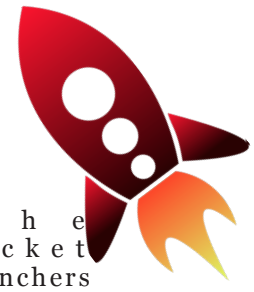


# Heartfelt HESTEC

## Rocket Launchers in competition

**Ana Trujillo**  
THE RIDER



The Rocket Launchers organization at UTRGV has entered the Base 11 Space Challenge, a \$1 million prize competition in which the first college to design, build and launch a liquid-propelled, single-stage rocket to an altitude of 100 km will be the winner.

Rocket Launchers was founded three years ago, and its purpose is for students to gain experience in high-power rocketry. They have been competing in other challenges, including the Spaceport America Cup.

The Base 11 Space Challenge is sponsored by a California-based company, Base 11. Forty-eight to 52 colleges from the U.S. and Canada are competing for the prize.

"What they want to do is see if they could send small rockets into space ... to decrease expenses," said Marco Rojas, president of the organization and a mechanical engineering senior.

Base 11 contacted Rocket Launchers and asked if they were interested in joining the challenge. It took around three weeks to have all the paperwork done, according to Rojas.

If the students win the competition, the prize will be divided between the school and the organization. Rojas

See **ROCKET**, Page 7



Kathryn Alonso/THE RIDER

Kate Biberdorf, better known as Kate the Chemist, performs her signature chemical experiment "breathing fire," last Wednesday.

**Kathryn Alonso**  
THE RIDER

Last week, UTRGV celebrated its 17th annual Hispanic Engineering, Science and Technology Week (HESTEC).

The event consists of interactive activities for the community centered on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

Sponsors, nonprofit organizations, students and university departments come together to bring an immersive experience of STEM for local elementary, middle and high school students.

Karen Dorado, director of Special Programs and Community Relations, said it also helps the university

create a relationship with the community as it is involved in many aspects of the week.

"It's a way for us to highlight our university, the programs that we have," Dorado said. "We have faculty, we have student organizations who are providing activities at the different events that are taking place."

**Robotics Day**

The event kicked off at the Pharr Events Center on Oct. 1, with students across the Rio Grande Valley gathered to compete in the field of robotics.

Each district sent in its own team to showcase self-built and programmed robots. The designs of the toylike robots are built to withstand the obstacles placed by the event coordinators.

The machines were judged by their completion and

success of passing the obstacle courses that were built integrating STEM concepts.

However, before entering the obstacle ring, the robots were examined by inspectors Dorance Cuba, a business outreach specialist for UTRGV, and Juan Santos, director of UTRGV Veterans Business Outreach Center.

Anthony Ortiz, a high school student at IDEA North Mission who was among the participants, said he believes the event will broaden opportunities and the mindset that children have.

"Children can, like, see all the opportunities in this engineering field and they can really get interested and it gives you the opportunity to work with, like, robots and stuff," Ortiz said.

**Latina Day**

On Wednesday, special guest Kate Biberdorf, also known as Kate the Chemist, an associate professor in the chemistry department at the University of Texas at Austin, spoke about women in the STEM field.

Biberdorf is a well-known scientist, popular for her hands-on approach and energetic attitude.

Five hundred girls from middle schools in Brownsville, Edinburg and La Joya were entertained and inspired by Biberdorf's words and experiments in the Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus.

In one experiment, she demonstrated how to make dry ice bubbles using dish-washing liquid soap. A student who volunteered held and popped

See **HESTEC**, Page 6

# Women's body acceptance program

**Jessica Mendez**  
THE RIDER

The Counseling Center will implement the Body Project program this semester to increase body acceptance among UTRGV female students.

Christopher Albert, director of the Counseling Center, said the Body Project goal is to encourage body positivity and reduce problems that may be related to body image, such as eating disorders.

"The Body Project is a dissonance-based body-acceptance program designed to help high school girls and college-age women resist cultural pressures to conform to the appearance ideal standard of female beauty and reduce their pursuit of unrealistic bodies," according to the program

website, [bodyprojectcollaborative.com](http://bodyprojectcollaborative.com).

The program is being offered in different universities across the nation and is supported by research from the Oregon Research Institute.

The Oregon Research Institute contacted UTRGV in Spring 2018 and the Counseling Center started looking for peer facilitators during the summer, Albert said.

There will be five undergraduate and graduate peer facilitators on the Edinburg campus and two on the Brownsville campus, he said.

Ricky Rendon, a peer facilitator for the program, said body acceptance is a challenge for many individuals, especially women.

"Even though, like Dr. Albert mentioned, this is specifically for



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/THE RIDER

See **PROGRAM**, Page 2



# THE RIDER

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

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JOURNALISM  
MATTERS  
NATIONAL  
NEWSPAPER  
WEEK  
OCT. 7-13

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Monday**  
**Billiards**  
The **Student Union** will host a **billiards**

**tournament** from noon to 4 p.m. in the game room on the Brownsville campus. On the Edinburg campus, the event will take place at the same time Tuesday in the game room. Students can play for free and get a chance to earn V-Bucks. For more information, call 665-7890.

### Rise and Shine Yoga

Find your inner peace with **relaxing yoga** at 8:30 a.m. on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus. For more information, call 665-7890.

### Student Ensemble Series

The **UTRGV Symphony Orchestra** will present its Fall Concert at 7 p.m. in the Texas Southmost College Arts Center on the Brownsville campus. On the Edinburg campus, the event will take place at the same time Wednesday in the Performing Arts Complex Auditorium. General admission is \$5. For more information, call 882-7025 or 665-3881.

