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## The Prospector, March 1, 2022

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# THE PROSPECTOR

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MARCH 1, 2022

Assayer of Student Opinion

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

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## Russia's invasion of Ukraine has global impacts

BY VICTORIA RIVAS  
The Prospector

After months of uncertainty, Russia invaded Ukraine early in the morning Thursday, Feb. 24, by firing a series of missiles near Kyiv and Kharkiv.

"Putin is the aggressor. Putin chose this war," U.S. President Joe Biden wrote Feb. 24 via Twitter.

The invasion began minutes after Russian President Vladimir Putin made a speech on national television announcing his decision to conduct a "special military operation" and denied any intentions to occupy Ukrainian territories.

According to a CNN report, Putin also claimed to conduct a military operation to protect the people subjected to genocide by the Kyiv regime.

"Both the claims of genocide and de-Nazification as a goal for the invasion of Ukraine are just misinformation," said Leslie Waters, Ph.D., assistant professor of history at UTEP. "But what is based on, I'm guessing is the fact that Russian speakers in Ukraine may often feel less represented by their government than Ukrainian speakers, but obviously that is not genocide."

During his speech, Putin tried to

encourage the Ukrainian military to lay down their arms and warned of consequences if any country interfered.

"Whoever tries to interfere with us, and even more so, to create threats for our country, for our people, should know that Russia's response will be immediate and will lead you to such consequences that you have never experienced in your history," Putin said.

The invasion comes after Russian military presence intensified across the Ukrainian border over the weeks with more than 190,000 troops.

Russia attacked from three sides and focused on targeting airports and seaports, causing thousands of families to leave the country to look for shelter or hide in underground train stations to escape the Russian assault.

"The next few days, weeks, and months will be hard on the people of Ukraine," Biden said via Twitter. "Putin has unleashed a great pain on them. But the Ukrainian people have known 30 years of independence — and they have shown that they will not tolerate anyone who tries to take their country backward."



A woman holds a candle and a Ukrainian flag during a prayer vigil for Ukraine at Tom Lea Park, El Paso, TX., on Feb. 27. Photo by Alberto Silva Fernandez The Prospector

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky responded in a Facebook video, saying Ukraine will defend itself to protect its people and freedom.

"Putin began war against Ukraine, against the entire democratic world. He wants to destroy my country, our country, everything we've been building, everything we are living for," Zelensky said.

Ukraine announced that all men between the ages of 18 to 60 were forbidden to leave the country and urged them to join the army to fight Russian troops.

Biden announced sanctions that will be implemented and profoundly impact Russia's economy and financial system by targeting Russia's biggest banks, Russian elites

and their families, and implementing export controls on certain technologies.

"Russia's economy has already faced intensified pressure in recent weeks; just today its stock market sunk to its lowest level in four and a half years, and the ruble weakened beyond its weakest daily settlement price on record — before additional sanctions were even imposed," the Biden Administration said in a statement from the White House. "With these new stringent measures, these pressures will further accumulate and suppress Russia's economic growth, increase its borrowing costs, raise inflation, intensify capital outflows, and erode its industrial base."

The U.S. and its allies, who are

members of NATO are implementing sanctions on Russia to suppress Russia's economic growth.

"It's going to actually harm the citizens as opposed to the leadership," said Gaspere Genna, Ph.D., professor and department chair of political science at UTEP. "Which means that the leadership can use it as a tool to galvanize against the people who are setting the sanctions."

Although the sanctions implemented by the U.S. and the European Union on Russia are long-term, UTEP Professor of Economics and Finance Thomas Fullerton, Ph.D., said these sanctions could also lead to agricultural, steel and manufac-

see UKRAINE on page 3

## El Paso Junior League to hold Women's Wellness Summit

BY KRISTEN SCHEAFFER  
The Prospector

A Women's Wellness Summit will be held Thursday, May 19, at the Hotel Paso del Norte hosted by the Junior League of El Paso (JLEP), a women's organization committed to volunteering and

promoting women's potential to provide change and improvement within the community. The JLEP is part of a larger organization, the Association of Junior Leagues International.

"The Junior Leagues Worldwide do different things for different

communities, and they really tailor their volunteer efforts to what their communities need," said Wendy Lanski, president of the JLEP. Lanski went on to explain that in 2016, the JLEP found in their research a need for physical and mental health resources for El Paso.

JLEP is using this summit as a training event, not only for members, but for the community to bring focus back to physical and mental health, explained Training Education and Development Committee Chair to the JLEP Rebecca Serros. The one-day event will host

a series of speakers to share their stories and encourage wellbeing of El Pasoans.

Lanski and Serros provided the Itinerary and Speakers for the summit below:

see WELLNESS on page 4



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# Opinion

Alberto Silva Fernandez, editor-in-chief

## Critical race theory is essential to public education

BY ALBERTO SILVA FERNANDEZ  
The Prospector

Lt. Gov Dan Patrick has stated that he wants to end tenure for professors who continue to teach critical race theory (CRT). Is not the first time the lieutenant governor has attacked CRT in public school systems, as he has joined Texas Gov. Greg Abbott in supporting legislation that would remove CRT from public K-12 education.

