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ASSAYER OF STUDENT OPINION

THE PROSPECTOR

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

FEBRUARY 11, 2014

LOVE & SEX ISSUE

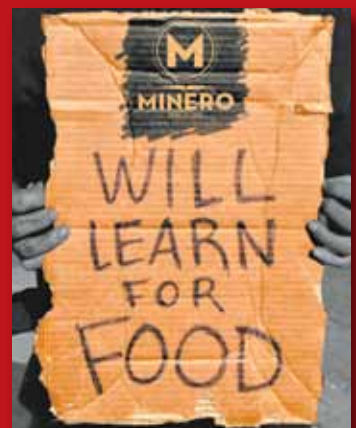
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COLUMN

On male feminism

BY ANDRÉS RODRÍGUEZ
The Prospector



One of the things I remember most vividly after coming out was being asked by my father if I wanted to be a woman. He hardly gave me time to answer. He simply followed it with a more assertive question: “You aren’t dressing up as a girl, right?”

That was what he wanted to talk about. Not relationships, not safe sex. He was worried about me going full woman.

His worry wasn’t unfounded. Growing up, I wasn’t into sports. I liked to draw, dance, listen to music and act out scenes from movies. That immediately classified me as feminine. My soft features as a boy never helped either.

My masculinity was prized in my father’s eyes. He could overlook the fact that I couldn’t kick a ball to save my life, or the fact that I had just come out as gay, but he couldn’t have me going around dressed like a girl.

I was being told that masculinity was a gift from above. It was this very precious thing that afforded you not only better opportunities in life, but also your father’s respect. All I could think of though was, “What’s wrong with being a woman?”

A man who possesses feminine characteristics is immediately labeled as weak. A woman who possesses male characteristics is immediately labeled as strong. Of course, it’s a little more complex than that, but that is what we’re told.

I felt like I could relate to women in that sense. I lived under the assump-

tion that because I was gay, watched so much “30 Rock” and listened to so much Beyoncé, I was a feminist.

I followed Liz Lemon’s life advice to the tee, sought solace in “Girls” and adored the feminist bookstore skits in “Portlandia.” I thought, as a gay minority I can relate to this; I can relate to the struggle.

It takes more than that, I came to realize.

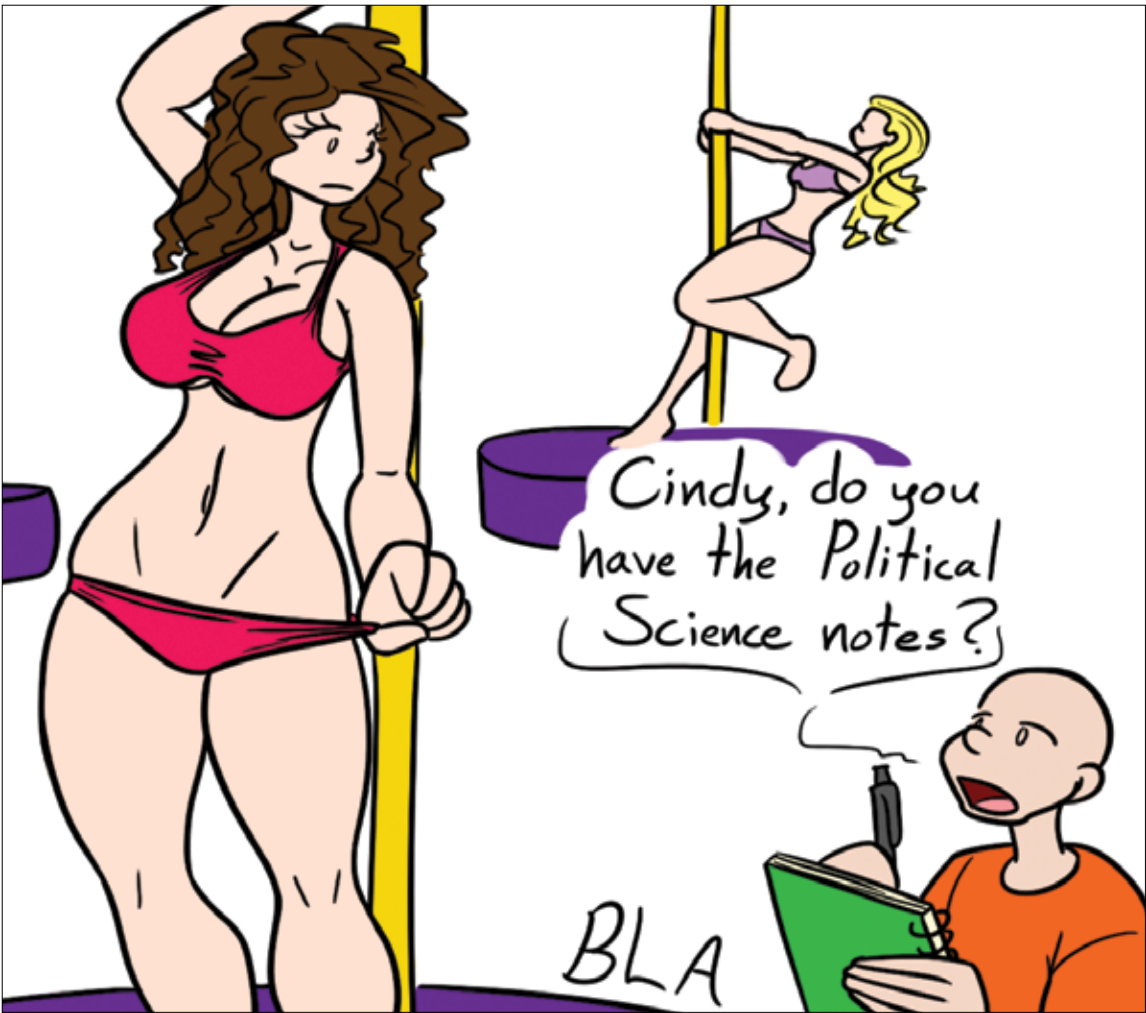
Feminism is a complicated movement. It’s a complicated state of being, of action and of reaction. I’ve realized I can’t fully grasp the breath of feminism without letting go of some of the old machismo I inherited and by acknowledging that being a man affords me certain privileges.

I like to think of myself as a feminist, because I appreciate women and look that they are treated with equality and respect. But I’ve been met with bumps along the way. My upbringing taught me to be protective of women, but also to be wary of them, and the more I enter into the gay scene, the more I see femininity rejected.

I have come across terms like “straight-acting” and “no fems” very often among gay men. I’m baffled by not only how homophobic these comments can be, but by how misogynistic and insulting they are. This is machismo at its most relentless and, although I understand these are personal preferences, they are also oppressing.

Yes, gay men and women are fighting a different fight, but I think there’s beauty in the overlaps. Feminism doesn’t exist by itself in the halls of the women’s studies departments and the voices of the radical and outspoken. It’s in the actions of those who listen and attempt to understand and who fight against sexism and for equality.

Andrés Rodríguez may be reached at theprospectordaily.news@gmail.com.



COLUMN

Chancellor announces his resignation

Dear Colleagues of the U. T. System Community,

When I began my journey as chancellor of The University of Texas System in February 2009, I knew the day would come when I would return to pediatric transplant surgery. Having spent the past 14 years in administration for the U. T. System, first as president of The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSC-SA) and now as chancellor, the time has come for me to return to my lifelong love and passion for the care and treatment of patients full time.

I have accepted a position at UTHSC-SA as head of Pediatric Transplant Surgery. This position, offered to me in late 2013, presents an opportunity for me to do what I trained so many years to do, and I view it as an important calling at an ideal time. Thanks to your extraordinary work, U. T. institutions continue to excel in great teaching, new discoveries, and much more. One of my most cherished experiences has been the opportunity to spend considerable time on campuses meeting with faculty and students. I learned more from you in these visits than I could have from any other source.

