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Student organizations gear up for the upcoming elections

By HENRY ARRABIDE

With the state primary election a little over a month away on April 3, student political organizations are hosting events aimed at getting students more involved in the political process.

“Our first and foremost issue is to motivate and assist in getting our student body involved and educated in our local, state and national politics,” said Ana Martinez, senior political science major and president of the University Democrats.

Martinez said the University Democracy is working to establish an organization that will stay active not just during the election season but for years to come. They plan to work with MECHA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan) to screen the documentary “Precious Knowledge,” which explores the current controversy with Mexican American studies in Arizona, sometime in late February.

“Th e first and foremost issue is to get organized and registered voters,” said Louis Southard, president of the College Republicans.
Neon Desert announces line up, people complain

BY KRISTAL OBLINGER

On Feb. 16, the Neon Desert Music Festival announced their 2012 festival. The festival offers a set of bands (so there are still more to come) that will be performing during the festival that takes place May 26 in Downtown El Paso. The list ranges from local bands such as Sound On Sound and Johnny Costello, to the big acts like Moby, Sparta and Ghostland Observatory. This is one phase one of their announcement of acts, which adds up to a full 19-set show at the moment.

According to the Neon Desert Music Festival’s Facebook page, fans are already complaining that there is nothing for them or that there is only one band they want to see. Here is the overall issue with concert series like this (this will be able to be applied to movie series such as the Plaza Theater Classic and other series that take place around the city as well): these shows are targeting niche audiences and fans and tend to exclude a lot of people.

Let’s take Coachella for example. This article is by no means saying Coachella is a better show because it has its flaws, which I’ll discuss in a moment. Coachella finds a way to bring all sorts of different acts together—from hip-hop to rap to look (at these all as broad genres), the attenders are provided with a show that tries to incorporate every genre in order to please the masses, but it also commits the same mistake that Neon Desert has made. Everyone has their own taste in music and many times this can cause an outrage when fans have to pay a lot of money just to see one band. When a lineup offers a long list of artists that people have never heard of, the mainstream audiences tend to be turned off from spending money on their product.

Many times, the reason these shows garner so much criticism is because they are marketing to a special group and only offer the masses one or two acts that they recognize and can connect with. These shows rely heavily on obscurity, which may bring out the rebel-sticking crowd, but they lose out on making the show bigger because there is less of a cash flow coming in. That same rebel-sticking crowd will then get turned off the next year when the show doesn’t try to bring an even bigger set. What one ends up with is an over-priced opening act.

So what is a good model? A good model should find away to incorporate the city as a whole, meaning you not only find a way to engage audiences with big names, but offer an even larger variety that works outside of the confines of the concert arena. The big one that does this is South By Southwest. SXSW differs because it turns not only the staging area into the show, but also involves local venues that allow for an even larger flow of money and talent to come through the city. Local bands, bands from out of city of state and even big-name groups will play around the city in special secret shows. This benefits the community and brings money into the pockets of both the organizers and the businesses, which then allows for more shows like this to come through and inevitably helps growth. The niche crowds get what they want and the general public has an opportunity to pick and choose what they want to do. Once again, though, the issue of an over-priced opening act occurs here as well, but it is smoothed over after years of building an audience that trusts in the way things are done. Coachella has the same kind of following.

The problem with Neon Desert is that it is still trying to achieve itself in the community, so it’s still playing a game of Russian roulette with its audience every time they announce the lineup. Although El Pasoans would like to think that everyone in the city is open to trying new things, the honest truth is that many are not. As young people, we also like to think that we are the defining population that everyone should cater to and that everyone should follow our lead in being open to new people and experiences, but we are not the broad market and we cannot ask everyone to suddenly change.

I feel the lineup is wonderful. There are some bands I have never heard of, but I am very willing to see and listen to them. So what am I trying to say? I’m trying to say this: that Neon Desert is a good idea, but it still has a long way to go before it can bring the names many general audiences want to hear. This festival is still building its fan base, but it cannot do that by pushing so many away. It needs to find a balance between fans, the community and the general audience.

By Krystal Oblinger may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

POUT RESULTS
Was the money you spent on Valentine’s Day worth it?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
This week’s poll question: Do like this year’s line up for Neon Desert?