In a tweet on Feb.15 Patrick wrote “I will not stand by and let looney Marxist (University of Texas) professors poison the minds of young students with critical race theory. We banned it in publicly funded K-12 and we will ban it in publicly funded higher ed. That’s



Alberto Silva Fernandez

why we created the Liberty Institute at Utah.”

The fact that the lieutenant governor thinks this has anything to do with Marxism goes to show he has never talked to an actual profes-

sional about CRT.

Critical race theory is a college level concept study that aims to understand why racism seems to continue to be embedded into systems in America through legislation such as redlining. It is not teaching someone of the Caucasian race as inferior as some conservatives believe, but it does state that race is not a biological issue but a social construct. The topic of race, and how to talk about it in classrooms, has continued to be a taboo subject in most public schools. As someone who went through the entire public school system in Texas, I can assure anyone who is scared CRT is being taught in classrooms, it simply is not!

What the lieutenant governor is trying to implement in higher education is a direct violation of academic freedom. On July 30, 2021, The Prospector published an article on CRT where Socio-Cultural Foundations of Education Director and Chair Cesar A. Rossato, Ph.D., talked about the importance of academic freedom.

“I was hired to teach CRT. Now you are passing laws trying to silence professors from doing their work – their scientific work. It is a violation of academic freedom, as you are trying to block people from doing their research,” Rossato said in the article.

The idea that a professor could lose tenure, something that is seen

as the highest form of academic achievement in your respective university. Because they chose to educate students about the truth of the foundations that America was built upon and continue to affect people of color like myself and my classmates attending UTEP today. As students, those of us who attend this university to grow in our pursuits of academia have a right to learn about topics such as CRT. With that being said, I call on UTEP President Heather Wilson to speak out against this trespass on academic freedom and ensure that professors are protected.

Alberto Silva Fernandez is the editor in-chief and may be reached at asilva36@miners.utep.edu; @albert.sf08 on Instagram; @albertosilva\_f on Twitter

## Texas fails to protect trans youth

BY ALBERTO SILVA FERNANDEZ  
The Prospector

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton are currently asking Texas citizens to report to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) if they believe transgender youth are receiving any sort of gender-affirming medical care.

The governor and attorney general believe allowing the youth to have access to services, such as puberty blockers, hormone therapy, and/or any medical procedure to help them become the gender they self-identify as, should be illegal.

They believe it is classified as child abuse, and seek to prosecute the parents who provide these options to their child. In Abbott’s order, he states there would be legal action taken against those who do not report these cases.

There is no law that legally allows anyone to report transgender youth to DFPS, let alone any other form of government. There is neither any law that deems providing gender-transitioning medical care as child abuse.

Both Abbott and Paxton are trying to disrupt adolescents from accessing safe gender-affirming medicine and are labeling it as protecting the trans youth.

The El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal has decided not to enforce Abbott’s order.

“In my opinion, there’s no way you can stretch the laws as written

to interpret these gender-affirming types of care as abuse or neglect,” Bernal said in an interview with El Paso Matters.

Abbott’s decision to involve himself and the Texas legislature in the lives of trans youth is unnecessary. Already prohibiting trans youth from being involved in sports, this is yet another attack on the normalcy that is slowly dissipating in Texas for the transgender community.

The order, which is reminiscent of the abortion law imposed Sept. 1, 2021, by Gov. Abbott, shows the similarities of limitations Abbott has put on the state. Not giving direct power to state officials but allowing for citizens of Texas to take the law into their own hands.

Creating a sense of fear in young trans individuals who want to identify in their respected gender is inhumane and can be traumatizing for some. With that, some may never be able to fully express their gender out of fear they will face legal consequence, or the possibility of their parents and/or teachers facing legal action.

Texas has become a place of fear instead of a place of inclusivity. We should not punish those who choose to live a life outside of what society labels as “normal.” Adolescents should not have to fear whether or not the way they identify will be legally accepted in their state.

Alberto Silva Fernandez is the editor in-chief and may be reached at asilva36@miners.utep.edu.

## Can the Miners play spoiler in C-USA tourney?

DANIEL ALEC LOPEZ  
The Prospector

The UTEP men’s basketball team is heading into the Conference-USA tournament with a lot of momentum. With two games currently remaining, UTEP has a chance to be seated in a good spot in this tournament.

But if the tournament were to start today, the Miners would be fifth or fourth seed. On its bracket, the Miners would play the lowest seed, whether it be the University of Southern Mississippi or Florida International University.

The Miners have not won a conference tournament game since the 2015-2016 season and it is looking to change that outcome.

The Miners have a chance to play spoiler in this year’s C-USA tournament if the Miners were to win the first match up. The next potential opponents the Miners could face would be either the University of North Texas or Louisiana Tech University.

UTEP does have a chance against both teams because it did manage to beat the Bulldogs on their home floor the second time around. Against Mean Green, the Miners fell short in that match-up, but were only a few stops and a few buckets away from winning.

With its recent heartbreaking loss against the University of Ala-



Daniel Alec Lopez

bama at Birmingham, fans should be excited about the larger body of work the team has produced. The Miners were able to go on a six-game win streak and move up to fourth place in the conference standing and are now only four games outside of second place.