My decision was not made lightly, but I was comforted by two factors, both tied to family. My new position will allow me to remain in the U. T. family, an environment to which I am dedicated and committed. Additionally, I will be able to convey gratitude and respect to my parents for the sacrifices they made for my siblings and me to spend considerable years in school to train as physicians. My father continues to practice medicine daily at age 89, and three of my brothers are physicians. It is time to honor what my parents did for me by returning to my father’s and my first love, the practice of medicine.

Chairman Foster has advised me that the Board of Regents will begin a search for a new chancellor in the coming weeks, and until my successor is named, I will continue to serve to the best of my abilities.

Thank you for your support and friendship and for all you do every day to make the U. T. System one of America’s finest systems of higher education.

With greatest respect,

Francisco G. Cigarroa, M.D.

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High 58 Low 36	High 66 Low 41	High 73 Low 45	High 75 Low 45	High 77 Low 44	High 77 Low 43	High 76 Low 42
Mostly Sunny	Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy
0% Chance for Rain	0% Chance for Rain	0% Chance for Rain	0% Chance for Rain	0% Chance for Rain	0% Chance for Rain	0% Chance for Rain

RESEARCH

Women’s studies researches rape on campus

BY JASMINE AGUILERA

The Prospector

Editor’s note: This is part one of a three-part series examining “rape culture” on campus and in the community.

The Women’s Studies Program is now conducting research on the issue of sexual assault among college students.

The Sexual Attitudes, Behaviors and Experiences Survey, originally began at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Ga., and was an effort to change the campus’s policy. Since then, the survey has been conducted twice and has turned its focus on UTEP and the El Paso community.

Brenda Risch, Women’s Studies Program director, began conducting surveys of more than 1,000 college students in fall 2013 for SABES-three. Risch said she believes that SABES-three is probably the biggest sample size of sexual attitudes and experiences of Hispanic students in the nation.

“College populations who are Hispanic or Latino are very rarely surveyed about these issues,” Risch said. “And when they are, they are vastly in the minority.”

SABES-three, which is currently being conducted, differs from the former surveys by focusing more on issues of power and control in intimate relationships. The survey also asks what people think constitutes sex, what they classify as consent and the background of those who have been assaulted.

The findings of the surveys conducted at UTEP have not been published yet, as they are still being analyzed and researched, but Risch said there are parts that have stood out to her.

SABES-three shows that college seniors are at a higher risk of becoming a victim of sexual assault because a partner or a family member may feel disempowered.

“We assume that they are being threatened by the fact that the person is going to be a college graduate,” Risch said. “As the family—or the student’s spouse, partner or boyfriend—becomes more anxious about that person having the power of a college education they become more and more resistant and can act out.”

The research is being conducted in light of an initiative launched by President Barack Obama in January that aims to combat sexual assault on college campuses.

According to a 2010 study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—the same study cited by the White House—one in five women has been sexually assaulted during her time in college. The CDC reports that 38 percent of women who are raped are between the ages of 18 and 24.

The White House report states that the college dynamic fuels the problem as many survivors are victims of “incapacitated assault,” meaning they are sexually abused while drunk, under

the influence of drugs, passed out, or otherwise incapacitated.

At a press conference held Jan. 22, Obama said, “This is not an abstract issue. It affects us all.” He added “I want every man in America to feel some strong peer pressure about how they’re supposed to behave and treat a women. This starts before they get to college.”

The initiative aims to combat violence by providing funding for multidisciplinary sexual assault teams of prosecutors, health care providers and victim advocates; providing funding for sexual assault nurse examiners; and it includes new prosecutions for perpetrators who target LGBT, immigrant and Native American victims and those who live in low-income or subsidized housing.

On college campuses specifically, the initiative plans to step up federal compliances that further obligate schools to prevent and respond to assaults.

Nanci Esparza, senior English and American literature major, said she believes we live in a “rape culture,” a term used to describe a society that tolerates or excuses rape.

“I think the fact that people are always talking about false accusations, even though it happens in very small amounts—I read somewhere that you are 300 times more likely to become a professional football player than be falsely accused of rape—I think that’s a part of rape culture,” she said. “The way that we believe that it’s a natural part of life and then we try to excuse it as much as we can.”

She said that as a woman, she is constantly thinking about her protection when she is outside or drinking alone.

“I have to protect myself or else I’m going to be blamed for (being assaulted),” Esparza said.

Risch said the most shocking thing she learned from the survey is that students who had been assaulted did not seek assistance.

“(Students) are not telling anyone,” she said. “A lot of that is out of fear of being shamed publicly or not being believed or having some sort of retribution.”

Students can turn to the UTEP Student Health Center, the University Counseling Center, the UTEP Police Department, or outside resources like the Sexual Trauma and Assault Response Services or the Center Against Family Violence.

UTEP Police crime logs did not turn up any incidents of sexual assault on the UTEP campus in the last year, excluding the incidents involving David Monastere, the notorious “butt-grabber.”

Risch said this doesn’t mean students are not sexually assaulted, but because UTEP is a commuter campus, most assaults happen when students are not on campus.

Deven McCoy, senior drawing major, believes strongly that our society creates an environment in which rape is acceptable.

“The fact of the matter is, we put our victims down rather than pull them up, which needs to stop immediately.

”
- Deven McCoy, senior drawing major

“The fact that we have politicians who, on numerous occasions, have normalized and even condoned rape speaks volumes of that,” he said. “Some even going as far as to say ‘rape is a blessing in disguise.’ There are even states where child visitation rights are granted to the rapist, and what this does is empower rapists and undermine the victim.”

McCoy said in order to change rape culture, blaming the victim has to stop.

“It has nothing to do with whether or not the victim was intoxicated, or what they were wearing. Rapists are the sole reason rape occurs,” he said. “The fact of the matter is, we put our victims down rather than pull them up, which needs to stop immediately.”

Although SABES-two and three were not conducted to change specific policies at any particular campus, Risch hopes that the surveys and the work done by the Women’s Studies Program could change the issue of sexual assault for the better.

Through the surveys, she hopes to promote awareness, safety and further the discussion on what consent really means.

“You know that folks don’t intervene always, even if they know they should,” Risch said. “But they are more likely to if they know they can and they are empowered to and it’s the right thing to do.”

The complete “Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed call to Action” report issued by the White House may be found at theprospectordaily.com, along with links to resources for those who have survived a sexual assault.

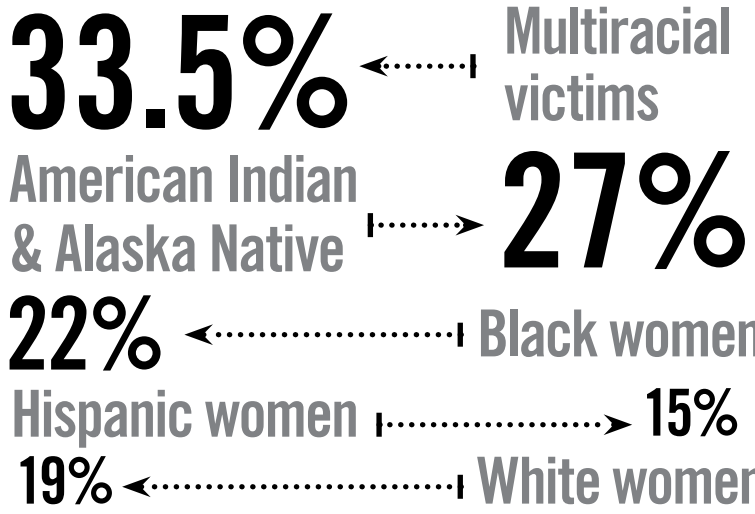
See next week’s story on community intervention through the STARS organization.

Jasmine Aguilera may be reached at theprospectordaily.news@gmail.com.

ONE IN 5 women /girls has been raped in her lifetime

ONE IN 71 men / boy has been raped in his lifetime

Minority women are more vulnerable to rape:



51% of female victims were raped by a current or former intimate partner while 41% were raped by an acquaintance Just 14% were raped by a complete stranger

52% of male and boy victims were raped by an acquaintance Only 15% of them were victims of a stranger

98% of females & 93% of male victims report that their assailants were male

Almost 50% of female survivors were raped before 18 and more than 25% of male victims were raped before 10



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CAMPUS LIFE

Sex industry course offers discussion on taboo subjects



CRISTINA ESQUIVEL / THE PROSPECTOR

Naomi Fertman, associate professor in the Women's Studies Program, teaching the course "Women and Work in the Sex Industry."