### Wellness Mondays

The **UTRGV Counseling Center** will host **one-hour workshops** on topics related to enhancing personal wellness, such as healthy relationships, stress management and beating the blues. The workshops will take place from 3 to 4 p.m. in Salón Jacaranda in the Student Union on the Brownsville campus. For more information, call 882-3897 or email counseling@utrgv.edu.

### National Mad Hatter Day

Decorate your own mad minihat and enjoy a cup of tea at 11 a.m. in the Student Union Commons on the Edinburg campus and in La Sala on the Brownsville campus. For more information, call 665-7890.

### Tuesday

#### InqSpot Book Club

Students can pick up a copy of **Stephen**

King's novel, "**Sleeping Beauties**," while supplies last, at the Student Union Info Desk on the Edinburg campus and in the game room on the Brownsville campus. A discussion of the book will take place from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. in the Student Union Commons on the Edinburg campus and in El Comedor on the Brownsville campus. Coffee and cookies will be provided. For more information, call 665-7890.

### Wednesday

#### Magic: The Gathering Tournament

The **Student Union** will host a **Magic: The Gathering Tournament** from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Kiskadee Room on the Edinburg campus. Snacks will be provided and the top three finalists will earn V-Bucks. For more information, call 665-7890.

### Game Room Fest

The **Student Union** will offer **free play and snacks** at 11 a.m. in the game room on the Brownsville campus. For more information, call 665-7890.

### Talk About It S'More

**Miguel Venegas**, of the office of **Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention**, will talk about language and identity from 7 to 8 p.m. in the Main Courtyard on the Brownsville campus. The event is hosted by **Leadership & Social Change**. For more information, call 882-5937.

### Thursday

#### Love your #selfie

An interactive workshop on **self-love and self-compassion**, hosted by the **UTRGV Counseling Center**, will take place from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the Student Union's Palmetto Room on the Edinburg campus.

### United Union

Celebrate **National Coming Out Day** at noon on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus and in the Student Union Commons on the Edinburg campus. For more information, call 665-7890.

### LGBTQ+ Show Your Colors

The **Career Center** will host a discussion panel on **embracing diversity and inclusion in the workplace** from 6 to 8 p.m. in Student Academic Center 1.101 and 1.102 on the Edinburg campus. For more information, email careercenter@utrgv.edu.

### Bench Press Competition

Test your strength in a **bench press contest** from 6 to 8 p.m. in the **University Recreation Center Tower** on the Edinburg campus. There will be two divisions, male and female. Winners will be determined by the weight lifted relative to body weight. For more information, call 665-7808.

### Pop on by

Learn about the **Learning Center** services from 1 to 3 p.m. in Music, Science and Learning Center 2.118 on the Brownsville campus. On the Edinburg campus, the event will take place at the same time in Edinburg Learning Center 100. Free popcorn will be served. For more information, call 882-8208 or 665-2585.

### Friday

#### 'Fortnite' Fridays

Students can play "**Fortnite**" for free and enjoy snacks from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the game room on the Edinburg campus. For more information, call 665-7890.

### Upcoming

#### Zombie Walk Food Drive

The fourth annual **Zombie Walk**, to benefit the **UTRGV Food Pantry**, will take place from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. Oct. 23 in the ELABS 107 Studio Theater on the Edinburg campus. Participants who donate five cans of food will receive a zombie makeover; those who donate seven cans will be entered in a raffle for a chance to win various items. For more information, email marianita.escamilla@utrgv.edu.

--Compiled by Jessica Mendez

# POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Sept. 24 and 29.



### Sept. 24

**12:20 p.m.:** A student reported that she was assaulted by another student in the Liberal Arts Building North on the Edinburg campus. The incident happened

Sept. 18 after a brief conversation. She said the male student grabbed her by the throat, kissed her and fondled her crotch area over her clothing. The case is under investigation.

**1:43 p.m.:** A student reported having an argument over a parking space with an unknown man in Lot B1 on the Brownsville campus. The man pushed the student, and when the student returned to his vehicle after class, he noticed that two tires on his vehicle had been slashed.

### Sept. 26

**12:58 a.m.:** An officer stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation on West Schunior Street in Edinburg. He determined the vehicle was displaying a registration sticker that belonged to another vehicle. The driver was cited for multiple traffic violations and the vehicle was released to a family

member.

**8:48 p.m.:** An officer stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation on West Schunior Street in Edinburg. A name check on the student revealed he had an active traffic warrant for \$340 from the Edinburg Police Department. The student was transported to the Edinburg City Jail.

### Sept. 27

**9:28 a.m.:** A staff member fell out of his electric wheelchair in the Health Affairs Building West on the Edinburg campus. The man complained of pain in his left knee. He declined emergency medical services.

**10:53 a.m.:** The Medical Education Building on the Edinburg campus reported a power outage. An officer who responded to the call observed smoke coming from the air-conditioning unit outside. The Edinburg Fire Department was dispatched to investigate the smoke. The smoke was steam emitting from an AC unit. The building was cleared for re-entry.

**12:57 p.m.:** A student employee was horseplaying with a co-worker on the Edinburg campus when they were told to stop by another student

employee, who was carrying a pocket knife. The student employee said he felt threatened, but witnesses stated that the knife was not used in a threatening manner. The case was referred to UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities.

### Sept. 28

**8:25 p.m.:** An officer who stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation in the 1600 block of West McIntyre Street in Edinburg detected a marijuana odor from inside the vehicle. A search of the vehicle found an open beer can, but no marijuana. The driver was cited for possession of alcohol by a minor, a class C misdemeanor, and was released at the scene.