46% NO
54% YES

SPEAK YOUR MIND
Submit a letter to the editor!

Letters will be edited for clarity and brevity. Letters over 250 words are subject to editing to fit available space. Please include full name, street address and telephone number and e-mail address, plus major, classification and/or title if applicable. Address and phone number will be used for verification only.

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on Super Tuesday, March 6. This is a day when the majority of states hold their primary elections, and typically the results indicate which candidate will win their party’s nomination. On March 26, the College Republicans plan to visit Austin for the state GOP convention, which will be held on the floor of the Texas state house of representatives.

Aside from the two-party Democrat-Republican clubs, a third student organization has formed in support of GOP candidate Ron Paul and his libertarian ideology.

“Youth for Ron Paul’s main objective is to identify, recruit, educate and mobilize students and young activists to elect Ron Paul president of the United States,” said Isabel Gonzalez, rehabilitation counseling graduate student and president of Youth for Ron Paul. “We expect to do that by delivering Ron Paul’s message of liberty, sound money and diplomatic foreign affairs.”

Youth for Ron Paul will hold a question and answer session and a presentation on the candidate at 7 p.m., Feb 22 at The Percolator Café.

No matter what political affiliation, all three groups hope their fellow students will get involved. The University Democrats hold their meetings at 3 p.m. every Tuesday at the Bhutan Lounge. The next College Republicans’ meeting will be at 7 p.m. Feb. 23, at room 307 in the College of Business Administration Building.

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Latino voters expected to break turnout record

Ben Monterrosa, left, Clarissa Martinez-De Soto, Rudy Lopez and Maria Teresa Kumar participate in a discussion Feb. 8 about Latino voters moderated by Arturo Vargas, far right.

WASHINGTON — Latino voters are likely to turn out to vote in record numbers in November, according to experts, and in some states will determine who wins.

According to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), an estimated 12.2 million Latinos will vote this year, a 25.6 percent increase from 2008.

“We want to show up to vote because we want to see transformative change happen,” said Clarissa Martinez-De Soto, director of immigration energizes voters because it is personal.

“The growth in the Latino population shapes elections today and the future of voter turnout will be determined by young people. According to NALEO, a fourth of young people in the country are Latinos, and in states such as California and Texas, almost half of all teens are Latino.

“There is a political awakening that is happening, that is not being seen by either party,” Kumar said. “I think that is where the opportunity is. We’re part of the menu and not at the table, and until they start making sure we’re part of the menu and not at the table, people are not going to start talking about the real issues.”

Seminole Barrows, senior project media major at UTEP in San Antonio will present the speech “Coretta Scott King’s legacy in Rosa Parks: A Legacy of Social Justice,” at 6:15 p.m., Feb. 23 at the Blumberg auditorium at the UTEP Library.

Black History Month events continue

February is not over. Students still have an opportunity to participate in Black History Month events on campus.

Michael Hurd will speak about black women educators at 6:15 p.m., Feb. 22 at the Blumberg Auditorium at the UTEP Library.

Rosalyn Tiftong, history professor emerita at Morgan State University, will give a speech “Black Female Entrepreneurs: Madam C.J. Walker and Cathy Hughes,” at 6:15 p.m., Feb. 23 at the Blumberg Auditorium at the UTEP Library.

The last speech will take place Feb. 28 and features Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, English professor at Spelman College. She will present the speech “Coretta Scott King’s Beloved Community” at 6:15 p.m., at El Paso Natural Gas Conference Center.

Movies in honor of Black History month will also continue to be shown at the Union Building East, Acacia Room 102A. They are “Set It Off” at 6:15 p.m., Feb. 22 at and “Dreamgirls” at 6:15 p.m., Feb. 28.

Ancient tribe exhibit featured at Centennial Museum

Students are welcome to visit the latest exhibit at the Centennial Museum that will feature the runners of the Rarámuri, or Tarahumara tribe. The exhibit will stay up until May 5.

The tribe is famous for their ability to run long distances through the Sierra Mountains in Chihuahua. Photographers Diana Molina documented their life and culture for about 20 years and their photos will be on display in the exhibit.