BY MARIA ESQUINCA

The Prospector

In a small classroom, hands are being raised in the air and loud murmurs are echoing across the room.

On the wall you see the words "PORN AND FREE SPEECH" projected in bold white letters. This is just a normal day in Associate Professor Naomi Fertman's Women and Work In The Sex Industry class.

"We're really here to learn, to respect different points of view," said Esther Zapata, junior public relations major.

The course is offered under the Women's Studies Program and is taught by Fertman, who took over the course three years ago. It's also offered online.

Fertman breaks the course down into three parts—pornography, prostitution and sex trafficking. Through its content, the course pushes the boundaries by taking a comprehensive look into traditionally taboo subjects.

"It is really kind of an examination of a culture...that we don't understand here in the U.S. There's a lot of stereotyping, a lot of biases towards working in the industry and there's a lot of misinformation," Fertman said.

Part of the allure of the class is that the subjects are not traditionally talked about.

"It was something out of my comfort zone and I wanted to explore that," said Jacqueline Armijo, senior multimedia journalism major.

Women Studies Director, Brenda Risch, said one of the strengths of the class is that it gives students a venue to talk about taboo subjects and that "they are educated in the many ways in which our culture is exploitative of women and children, and men too," she said.

The course is not easy to get into. Students often have to wait a semester or two before being able to register for the class.

"I tried registering for it twice and the class was full...the third time I was able to get in because I registered super early.... I was super excited," said Naomi Rivas, senior multimedia journalism major.

However, students are quick to find that the class is not what they expected.

"When I started the class, one of the first questions the professor asked us

"You want to keep talking about it. You want to make a change."

-Memo Bayona, sophomore psychology major

was what is your perspective or your opinion towards prostitution and if we believe that it is a choice," Rivas said. "I remember the response that I wrote down ... she later in the semester asked the same questions and my response was completely different."

Despite the misconception that the course might mainly attract women or women's studies majors, it appeals to a broad range of majors and genders.

"Another thing that I love about this class is that it's not only about fighting against injustice, but about breaking stereotypes," said Memo Bayona, sophomore psychology major.

Fertman finds a way for her students to apply what they learn outside of the class, which she said is different from other courses.

"We are going to have an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent talk to the students so that they can have some network and understanding of how the issues are affecting this community," Fertman said. "So building that bridge between the academic and the real world, this course allows for that bridge to be built."

Students said they leave the course with a fresh perspective.

"It's a class that you go out of it and you're still talking about it, you keep thinking and you go into research," Bayona said. "You want to keep talking about it. You want to make a change."

Maria Esquina may be reached at theprospectordaily.news@gmail.com.

TECHNOLOGY

App it before you tap it

BY HELEN YIP AND ASHLEY MUÑOZ

The Prospector

"Pure," "Grindr" and "Tinder" are apps that allow a person to "hook up" or meet up.

"Pure," for example is an app that uses GPS technology to locate anyone in the area who has a profile.

Your request to meet up will be posted among the friends you "match" with. Then you begin to get requests to meet up. If you accept other "matches," you will be notified that you have found company for the night. Or you may "decline and end dialog" and keep searching.

"Most guys I know just go on there to hook up," said Gabriel, senior music major, who requested his last name not be used in this article.

Gabriel has used the app called "Grindr," which caters to males looking for males. The app launched in 2009 and now has more than seven million users in 192 countries.

"It feels like a game in all honesty," Gabriel said. "It's kind of weird."

He said although he has met some cool people, the relationships don't feel substantial because of the motives.

Senior Ricardo Reyes, who's used "Tinder," said he likes the way the profiles are set up.

"I believe it's a good site to meet new people," Reyes said.

"Tinder" is an app that was created by USC grads Sean Rad and Justin Mateen. "Tinder" works synonymously with Facebook.

This app allows you to create a profile with pictures and not much else. You can "miss" or "hit" a match, with an "X" for "dislike" and a "heart" for "like." Once you "heart" a match, the app takes you into a private chat room and you are free to interact with the other person.

Michael Duran, junior art major, has seen these apps advertised on Facebook and Hulu. But when it comes down to it, he said he would never use them.

"You could end up with anybody," Duran said, a thought that has kept his curiosity from wandering.

Dr. Ogechika Alozie, a medical doctor at Texas Tech, works with diagnosing HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. He said he has had a lot of patients who have admitted to using the apps.

"One of the ways that they do hook up is in the HIV community or using apps like this," Alozie said.

However, Alozie is not convinced about existing data that connects using such apps and contracting an STD.

"In communities that use a lot of online dating, there seems to be some cycling of HIV," Alozie said. "So you have these clusters that get infected and then spread it to clusters."

David Peralta-Torres is an HIV education and prevention specialist at the El Paso Department of Health and is an expert on such apps. "There is free version and a pay version," Torres said of "Grindr."

"Jack'd" and "Scruff" are also apps like "Grindr" that cater to men seeking men. Torres is more familiar with these apps and "Tinder." He recommends everyone get tested every 3-6 months.

"Hula" is an iPhone app that and website on the other end of the spectrum. This app allows you to request your recent STD testing results from anywhere in the country. Hula then takes your results and displays them digital on your profile with a simple positive or negative.

Hear more of what Gabriel had to say at theprospectordaily.com.

Helen Yip may be reached at theprospectordaily.news@gmail.com.



SPECIAL TO THE PROSPECTOR

Join Us For Justice, the El Paso Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the UTEP Department of Religious Studies Proudly Present

Ellery Schempp in person

Ellery Schempp was a 16 year-old student of Abington High School when he challenged his school's daily required reading of ten bible verses followed by the recitation of the Lord's Prayer over the school-wide intercom system. The case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The decision changed our country forever.

Hear him tell his story.

2 pm, Sunday, Feb 16, 2014
UTEP Union Cinema
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For more information: www.joinusforjustice.org
or Dr. Ann Horak, Director of Religious Studies (915) 747-5519

FEATURE

The girl next door: student dancer shares her story

BY LORAIN WATTERS

The Prospector

Editor's note: The student interviewed in this story asked to be named by her dancing name, "Mary."

Red lights bounce off of velvet-covered walls, reflecting on mirrors and cascading down naked bodies, sweat and glitter mixing together. Up-beat synth-pop songs play loudly on the speakers, masking the clinking of shot glasses and the shouting of men.

Mary, 22, a junior English and American literature major, is petite—her body hidden beneath denim jeans, a beige long-sleeved shirt and sneakers. Her glasses make her brown eyes bigger than they are because of their strong prescription. She's as "blind as a bat," she said.

After quitting her job at Whataburger, Mary began working at Foxy's when she was 18.

"The idea of it seemed to click, making that much money. So I started waiting tables, going in at 8 p.m. and leaving around 4 a.m.," she said. "After a while, they try to flip you. They basically said you either start dancing or you have to leave. It was very rough and that's how I started as an erotic dancer. It's a business. A lot of girls don't really have a say in it."

The adult entertainment industry is grossed at \$57 billion worldwide annually, according to crossculturalconnections.org.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 400,000 women were employed at U.S. strip clubs in 2012, and this number has been increasing.

Some women decide to be exotic dancers to finance high-maintenance lifestyles or to make enough to pay the bills.

Many women choose to work in the adult entertainment industry because

they may earn an anywhere from \$20,000 to \$140,000 annually.

Before the economy turned for the worst, Mary was making \$400-500 a night, usually beginning work at 6 p.m. and leaving by 2 a.m.

"Now I am lucky if I make \$200 a night. We (dancers) don't make as much as everyone thinks we do—the honest dancers that is," Mary said.

Dancers who do their stage sets, give lap dances and drink with their customers are honest, whereas those who engage in sexual acts to earn a few extra hundred dollars are coined otherwise, Mary said.