### Sept. 29

**3:58 a.m.:** Emergency medical services responded to a student resident who was feeling ill in the Casa Bella Apartments on the Brownsville campus. The student was evaluated and her vitals were good. The student declined further examination.

--Compiled by Ana Trujillo

### PROGRAM

Continued from Page 1

female students, one of the things that I also believe is that as a facilitator, it's important to also understand that the male population has a significant role in body shaming the female body, and that leads to some problems," Rendon said.

Peer Facilitator Ivana Zamora found out about the program from Rendon and wanted to be a part of it.

"Accepting the body that you are in is a real challenge and we don't really talk about that," Zamora said.

For the fall semester, the program will consist of two groups on the Edinburg campus and one on the Brownsville campus. The Edinburg groups will start Oct. 15 and 16, respectively, and the Brownsville group on Oct. 18.

The program will consist of four consecutive sessions, one session per week, and the ideal number of participants per group is eight to 12,

Albert said.

Only UTRGV female students can participate in the program and the deadline to sign up is Oct. 14.

"Everyone is taught to believe that they have to be a certain way, or they have to look a certain way, and that, unfortunately, leads to lack of acceptance and we want to challenge that body ideal," Rendon said.

For more information, call 665-2574.



# VAQUERO VOICE



## Why is it important to vote?



"It's important to vote because we are the future generation, which means that, like, the decisions that we take right now or that we make, affect us in the future and as well as the ones that are to come after us. And, well, like, with everything going on, it's important because, like, it affects everyday lives, it affects the rights of many people and it's just an opportunity that's given, so why not take it?"

**Melissa Botello**  
Rehabilitation services sophomore



"It's important to vote, in my opinion, because it gives you a voice. It also gives voice to people that normally don't have a voice. People that don't feel like they ... don't have a voice specifically in how elections are or how our laws are made or how laws are put into effect. So, I guess people in lower income areas. And [voting] also gives you a part, or allows you to be part, of the democratic process we have here in America."

**Christian Julian**  
Information systems senior



"I think it's very important to vote because it's your word and you have the right to vote. I mean, might as well do it. And also, it could help the community out. Some people think it doesn't, but honestly it does. For example, in like this last election with Donald Trump versus Hillary Clinton, not a lot of people voted. And I thought Hillary was going to win and it ended up that Donald Trump won, so my opinion is go out and vote and do whatever you can to put your word out."

**Mia Morales**  
Mass communication senior



"Absolutely, I think voting is one of the major tenets of our country. People have died for the right to vote. People have fought so hard to make sure everyone has the right to vote. And I think people who don't vote, honestly, are just kind of giving that up. You know what I mean? I think that it's important in a democracy, you know? And without a right to vote, we are basically in a dictatorship."

**Seth Vargas**  
Music performance sophomore

--Compiled by Robert Benavidez Jr. and Aaliyah Garza

## Submit a Letter to the Editor

The Rider encourages letters but does not guarantee publication. We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar and content. Letters for The Rider may be sent to [therider@utrgv.edu](mailto:therider@utrgv.edu). All letters must be typed and no longer than 400 words. Letters must include the name, classification and phone number of letter's author or the letter cannot be published. Opinions expressed in The Rider are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rider or UTRGV administrators.



# The 'zero tolerance' game



**Eric Montoya**  
SPANISH EDITOR

As you walk to your school, job or meeting, thousands of immigrant children wander around in "mini-jails," also known as shelter facilities, yearning for the day they will be allowed to see their family again.

Last week, about 2,000 children were moved in the middle of the night from different shelters across the United States to Tornillo, Texas, a desert city that now looks like a new city: "tent city."

You don't have to be a psychologist to know that separating children from their parents is detrimental to their physical and mental health.

I have been shocked on different occasions while reading and listening to the countless testimonies of the poor treatment, the education deficiencies and the exasperating experiences these children go through.

Children cannot be prosecuted along with their parents; therefore, after being detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services send the children to the shelters while their parents are taken into custody by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), according to [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov).

The children have to stay in the shelters for days, or sometimes months, where they are only allowed one or two hours of recreation time per day until they can find a sponsor (parent, guardian, other adult relative, or foster care provider) or until their parents' or legal guardian's immigration cases are resolved.

This situation did not start today or last week. The spark that started the

fire was President Donald Trump's "zero tolerance" policy, which took effect on April 6. This policy "prohibits both attempted illegal entry and illegal entry into the United States by an alien," according to the U.S. Justice Department website, [www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-announces-zero-tolerance-policy-criminal-illegal-entry](http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-announces-zero-tolerance-policy-criminal-illegal-entry).

Although there have been many administration officials, including Trump, who claim the Democrats' laws are causing the separation of immigrant families, there are no existing laws or policies that force the government to separate such families. I find it interesting how several

the influx of immigrants. However, the reason why the "zero tolerance" policy has caused so much turmoil and chaos is simply because it involves innocent children.

As an article published by the Texas Tribune reports, there were 5,099 children living in shelters as of Sept. 20, according to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, which is the unit charged with regulating the "federally funded shelters." Also, the article states the Rio Grande Valley and the Houston area have the largest number of Texas shelters with 10 and nine facilities, respectively.

Private "nonprofit" companies, such as Southwest Key Programs, have been using the situation as a means of profit. Regardless of how they portray themselves in the media, thanks to the multiple testimonies from children, ex-employees and reporters, the credibility of these organizations has been broken.

Juan Sanchez, chief executive of Southwest Key Programs, nearly earned \$1.5 million in 2016, according to *The Washington Post*.

Even though Trump rescinded the "zero tolerance" policy in June, there have been reports of cases where children who cross the border are still being separated from their parents or guardians, besides the hundreds, if not thousands, of children who still remain in the shelters.

