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WNBA

Dallas Wings hire head coach

Jose Fernandez coached the University of South Florida before the move.

BY KALE IVIE
The Shorthorn sports editor

The Dallas Wings have closed in on their new head coach, picking up Jose Fernandez to lead the charge into the 2026 WNBA season.

The Wings announced the coach will be formally introduced into his role Nov. 6, according to ESPN.

Following the 2025 season, the Dallas Wings fired Chris Koclanes about two weeks after the final home game. The decision comes after another subpar season at UTA's College Park Center. Koclanes' sole season with the wings produced a

10-34 record, despite picking up the 2025 No. 1 draft pick, Paige Bueckers.

With a fresh year ahead, the Wings are looking to implement experience into the head role of the team. Fernandez, who is parting with the University of South Florida, head coached the Bulls' women's basketball team for nearly 25 years.

Throughout his tenure in South Florida, Fernandez made 19 postseason berths and a dozen 20-win seasons. Recently, he acquired four conference championships, two regular season titles and two conference tournament championships, all within the last five years.

Fernandez has become

acquainted with the professional scene during his time at the collegiate level. He has sent nine WNBA draft picks and signees to the league in addition to the 24 former University of South Florida players who are now playing professionally across the globe, including Minnesota Lynx guard Courtney Williams and Phoenix Mercury guard Kitija Laksa.

"I just think it's an interesting transition for me to the pro game," Fernandez said in a University of South Florida article. "The Dallas Wings are making an incredible investment. I'm excited to get this chance."

Fernandez is best known for being the "win-



Courtesy of University of South Florida Athletics

ningest" coach at the University of South Florida, racking up nearly 500 wins and recruiting players from 22 different countries.

With the league expanding its presence worldwide, Wings general manager Curt Miller praised Fer-

nandez's experience with successful recruiting outside the U.S. and will be a driving factor for the coming season, according to ESPN.

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WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

Movin' Mavs burn rubber

Both Movin' Mavs teams returned to action over the weekend



The Shorthorn: Elvis Martinez-Cartagena

The Lady Movin' Mavs cheer together after scoring a point during an Oct. 24 game against the University of Arizona at the Maverick Activities Center. The Lady Movin' Mavs won the game 52-31. See more **MOVIN' MAVS** photos on page 7.

CULTURE

Humans hunt for safe scares

Haunted house-goers spike their adrenaline with a safety net.

BY LESLIE OROZCO
The Shorthorn managing editor

As Halloween creeps around the corner, people flock to scary movies, frequent haunted houses and visit spooky attractions to feel a rush of fear and excitement.

Chain saw-wielding clowns, dark rides, fog machines and jump scares are all carefully designed tactics to make people scream. But for many, the appeal goes beyond the fright.

These experiences offer

a rush with a safety net and a chance to test attendees' edge. But behind the fake blood and the screams lies something real: the strange thrill of being safely terrified.

Sofia Vinson, Six Flags over Texas entertainer, said the actors are trained to know when to keep their distance and when to go for the scare, providing a safe environment for attendees and performers.

"It's getting that fear in the safest way possible, because they know the actors can't touch them and they can't touch the actors," Vinson said.

Yashwant Bunga, data science junior and a scare actor volunteer for EXCEL Campus Activities' haunted house, also shared the same sentiment.

"The aspect that everything is in control, that makes them know that, 'OK, nothing's going to happen to me,'" Bunga said.

For Vinson and other entertainers, it's not just about the scares.

"We don't always aim to scare," Vinson said. "We just want to be a sort of entertainment for people."

Even when the scare

doesn't land, Vinson said they try to make people laugh and make sure they still have a good time.

For the actors, it's about putting on a show. For the guests, it's something more primal, a curious mix of fear and excitement that floods the body when the scares approach, even when the danger isn't real.

Despite not being real, that danger is rooted in biology and psychology.