"You have politicians, engineers, doctors and lawyers in clubs, all watching you. Some will give you \$60 just to take a shot with them. If a girl now is making \$500-\$600 a night, you know something is going on there," Mary said. "Yeah, you take your top off and some clubs want you to be nude. It all depends on what you're willing to do and where your morals and values are."

When she started her exotic dancing career, Mary was unprepared for the harsh reality of the adult entertainment industry. She failed her first semester and was put on academic suspension.

"I didn't know how to handle it. I have anxiety issues, so when I was suspended, I broke down," Mary said. "That's how my family found out what I was doing. My dad cried."

Mary's father has since believed that she has stopped dancing, but her mother, sister and husband know that she is still very active in the industry.

"My mom works at Walmart part-time and my dad is a retired lawyer. I give them \$100-500 a month and when she wants more money for her cigarettes I have to stop and ask her

'are guys touching my boobs really worth your cigarettes?'" she said.

Mary's husband is in the Army and does not approve of her being an exotic dancer, but understands that she wants to be independent and help pay the bills.

"My husband knows how women in the industry are treated. It's literally like men are shopping for the kind of meat they want when they walk in—they look at color, the percentage of fat the girl has, everything," Mary said.

When asked if she enjoyed working as an exotic dancer, she said, "I do and I don't."

"I am happy that I am able to pay all of my bills on time, get Starbucks every day and eat out every day. What I don't like about it are all of the douchebags you meet. They are constantly trying to touch you, but it comes with the job," Mary said.

As Mary progressed in the industry, she began to feel self-conscious about how she looked, comparing herself with the other dancers.

"Some of the girls are like walking Barbie dolls and it's hard to compete with that. Over time, it changes who you are," she said. "You'll want to look a little bit like them."

After saving some of her earnings, Mary had breast augmentation, going from an A-cup to a D-cup.

"It didn't change the amount of money I got, but I do feel better about myself," she said.

Contrary to popular belief, exotic dancers have to pay the club or business to dance there, a house fee—usually \$20 to \$50 a night.

"Everything we make is tax free, but we also have to pay for our costumes and shoes, gas to get to the club and anything that we use at the club, like food," Mary said.

After working at Foxy's, Mary started working at Jaguar's, then Dreams Cabaret was built and she began working there. However, she was soon fired after pushing a customer.

"He tried touching Amber, that was her stage name—in her hoo-hah, so I tried pushing him off her. They fired me after that and now I'm at Red Parrot. It's full of truck drivers there, so you can imagine the smell," Mary said.



SPECIAL TO THE PROSPECTOR

Exotic dancers can earn anywhere from \$20,000-\$140,000 annually.

A study done by K. Holsopple, "Stripclubs According to Strippers: Exposing Workplace Sexual Violence" revealed that 51.2 percent of women working as exotic dancers were threatened with a weapon and 100 percent of them have been physically assaulted.

"There are men who come in drunk and start touching you or grabbing your arm, but I try to stay away from them," Mary said. "There was a man who wanted to rape me at Jaguar's, but I kicked him in the balls before he could do anything. The intent was there though."

Brenda Risch, director of UTEP's Women's Studies Program, believes that when it comes to consent, no means no, but the way today's culture has been shaped challenges this idea.

"Attitudes lead to behaviors, behaviors lead to experiences and those experiences could be voluntary or involuntary," Risch said. "It doesn't matter if you're standing there stark naked, if you said no, you said no. Our cul-

ture doesn't see it that way—if women dress in a sexually provocative way or are in a certain location, you somehow consented to other behavior."


Along with experiencing this abuse, Mary has also experienced men asking for her to perform strange acts such as urinating in a cup or giving them her used tampons, paying her \$1,000 in return.

"When guys walk into a sex shop or a strip club, it's a fantasy that they have and they take that fantasy with them to their relationships outside of the club," Mary said. "They go on asking other girls to act like this and they get mad when the girls don't want to. It is a world for men made by men."

After graduation, Mary said she does not plan on working at a regular 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. day job, but if a good-paying teaching or secretarial position were to open up, she'd leave her job as an exotic dancer.

Lorain Watters may be reached at theprospectordaily.news@gmail.com.

TAX PREPARATION TIPS



IRS impersonation schemes flourish during tax season and can take the form of email, websites, even tweets. If you receive a scam email claiming to be from the IRS, or discovered a website that claims to be the IRS and does not begin with www.irs.gov, forward to the IRS at phishing@irs.gov. To learn how to identify a secure website, visit the Federal Trade Commission's website at www.ftc.gov.

The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email or social media. The IRS does not send emails stating you are being electronically audited or that you are getting a refund. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as text messages and social media channels.

Perform a clean sweep

Use an anti-malware software product to scan for and eliminate any key logger or other security loophole on the computer you'll be using to prepare your taxes.

Update your software

Use the latest versions of any tax software. Update the latest versions of Web browser software such as Adobe Flash and digital media players.

Secure your home computer set-up

Use strong passwords on both your home computer and your wired (or wireless) Internet router.

Have a backup ready

An external hard drive or a USB memory stick to store your sensitive tax data as you work on your return. Secure it in a safe place when you're not working on your electronic return.

Watch your step online

Know where to go to on the Web for tax information. For example, the official Internal Revenue Service website is, <http://www.irs.gov> NOT www.IRS.com


To learn more, visit <http://www.irs.gov> or <http://www.consumerreports.org>

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FEBRUARY 11, 2014

ENTERTAINMENT

EDITOR
ANDREA ACOSTA, 747-7477



MAPS.GOOGLE.COM / PHOTOS BY TANIA MORAN / ILLUSTRATION BY DIEGO BURCIAGA / THE PROSPECTOR

BY ANDREA ACOSTA

The Prospector

Long-distance relationships are often colored with the stigma of negative outcomes. But every year while students study abroad they come back with culture shock, a high boost of confidence and sometimes with a taken heart.

UTEP alumna Lauren Ruiz didn't see this coming. She met her boyfriend during her studies in France and is currently in a long-distance relationship with him.

"I met him a day after Valentine's Day in Paris in front of the museum of Les Invalides and although it was not love at first sight, much to my surprise, this stranger turned out to be one of the most loving, caring and romantic people I had ever met," Ruiz said.

Ruiz said that it's not the distance that is the measure of a relationship, since any relationship with or without distance requires love, time, work and dedication.

"Any relationship, whether long distance or close, will always require work," Ruiz said. "When you truly love somebody, distance will never

be an issue. Although I do miss my boyfriend, the distance doesn't stop us from being happy."

Long-distance relationships have become more manageable thanks to apps like Skype, but the price for technology's innovation can be quite expensive, according to Monica Ramos, a UTEP alumni who also met her Belgium boyfriend during her study abroad experience in 2011.

"Skype credits eat up fast with almost \$10 every two weeks," Ramos said. "We also send each other care packages often and even-

tually—the total amount spent added up quite fast."

However, Ramos said that thanks to apps like "WhatsApp," "FaceTime" and "Skype," they are able to communicate much more frequently and be a part of each other's lives, even with an eight-hour time difference.

see ABSENCE on page 11

RESTAURANT

Pop-up restaurant offers one-of-a-kind Valentine's Day

BY LESLY LIMON

The Prospector

Tapes Mixedplates—an El Paso-based company dedicated to bringing people together through a series of blogs—will be hosting a new dining experience just in time for Valentine's Day. Couples may choose to be swept up by a limo, be handed a bottle of champagne and be taken to an unknown yet exclusive underground restaurant.

These underground eating establishments—usually advertised by word of mouth, blogs or social networks—are usually closed-door and

are often operated out of someone's home or at an undisclosed location.

Pop-up restaurants have gained popularity across larger cities in the United States, and now this concept will provide El Pasoans with the experience.

While some may think of this as a thrilling and mysterious dining experience, others are wary of being taken someplace they don't know in advance for Valentine's Day.