The Miners have the talent on backcourt to score at will against the elite teams and be able to play stellar defense as well. However, what could get them into trouble is their frontcourt offense and rebounding which has been the team’s weakness all year. This weakness could also get it bounced out in the first round like last year.

However, while the glass is only half full, most of these teams in the conference do not have a true big man inside, but do have one that can make plays, rebound, and get critical buckets.

Junior forward Tydus Verhoeven will be one of the key players in some of these match ups because he must rebound the ball to give the Miners that extra chance on offense or prevent the opposing team from getting a rebound.

The Miners defense will also be key in these tournament match ups. The Miners have been forcing 16 turnovers this season and are able to get victories when forcing the team to turnover the ball at a high rate.

Offense will follow if UTEP is able to play tough defense against their opponents that the Miners might match up with. UTEP does best when they play balanced on both sides of the ball, so if their defense gets going, so will their offense. Junior guard Souley Boum and junior guard Jamal Bieniemy will be keys to running the offense and sinking the crucial buckets in these contests.

Both guards have been key to the Miners’ more recent success. Starting with Boum getting clutch buckets against the Bulldogs and Bieniemy scoring at a volume high to get wins. The Miners have a tall task, but they are equipped enough to win at least two games in this upcoming tournament.

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Personal information (phone numbers and address) will be used for identification only. Letters are subject to editing to fit available space, clarity and brevity.

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**UKRAINE** from page 1

tured products shortages.

“The war may interfere with the planting seasons for many crops and lead to higher global prices for wheat, corn, cabbage, barley, and peas,” said Fullerton. “Additional supply-chain disruptions may result for steel and other manufactured products. Also problematic are financial market upheavals for commodities, stocks, bonds, and currencies. The dollar has strengthened in recent days because of its status as a safe-haven currency.”

Ukraine was formerly part of the Soviet Union but became independent when it collapsed in 1991. Putin claims Ukraine is part of Russia’s history and culture and considers it a “hostile act” if Ukraine joins NATO.

“We claim, rightfully so, that Putin has violated international law and international norms in doing what he did, and he did,” said Genna. “So, therefore, for the United States to actually intervene, it would have to do so along the lines of international law.”

Ukraine is not part of NATO, and therefore the U.S. and other Euro-



Pastor Antonio Brown says a prayer in solidarity with Ukraine at Tom Lea Park in El Paso on Feb. 28. **Photo by Alberto Silva Fernandez/The Prospector**

pean countries cannot intervene in the war unless Russia attacks one of the NATO members.

“Today, I met with fellow leaders from our NATO allies and spoke with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine,” said Biden in a statement.

“The United States continues to provide economic, humanitari-

an, and security support—and we continue to rally other countries to provide similar assistance.”

Genna believes that diplomacy was never a viable option for Russia and the west.

“The only way diplomacy would’ve worked is if the West gave in to all of his demands,” Genna

said. “NATO would never accept not only Ukraine but also never accept Finland and Sweden as members of NATO. It would fully have to recognize that all eastern Europe is part of the Russian sphere influence.”

Genna also said China could become an ally of Russia, if necessary, by providing military and financial assistance.

“He also has a shared interest, just like Putin has declared Ukraine to be either part of old Russia, or greater Russia or whatever,” Genna said. “China has had a long-standing claim on Taiwan, and they want Taiwan to be integrated diplomatically and that is what they have been trying to do so with Putin, trying to convince him to do so diplomatically.”

As of Saturday, Feb. 26, The Guardian reported 198 Ukrainians have been killed, including three children, and 1,115 Ukrainian citizens have been injured, according to Viktor Liashko, the minister of healthcare of Ukraine.

Former President Donald Trump praised Putin Feb. 24, for his

“smart” actions and called Zelensky “brave” during a fundraiser in Florida.

“It’s dangerous because he still has a lot of pull in the Republican party,” said Genna. “According to the latest polls there is probably a good chance that the Republican party will take control in congress with a very strong pro-Trump contingency caucus, which means then that any chance of getting congressional approval for any type of military actions is probably out the window.”

A series of protests have occurred around the world, including in Russia, demonstrating solidarity with Ukraine and condemning Putin’s decision. Hundreds of Russian protestors have been arrested.

“I think what is really important at this moment, is that it was a completely unprovoked attack on a sovereign country,” Waters said.

Victoria Rivas is the arts and culture editor and may be reached at [vrivas7@miners.utep.edu](mailto:vrivas7@miners.utep.edu); [@VicRivas\\_18](https://twitter.com/VicRivas_18) on Twitter.

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# KTEP radio station to receive \$2 million from Margaret O. Herman

BY JULIA LUCERO  
THE PROSPECTOR

Production Room “B” at KTEP station at the Cotton Building at The University of Texas at El Paso Feb. 23. Photo by Salette Ontiveros/The Prospector

The University of Texas at El Paso received a \$2 million donation for NPR affiliate radio station KTEP-FM (88.5) and will provide funding for undergraduate students scholarships.

The endowment comes from the late Margaret O. Herman, an heiress of the Hess family, inventors of the steel-toe shoe was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1930. She moved to El Paso in the early 1980s. She later died in 2018, a UTEP Communications news

release read.

An endowment is a protected source of money, said Richard Pineda, Ph.D., chair of UTEP’s Department of Communication Studies.