Fear is necessary for survival: It is an alarm system that triggers a fight-or-flight response in the amygdala, a part of the brain, that is rooted

in humans' evolutionary need to avoid threats.

When the body detects danger, even simulated danger, it releases cortisol and adrenaline, which triggers dopamine and endorphins. Heart rate and blood pressure increase, leaving people pale, cold and clammy, according to the Cleveland Clinic, a nonprofit multispecialty academic medical center. The pupils dilate to see the threat more clearly and physical processes that don't help survival, like digestion, are temporarily suspended, according to the clinic.

FRIGHT continues on page 4

ELECTION

Know before you vote

On Nov. 4, residents will vote on 17 constitutional amendments. Here is what to know before going to the polls.

BY PEDRO MALKOMES
The Shorthorn editor-in-chief

On Nov. 4, Texans will have the opportunity to vote on 17 proposed state constitutional amendments and, depending on where they live, a state Senate race.

Early voting is already underway and will continue through Friday, with Election Day set for Tuesday.

Since 1876, Texans have participated in constitutional amendment elections under Article 17 of the Texas Constitution, which allows voters to decide on proposed amendments.

Constitutional amendments are the only ballot propositions Texans get to vote on at the state level. Once an amendment is passed, to undo it, a majority of state lawmakers and Texas voters would need to pass another amendment.

Here is everything to know about the election, from where to vote to the key issues on the ballot.

What's on the ballot?

The 17 proposed amendments to Texas' constitution will be accompanied by a brief explanation for each change.

VOTE continues on page 2

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Football fosters creatives

The Football Team: A Creative Collective puts on shows and events to bring UTA's creative community together.

BY ACADIA CLEMENTS
The Shorthorn staff

At most Texas universities, Friday nights mean football games and tailgates. To some at UTA, they mean goth raves, gallery shows and indie concerts, all thanks to a group of students who decided to start their own team.

Founded in 2017 by Garret Martin, Downtown Arlington Management Corp. vice president and UTA alumnus, The Football Team: A Creative Collective began as a tongue-in-cheek nod to UTA's missing football program and has since become a hub for the campus's creative scene.

"I feel proud that it started and incredibly excited every time that it's still going," Martin said.

As a nonprofit organization on campus, the club hosts several events each year, from its early days of house concerts to sold-out events and goth raves organized by the current administration.

Martin was the first president or "quarterback" of the club and said he started it to create a space for creatives to come together.

Being surrounded by creative students at UTA, the "lifeblood" as he called it, he felt that they were what made UTA cool. With the help of professor Matt Clark, faculty director at the Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology Development, Martin pitched his club idea to Clark's class, some of whom were the early members.

"UTA is a place where creatives are empowered, and that drives the organization," Martin said.

FOOTBALL continues on page 3



Photos by Maricela Gonzales

Attendees cheer for performers at The Football Team: A Creative Collective's Halloween Show on Oct. 25 at Coffee Pop-Up Boutique. A variety of food and coffee from the boutique was available for attendees.

Football

continued from page 1

When he graduated, he passed on his position through an election.

“I felt anxious,” he said. “And I felt excited to see somebody else kind of cast a vision. I think that was one of my philosophies, was that empowerment, and so to empower someone to take over the whole thing, that was a whole next level of it.”

The club’s rise and continuation has not been without its challenges. Martin said there has been a struggle in the past between the club being a business or a friend group.

“There’s been times where I was like, ‘Oh alright, it’s gonna fail, and that was a good run. I really loved it,’” he said. “But now it’s stronger than it’s ever been.”

Each of the nine presidents has had a different take on the ideals of the club, building on what the previous presidents left behind to create a business model or to come together as more of a friend group, Martin said.

“A lot of our members are musicians and artists, so we put a big emphasis on not only promoting our members, but also promoting local bands and that kind of thing; so any sort of live music or art-related event, we make it happen,”

Maggie Clark
president of The Football Team: A Creative Collective

The current president, Maggie Clark, has been a member of the club for three years. She said she was drawn to the club because it allowed her to hang out with her friends while enjoying and organizing events.