"It's a little weird," said Aaron Rye, senior advertising major. "I wouldn't be comfortable. I like knowing where I'm going."

Christopher Lee Diaz, owner and founder of Tapes Mixedplates, said he decided to start this business in 2013 because he found the national food touring company, for which he previously worked for, limited him.

"I decided it was better to develop a concept of my own," Diaz said. "I really kept this idea going because I felt it was important to build strong ties with the local community and restaurants."

To become part of this exclusive Valentine's Day dinner, attendees must first reserve a space online at the Tapes Mixedplates website, since this one night event has the capacity to only seat 30 people. Tickets are \$70

and include transportation provided by L3 Coach, a local party bus company, along with a six to nine-course meal served by a secret chef.

"Participants will be picked up by L3 Coach and served champagne at a designated area. We will be transported to an undisclosed location, where will we start the night off with a cocktail hour and note this event is BYOB," Diaz said. "We will then move on to the fun part of the night, where attendees will enjoy their meal. From there, we will enjoy the rest of the night at the venue where participants can just relax and enjoy music with their date or meet the other couples."

Attendees will be transported back to the drop off location.

"It sounds like it might be kind of fun if you're into adventurous dates," said Lea Tellez, junior graphic design major. "Just the fact that you don't know where you're going is kinda scary, but other than that, it sounds interesting. I think it would make an interesting Valentine's Day date."

Alejandra Yerena, senior art major, said that being a guest of the pop-up restaurant experience sounds like fun.

"I think it's a really good deal because a limo alone is pretty expensive," Yerena said. "I would love to go."

see POP-UP on page 12



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QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What has been your worst date?

CRISTINA ESQUIVEL/TANIA MORAN/MICHAELA ROMAN / THE PROSPECTOR
SEE VIDEO VERSION AT THEPROSPECTORDAILY.COM



ARES ALARCON
Junior media advertising major
“We went out to eat and the conversations we were having weren’t that great. Neither of us were into a date. I was just waiting for it to be over.”



CELINA CHAFFINO
Freshman biochemistry major
“My worst date was when my date and I went to the movies and got pizza and he made me pay for it. When we got back to his house he ditched me for his grandparents.”



CHAD CANDELARIA
Senior media advertising major
“At dinner, my card declined when we were on our Valentine’s Day date and the check was about \$100. She ended up having to pay for it.”



KAMRI COFFEE
Sophomore pre-business major
“Going to see ‘The Hunger Games’ and having the guy I went with cry the whole movie.”



JOSH STOKES
Senior biochemistry major
“When I got my dates’ car towed and we had to go pick it up. Then her car broke down. That was our last date.”

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MIREYA MEDINA
Freshman general studies major
“I found out some stuff about my boyfriend and I had to break up with him a day before Valentine’s Day.”



MARC NELSON
Freshman general studies major
“My worst date was freshman homecoming in high school. I met her on Facebook and when we went there was nothing for us to talk about since we only talked online. It was just a really awkward night.”



SELENA RAMIREZ
Freshman general studies major
“Some guy had invited me to have dinner and yet it turned out to be that I was the one that had to pay for it myself and for him. I had given him two big bears and his favorite chocolates, and in return I didn’t get anything.”



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ABSENCE from page 4

“We also communicated via email, since my boyfriend is sort of old school. We would also send each other poems and our reflections through letters,” Ramos said. “But if it wasn’t for these outlets, I think it would have been impossible to catch up with one another. Honestly, I don’t know how they did it back in the day. I mean regular mail is exciting, but I would have died without the rest.”

After dating for two years, Ramos’ relationship didn’t become part of the 40 percent of the 14 million people in the U.S. who end a long distance relationship. They both now live in Belgium and this will mark their second Valentine’s Day together.

“Our Valentine’s Day will consist of cooking pasta together, which is one of our favorite plates, then maybe spend a relaxing night watching a movie or just walking through the city,” Ramos said. “Couples often times take for granted the little things that matter in a relationship, and rather focus on how much we have to spend in order to make this day special.”

Unlike Ramos, Ruiz will be waiting until May to see her boyfriend and said she can’t wait to have Valentine’s Day every day for the three months that he will be in El Paso.

“I look forward to spending time with him and having actual dates, where we can talk in person, laugh, walk together, hold hands and live life,” Ruiz said.

Apart from all the obstacles that long-distance relationship couples face, Ruiz and Ramos agree that the time difference is something difficult to keep track of. There was only some allotted time to talk before either one of them had to go to school, but eventually it became part of their daily routine.

“I would stay up and Skype with him at 11:30 p.m., while he had to wake up at 7:30 a.m.,” Ruiz said. “Most of the times, I would end up going to bed at three in the morning, simply because we had such great conversations that took my sleepiness away.”

In addition, Ramos said that not being able to physically share her day with him was hard to endure on a day-to-day basis.

“On Sundays we would log in to Skype and cook simultaneously and then eat together. I would have brunch while he would eat his dinner,” Ramos said. “Not being able to hug or cuddle, while watching a movie, was very difficult to endure, but because of all these obstacles it certainly strengthened our relationship. It made us fight for each other so much that it established a rock-solid base.”

Much like a relationship, friendships are also established and evolve while being abroad.

Isabel Molina, who studied for a semester in France last spring, said that although making new friends is an essential part of a study abroad experience, its a hard transition once they have to test their friendship overseas.

“We became something more than friends; we became dependent on one another, we became a family known as ‘The Ragazzi’—a name that was given to us by an Italian woman,” Molina said.

Once the semester is over and everyone has traveled back to their home countries, Facebook and Skype are the only ways to remain in con-

tact and talk about their adventures and memories.

“Never did I think family could be found on the other side of the world,” Molina said.

While the perks of having a long-distance relationship or friendship don’t always fall under that happily ever after category, the reward always shines through.

The time apart may strengthens communication, honesty and creativity that will serve as valuable factors in a relationship—creating a strong bond between each other, Ramos said.

“This experience really made me grow as a person and definitely taught me how far I would go for him and not take anything for granted,” Ramos said. “However, long-distance relationships may not be for everyone, since the only way that it works is if both parties are willing to put double the time and effort in the relationship and are mature enough and serious about each other.”

Ruiz added that being apart has encouraged them to talk and share their emotions a lot more, since long-distance relationships can’t afford confusions because of dead silence.

“There is always something to talk about, laugh or cry about. It is a period when you show the person who you truly are,” Ruiz said.

While Ramos, Molina and Ruiz have dispelled the stigma put on long-distance relationships, they share common advice for those that are currently thinking about studying abroad or for those that are not yet aware of their fate.

“Just like any relationship, it requires time and effort to make it work. Distance relationships, however, require double the work, trust and much sacrifice. They are kind of like an unofficial marriage, like a test run or an experiment, since it requires commitment, understanding from both parties and not to mention much creativity to keep that spark going and make up for each other’s absence,” Ramos said.

Andrea Acosta may be reached at theprospectordaily. ent@gmail.com.

EVENTS



MICHAELA ROMAN / THE PROSPECTOR

Places to go for Valentine’s

BY AMBER GOMEZ
The Prospector

El Paso has a variety of events that you can attend, depending on what you would like to do this Valentine’s Day or how much money you will spend, From mariachis and dance, to wine and dinner, pick one of these events or places and you’ll feel like a winner.

Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan, 8 p.m. Feb. 14 at the Plaza Theatre—Founded in Tecalitlan, Mexico in 1898, this famous mariachi group has starred in more than 200 movies, recorded dozens of pasodobles, bailables, polkas and more. They will be performing “Cruzar la Cara de la Luna” (“To Cross the Face of the Moon”), the world’s first mariachi opera. Tickets are available at ticket-master.com.

Shundo Ballroom Dance Studio—located 2719 N. Stanton, the studio offers the best gift you can give your partner this Valentine’s Day—a dance lesson. Join the Shundo Ballroom at 6 p.m. Feb. 14 and learn to dance a ro-

mantic rumba. For more information, call 532-2043 to reserve your spot.