“With our particular donor the commitment that she had was really based on her love of public radio and her belief that that was an important service that the university offered,” Pineda said.

KTEP’s Director of Development and Interim General Manager John

Carrillo said the \$2 million was split evenly between the university and KTEP. The other half will go towards student services, he said.

“Over the course of a year the \$1 million set up in a trust will collect interest, the interest is what KTEP will have access to every year,” Carrillo said.

The gift KTEP received will be used to pay for programming and equipment, Carrillo said.

KTEP plans on improving a production facility that has not been

upgraded since 1985, Carillo said.

“The funds in this first wave are going to help transform that studio,” Pineda said.

“An immediate upgrade for the radio station is a mixing desk. Which is used to mix different sound sources,” Carillo said.

“There’s a lot of work that needs to be done. Not only in terms of the infrastructure itself, the acoustics for the room, but also in terms of the actual equipment, which is actually outdated,” Carillo said.

Donations to a university help cover costs that tuition and state funding could not provide.

“It’s somebody saying that they believe in the work that you’re doing,” Pineda said.

Trustee of Herman’s estate Sue Becknell says the endowment will touch many lives and Margaret was an avid reader of KTEP and supporter of education, news release stated.

Julia Lucero is a contributor and may be reached at jlucero13@miners.utep.edu.

## WELLNESS from page 1

### Plenary Speaker

Gerina Mendoza: American professional golfer, currently in the LPGA Tour, once collegiate golfer for UTEP and reality star from the “The Big Break.”

### Breakout Session A: “3 Generations of Female Boxers”

Native El Pasoan, Kayla Gomez, teen boxing athlete who competes with Team USA. Gomez will be

joined by Cindy Aceves, grandmother, and Crystal Aceves, mother, who also worked as coaches and inspiration to Gomez. Under her belt, Gomez is the first ever Youth Pan American Gold Medalist, Thirteen-time National Champion, and a Four-time International Gold Medalist. She was recently named Under Armour Youth Female of the Year and USA Boxing Youth Female Boxer of the Year for 2021.

Gomez is currently looking to compete in the 2024 Olympics in Paris with Team USA.

### Breakout Session B “Women Invested in Wellness”

Michelle Blumenfeld: professional certified coach with the International Coach Federation, and with eclectic experience in leadership development methods and coaching strategies.

Emma Schwartz: President for the Medical Center of the Americas (MCA) Foundation, a non-profit organization that drives the vision for positioning the Paso del Norte region as the center of health delivery, medical education and biomedical research for military, border and Hispanic populations.

Lorraine Higgins: franchise owner of Orange Theory for El Paso

### Keynote Speaker

Alexandra Raisman: two-time gold medalist gymnast and advocate.

### Panel of Physicians

“Women’s Wellness in the Borderland in a time of Covid”

Melanie Olivas Longhurst: Ph.D., M.Ed., Assistant Professor, licensed clinical psychologist, and Psychology Training Director in the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso Department of Psychiatry and training director for the El Paso Psychology Internship Consortium (EPPIC).

Bridget Swinney: M.S., R.D., Nutrition expert specialization in



The Woman’s Wellness Summit, hosted by the Paso del Norte Hotel on May 19, will include speakers such as LPGA golfer Gerina Piller, UTEP alumna and El Paso boxer Kayla Gomez, and two-time Olympic gymnast Alexandra Raisman. Photo courtesy of Agência Brasil.

prenatal nutrition, child nutrition, and family eating matters. Nearly 20 years of experience with nutrition counseling, clinical dietitian, public health nutritionist, diabetes educator, and weight loss group facilitator.

There are two pending additional physicians for the panel.

There will also be various vendors attending the summit for women to learn more about.

“We are trying to make this more of an intimate event for our first one,” said Lanski, when describing their vision for the summit. “So, we will sell out at 500 tickets which I think will be a nice-sized group, but it will be allowed for people to interact with one another, meet each other, commune with each other, and network with physicians,

people in the business, people just wanting to know more what the resources are in El Paso.”

The JLEP still has sponsor opportunities for the summit available for anyone interested, contact information can be found on their Women’s Wellness Summit page as well. For anyone interested in becoming a Junior League member, Lanski states all that is required is the minimum age of 22, and women can sign up, and be willing to work and help the community.

Women looking for more resources can find information at jlep.org on the Women’s Wellness Summit page.

Kristen Scheaffer is a staff reporter and can be reached at kmscheaffer@miners.utep.edu.



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# Arts & Culture

Victoria Rivas, editor

## Local artist to create a new Aug. 3 memorial

BY ALYSON RODRIGUEZ  
The Prospecter

El Paso was changed forever on Aug. 3, 2019.

A gunman drove across Texas and took the lives of 23 innocent people. Since that day, two memorials have been created honoring the victims' memory, and a new one is being built in Ponder Park.

The first memorial stands tall at 30-feet in the parking lot of the Walmart where the shooting took place, depicting a "grand candela" as a beacon of hope for the El Paso community. This monument opened in November 2019 after that Walmart reopened.

The second memorial is located at Ascarate Park, and is called The El Paso County Healing Garden. It is a tall wall with plaques of the victims' names and stands as a reminder of our city's culture and resilience that cannot be weakened by hate. It opened on the second anniversary of the shooting.