The confusing and exhausting journey is still far from over for many of the migrant children who are still housed in the shelters. Unfortunately, the issue will still be used as a political and profit-generating tool. This situation is just part of the same old political game, the only difference is that, here, the children are not playing.

**“ You don't have to be a psychologist to know that separating children from their parents is detrimental to their physical and mental health. ”**

Republican lawmakers and administration officials use the immigrant children issue as a tool for drawing supporters from the Democratic Party, even if it means creating false statements.

Contrary to what these officials claim, the Trump administration created and supported the "zero tolerance" policy. The Memorandum for Federal Prosecutors Along the Southwest Border by Attorney General Jeff Sessions released on April 6 clearly states that "if adopting such a policy requires additional resources, each [United States Attorney's Office along the Southwest Border] shall identify and request such additional resources."

There is no denial of the fact that every country has to have some kind of policy to control



# Life in the limelight

## UTPA alumnus makes his mark on the film industry

**Britney Valdez**  
A&E EDITOR

Ali Naqvi is a producer, director and independent filmmaker whose repertoire includes “Batman: The Dark Knight Rises,” “Parks and Recreation” and the HBO series “Westworld.” He attributes his success to the networking skills he learned during his time in the Rio Grande Valley.

Naqvi grew up in Louisiana and moved to the Valley, where he attended legacy institution University of Texas Pan American from 2003 until 2008 and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in communication.

Even though he thoroughly enjoyed his time as a student, he faced a common problem all graduates have—finding a job after graduation.

“I loved my experience at UTPA,” Naqvi said. “[I loved] the hands-on aspect of everything. I do know that afterwards, there wasn’t a good idea of what to do next. Usually after school or any kind of higher education, especially in this field, you make some kind of connections and stuff like that. We did make connections but only locally and there wasn’t a clear idea of, ‘OK, now what are we going to do with this degree, this piece of paper?’”

He emphasizes the importance of emerging films, students realizing their potential and making connections in cultural hubs such as Los Angeles and Austin.

“You finish [your degree] and you’re like, ‘OK now what?’ I guess I can make commercials locally, or work at a news station,” Naqvi said. “[That] is not all we can do. We can create local indie films and TV shows. We have great resources in the Valley and it’s a matter of finding them and mining them.”



PHOTO COURTESY

Ali Naqvi, a UTPA alumnus, is a producer, director and independent filmmaker who has worked on projects such as “Batman: Dark Knight Rises,” “Dumb and Dumber To” and “The Lone Ranger.” He also worked on the HBO series, “Westworld,” as a writer’s production assistant.

After graduation, he briefly worked at McAllen’s newspaper, *The Monitor*. Although he gained a lot of camerawork experience, he grew tired of the mundane, repetitive work and realized that he wanted a more fast-paced career.

Naqvi soon moved to Los Angeles and began scouting for jobs in film production. Although it was difficult to make connections at first, he was able to form the bonds he needed to become a prominent member of the industry.

“Sitting at home, I was getting a bit anxious because I didn’t know anybody [in Los Angeles],” he said. “I was doing a lot of [surfing] on Craigslist and some work websites like ProductionHUB and

Facebook. ... So, I did a lot of random independent films and freelances [where I’d] just jump on a random set or a few TV shows. And early on, I worked with a producer almost three weeks after I moved here and he kept saying, ‘Oh, work hard for me and I’ll get you on something great. I’ll get you on something big.’”

“I worked three movies with them and two were unpaid and for the third one, he got me paid. And the fourth was ‘Dark Knight Rises’ and I got going on that with him for seven days. He called me up and asked, ‘What are you doing next Wednesday after the third movie?’ I was like, ‘Nothing’ and he was like, ‘Cool, you’re working on

‘Dark Knight Rises.’ I just remember jumping up and down a lot that day.”

Naqvi’s hard work on “Batman: The Dark Knight Rises” put him on a list of production assistants where he was able to form connections, which later landed him on the set of “The Lone Ranger.”

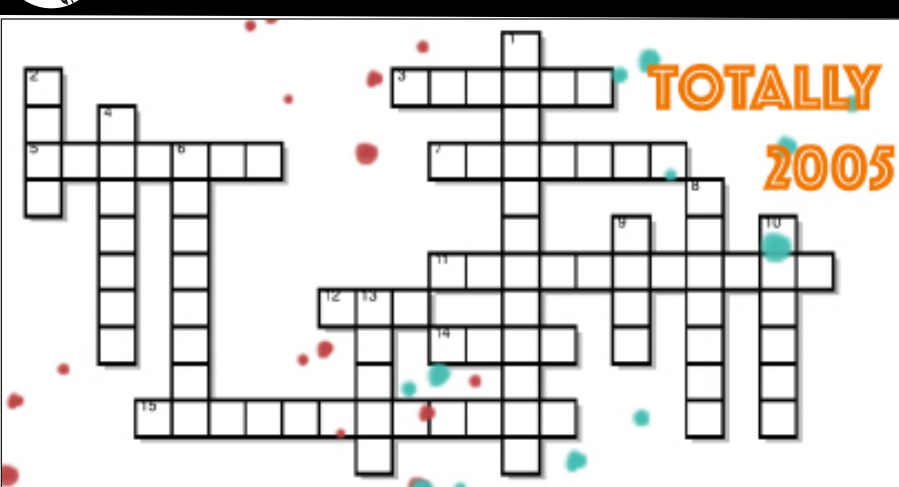
Even though the job is unpredictable, he still enjoys every part of it and shared one of his memorable experiences with *The Rider*.