Café Central—According to the City Magazine’s Best of City Awards, Café Central is El Paso’s Most Romantic Restaurant. Located at 109 N. Oregon St., couples may enjoy a night of fine dining, expertly chosen wine and cuisine carefully selected for the occasion. Make your reservation today at opentable.com/café-central.

Abundant Living Faith Center—a dance will start at 7 p.m. this Valentine’s Day at the Monte Carlo Ballroom, 1781 N. Zaragoza. For \$40 you can enjoy a lovely dinner and a dance.

Craft and Social—Located at 305 E. Franklin, will be offering a delicious night of chocolate, wine and beer pairings. Their popular strawberry beer will be on special and the bar will feature five chocolate treats from Fudge-N-More, along with five wine and beer tastings.

Fort Bliss during their 1849 Week Feb. 8-15. The Army base’s Freedom Crossing stores and restaurants are offering \$18.49 specials such as dinner for two at Buffalo Wild Wings and a

full slab of ribs from Chi-Town BBQ. At noon and 6 p.m. on Valentine’s Day, A’Gaci will have fashion shows and free Valentine’s Day R&B concert by Sha’vonne at 7 p.m., along with an outdoor fireplace to keep you warm.

Several romantic films will be released on Feb. 14, where you can enjoy a romantic movie accompanied by a date and buttery popcorn. Being released this Valentine’s Day is “Endless Love,” “About Last Night,” “Winter’s Tale” and “Love is in the Air.”

Christ the Savior Catholic Church—the third-annual St. Valentine’s Dinner-Dance will be at 6 p.m. Feb. 15 at the VFW Party Hall, located at 5535 Saluki.

Restaurants and events on Valentine’s Day are going to be packed, so perhaps you may want to celebrate it a day later to avoid the crowds and still do something nice. For only \$20, you can enjoy a dinner catered by Trattoria Bella Sera along with a fun dance.

Amber Gomez can be reached at theprospectordaily. ent@gmail.com.

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COLUMN

Love is society’s bait for consumerism

BY JOSE SOTO
The Prospector



Shortly before I began working on this column, I checked my bank account balance. Now, I sit here writing with a smile on my face from corner to corner. Why? Because I won’t be wasting those extra \$300 on buying unnecessary and romanticized purchases. My wallet won’t take a blow either from lavish entrees and hesitantly wrapped expensive presents, and fortunately, neither will my character.

I know what you’re thinking. I’m either cynical or bitter—from an overwhelming heartbreak, or just jealous that, as life would have it, I am single. Last year, while I was in a previous relationship, we were too early in our involvement to go full throttle, having only been together for some weeks. We simply settled for drinks at a local bar. That’s the extent of my experience with Valentine’s Day. The truth is, I’ve never really had a Valentine and I’d like to keep it that way.

That’s not to say I’m not a romantic person or don’t believe in love. I simply believe that one does not need a specific day to express love for others. When I’ve been lucky enough to be involved with someone romantically, I’ve taken any opportunity to communicate that ardor. There’s no need for an allocated date for expressing my love for anyone, and more importantly, I don’t believe in the capitalistic notion that I must put my debit card through a swiping binge to showcase that I am capable of human emotion.

I’ll pass on the extensive wait times at restaurants, the overpriced hotel room package deals, the boxed array of diabetes-inducing candies and the generic, mushy card. The

overwhelming hype for this holiday has become the commercialization of love.

I’m sure it’s great for the economy, but it’s unfortunate for our values. We are expected to shower our loved ones with gifts and treats, a mere two months after Christmas, as if we didn’t have enough expenses already!

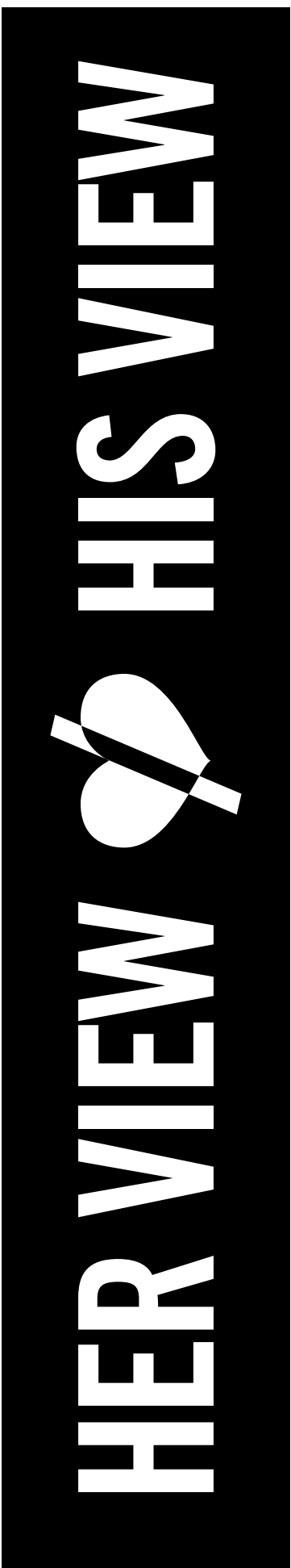
What makes matters worse, is that certain items and purchases are directly expected such as, flowers, chocolates, candy and champagne. Even the female undergarment industry has managed to insert themselves into the mix. We are expected to purchase these particular things to demonstrate our love for our special someone.

Aren’t we entitled to make our own decisions as consumers? Don’t we have the right to politely decline to buy anything at all? By society’s standards, refraining to do so will get you dubbed degrading terms. Either you’re broke, cheap, a jerk and even pronouns that are not publishable—unless you’re Javier (read his column in last week’s issue). You’re screwed if you do, and screwed if you don’t.

Shouldn’t every given day be Valentine’s Day? And shouldn’t any gift be considered worthy enough to showcase love? We all struggle to find substantial love and I understand the celebration of such love.

I commend those who take any opportunity to shower their loved ones with signs of their affections. However, we shouldn’t around for the calendar to showcase our ability to love, and perhaps most importantly, we shouldn’t allow society to hook us into consumerism with the love being the bait.

Jose Soto may be reached at theprospectordaily.ent@gmail.com.



COLUMN

No valentine? Let it go.

BY AMANDA GUILLEN
The Prospector



Is it the feeling of love in the air around this time of year? Or the anticipation of preparing something amazing for that special someone?

Or is it the way that the love is displayed for everyone to see? I know that this holiday can be annoying and controversial to many, but it is my second favorite holiday next to Christmas.

Love is something so special and so significant—that I for one am glad that it got its own holiday. Now call it what you will—a holiday that large corporations created to make money and capitalize on fools in love—but I think that it doesn’t have to be about the money spent, but the reason it is celebrated.

Go back to your adolescence and remember sitting in class with your bag full of valentine’s cards and candies ready to pass out to your friends and classmates. Remember sitting down the night before and writing the names on the cards and debating on which one of your best friends—or maybe your secret crush—would get that big card. Because we all know that meant they were just a little more important than anyone else.

As a teenager in high school you would wait for the day when your boyfriend/girlfriend or maybe even a group of friends asked to be your valentine. Then you would walk around the school with those obnoxiously huge teddy bears or maybe the bouquet of flowers that were left at your desk. You know that this was something that made you feel special and most importantly, loved.

Now as a college student, not much has changed. You still get that same feeling when your valentine makes you smile with that late night dinner and that heartfelt gift that they made just for you.

I do agree that this holiday shouldn’t be the only time of the year that people show their love for each other. I think it should be celebrated as a holiday and not as an excuse to show someone that they love each other this one day out of the year.

Just like Thanksgiving shouldn’t be the only day that you’re thankful for everything in life, Valentine’s Day shouldn’t be the only day that you celebrate love.

Now, I know people will read this and still be skeptical about the holiday. That is fine, but you have to also take into consideration that love is not only shared between people in a relationship, but also between friends, family and even pets.