Under her leadership, there has been a focus on furthering community connections and expanding who the club works with, focusing on small businesses, Clark said, along with providing the club’s artists and musicians more opportunities and exposure.

“A lot of our members are musicians and artists, so we put a big emphasis on not only promoting our members, but also promoting local bands and that kind of thing; so any sort of live music or art-related event, we make it happen,” Clark said.

More is expected from members, such as attending events, which has been successful as a whole, Clark said. Because of the ground laid by previous members and officers, the club can plan further ahead and book venues months in advance, she said.

She has made it a priority to get



Arlington resident Madison Khya, 22, left, and Waxahachie, Texas, resident Brayzon Henderson, 22, members of the band 4!, perform at The Football Team: A Creative Collective's Halloween Show on Oct. 25 at Coffee Pop-Up Boutique. The event featured performances from the Bom Bom Boms, 4! and Matador.

members experience planning and executing events as leadership members and project managers. When she first joined the club, Clark had a lot of ideas but didn’t know how to make them happen, she said. With her presidency, she wants to make sure that members get the necessary tools to lead a project and are prepared for years to come.

Around eight years later, the club is facing a new set of challenges.

With sold-out gatherings and a packed events schedule, the club is navigating both managing ticket sales and meeting venue capacity, Clark said.

“We’ve never had the problem of having to ask our buildings what their occupancy limit is, but that’s where we are right now,” she said.

The group, composed of around 30-40 consistently attending students, meets weekly at an art gallery called Create Texas where they discuss upcoming events. The group operates through a voting system for what members want and when.

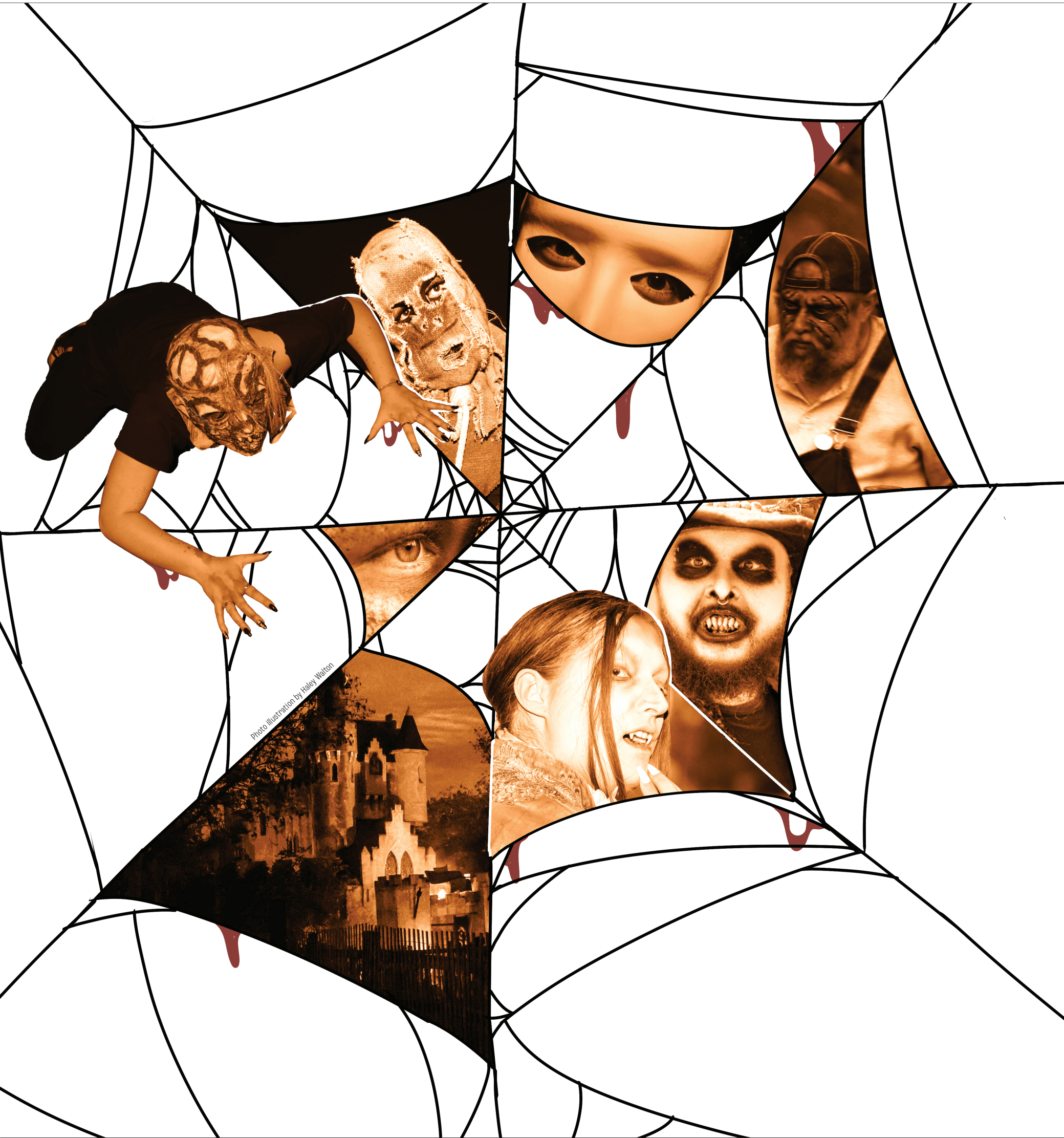
“We’re all on the same team trying to get the same things done,” Clark said. “That’s something that people really enjoy. That’s what makes me come back. So that’s something I try to cultivate in our environment.”

