the way I see those guys is a role to me. They’re always good at what they do, so I’m just following the path.”

What is the best advice you’ve been given and by whom? “My brother tells me, ‘Be you and play you. Don’t play the game that others play. Just play your game, and you’ll be fine.’”

When did you begin playing baseball, and why? “I’ve been playing baseball since I was 3 years old. My dad played a little. He was more basketball, but he loved baseball, so he got my brother and me to play it. So, I saw my brother playing it, and I was like, ‘Well, I want to play, too.’ Back then, I was not good at all. The people in my hometown will say my brother was really good and I was just so-so. At the age of 15 or 16, the roles changed. People would say, ‘Your brother is a little better than you,’ so it was kind of funny.”

What’s your favorite place to hang out on campus?

“Does the baseball field count? I love being out here. Being out here just reminds me of where I come from, and it’s a great field.”

What are your academic goals? “I want to, first of all, graduate this semester. One of my goals is to have a 3.5 GPA or above.”

What are your personal goals for this season?

“Obviously, I’m trying to get better at every single one, better than last year for sure. Hopefully, I can become accomplished in every single section like average, hits, doubles, home runs. I just got my first two home runs, so that was good. Hopefully, I can get more hits than last year and stolen bases. Just improve on everything baseballwise.”

--Compiled by Sarah Carvajal

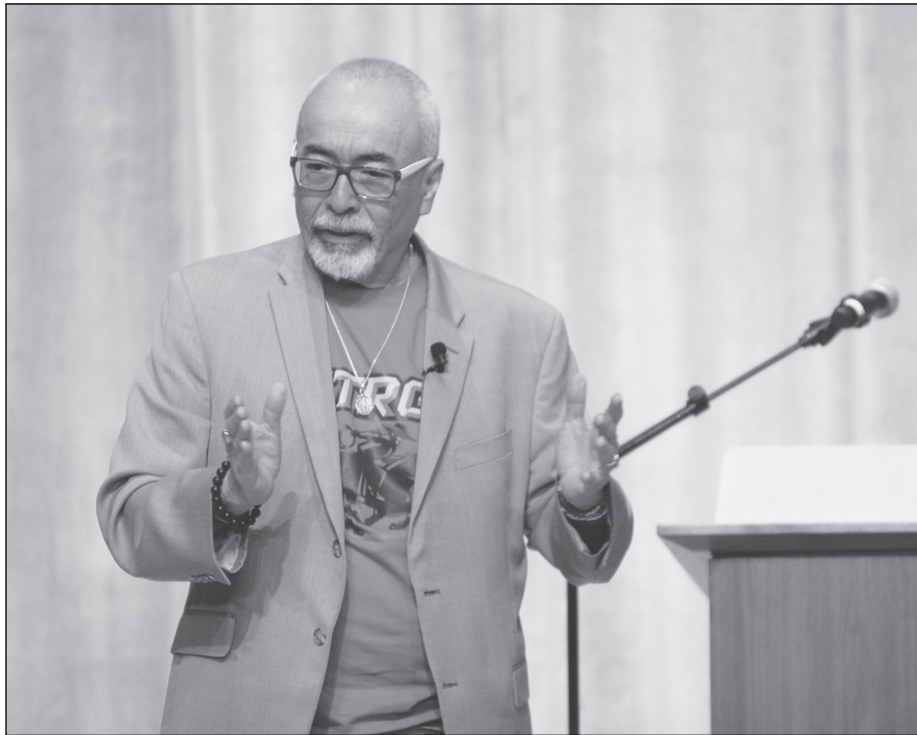
U.S. poet laureate speaks on social justice

Bryan Ramos
NEWS EDITOR

Juan Felipe Herrera, the first Hispanic to serve as the U.S. poet laureate, visited the UTRGV Edinburg campus last week to discuss social justice and share his work.

“It all begins with you,” Herrera said during his keynote address last Thursday in the Performing Arts Complex. “It all begins with what you observe and wrongs that you see, limitations imposed on our families, on workers, on women, on LGBTQ students and friends, and human beings and animals and plants, and you go, ‘I don’t like the way they’re being treated.’ That’s how social justice begins.”

Herrera, who lives in Fresno, Calif., is the author of 30 books, including “187 Reasons Mexicanos Can’t Cross the Border: Undocuments 1971-2007” and “Border-Crosser with a Lamborghini Dream.” He was appointed as the Library of Congress’ 21st Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry on June 10, 2015, and was appointed to serve a second term on April 13 of last year. Herrera is the also the son of migrant farmworkers.



Juan Felipe Herrera

GABRIEL MATA/THE RIDER

UTRGV creative writing Professor Steven Schneider, who wrote the

National Endowment for the Arts Big Read grant along with two books of his

Poets: Listen to the world around you

Karina Aguirre
ONLINE EDITOR

Promoting literacy, culture and the arts to the UTRGV community, the Festival of International Books and Arts (FESTIBA) hosted Mexican poet Estrella Del Valle and Dominican poet María Palitachi Thursday evening on the Brownsville campus.