Local artist Albert "Tino" Ortega, known for painting the 3D balloon murals seen across El Paso, has been commissioned to create a third memorial. Ortega is going to have a budget of \$170,000.

"I feel really enthralled and honored to be considered for this opportunity. I know how deeply that day affected me and pretty much everyone in the community," Ortega said. "I want to make sure that this spot is a beacon of reflection of who we are as a community. We can



Local artist Tino Ortega was chosen to create the new Aug. 3 memorial that will be built at Ponder Park, 7500 W.H. Burges Drive in El Paso. **Photo by Alyson Rodriguez/The Prospecter**

come to this spot and hopefully reflect on this day that impacted us so deeply. That's why I do the balloon murals too, because it is about the reflection of the community. The balloons reflect what our history is about and our culture and it is a way of mirroring who we are."

Many public meetings have been held about the new memorial at the Marty Robbins Recreation Center, 11620 Vista Del Sol Drive, and more meetings to come.

The funds to pay for the new memorial will be taken from the two percent of the city's capital improvement budget that is allotted for public art projects.

Ortega was chosen out of hundreds of artists vying for the opportunity to create the new memorial at Ponder Park, 7500 W.H. Burges Drive. Applicants needed to submit their resumes and works of art to be considered.

"I am trying to convey a lot of

messages through this memorial," Ortega said. "I would go to the other two memorials and would get inspiration from them. I tried to take pieces design-wise from them, so then they are all bridged to one another. The piece itself is supposed to represent a crown. Crowns are synonymous to people with power or nobility. The shooter took away 23 people's power on that day. This memorial is restoring that power in remembering them."

Ponder Park was chosen by the city because it is where El Pasoans met after the shooting happened. The community banded together; it is where people found out their loved ones were taken away from them. The whole city mourned together at the park.

"It's very crucial to have a memorial at Ponder Park because that is where everyone met at, and it is important to highlight the energy of this place," Ortega said. "The monument will have 23 trees and 23 lights, we're trying to incorporate the number into the whole memorial. I am also working with a local writer to incorporate poems as well."

Many UTEP students are excited to see what the new memorial looks like in person.

"I am looking forward to visiting the new memorial when it is built. Aug. 3 was a very traumatic day for the whole city, and this monument will be a nice place to remember the victims," said UTEP senior Elisa Rodriguez. "I think Ponder Park is a good location for the art piece because it is so close to where it happened."

To see more of Ortega's art or to learn about the monument, visit his Instagram @ortegatino. He also co-owns Galería Lincoln located at 3915 Rosa Ave.

Alyson Rodriguez is a contributor and may be reached at aerodriguez20@miners.utep.edu; @alyson\_rod1127 on Twitter.

## State banned books become accessible in El Paso Public Libraries

BY VICTORIA RIVAS  
The Prospecter

UTEP students applaud El Paso's City Council members' decision to allow public libraries to display a section of banned books and make them accessible to the public, despite challenges across the state and country.

"I think history and all those important topics need to be learned by everyone so that children can also learn from it and have opinions," said Ivan Aguilar, 20, a UTEP computer science student.

The item was presented to the council by District 2 Representative Alexandra Annelo and was approved unanimously by council members.

"Really important books that talk about history are being banned for no other reason than denying people the right to understand history," Annelo said during a city council meeting.

The YWCA will donate all books to the libraries to ensure all El Pasoans have free access to information and literature.

"Not all topics are easy, but it is incredibly important now as ever to continue to provide access to our community," Deputy City Manager

of Quality of Life Tracey Jerome said during the city council meeting. "Our libraries should be a place of safety and support where they can go and seek out and have access to all types of information."

Some parents across Texas and the country have described the banned books as pornographic and/or age-inappropriate for children since they discuss topics regarding slavery, sexual abuse, puberty, identity, and sexuality. They ask for these books to be removed from public and school libraries.

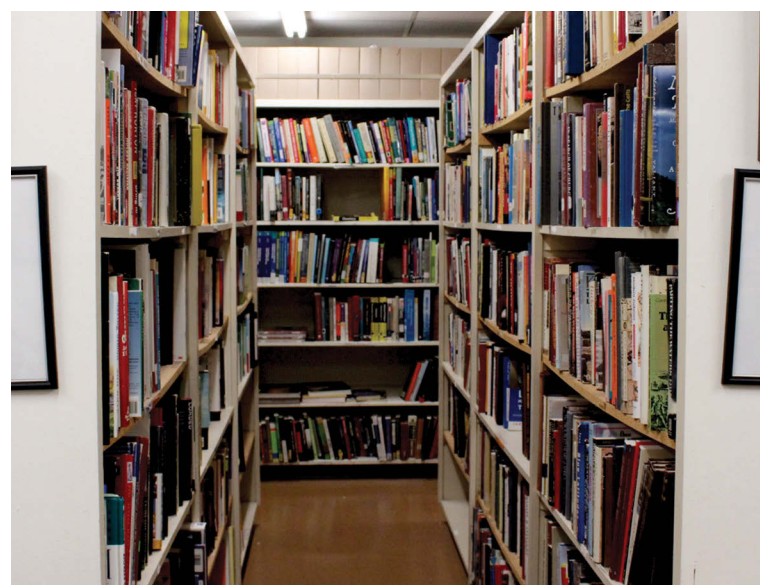
"Sexual assault and people of color are usually only taught through literature," Annelo said. "It is not something we sit down with young women and talk about. It is something that they, unfortunately, have to learn for themselves through entertainment, and it is very important that we make sure that this community is educated as it can be and that it has the resources that it needs."