“I helped when they came back from shooting “Aloha” in Hawaii with Bradley Cooper and Emma Stone,” Naqvi said. “They came back and they had this shipping container that was shipped back with all their supplies and everything that was left over from the show, and one of my jobs was that I got brought on to unload this shipping container. Some of [the jobs you get called on] are crazy, random odd jobs. At the end of that, it was like, ‘Hey, this workout bike that belonged to Bradley Cooper in filming is just going to get tossed in the trash. Does anybody want it?’ And we were just like, ‘We’ll take it!’ It’s the weird collection of random stories and memories. None of it seems real.”

Well aware of the growing interest students have in the unique career he has, Naqvi advises current students who are striving to make their name in the film business to take the plunge despite any fears they have.

“In the Valley, we come from a place where you get comfortable, you get complacent and you look around and say, ‘So, this is the level I’m at,’” he said. “Just do it. [That goes for] anybody in any industry. Even if you don’t know anybody who is doing it, there is someone [who is] and you will probably be able to do it, if not better than them.”

### CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- Across**
- This former president was sworn in for his second term this year. George \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Destructive, deadly Category 5 hurricane that struck the Gulf Coast, including New Orleans, Mississippi and Alabama. Hurricane \_\_\_\_\_.
  - This trial took place in June 2005, when pop star \_\_\_\_\_ Jackson was charged with molesting a 13-year-old boy. He was found not guilty.
  - This movie/video game rental company went out of business in 2011 due to competition from emerging online competitors. It closed its remaining stores in 2014.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ prices rose sharply after trouble in the Middle East and later because of Hurricane Katrina.
  - These actors, who starred in “Mr. and Mrs. Smith,” made their relationship public this year. Brad \_\_\_\_\_ and Angelina Jolie.
  - The fourth movie installment of the Harry Potter franchise debuted this year. “Harry Potter and the \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Down**
- This brand is well known for producing its velour tracksuits worn famously by Jennifer Lopez and Paris Hilton.
  - These shell necklaces were all the rage in high schools, especially among boys.
  - Her song “Hollaback Girl!” was the most downloaded song of the year, Gwen \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Apple released the first generation \_\_\_\_\_. This mp3 player featured a screen and served as a replacement for the iPod Mini.
  - This social media platform was all the rage before Facebook and was previously owned by Justin Timberlake.
  - Microsoft released this gaming console in North America this year, \_\_\_\_\_360.
  - A brand of sneaker with a removable wheel that allows users to glide similar to skates.
  - Green Day’s album “American \_\_\_\_\_” became the band’s career comeback and featured songs such as “Boulevard of Broken Dreams” and “Wake Me Up When September Ends.” It also won the Grammy Award for Best Rock Album in 2005.

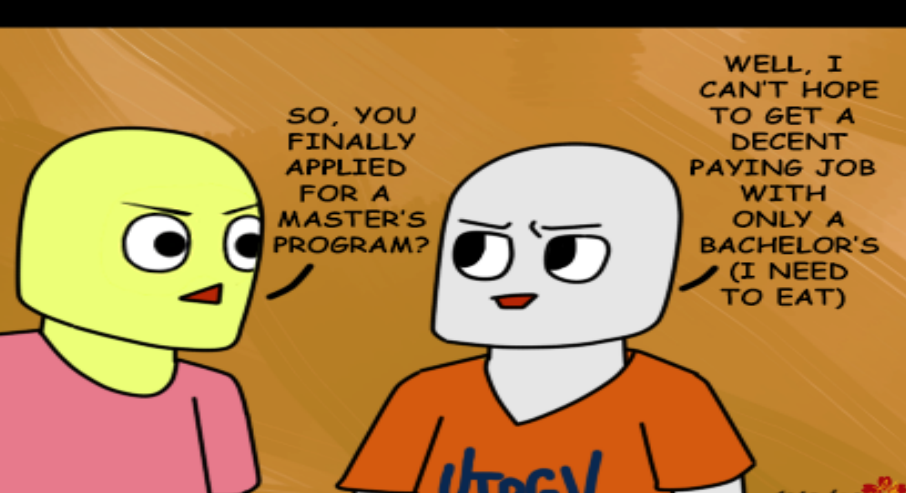
By Britney Valdez and Laia Vite

### Scribbles & Thoughts By Laia Vite

GETTING A DEGREE...



IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU HOPED FOR





# Heading to the top

## UTRGV home to Polish national team player

**Juanita Maldonado**  
SPORTS EDITOR

Kinga Szemik, a native of Pietrzykowice, Bielsko, Poland, and junior goalie for the UTRGV Women's Soccer Team, had a dream of being a goalkeeper in the U.S. She worked hard to achieve her dream and is now a key component, not only for the Vaqueras, but also for the Polish Women's National Soccer Team.

On Oct. 11, Szemik will return to Poland to play some friendly matches with the national team. However, the team is quite familiar with her because she had the opportunity to train with the team during the summer.

Szemik said she is excited to represent her country.

"To be honest, I'm so excited, I'm so happy," she said. "There is nothing better for an athlete than to be able to represent your country at the highest level in the world, and that's just a dream come true.

"It came true to me and all I can do is keep working hard and just prove to all of them that I deserve to be there and I deserve to play."

Szemik recalls running after a soccer ball since she began walking.

Her passion for the sport increased during her childhood because of her brothers, who were always playing soccer, and it is one of the most popular sports in Poland.

At 8 years old, Szemik



Aaliyah Garza/THE RIDER

Vaqueras goalkeeper Kinga Szemik practices in the rain Sept. 28 at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex in Edinburg.

joined her first soccer club, but it was not easy for her because the club was composed of an all-men's squad.