“I’m grateful to be part of the football team, because it showed me a lot about friendship, but also about professional opportunities and how to be a contributing member of your community.”

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Jazz studies senior Stellan Marroquin plays the guitar at The Football Team: A Creative Collective's Halloween Show on Oct. 25 at Coffee Pop-Up Boutique. Marroquin is a member of the band Matador.



Fright

continued from page 1

Erin Austin, associate professor of instruction for psychology, said young adults also seek to engage in scary behaviors due to brain development, identity exploration and risk-taking tendencies. She said this happens because the limbic system, which governs emotions and reward processing, develops more rapidly than the prefrontal cortex, which controls impulse control

and risk assessment. Sensation-seeking, also called thrill-seeking or excitement-seeking, is pursuing new and different sensations, feelings and experiences, according to Psychology Today, an online mental health and behavioral science publishing enterprise. “Your brain has difficulties separating reality from what’s actually being presented, because the whole point is this immersive experience,” Austin said. Still, not everyone reacts

to fear the same way. Bunga said two people he jumped-scared ran away and didn’t come back. On the other hand, he said he also saw people who had no reaction. The way people react to fear can also be based on the type and length of exposure, the intensity, the presence of other individuals, past experiences and personality. While safety in numbers might seem like a good way to combat fear, for Bunga, it is the opposite.

“It makes it harder,” he said. “With your friends you’re more vulnerable, and I see that as weakness.” For Vinson, it’s all about feeling the energy of the group. “If there’s a group that I can tell is all scared equally, then yes, I’ll go for a group,” they said. “If there’s like one person in the group that I can tell is really scared, then I will definitely go for them.” Despite the sweaty palms, fast breathing and a heart beating so hard it drowns

everything else out, fear can also lead to pleasure. When riding roller coasters, going through haunted houses or watching horror movies, the thrill doesn’t always end when the ride or the movie is over, according to Northwestern Medicine. For college students juggling classes, social life and adult pressures, these controlled scares can offer a chance to release tension, bond with friends and feel a safe rush of adrenaline. The relief after a jump

scare, the laughter that follows and the shared stories reinforce the enjoyment. These experiences can serve as emotional rehearsals, allowing students to practice coping with fear in a fun and safe way. As fog thickens and the lights flicker, performers may be putting on a show, but guests are chasing something deeper: the thrill of fear, the satisfaction of surviving it and the rush of feeling fully alive.