Brenda Risch, founder and executive director of the Borderland Rainbow Center, believes that children need access to a diverse library that includes books that represent them to receive a complete education.

"First of all, in terms of representing different races, racial experiences, LGBTQ+ experiences, like all children should see themselves reflected in the books in their schools. That is just part of human rights," Risch said.

More than 800 books are at risk of being inaccessible to students in Texas by the Texas State leadership, including books such as:

- "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee
- "Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck
- "Gender Queer: A Memoir" by Maia Kobabe
- "Animal Farm" by George Orwell
- "The Catcher in the Rye" by J. D. Salinger
- "The Hate U Give" by Angie Thomas
- "Middlesex" by Jeffrey Eugenides
- "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood
- "And Still I Rise: Black America since MLK: an illustrated chronology" by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
- "The Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears" by Susan E. Hamen
- "Stamped from the Beginning:



El Paso City Council allowed public libraries to make banned books accessible to the public, including "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee and "The Hate U Give" by Angie Thomas. **Photo by Carolina Uribarri/The Prospecter**

the Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America" by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds

"I think it should be accessible to get these books, just so that kids can be aware that, that did happen, and so they can get more information on it, and that would give them a new perspective or make their own thoughts on the subjects," said Susana Tapia, 23, a UTEP forensic science student.

In December 2021 Canutillo Independent School District voted to keep "Gender Queer: A Memoir" by Maia Kobabe (an LGBTQ-themed book) at their libraries despite a parent's complaint about the book containing inappropriate sexually explicit content.

"As long as it is age-appropriate, I think kids can have access," Tapia

see **BOOKS** on page 6

# ‘The Batman’ could be the best remake ever

BY ITZEL GIRON  
The Prospector

*This is your formal warning for mild spoilers.*

The highly anticipated “The Batman” film by director Matt Reeves is set to arrive in movie theaters March 4, but it has already surpassed all expectations, including my own. Being another remake in almost 60 years, it is a top contender for being one of the best.

With actor Robert Pattinson taking on the lead role as Bruce Wayne/Batman, this is a darker direction for the already established hero and seems to have paid off. The film is filled with a star-studded cast including Zoë Kravitz (Catwoman), Andy Serkis (Alfred Pennyworth), Colin Ferrel (The Penguin), Paul Dano (The Riddler), and Jeffrey Wright (James Gordon) making it a movie you want to see.

Having so many remakes, I feared the well-known storyline would be repeated, which has caused much failure in the past.

The film is set in a different Batman universe compared to Ben Affleck’s “Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice,” but remains about Gotham City being overrun by crime and is now being tormented by The Riddler.

Pattinson, who faced backlash for being cast for this movie, was able to portray Batman with great ease, which seemed almost natural to

him. His version of the character is darker and more realistic than its comic-like predecessor and allows for great storytelling.

Chemistry was noticeable with the entire cast, specifically between Pattinson and Kravitz as their romance was perfectly depicted in the film. It was neither forced nor forgotten as it can sway either side in superhero films. Both portray their roles with great ease and complement one another throughout the film.

Other great assets to this film are Colin Ferrel and Paul Dano, with their portrayal of the villains of this film, The Penguin and The Riddler. Dano creates an unsettling feeling when it comes to The Riddler, as if it is realistic and could be some psycho off the streets. Ferrel allows for such character development in the film, especially since The Penguin is not the main antagonist of the film.

In a movie as dark as this one, both visually and emotionally, humor seems almost impossible, but the subtle humor allowed it to feel natural. From the sudden clothesline, Batman endured to The Riddler’s sly jokes, it kept the movie multi-dimensional. Being almost three hours long, I stressed the film would not live up to the standards of other movies that were just as long. This movie, however, seems to keep you on your toes, and right as you think the movie ends, it pulls



“The Batman” will be in theaters March 4 and is directed by director Matt Reeves and stars Robert Pattinson and Zoë Kravitz. Photo courtesy of “The Batman” official movie website.

the audience further into the plot.

It is the storytelling done by the writers that allow this comic book adaptation to come to life in such a realistic way. It never becomes over the top and ridiculous. Rather, it is as if Gotham City could be only mere hours away.

Batman fans will be in for a real treat by the acting skills of everyone on the cast, the films’ direction, the storyline, and the quick cameo of a favorite Batman villain. Fans now hope that Pattinson continues

his portrayal until the end of what should be a series of films. Pattinson and the entire cast fit their respected roles perfectly, which without them the story would have fallen through ten minutes in.

Ultimately, the film has allowed me to give DC comics and their films another chance as it has won me over as a viewer with Pattinson’s portrayal. This could easily be my favorite Batman, if not for Christian Bale’s performance in “The Dark Knight.” It is however, the

best Batman portrayal in the past 10 years, and deserves all the credit.