ULTProфессor one of 20 who spoke at Canada’s largest teachers’ conference

Bill Robertson, associate provost and associate professor of teacher education, was one of 20 chosen by the Calgary City Teachers’ Convention Association to speak at this year’s convention.

Robertson is also known around campus as “Dr. Skateboard” because of his knowledge of the mathematics of skateboards. He presented about the physics of skateboards to 300 middle school students as well as led two workshops about Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

ULTPro conference to showcase feresearch on STEM teaching

UTEP is hosting the second annual Kaleidoscope of Teaching Math and Science Conference Feb. 25. This year’s event is open to the public.

The conference is set for 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Feb. 25 at the Undergraduate Learning Center on the UTEP campus. Registration runs through Feb. 20 on the conference website, science.utep.edu/kaleidoscope. The cost is $50 for UTEP students and $50 for members of the public.

ULTPro symposium on energy science and engineering puts out call for papers

The second annual Southwest Energy Science and Engineering Symposium at UTEP has issued a call for papers.

The interdisciplinary conference is accepting papers through March 1 on all topics related to energy science and engineering. Those interested in submitting their scientific findings can visit engineering.utep.edu/ses for more information.

The symposium — to be held at 8 a.m., March 24 at the DoubleTree hotel — is intended to provide formal and informal interactions between students, scholars and industrial professionals in the southwest region. The event will feature keynote speaker Robert R. Romanyov Jr., Ph.D., technology manager for Power Systems Advanced Research at the National Energy Technology Laboratory under the U.S. Department of Energy.

ULTPro L.I.V.E. — 21st Century Scholars

One hundred UTEP students have been named UTEP 21st Century Scholars. They represent the best of untapped, high-potential talent at the university. The 21st Century Scholars will be engaged in a day of programming that emphasizes essential career skills including communicating in a professional setting, networking, self-promotion and working in a collaborative environment.
Costello returns to the studio and prepares for Neon Desert performance

By JERRY ALDAZ
The Prospector

Johnny Costello sings dirty rock and roll in the new album he will be working on in the studio. On Dec. 16 of last year, Costello returned to the studio and prepares for Neon Desert performance, saying “Then it swelled up into six months of getting down.”

It is a late Thursday night at the Lowbrow Palace and Costello is thumping turbulent rock and roll blues on his cherry red Epiphone Dot electric guitar. After his gig, he heads to the patio to cool down.

The stage for “Epic Rap Battles of History,” memorable rivalries including Hitler vs. Darth Vader, Beethoven vs. Justin Bieber and Abe Lincoln vs. Chuck Norris, these lyrical skits use widely-known references to deliver comedic blows. Beyond elaborate costumes, props and colorful visuals, this show interacts with audiences by allowing them to determine battle champions and vote on future rivalries. If desiring to sing along, these gangster battles are available through iTunes.

Costello said he is evolving drastically as a musician. On Dec. 16 of last year, Costello released his six-song EP and is now back in the studio recording a full-length record.

“Boobs like Black Music Cycle Club, Black Lips and Black Keys have really influenced me in a way that I started writing really dirty rock and roll,” Costello said. “It’s more fun to play, more fun to see people’s reactions and they get really into it.”

Berry has been assisting Costello as a drummer since “Crossroads of the Southern Pacific.” He said Costello’s new record is bigger, more cohesive and faster rock with more drums and heavy base lines.

“His sound is more cohesive and he has a better understanding of what he wants the entire record to sound like as a whole,” Berry said. “It’s definitely more electrically driven, not as acoustic.”

According to Costello, the recording process in the studio is moving along fast and unfolding naturally.

“We planned two days to do drum tracks and knocked out drum tracks the first day and I’m almost done with the guitar tracks,” Costello said. “There’s really cool ideas as far as different tunings on the snare; really cool concepts that have kind of been created on the spot and we just did it and then we’re like, ‘Whoa, that’s cool!’

Costello said he is eager to start getting his new material out.

“With this record, I’m really excited about it. It’s going to be loud and something I really want to promote,” Costello said. “Hopefully, I can get it out in Paste Magazine, SPIN, just really work hard at promoting it and booking shows, start playing festivals and put myself and the album out as much as I can.”