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The Shorthorn: Haley Walton

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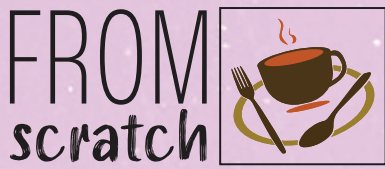
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Sugar skull cookies honor Day of the Dead

The treats are a tradition to remember the deceased

BY LESLIE OROZCO
The Shorthorn managing editor

You're reading From Scratch, a series deconstructing the food we eat (and the drinks we drink) to explore their history, their variety and the ways we consume them.

Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, features many staples, such as altars decorated with marigolds, candles, photos of deceased loved ones and perforated paper banners.

Among these staples and traditions are sugar skull cookies or "calaveras de azúcar," vibrant treats bringing colorful, detailed designs to altars or graves.

Glitz Bakery in Fort Worth offers sugar cookies for a wide range of occasions. Assistant manager Claire Devenport said the sugar skull cookies are part of the shop's case collection, meaning customers can go in and buy them without having to put in a custom request.

"I think something that sets us apart is that, on top of the look of the cookie, we also really try to put a lot of importance on how they taste."

Claire Devenport
Glitz Bakery assistant manager

History

Sugar art was brought to the New World by Italian missionaries in the 17th century. The first church mention of sugar art was from Palermo, Italy, during Easter, when sugar lambs and angels were made to adorn the side altars in the Catholic Church, according to Mexican Sugar Skull.

With Spanish colonial influence in Mexico, the locals adapted the sugar-molding technique learned from Catholic friars on how to make decorations out of sugar. Clay-molded sugar figures of angels, sheep and sugar skulls go as far back as the colonial period in the 18th century.

In Mexico, these sugar sculptures have evolved into the iconic skull-shaped sweets and decorations now known as calaveras de azúcar. They have become a prominent feature used to adorn churches, gravestones and altars during Día de los Muertos.

The

sugar skulls reflect a blend of indigenous ancestor respect traditions and Catholic commemorations of the dead.

While the original church-based sugar art stems from Europe, the way sugar skulls are used in Mexico today is based on local customs around memory, death and celebration, serving as offerings and a way to remember loved ones that have died.

Variety

The sugar skull cookies stand out for their unique qualities, from colorful icing and intricate designs to varying sizes and flavors.

Extracts are one way to flavor sugar skull cookies, with vanilla and almond being some of the most popular flavors.

"You go online and you see decorated cookies, and, of course, they're always beautiful," Devenport said. "I think something that sets us apart is that, on top of the look of the cookie, we also really try to put a lot of importance on how they taste."

To achieve its signature flavor, the shop uses almond extract, sometimes called wedding cake taste by customers, to complement the buttery, soft texture of the cookies. The result is a rich, sweet treat with just a hint of almond, she said.

The icing adds more flavor to the cookie, along with colorful patterns that tie it all together.

The two-to-three-day process begins with baking the cookies and adding a base layer of color icing, Devenport said. Then the cookies are left to set overnight before adding any detailing on the second day. On the final day, the cookies receive the intricate designs that customers see when they purchase the final product.

Impact

When customers not aware of the holiday or the meaning behind the sugar skull cookies see

and ask about them, they learn about the cultural significance of the sugar skulls and add a couple of them to their cookie assortment, Devenport said.

"It's great feedback that promotes positivity and further knowledge about the culture with people who aren't necessarily familiar with it," she said.

Sharing knowledge of the cultural weight behind the cookies is a nice way to celebrate Hispanic culture, Devenport said.