Students, faculty and fellow writers attended the event held in the Main Building’s Salón Cassia, where the poets spoke about topics relating to their work.

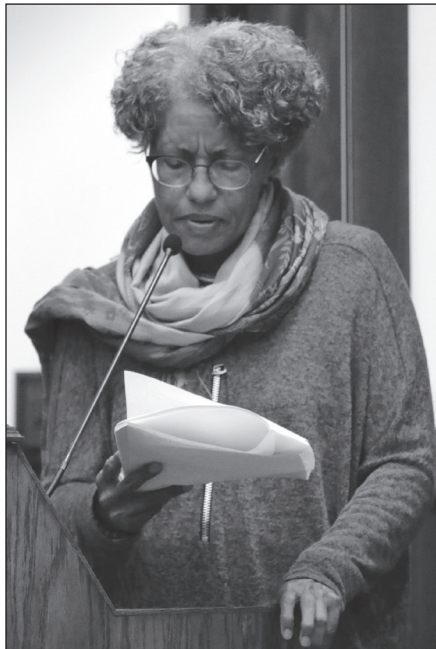
The event began with Del Valle, a native of Córdoba, Veracruz, Mexico. She told the audience about her upbringing and her journey as a poet. She has published five poetry books and is working on her sixth.

Del Valle shared the subjects of her work, like the collection of love poems titled, “*Bajo la luna de Aholiba*,” as well as “*Fábula para los cuervos*,” written about her family, and “*La cortesana de Dannan*,” about her life and struggles.

The poet described that in her early writings, she drew all the attention to herself, as if the sun revolved around her.

It wasn’t until Del Valle left to Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, that her writing inspiration changed.

“When I left my city and moved to Juárez, I wrote another book and it won the *Premio Latinoamericano de Poesía Benemérito de América in Oaxaca*. That book is called ‘*El*



KARINA AGUIRRE/THE RIDER
María Palitachi

desierto; Dolores,’ and that’s when I started to write about what I was seeing around me,” Del Valle said in Spanish.

Del Valle spoke about her transition to the United States. Her book, “*Vuelo México-Los Angeles. Puerta 23*,” shed a light on her journey in a foreign land and the hardship that came along with it.

“After I moved to Los Angeles, everything was a cultural shock to me.



ANA CAHUICHE/THE RIDER
Estrella Del Valle

In Mexico, everybody knew and loved me,” Del Valle said. “When I got to L.A., that’s when I truly understood what it meant to be Mexican. It didn’t matter how educated I was or how many books I had written.”

Del Valle concluded her presentation by reading a few poems from a work in progress that she hopes to release this year, titled “*Calima*,” which was inspired by the “Planet of the Apes.”

own, organized the visit from the poet laureate. Herrera’s visit was part of FESTIBA, the Festival of International Books and Arts, which promotes literacy and culture to residents of the Rio Grande Valley.

Herrera said social justice is about positive change and human rights.

“I was wondering about positive change in our society,” he said. “I was wondering about this thing called social change in our society, because all colors, all classes, all gender orientations, all people to be treated with equality, to have the total freedom they deserve. It’s their human right. We want tenderness, we want kindness, we want compassion, we want art, free expression and new, bright, rhythmic, blazing visions to come for our future generations.”

Bryce Milligan, a San Antonio writer, musician and prominent literary publisher, was also on hand to talk about the history of the search for social justice.

“The yearning for true social justice has been expressed throughout human history all over the planet,” Milligan said. “I would argue that now is the time to break the rules, to broaden our horizons, to envision, strive and demand liberty and justice for all.”

A native of the Dominican Republic, poet María Palitachi read a reflection of her home country’s literature. The poet opened her presentation by explaining that the island’s work was not as known as it deserves to be.

Palitachi is a member of “Dominican Poets USA” and she is the author of the books “*My Little Paradise*,” “*Amongst Voice and Spaces*” and “*Laberinto de la Espera*,” among others.

Asked about her inspiration, the author replied that in 2016 she drew ideas from many places.

“I published three books, in a trilogy, so it’s hard to tell because each one of them has a different voice,” Palitachi said. “One is about love, one is social and the third one is a game I did.”

Her book, “*Once puntos de luz* (Eleven) Spotlights,” is composed of 11 verses and each can be read top to bottom, bottom to top and from the center out. That is the game to which Palitachi is referring.

Palitachi said she writes every day.

“I don’t let a day go by without writing something,” she said. “I’m very weird. I could be in a bathroom, on a balcony, on the beach. I spend a lot of time at the beach in the Dominican [Republic]. ... I could even write a poem right here. ... I function differently. I listen to people talk and I hear poetry. I could be writing a poem and then I hear somebody speak and then I hear a verse and I’ll write it on another page.”

POLICE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

leaving windows open and to lock up their vehicle.

“What we try to do is educate people through social media and fliers we hand out,” he said. “Travel with a friend, try to keep one person sober, a designated person, not just for driving but just to keep an eye on the group. Don’t ever drink from drinks that are passed around or you don’t know where they came from.