It is worth seeing more than once. I give it 4 out of 5 stars, solely because I wish I could have seen Pattinson play Bruce Wayne a bit more than he did, but that could be me just being greedy and wanting more eye-liner Bruce Wayne.

Itzel Giron is the audience engagement editor and may be reached at [iagiron@miners.utep.edu](mailto:iagiron@miners.utep.edu); [@by.itzel.giron](https://www.instagram.com/by.itzel.giron) on Instagram; [@itzel\\_anahi\\_16](https://www.instagram.com/itzel_anahi_16) on Twitter.

**BOOKS** from page 5

“Once they start getting more curious and they start getting into those topics, it’s better that they

have information, rather than they get opinions based on just biased opinions from either their families or peers.”

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott asked the

Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) to remove banned books from schools’ curriculums.

“A growing number of parents of Texas students are rightfully

outraged about highly inappropriate books and other content in public school libraries,” Abbott said in a letter to TASB. “The most disturbing cases include material that is clearly pornographic, which has absolutely no place in the Texas public education system.”

Risch believes children need to be exposed to a variety of ideas and books to help build their own opinions and learn what fits best with their values.

“There are a group of people who are afraid of change, and what they have realized is that literature can inspire things that they can’t

control,” Risch said. “They don’t want anything to change; they want everything to stay the same as it has always been. If you want to stifle change, you have to stifle the transmission of information, ideas, development of imagination, and development of critical thinking.”

The banned books displays can be found at every El Paso public library. For information, visit [www.elpasolibrary.org](http://www.elpasolibrary.org)

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# Sports

Emily Autumn Velasquez, editor

## Scoring threat on the court

BY DANIEL ALEC LOPEZ  
THE PROSPECTOR



Junior guard Souley Boum takes a shot against a Florida International University defender at the Don Haskins Center. Boum has averaged 19 points and four rebounds per game during the 2021-2022 season. **Photo by Annabella Mireles/The Prospector**

## Junior guard Souley Boum has major impact on the court

Boum has been a key player in many of the Miners' big victories this season.

One of the many games in which he had an impact was against the third-ranked team in Conference-USA, Louisiana Tech University. Boum was able to change the game with a steal and layup that eventually led to the win.

This season, Boum has been averaging 19 points per game, and four rebounds per game. Boum struggled early in the year in shooting consistent 3-pointers and scoring in general as there were games where

Boum shot a low 28% from the 3-point line. But he is still able to make an impact on the glass despite the streaky shooting from beyond the arc.

"To be honest from the beginning of the season, I was still scoring, people was saying all this stuff, I was still averaging what I was averaging last year," Boum said in a Feb. 24 interview after practice.

Boum's scoring abilities were able to help the Miners during their six-game win streak. Boum was averaging high scoring amounts and making plays that helped late

in game situations. His defense is nothing to scoff at, as some of the stifling plays have helped as well.

"It just gets me pumped to play, when you come in and get lost on defense, my old coach used to tell me... Your offense will take care of itself," Boum said.

Originally from Oakland, California, Boum attended Oakland Tech High School and played all four years on the varsity squad. Then, Boum attended the University of San Francisco where he averaged 10.9 points per game and was selected to the freshman West Coast

Conference All-American team.

After spending his freshman season there, Boum transferred to UTEP, but had to sit out the 2018-2019 season.

Boum's favorite basketball player is the late Kobe Bryant, former shooting guard of the Los Angeles Lakers. Boum also loves soul food and music.

Boum overall makes the basketball team better, whether it is by shooting the ball or knifing through the defense to score a lay-up. Boum is a threat to score from anywhere on the basketball court.

Head Coach Joe Golding gave high praise when asked about Boum, claiming he's extremely proud of the work he has put in since December, how he's become a leader for the team on and off the court, and how he never steps down from a challenge. The UTEP men's basketball team can be seen back in action in their next game against Rice University at 7 p.m. Mar. 3 at Tudor fieldhouse.

Daniel Alec Lopez is a staff reporter and may be reached at [dalopez23@miners.utep.edu](mailto:dalopez23@miners.utep.edu).

## U.S. women's soccer team settles equal pay lawsuit

BY KATRINA VILLARREAL  
The Prospector

The U.S. women's national team (USWNT) reached a settlement with the U.S. Soccer Federation (USSF) to receive equal pay for years to come, ending a six-year fight Feb. 22. The settlement will ensure not only equal pay with its male counterparts but offers the women's team millions in back pay, equal pay on all fronts including world cup bonuses, and equality when it comes to equipment.

"There are a lot of on-field accomplishments like World Cups and Olympics, league championships,

but this will really stand out as one of the most meaningful moments," current USWNT defender, Becky Sauerbrunn told Associated Press.

The U.S. Soccer Federation will pay \$24 million to the USWNT to settle the discrimination dispute. Both sides also announced that players will split \$22 million, along with an additional \$2 million to help the USWNT during their post-career goals and help with charity efforts to help grow women and girls' soccer.