Costello is currently working on a deal to play 11 shows with Frank Turner in Australia and is officially booked as one of the acts that will be featured at this year’s Neon Desert Music Festival. “I already have six more songs I want to do for a new record and then just keep going, keep creating and putting out as much music as I can,” Costello said.

Emmanuel Aratz, senior marketing and finance major, said he liked Costello’s folk-rock music sound and that he is anxious to see where his new record will go.

“I thought his music was really chill and very different. When finding out that he is going into another genre it surprised me,” Aratz said. “Overall, I guess only time will tell if this new style will work for him in his second album. As the good musician he is, I think he will succeed, I look forward to hearing his new album.”

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the organizers brought 29 acts under the Sun City sky.

“There is no reason for us not to have something like this,” Paul said. “We book a lot of shows and we see a lot of bands who want to come into the city and play, and we are trying really hard to be able to bring these people here.” So far, the festival’s main headliners for phase one consists of a DJ set by Molby, Sparta, Ghostland Observatory and Desorden with performances by Mexicanos with Guns, Sound On Sound, Yacht and many others.

“We are focusing on growing slowly and bringing something new to the city,” Paul said. “For now we are always going to focus on electronic, Latin, rock and indie rock music. As time progresses, hopefully we can incorporate more genres, but at the moment these genres are very important to El Paso.”

The first year, the production company did a survey in order to identify what El Pasoans wanted to see in a festival. Paul said they received 1,000 replies that showed that those genres were what the community wanted to hear. Despite last year’s success, the group received criticism on their Facebook page this year due to what many called a “lack of diversity in the music.”

The Neon Desert launch party took place Feb. 16 at Lowbrow Palace, and many people attended in order to show support for the festival.

“The place was packed and at some points throughout the night there was a line to get in,” Paul said. “The people of El Paso don’t get nearly as much credit as they deserve for being passionate music fans. The launch party (Feb. 16) showed that they love music, and we are so appreciative of that.”

Ana Martinez, junior sociology major, was excited about the launch party and enthusiastic about the release of the names of bands that would be performing. She said the mystery behind phase two also added to the excitement.

“They are bringing some new people, some people are toned down, it’s pretty cool,” Martinez said. “It’s getting hyped up; the bands are amazing that are here and are coming. I really like it a lot.”

Martinez enjoys the opportunities this kind of event brings to the city as a whole and feels it will help broaden people’s experiences.

“It’s really cool to see creative art and live music in El Paso. I think it’s great,” Martinez said. “It’s something for people to come and join and discover a bit about different cultures and different sides of El Paso.”

The cost for tickets range from $55 for a standard pass to $150 for a VIP pass, which offers a catered meal by The Magic Pan, fresh fruits and treats from Edible Arrangements (two of the sponsors), re-entry and other opportunities.

“I think if we sat here and said that we wanted to be like Coachella or South by Southwest, we’d be setting ourselves up for failure,” Paul said. “There is nothing wrong with shooting for the stars, but we are better off taking this little by little. Do we want to be a big festival? Yes, we do, but we’re three friends who all still have day jobs and work on this during the weekends and we don’t have any money or big investors. We just want to continue to try to bring bigger bands and bring enjoyment to the city.”

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Senior guard Baiba Eglite had to overcome. Losing her mother, while being thousands of miles away, has been a wound that basketball has helped her heal. “At first it was hard, but I was just trying to stay busy and not let myself down. I tried staying positive and thinking that everything happens for a reason that something bigger is coming,” Eglite said. “That’s why I just focused on basketball, school and graduating so I can make my mom proud, because that’s what she wanted.”

Eglite transferred from Riga, Latvia in 2008 after playing for the national team and competing in the under-18 and under-20 European championships. She was forced to sit out her freshman year due to NCAA transfer rules.

Head coach Keith Adams considers Eglite one of her best shooters and team players and perhaps an even better person. A few days prior to the Feb. 9 64-56 home win against Marshall, Adams made her admiration for Eglite known during practice.

“Today before we started practice, I called her over and I wrote something on my practice sheet and I showed her,” Adams said as she pointed to the note. “I’m proud of her. I told her that today.”