She said playing with men had its ups and downs.

"It's very interesting, actually, because when I look back at that experience I'm like, 'Why did I keep on playing soccer?'" Szemik said. "It wasn't easy because, especially at that age, boys are like, 'Oh, what is she doing here? She's a girl. Can she even kick a ball?'"

"It took a lot of hard work and faith in myself to be able to stay there and just prove to them that I can do it and I can

play as good as you are."

Although it was difficult for Szemik to accept the criticism of the men, she said it did help her grow as a person.

"It made me a tougher athlete that is not afraid of challenges," she said. "It also helped me improve as a person, I would say, because I am not the kind of person that would give up easily, you know?"

At age 12, Szemik first heard about a chance of coming to America and being able to play with a scholarship for a university. Since then, she kept the thought in the back

of her head.

The biggest breakthrough in Szemik's career was becoming the starting goalkeeper on the U-17 Polish National Team and winning a gold medal at the 2013 Union of European Football Association Women's Under 17 Championship after defeating Sweden in the finals.

She said winning a gold medal was unbelievable.

"That was amazing," Szemik said. "First of all, we go to the finals. No one believed in us. We go there and there were such big teams to stand in front of and big opponents

like Spain and Sweden, which are the best teams in Europe, so no one believed in us.

"The experience as a player is amazing, you know, like you're the best in Europe in your age group. It was a big achievement for us as players, for us as people and also for us as a country because, you know, in Poland, they are still in the level where there is a lot of stereotype towards little girls playing soccer or, like, women and soccer in general."

After winning the gold medal, Szemik went on to play with the U-20 National Team. During those years, she was a three-time honoree for Best Young Goalkeeper in the country.

She joined UTRGV's soccer team in 2016 and finished the season ranked 41 in NCAA goals against average (1.005).

In 2017, Tylko Kobięcy Futbol, a major women's soccer website in Poland, ranked her as the third-best Polish goalkeeper.

This season, Szemik has been named the WAC Defensive Player of the Week three times.

She has had quite the success, but her biggest goal is to one day play at the professional level. She would not mind playing for any team, but if she had to pick just one, it would be Orlando Pride of Orlando, Fla.

For now, Szemik's primary focus is for the Vaqueras to win the WAC Championship.

# Dancing Vaqueras

## Volleyball team comes up with unique warmup

**Juanita Maldonado**  
SPORTS EDITOR

With more than 1,400 likes and 486 retweets on a video posted on Twitter, the UTRGV Women's Volleyball Team became an overnight sensation dancing to "Fergalicious" during warmup, which features a rapping player.

The idea originated from Assistant Coach Vini Baigan. He told the Vaqueras he wanted to develop a cool warmup for the new year, and they agreed.

Senior captain Alexandra Ecker said she agreed with the idea right away because it meant replacing the team's old dynamic workout.

"We used to do, like, a really boring warmup, called dynamic warmup, and we've done it since my sophomore year, so we used to get really bored of it," Ecker said. "We just thought it'd be fun to incorporate kind of a Zumba-type dance or something for warmup, just to switch it up and have fun during warmup."

After the idea was presented, the team developed a "dance committee," led by senior Gyselle Zayas, junior Barbara Silva and freshman Carter Helmcamp. The three Vaqueras are usually seen leading the team in the dance.

When trying to come up with dance moves, the committee knew it had to incorporate jumping to get their heartbeat going and lunges to replace traditional stretching. Within a week, the committee had already developed



Laia Vite/THE RIDER

The UTRGV Women's Volleyball Team practices at the Edinburg Parks & Recreation Center gym last Tuesday.

a dance.

The team dances to Shakira's "Waka Waka" and Fergie's "Fergalicious," among others.

Aside from dancing, the team also has a rapper, junior Paulina Ramirez. Ramirez said she began singing for the team when there was no music for stretching.

"We went to Utah State University Invitational Tournament, we asked for music and then there wasn't any when we were about to start," Ramirez said. "We always start like 15 minutes before, so we were like, 'OK, we are just going to start it without anything.'

"But, then I don't know. I just, like, went up to the dudes and I was just, like, 'Since you don't have music, can I have a microphone?' and I would just sing the songs. I just started singing 'Party in the USA.'"

From that moment on, the team decided that if there was no music, then Ramirez would be in charge of singing.

If you would like to see the Vaqueras' unique warmup, catch them in action at one of their games. Their next home game is at 7 p.m. Saturday against New Mexico State University.

## This week's home game schedule

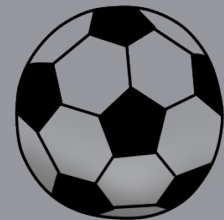
### Volleyball

• 7 p.m. Saturday vs. New Mexico State University at UTRGV Fieldhouse



### Women's Soccer

• 1 p.m. Sunday vs. Seattle University at UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex







Joahana Segundo/THE RIDER

Hundreds of middle school students from the Rio Grande Valley came together during HESTEC's Student Leadership Day to learn about a wide range of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers and gain motivation through speakers.