So before you go bashing the holiday this year, think about the love you can celebrate. Maybe buy your mom a bouquet of roses or your dad a box of his favorite chocolates. Love is the basis of this holiday and who should determine who you celebrate it with?. As for me, I will be celebrating Valentine’s Day with my true love. Our plans consist of sitting on the couch with a bowl of popcorn, watching our favorite Disney movie, maybe singing a few rounds of karaoke, taking BuzzFeed quizzes and watching cute YouTube videos of kittens.

My baby sister is my faithful valentine. She is the one who I laugh with, the one who shares my love of Disney, glitter and popcorn and is the person who I will be spending my holiday with. The Disney movie “Frozen” is our favorite movie for many reasons. For my sister it is the idea of comparing us to the princesses on the screen, but for me it is the lesson that true love doesn’t necessarily have to be between prince and princess. It can be the love between your sister or brother that can save you.

So before you diss this holiday, just remember what it is all about in the end: the celebration of love.

Amanda Guillen may be reached at theprospectordaily.ent@gmail.com.

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POP-UP from page 9

It sounds exclusive and exciting, and bigger cities have pop-up restaurants too. I’m surprised they aren’t charging more per plate, it’s a great deal!”

Diaz said that although it’s the first time Tapes Mixedplates tries this in El Paso, he is planning on a city-wide food tour with L3 Coach.

“I am still going to be running monthly food tours and would love to coordinate something with the El Paso Chihuahuas once the season begins,” Diaz said. “Underground dining will be a monthly event as well, with different themes and chefs each time they are held. I’m planning cooking challenges and cocktail challenges as well. I am also getting ready to start bringing in music acts and eventually plan to mix everything together to make a music festival.”

Tapes Mixedplates is striving to change the way people view their dining experience in El Paso.

“I really feel the local chefs in El Paso need to be highlighted both at a local level and national. I am looking forward to building a strong networks of followers on my blog and showing readers and fans the

“

I really feel the local chefs in El Paso need to be highlighted both at a local level and national.

”

-Christopher Diaz, Tapes MixedPlates owner

kind of caliber of chefs we have in El Paso,” Diaz said. “The kind of events I put on help local residents and tourists to experience the food scene differently, especially when they ask: “What’s a good place to eat?”

To reserve your spot, visit tapes-mixedplates.com. For more information about their events, visit facebook.com/TapesMixedplates.

Lesly Limon may be reached at theprospectordaily.ent@gmail.com.

FEBRUARY 11, 2014

SPORTS

EDITOR
EDWIN DELGADO, 747-7477

Track earns 7th place at Texas A&M Invitational



JAVIER CORTEZ / THE PROSPECTOR

UTEP medley relay dominated at the Texas A&M Invitational en route to a seventh place finish overall.

BY JAVIER CORTEZ
The Prospector

Even though the UTEP men's and women's track and field team finished in seventh place overall, the Miners showed individually just how good they are at one of the nation's biggest stages, the Texas A&M Invitational, which took place Feb. 8-9.

After day one, the men's team met a talented field from UCLA, Baylor and LSU, and the Miners' strong suit

came through. The distance medley squad, made up of freshman Cosmas Boit, junior Abiola Onakoya, sophomore Daniel Tarango and junior All-American Anthony Rotich, performed well.

Rotich won the day when he regained the Miners' lead and secured the distance medley win. Overall, the Miners ran a 9:37.31, which is the third-fastest time in Miner history, and currently ranks them

eighth in the nation and first in Conference USA.

Junior Elphas Maiyo continued the Miners' success by winning the 5,000-meter run. The win was Maiyo's first of the season.

While the Miners had great success, it was not enough to hold off powerhouse Texas A&M. The Aggies swept both the men's and women's invitational titles.

"Coaches are fairly pleased with the competition," head coach Mika

Laaksonen said. "We competed against some talented teams and still had athletes make impressive marks. We still have one more meet before the conference championship, so our focus will be on getting a few individuals to perform better, but I think most of them will get there by the time it counts."

By the end of the meet, there were many Miners who stood out amongst the many talented teams at College Station.

Sophomore Nickevea Wilson won the women's triple jump. Senior sprinter Janice Jackson finished second in the 60-meters with hurdles. Along with winning the men's distance medley, Boit won the men's one-mile race and senior Mark Jackson set a meet record in the men's long jump with 7.61 meters.

In the past, the women's track and field team garnered more of the spotlight with four-time All-American Risper Kimaiyo, Olympic bronze medalists Blessing Okagbare and Oludamola Osayomi.

This year it's been the men's team that has taken that spotlight and ran with it. Starting the season ranked 22nd in the country, the men now find themselves as 13th in the country and are being led by Rotich, who won the national title in the 3,000-meter steeplechase last year.

With the good results this past week at College Station, there is a buzz about UTEP track once again.

“Coaches are fairly pleased with the competition. We competed against some talented teams...”

- Mika Laaksonen, head coach.

"I think people notice us," senior sprinter Mark Jackson said. "In order for us to be a serious threat though, we're going to actually have to come with it at the national meet for people to actually open their eyes and notice that UTEP is here, which we are."

Before the NCAA indoor championships, the Miners still have some work to do. This week the Miners will be heading to Albuquerque, N.M., for the Don Kirby Track and Field Elite Invitational. Once the Miners have finished the two-day competition, they will finish the month of February by heading into the Conference USA Indoor Championships at Birmingham, Ala.

Javier Cortez may be reached at theprospectordaily.sports@gmail.com.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Miners prepare for crucial visits to Old Dominion, North Texas

BY JAVIER CORTEZ
The Prospector

After a successful sixth-straight win on Feb. 8, the UTEP women's basketball team is on the road again to face the Old Dominion Monarchs and the North Texas Mean Green Eagles on Feb. 15 and Feb. 19, respectively.

At this point in time, the Miners find themselves playing some of their best basketball. In the game on Feb. 8, Florida International came in with the nation's leading scorer Jerica Coley. Not only did the Miners successfully tame the Golden Panthers, 83-62, but they also held Coley to a mere 10 points.

"That was probably one of the best defensive outings we've had," said head coach Keitha Adams. "I'm very proud of our team, it was a great team win."

“We better be ready to get results on the road and this two games are crucial for us.”

- Keitha Adams, head coach.

This last Miners' win happened in front of the eighth-largest crowd in UTEP women's basketball history at 5,102 fans. With two road wins, the Miners might make history when they return home against East Carolina on Feb. 22.

"It was great. I'm very proud of El Paso. I really appreciate that we had such a great crowd. It was the largest crowd we've had all year," Adams said. "We just need to have that kind of crowd and even a bigger crowd. It just needs to grow."

In order for the Miners' attendance to grow, they first must take care of Old Dominion. Coming into their game with UTEP, the Lady Monarchs' record stands at 11-13 and 4-6 in conference play. Although the Monarchs come into the game with an unflattering record, they do pose a threat. At the end of January, the Monarchs narrowly lost to East Carolina, 63-64. East Carolina has the best overall record in Conference USA at 20-3.

The Monarchs are led by junior forward Shae Kelley, who is the only Old Dominion player averaging double figures, she averages 16.8 points per game, along with 10.3 rebounds.

The Monarchs however could pose a threat with their 3-point shooting, as four different players lead the team from shots beyond the arc—junior forward Tiffany Minor, sophomore guard Galaisha Goodhope and senior guards Stephanie Gardner and Michelle Brandao.

Next up after ODU for the Miners is North Texas. The Eagles find

themselves in a similar situation at 10-13 and 4-6 in conference play. On six occasions this season the Eagles have lost by five points or fewer. The Miners will be favorites heading into Denton, Texas, but a close game is not out of the question.

North Texas is led by junior forward Breisha Wynn, who averages 11.2 points per game, and Alexis Hyder, who averages 10.4.

Despite the Miners' impressive 19-4 record, they find themselves in a very close race for the Conference USA regular season title. They are currently in a three-way tie for second place with East Carolina and Tulane at 8-2. Ahead of the Miners is nationally ranked Middle Tennessee State.

Another conference loss could put an end to the Miners' chances to win the Conference USA regular season title. The most likely scenario will be that the Miners will win both road games and find themselves in a highly touted match-up against East Carolina a week and a half from now.