“If you’re at an event and you set your drink down to go to the restroom, have someone watch it or don’t drink from it again when you come back if you can’t validate that nobody slipped something in it.”

Lucio said even though his department will try its best to avoid any casualties, it can’t be everywhere.

“The only way to prevent [casualties] is by high visibility by the patrol division,” Lucio said. “You can’t be everywhere and you can’t be at every traffic stop or every traffic light, but once they see the strength of the law enforce-

ment ... we start cutting out some of those problems.”

Smith said most of the crimes that occur during Spring Break are alcohol-related or disorderly conduct.

“Most of them are what we call Class C charges, drunk and disorder-type of charges,” Smith said. “Class C’s are always around a couple hundred bucks or so.

One of the big mistakes that people make is they say, ‘Well I’m old enough. I can drink on the beach.’ Yes

you can, but you can’t have glass containers. We really enforce that heavily. If somebody is going to drink on the beach and they’re going to drink responsibly, that’s fine, but it needs to be out of plastic or aluminum.”

The lowest level criminal offense is

a Class C misdemeanor. Class C fines are a maximum of \$500 and there is no jail time attached. Although there is no jail time attached, an individual still has the right to a jury trial for a Class C charge.

“We also want people to come have clean family fun and be responsible, so they can have a fun time and have good memories of South Padre without winding up on the wrong side of the law.”

Randy Smith
South Padre Island Police Chief

“[They can’t] assume they can come here and just get drunk and say, ‘Well, because I’m not local and nobody knows who I am here and I’m from another state or whatever.’ ... That kind of record can follow you. You can wind up in jail here or wind up going to court

here.”

The SPI police chief said he encourages families to come to the Island but to stay alert and be responsible.

“We’re a tourist town; we haven’t lost sight of that,” Smith said. “Coming and visiting is what we’re about, we promote that. But, we also want people to come have clean family fun and be responsible, so they can have a fun time and have good memories of South Padre without winding up on the wrong side of the law.”

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WAC
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

the first season under the new coach, there's personnel change and systematic differences.

The head coach said challenges pertaining to changes, such as switching from zone to man defense is no small task.

"Sometimes, that just doesn't happen right away," he said. "It takes time and you really have to mentally understand it."

Hill said more wins obviously would have been ideal, but the culture has been set.

"Very happy with the effort of our guys," he said. "That's what I told people before, 'You have to crawl with us.' It's not just going to change overnight. It's recruiting, it's the players that you have here changing their mentals."

One player having a consistent season filling the score sheet is Nick Dixon. He's the team-scoring leader with 18.4 a game, and 20.3 in WAC games.

Antonio Green is second in scoring with 15 points per conference contest.

Dixon said the tournament is an opportunity to correct mistakes from earlier meetings.

"Like Coach says, 'Basketball is forgiving,'" Dixon said. "We've played these teams before, so it's not going to be a total blind side. Hopefully, we're going to learn from the mistakes from our conference games."

A game that is reason for optimism was Feb. 18's 107-101 loss to New Mexico State University, the team that has won four of the last five conference championships.

Dixon said offense is rarely the issue. Defense has to step up to secure wins.

"Our scoring can keep us in a lot of games," he said. "That shows we'll have enough points to stay in a game. Our defense will give us that to take us overboard to win those games."

UTRGV will face UMKC in the first round of the WAC tournament Thursday. If the Vaqueros win that game, they will face the winner of New Mexico State vs. Chicago State University.



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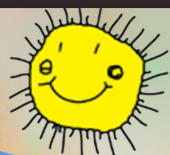
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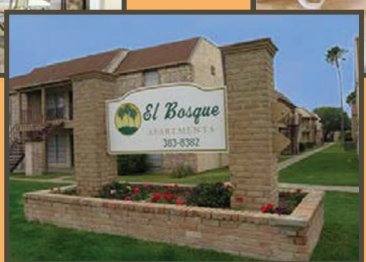
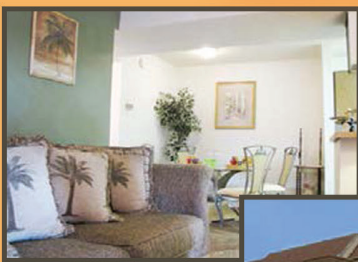
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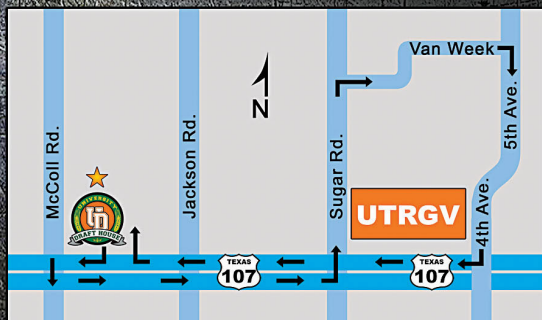
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