"I just think it's so difficult sometimes to talk about and to articulate the kind of discrimina-

**"The biggest piece of little legacy that us of this generation can take is that the player's coming up next will have a much better ability to just play."**

**Megan Rapinoe,**  
USWNT midfielder and winger

tion, abuse, inequity and disrespect that so many women feel so often in their job," current USWNT midfielder and winger Megan Rapinoe told The Associated Press. "And I think we were able to start to put a voice to that, put a face to it, put talking points to it and put a sort of movement behind it."

According to The Associated Press, the fight began in 2016 when five players from the USWNT, including Rapinoe, Carli Lloyd, Hope Solo, Sauerbrunn and Alex Morgan filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The women explained that they were paid

thousands of dollars less than the male players. In 2019, all 28 players of the USWNT filed a gender discrimination lawsuit.

In 2020, a district judge ruled against the women claiming that they had agreed to a different pay than the men's team, according to the Washington Post.

During that same year, a legal file by the USSF was made public where they said, "(the women) do not perform equal work requiring equal skill and effort, the overall soccer-playing ability required to compete at the senior men's

see **EQUAL PAY** on page 8



# COMMENTARY

## Olympics raises racial double standard

BY EMILY AUTUMN VELASQUEZ  
The Prospecter

There are plenty of double standards that are set for people due to gender, race, or sexual preference. During this Olympic season we saw a case of double standards that could not be overlooked and need immediate attention to see change.

Sha'Carri Richardson, a 21-year-old U.S. sprinter who won the 100-meter race in the U.S. Olympic trials last summer, was barred from competing in the Tokyo Olympics after testing positive for THC when drug tested.

Richardson said she was using marijuana as a coping method after suffering from the loss of her biological mother. Richardson faced a lot of backlash for letting her emotions get the best of her when deciding to use marijuana. She apologized to her supporters for not being able to compete, but not for coping with the death of her best friend.

THC is not a performance-enhancing drug, but it is on the World Anti-Doping Agency's list of prohibited substances, hence her not being allowed to compete in the Olympics.

Russian skater Kamila Valieva failed her drug test in December



Emily Autumn Velasquez

after testing positive for Trimetazidine. Trimetazidine is a performance-enhancing drug; it is a heart drug said to boost a person's endurance and blood efficiency.

Two other substances were found when she took the test, but they were not on the list of prohibited substances. But all three together "seem to be aimed at increasing endurance, reducing fatigue and promoting greater efficiency in using oxygen," according to Travis Tygart, the chief executive of the United States Anti-Doping Agency.

Valieva's drug test results did not come out until she helped her team win a gold medal in the Tokyo

Olympics, whereas Richardson's drug test results were revealed almost instantly.

"Failed in December and the world just now know however my result was posted within a week and my name & talent was slaughtered to the people," Richardson tweeted Feb. 14.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport said suspension from Olympic competition would cause the 15-year-old "irreparable harm," but no one considered the harm that would come to Richardson when she was not allowed to compete in the Tokyo Olympics for coping with her mother's death by smoking marijuana.

"Can we get a solid answer on the difference of her situation and mine? My mother died and I can't run and was also favored to place top 3. The only difference I see is I'm a black young lady," Richardson tweeted Feb. 14

Both athletes were favored to win medals in their sports, but despite both testing positive for drugs prohibited, only one of them was unable to compete in the sport they love.

Double standards are constantly being pointed out, but all these athletes get afterward is an apology

– no effort to enforce changes to prevent it from happening again.

Richardson was more than valid for using her platform to call out the injustice she was facing firsthand.

Richardson is constantly using her voice to highlight athletes that are beating the double standards and showcasing icons who have done a lot for the African American community.

Richardson faced a suspension for a drug that did not even affect how she competes, but because she is African American, she did not get the benefit of the doubt Valieva received.

Claims of Valieva "accidentally" taking the performance enhancer came out almost immediately after her results, whereas with Richardson, all she faced was negative comments.

To compete at an Olympic level is one of the highest honors an athlete can achieve, so there should not be any room for double standards to exist. The unfairness Richardson faced is not one that we should ever have to see happen again.

Emily Autumn Velasquez is the sports editor and can be reached at [eavelasquez@miners.utep.edu](mailto:eavelasquez@miners.utep.edu); @emilyautumn20 on Twitter.

### EQUAL PAY from page 7

national team level is materially influenced by the level of certain physical attributes such as speed and strength," reported ESPN.

In an article by the Washington Post they explain the pay disparity is complex.

The men's team is compensated on a pay-for-play basis where the players are able to earn more if they win, while many of the women are offered a base salary and a smaller bonus for winning.

For years the USWNT has been better than the men's team, winning four World Cups since it was first formed. At times the women's team brought in higher revenue than the men's team, according to the Washington Post.

The agreement to pay both the male and female players equally from this day forward also includes an agreement for players to receive equal pay by playing in World Cup competitions, where the bonuses provided to players have been profoundly unequal, reported The Washington Post.

History was made on this day, making it a big win for not only the current USWNT players but future players as well.

"The biggest piece of little legacy that us of this generation can take is that the players coming up next will have a much better ability to just play," Rapinoe said in an interview with CBS Mornings Feb. 22

Katrina Villarreal is a staff reporter and may be reached at [kvillarreal1@miners.utep.edu](mailto:kvillarreal1@miners.utep.edu).

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