A possible win over the Pirates at home would garner some national recognition for the Miners, which is important going into this year's Conference USA tournament. The most likely of scenarios is that the Miners will likely split the Conference USA regular season title with Middle Tennessee State.

Two things must happen though. The Miners need to win all of their remaining games especially against East Carolina and they need the Pirates to beat beat Middle Tennessee



MICHAELA ROMAN / THE PROSPECTOR

UTEP women's basketball team has won the last six games and will seek to make it eight.

State when they play them two weeks from now. Nevertheless, the rest of the Miners season starts this Saturday when they head to Norfolk, Va., to face the Monarchs.

"We only have two more home games in our schedule," Adams said.

"We better be ready to get results on the road and these two games are crucial for us."

Javier Cortez may be reached at theprospectordaily.sports@gmail.com.

WEEKEND SCORES



MEN’S BASKETBALL

Feb. 6
UTEP 58, East Carolina 47
Feb. 8
UTEP 63, Old Dominion 49

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

Feb. 5
Louisiana Tech 75, UTEP 85
Feb. 8
Florida International 62, UTEP 83

WOMEN’S TENNIS

Feb. 7
UTEP 0, Arizona 5

Feb. 8
UTEP 1, Grand Canyon 6
Feb. 9
UTEP 2, Sacramento State 5

SOFTBALL

Feb. 7
UTEP 0, Nebraska 7
UTEP 6, Saint Mary’s 2

Feb. 8
UTEP 0, Florida State 8
UTEP 10, Saint Mary’s 11

Feb. 9
UTEP 6, New Mexico State 8

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FEATURE

The most loyal and dedicated Miners fan

BY LUIS BARRIO
The Prospector

Florida International's women's basketball team is being introduced in the starting lineups. As the PA announcer calls out each player's name, everyone in the surrounding sections knows what follows.

"Who?!" is what longtime UTEP fan Patricia Flores, or Miss Pat as fans, coaches and players know her, says with fervent fire when an opposing player is introduced.

During the women's games, she is stationed right behind the Miners' bench and although they've heard it many times, the Miners grin as she humorously heckles the visiting team.

"I love Miss Pat. She's one of our biggest fans. She's just a good person," said senior guard Kelli Willingham.

UTEP is trying to score on the offensive end and they draw a personal foul. This causes Miss Pat to shout, "You! You! You! You!" to reaffirm to the opposing players that they did indeed committed a foul.

Miss Pat and her husband have seen the Miners play since the 1980s.

"I think just the team enthusiasm, even from years past up to now, they just fight and keep clawing," Miss Pat said. "I love going to the games and acting crazy. That's the best thing going in El Paso."

It was about seven years ago when Miss Pat started attending every women's basketball home game.

Her unmatched enthusiasm has garnered her questions such as, "which player is your daughter?" She always replies that she doesn't have a daughter on the team.

When the Miners play away from the Don Haskins Center, Miss Pat will go on the road and cheer on the Miners if the opportunity presents itself.

One night after a road game victory, Miss Pat got a call in her hotel room from one of head coach Keitha Adams' assistant coaches. She said she was told on the phone: "You are the number one fan, keep it going. You support our team, keep it going."

"The thing that we love about her is that she's there always supporting us," Adams said. "She always has our back and we love that. Her passion is very real and her energy is really

good. We just need more fans like Miss Pat."

Earlier in the season, the men's basketball team traveled to the Bahamas for the Battle 4 Atlantis tournament. Perennial powerhouse schools such as the Kansas Jayhawks and Tennessee Volunteers had their legion of followers at the game. The Miners had a small, but loud following, and Miss Pat was right there cheering and supporting the Miners. Even the Knoxville New Sentinel wrote a story about her after UTEP played Tennessee on Thanksgiving.

Perhaps the one thing bigger than her passion for Miner athletics is her gracious heart.

On several occasions, she has invited over and had the men's and women's basketball teams over to her home, where she grills burgers and hot dogs and gives the players a home away from home feeling.

"They're really nice kids," Miss Pat said. "It's nice to be able to do something like that for them because you want them to feel like they're part of a family. You don't want them to be here away from home and they have nobody."

It is a tradition for the UTEP home crowd to stand at the beginning of the first half and the second half until the visiting team has scored its first field goal. As soon as the shot goes in, the sea of orange fans seat themselves into their chairs and proceed to watch the game.

The only ones that remain standing are the security staff, Paydirt Pete, the head coaches and Miss Pat. She stands the whole game until the final buzzer. Even the cheerleaders get to take a break and sit down once in a while. Even with a couple of bad knees and a bad hip, Miss Pat said she sees this as no legitimate excuse not to cheer on the Miners.

Not only does she try to give a boost to the players, but she also urges the students to be as loud as she is and said there is no excuse for not jumping and screaming for 40 minutes.

"I want them to know that as a fan, I got their back. I want them to know that no matter how they come out and play, I got their back," Miss Pat said.

Like a caring mother, who will provide support through thick and thin,



MICHAELA ROMAN / THE PROSPECTOR

UTEP has won their last six conference games. They have won 11 of 12 games and are tied with Southern Miss in first place of conference.


Miss Pat tells her husband all the time that she believes the players are so talented that they can win every game. "I truly believe it," she said.

This is why people like Miss Pat and take time to let her know that

her spirit is a treat to watch. Her affable character blends with a relentless commitment to give the Miners every edge she can as a fan is something to respect.

"I'll be going to the games as long as God says I can," Miss Pat said.

Luis Barrio may be reached at theprospectordaily.sports@gmail.com.



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CHIHUAHUAS

Students react to baseball stadium opening delay

BY EDWIN DELGADO
The Prospector

MountainStar Sports Group recently announced their decision to postpone the opening day of the new downtown ballpark from April 11 to April 28, a decision that was not very well received among El Pasoans and students at UTEP.

“I was really excited for the season to start and now we’re going to have to wait another two weeks for it,” said Tomas Lopez, junior busi-

ness administration major. “I’m a little disappointed on the delay, but I’m hoping that there will not be any more surprises.”

The opening home-series for the Chihuahuas will now be played at the Kino Sports Complex in Tucson, Ariz., and the new ballpark will be inaugurated on April 28 when the Chihuahuas host the Fresno Grizzlies.

According to the president of MountainStar Sports Group, Alan Ledford, the stadium will be completed by April 11, however some, “Public safety com-

ponents, concession spaces and state-of-the-art amenities” may not be finalized by then.

“While there was a possibility that the home opener could be played on April 11, we want to ensure we can offer the quality ballpark experience that El Paso deserves,” Ledford said in a statement.

Fans who have already bought tickets for the opening series have the options of exchanging them, getting a refund or donating them to veterans.

The delay also caused some students to wonder if this was a good idea in the first place.

“This is exactly what I was afraid that could happen,” said Aline Diaz, sophomore education major. “Bringing the baseball team was a mistake. Now I wonder what the next issue with the team is going to be.”

Construction crews had a very narrow window of time to get the ballpark erected. On April 14, 2013, city hall was demolished to make room for the ballpark and it took more than a month to clean up the site, leaving the construction crews about 10 months to get the stadium ready.

“We have one chance to do opening day right and we owe it to the community to make sure that (the) first impression of every detail in the ballpark is unforgettable,” Ledford said. “This is as much about the whole ballpark experience as it is about playing baseball. April 28th will be worth the wait.”

With the change in scheduling, the Chihuahuas will now have an eight-game home stand to inaugurate their new ballpark when they face the Fresno Grizzlies from April 28 to May 1, followed by four games against the Sacramento River Cats from May 2-5.

“I don’t think the delay will make the team lose support,” Lopez said. “I’m sure most people in El Paso are as anxious as I am for the Chihuahuas’ season to begin.”

Edwin Delgado may be reached at theprospectordaily.sports@gmail.com.



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AARON MONTES AND MICHAELA ROMAN / THE PROSPECTOR
(Top) Kino Sports Complex in Tucson will host the Chihuahuas’ first four home games.
(Bottom) Current progress at downtown ballpark.

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