On top of sitting out her freshman year, Eglite tore her ACL in the summer of 2010, which forced her to miss the team’s first 19 games. Eglite attended summer school that year, which was when her mother passed. “She is one of the strongest people I have ever been around and her attitude is so positive. You can just watch her. She’s always got a smile on her face, she’s got a really good spirit about her,” Adams said. “She’s a strong young woman and she’s a great teammate. She’ll do whatever we need for her to do.”

Adams said that Eglite’s personality will help her be successful in life beyond basketball.
"It has been good. It helped a lot, especially communication wise and getting to know the place at first," Vitola said. "I think she's very helpful and she's trying to do things the right way. She's always very positive."

Eglite is thankful that her teammates have stayed with her through tough times and have helped her keep a positive attitude.

"They were very supportive and I knew they would have my back and whenever I would feel bad or sad, they would talk to me," Eglite said. "They didn't let me down, they would keep me positive."

Eglite has seen increased playing time as of late, which Adams attributes to her shooting skills.

"She is averaging just under six minutes per game coming off the bench and is one of the team's best three-point shooters, averaging 36.7 percent from behind the arc. The average is third best on the team behind senior forward Gloria Brown and sophomore guard Kelli Williams."

"I just do my job and what everyone is expecting from me is to shoot the ball and when teams are playing zone or whenever I have a chance, that's my game," Eglite said.

Track and field
Transfer hurdles through successful first year at UTEP

BY RUSTY BURNS AND DANIEL ORNELAS

The Prospector

In head coach Mike Laaksonen's first year last season, it was his relay team and throwers that sent some UTEP athletes to the NCAA Championships. But after sophomore hurdler/sprinter and Clemson transfer Janice Jackson entered prior to the current indoor track and field season, he may have found a way to send an athlete in all facets of track and field to the NCAA's.

"I like what she's done. She's a very good competitor," Laaksonen said. "She takes care of her business very well."

Jackson came to UTEP because of former assistant coach Keiba Tolbert, who was an acquaintance of her high school coach. Tolbert left to coach the hurdlers at Harvard last year but Jackson still stayed as a Miner and has been making strides since.

"(My high school coach) knew (Tolbert) for about 20 years, and thought he was a good guy and good hurdles coach," Jackson said.

In high school, Jackson was a two-time All American in the 40-meter hurdles. She competed in the National Scholastic Meet and was named a Nike Outdoor All American in 2009 for the 100-meter hurdles. During her freshman year at Clemson, she posted 15 top-10 finishes and competed in meets such as the Virginia Tech Elite Meet and the Texas Relays.

Jackson has adjusted well to her new surroundings. She has competed in all four indoor meets this year, with her event being the 60-meter hurdles. Her season began when she placed third in UTEP's Jan. 14 Blue and Orange Invitational. In the following events, Jan. 21 at the Cherry and Silver in Albuquerque and Feb. 3-4 at the Frank Sevigny Husker in Nebraska, she won silver and gold, respectively. In the team's most recent outting, Feb. 11 at the Texas A&M Invitational, she placed third

"Janice is a joy to work with and she's a very talented young hurdler," assistant coach Scott Roberts said. "She's made real good strides all the way through the season and her times have come down. She ran really well at Texas A&M. She's ranked third in the conference. She beat the runner from Houston who's ranked second at the A&M meet. We're thinking we're going to get great things out of Janice at conference."

"Being a transfer from the ACC, eyes of spectators, coaches and runners alike have been on Jackson, wondering how she'll stack up in C-USA. She's well aware of that."

"I definitely think I will surprise people during the conference meet," Jackson said. "I'm looking forward to run a good time because I know some people are watching me because I transferred from Clemson. They might ask what I was thinking learning a school that has such a great program in track. I try not to think about that kind of stuff. I just want to think about me and my race, my lane and my tunnel vision, and I'll be alright."

But Jackson is not so worried as to what others think of her individual performances when it comes to big stages.

"I tell myself it's not a big meet," Jackson said. "That might sound funny but for me, who has a history of choking at big meets especially when I was in high school, my mentality is to do what coach Roberts tells me and I'll be alright."

The Miners schedule will head to the C-USA Indoor Championships Feb. 22-26, hosted by UAB.

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