**HESTEC**  
*Continued from Page 1*

the bubbles, which released smoke. Biberdorf advises women pursuing STEM careers to never give up on their dreams. "The biggest advice I have for anybody, especially women or minorities going into the STEM field is you have to persevere," she said. "... Go after your dream, and no matter what anybody says just ... don't ever pay any attention, just move right on." Earlier in the day, women leaders from UTRGV and the community shared words of wisdom. Denise Palacios, Student Government Association president, and Linda Tovar, master of ceremonies for Latina Day and Public Affairs senior manager for H-E-B, encouraged the girls to celebrate and be proud of their heritage. **Student Leadership Day** On Student Leadership Day, Navy

Recruiting District Cmdr. Jeffrey Michael Reynolds spoke to over 400 students about his struggles in his career path. Reynolds said leadership is often used by its definition, but it is more than someone with a title. "When you think of a leader, you tend to think of somebody in a position of authority," he said. Reynolds stressed to the middle schoolers that the leaders did a lot to be where they are now and that it will take a lot of work to get there. "It's not just a position," he said. "For every one of those leaders, for every leader you see, there's a long string of failures, and a long string of challenges, and a long string of things that led up to the point where they did what they did." Later that day, Derek Greenfield, a consultant and motivational speaker, provided the students with laughter and entertainment as he spoke about the importance of teamwork, confidence and believing in yourself.



Jessica Mendez/THE RIDER

Angel Lopez, an electrical engineering junior and member of the UTRGV STEMs Mentor Club, teaches fifth-grade students from A.X. Benavides Elementary School the relationship between predator and prey, as part of the HESTEC STEM + ME Expo last Tuesday on the Brownsville campus.

In an interview with *The Rider*, he said he hopes his speeches give the students an idea of how to find their inner strength. "I hope they have an even greater sense that they are incredible and amazing," Greenfield said, "and that they have all the gifts and talents inside of them to accomplish whatever dreams they set for themselves." He said young people are sometimes surrounded by negativity and it is important to remind them of what they can accomplish. "They're not the future, they're the present," Greenfield said. "Right now, they have all the gifts and talents inside of them and when they can come together, realize their greatness, get the support of the community, indeed, everything is possible for them." **HESTEC STEM + ME Expo** Elementary and middle school students across the Rio Grande Valley attended the first HESTEC STEM + ME Expo on the Brownsville campus as part

of HESTEC Week at UTRGV. Milton Hernandez, program coordinator for the Division of Governmental and Community Relations, said the purpose of the event is to raise awareness of the science fields through exhibits. Exhibitors on the Brownsville campus last Tuesday included Estero Llano Grande State Park, Resaca de la Palma State Park, Gladys Porter Zoo, Texas Wildlife Association, Brownsville Public Utilities Board, Workforce Solutions, Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park and the UTRGV STEMs Mentor Club. On the Edinburg campus, organizations such as Wells Fargo, International Business Machines Corp., H-E-B and the colleges of the university exhibited throughout the week. --Jessica Mendez, Aaliyah Garza and Ana Trujillo contributed to this report.



For over 30 years the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program has sought qualified applicants to promote grass-roots international exchange through English language education throughout Japan.

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*Answers to last week's puzzle*

fallen stars

JOHN LEWIS  
BOB MARLEY  
WINEHOUSE  
KURT COBAIN  
MICHAEL JACKSON  
TUPAC  
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.  
JACKSON  
PRELLEY  
FRANK  
BOB MARLEY  
HINCE  
CURRY  
WHITNEY HOUSTON  
JIMMY HINSON  
AFRANK  
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.  
JACKSON  
TUPAC  
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.  
JACKSON  
PRELLEY  
FRANK  
BOB MARLEY  
HINCE  
CURRY

**PET HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST**

Email a photo of your pet in costume to [THERIDER@UTRGV.EDU](mailto:THERIDER@UTRGV.EDU) by 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12. Voting will take place Oct. 15-24. Winners will be featured in our special Halloween issue!

Please include the following information in your submission: pet's name, costume name, owner's full name, major and classification, or title. Contest is open to all UTRGV community members.



# El encuentro de dos mundos

## Día de la Raza se celebra este viernes

**Eric Montoya**

EDITOR DE ESPAÑOL

En un día como este, el explorador proveniente de Génova, Italia, Cristóbal Colón, estaba a solo cuatro días de realizar un evento que cambio rotundamente el curso de la historia: el Descubrimiento de América.

Aunque no es un día festivo oficial en Texas, el Día de Colón (en inglés, *Columbus Day*) será celebrado el día de hoy por varias ciudades, estados y países.

El Día de Colón se celebra en Estados Unidos cada año en el segundo lunes del mes de octubre. Durante esta celebración se festeja la llegada de Colón (en italiano, Cristoforo Colombo) a las Américas.

En una entrevista con *The Rider*, Manuel Medrano, profesor emérito del departamento de historia de UTRGV, dijo que a pesar de la controversia que existe respecto a quien descubrió América por primera vez, se le atribuyó el descubrimiento a Colón debido a que así fue como empezó a documentarse por escrito.

“Así fue como empezó a aparecer en los libros”, dijo Medrano. “Cristóbal Colón fue una persona muy compleja, quiero decir, era egocéntrico en muchas formas. Quería el crédito por las cosas. Él era ese tipo de persona que te cae muy bien o te cae muy mal, tú sabes, pero ellos no escribieron sobre su visita a América la cual fue en un lugar llamado L’Anse aux Meadows en el año 980 o a principios de los 1000”, dijo Medrano. “Esto fue considerado más como una creencia popular o mito en vez de historia real. Así que, ellos estuvieron aquí 500 años antes que Colón, pero nadie articuló su importancia en los libros de historia”.

Él dijo existen pruebas de que otras personas estuvieron en América antes de Colón.

“Los primeros europeos que vinieron a América son reconocidos como los nórdicos, los vikingos, tu sabes, pero ellos no escribieron sobre su visita a América la cual fue en un lugar llamado L’Anse aux Meadows en el año 980 o a principios de los 1000”, dijo Medrano. “Esto fue considerado más como una creencia popular o mito en vez de historia real. Así que, ellos estuvieron aquí 500 años antes que Colón, pero nadie articuló su importancia en los libros de historia”.

Él dijo que hasta el día de hoy se sabe que los vikingos fueron los primeros europeos en llegar a América. Sin embargo, el explicó que en ese tiempo se nombró América en nombre del



FOTO ILUSTRACIÓN THE RIDER

cartógrafo y explorador Américo Vesputio (en italiano, Amerigo Vespucci) quien trazó los primeros mapas del nuevo continente.

Muchos países latinoamericanos, como en el caso de México, han optado por festejar el Día de la Raza, en vez de celebrar la llegada de Colón específicamente.

El Día de la Raza se celebra anualmente el 12 de octubre. En este se conmemoran la herencia hispana de América Latina y se rinde homenaje a los varios países hispanohablantes que fueron conquistados por España.

Medrano dijo a *The Rider* que la llegada de Colón a América “trajo la tecnología europea ... religión y cultura, pero [también] extrajo fuerza laboral indígena, trajo enfermedades europeas, había mucha esclavitud indígena y esta esclavitud se institucionalizó cuando [Hernán] Cortés estableció las encomiendas”.

Él dijo que una forma de entender el resultado del encuentro de los dos mundos es por medio de la idea de la obra literaria *La raza cósmica* por parte del escritor mexicano y secretario de educación del mismo país en 1920, José Vasconcelos.

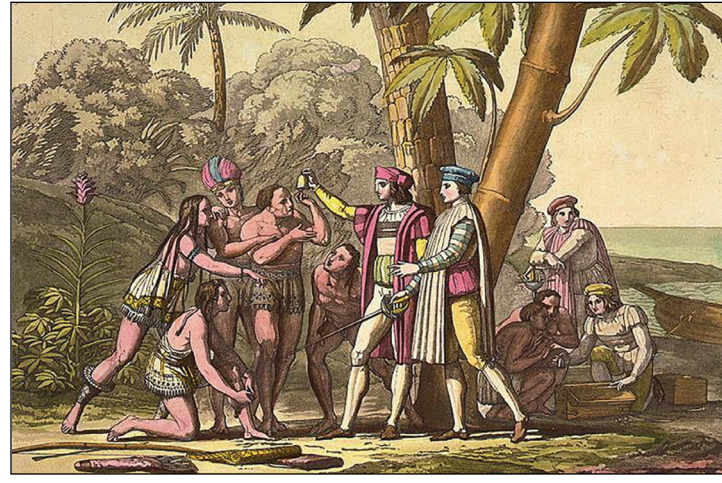
“La llegada de Colón cambio al mundo ... pero [Vasconcelos] dijo que la vida mexicana debería ser una síntesis basada en la cultura indígena que trascendió las limitaciones de

los europeos y lo que trajeron”, dijo Medrano. “Él dijo que el resultado de este proceso sería ... la raza cósmica”.

Andres Garza, un estudiante de último año en ciencias biomédicas en UTRGV, dijo que el Descubrimiento de América no fue beneficioso para los nativos americanos.

“El día de Colón no es día tan bonito para los nativos o para cualquiera de esta área”, dijo Garza. “Entiendo porque se celebra el Día de la Raza. Tiene una buena razón para existir. En el día de Colón [se celebra que] ... los españoles descubrieron América, pero esto no resultó bien para la gente de estas zonas”.

Joel Canales, estudiante de tercer año en licenciatura de inglés en UTRGV, dijo que el Descubrimiento de América es importante porque permitió la migración de europeos a lo que hoy es América.



en una influencia separada”, dijo él. “Aquí en la frontera tenemos la española, indígena y la de EE.UU. Lo puedes ver en la comida, lo vez en la codificación del lenguaje, lo vez en algunos de los códigos o leyes que aún permanecen que son parte españolas y parte estadounidenses”.



PHOTO COURTESY MARCO ROJAS

Rocket Launchers with their Space Bound II Rocket for the Spaceport America Cup in 2017.

### ROCKET

*Continued from Page 1*

talked about the competition with the dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Science.

“Before applying to the

competition, I had to speak with the dean,” Rojas said.

“The dean and I agreed that the college was [going] to spend their part into scholarships for students who want to have a career in the aerospace engineering

field ... other organizations [and] ... the facilities.”

If it wins, the organization will use its share of the prize for research and to improve their equipment.

The competition is divided into three phases: Phase

1, which is the preliminary design deadline; Phase 2, the critical design deadline; and Phase 3, which is the launch readiness deadline. It is a two- to three-year contest, depending on the launching window.

The first colleges are launching their rockets in May 2020, but they have time to try until December 2021.

Rocket Launchers will receive help from staff members, but their main adviser is Stephen Crown, a mechanical engineering professor.

“The faculty advisers are there to help us out in ... math problems that we just cannot solve, or give us advising [on] what kind of material we can use or process,” Rojas said.

Crown said he feels honored and proud of the organization’s accomplishments.

“I’m sure that there are many other good schools ... but I don’t think we are second to anyone,” he said. “We have an excellent group of students, faculty [and] an excellent university that

supports good work.”

Jose Infante, an active member of the organization and a mechanical engineering senior, said he feels excited about the competition, because he wanted to get involved in aerospace engineering.

“Everything I learn from this I will ... hopefully use in my future career,” Infante said.

The organization welcomes students who wish to join the competition. Since it is a two- to three-year process, sophomores, juniors, graduate students and students in the STEM field are preferred.

Rojas said if the organization wins the contest, it will be an important breakthrough for Hispanics in aerospace engineering.

“We are a Hispanic university and my team is a Hispanic team,” he said. “... We really want to win this, not only for ourselves, but because we know we represent our ethnicity, and our people back home.”



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