"I think it's something special that we can do, since we are here in Texas," she said. "The Hispanic culture is so strong and so alive in Texas."

Sugar skulls are more than decorative treats: They are symbols of memory, artistry and cultural continuity, celebrating the departed and the life that continues among the living.

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The Shorthorn: Ryleigh Hood

Do not neglect ‘odd-year’ elections

Elections focusing on amendments to the Texas constitution can often leave long-term impacts on residents and are difficult to undo after being passed

Not all elections are treated equally.

More than 820,000 Tarrant County voters cast ballots during the 2024 presidential and special elections. The year prior, not even a quarter of that number was recorded during a Texas constitutional amendment election, with 156,220 voters who cast ballots, according to county data.

With less public attention on state constitutional amendments compared to the whirlpool of political conflict and media coverage that accompanies presidential elections, some voters turn a blind eye when it's time to vote in them.

The Shorthorn Editorial Board believes that students should make an effort to educate themselves on the issues in these elections and vote, starting with November's election. Texans have the opportunity to vote on 17 state constitutional amendments through early voting until Oct. 31, and on Election Day on Nov. 4.

In past years, propositions voted on in constitutional elections, which many categorize as “odd-year” or “off-year” elections, have led to crucial changes such as barring same-sex marriage in Texas and extending governor term lengths.

The proposals in this year's ballot will cover a variety of issues, such as funding water infrastructure and revamping the State Commission on Judicial Conduct, but will mainly focus on bringing a slew of tax cuts for homeowners, business owners, spouses of veterans and several other demographics.

Some Tarrant County residents will also have the Texas State Senate District 9 race on their ballot. The district is currently vacant after former Republican incumbent Kelly Hancock stepped away to become the state's comptroller earlier this year.

Constitutional amendments are the only ballot propositions Texans get to vote on at the state level, and that opportunity should not be disregarded.

These amendments are also hard to change once set in place. To undo an amendment, a majority of state lawmakers and Texas voters would need to pass an entirely new amendment.

One of the potential reasons constitutional amendment elections, or



The Shorthorn: Haley Walton

any election, may experience lower voter turnout is a perceived lack of importance, especially compared to federal politics and presidential races.

Not only are proposed constitutional amendments directly impactful to Texas residents, but the changes are typically felt almost immediately.

In a 2005 Texas constitutional election, voters passed a proposition solidifying that marriage consists only of “the union of one man and one woman.” The same proposition also prohibited the state from creating or recognizing any legal status identical or similar to marriage, which could have served as an alternative for LGBTQ+ residents.

In 2015, Texas’ position was federally nullified following Obergefell v. Hodges, which legalized same-sex marriage in all states. Although now outdated, the state’s 2005 amendment legally stood for a decade — directly impacting an entire demographic of people.

Decisions of this magnitude continue to be determined in recent

constitutional amendment elections.

Following a 2021 election, Texas’ constitution was amended to prohibit the state from limiting religious services, such as church attendance. The decision came during a time when the COVID-19 pandemic, while past its peak weekly death rate, continued to have severe cases across the U.S., according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data.

These are only two specific cases, but Texas has a lengthy history of key constitutional amendments. There is another reason it’s important to vote in these elections, however: to show lawmakers that they matter.

In August, the Tarrant County Commissioners Court voted along party lines to cut over 100 polling sites for the Nov. 4 election. Officials said the cuts were cost-saving measures prompted by low voter turnout at certain sites and during less prominent elections.

Taking away preestablished voting sites will make it more difficult for residents to access the polls come

November. But for some lawmakers, it is not seen as a significant issue, given that fewer people vote in these elections.

THE ISSUE:

Not enough people vote in and educate themselves on constitutional amendment elections.

WE THINK:

Constitutional amendment elections cover important state issues that people should educate themselves on.

TAKE ACTION:

Students should exercise their civic duty by staying informed and voting in constitutional amendment elections.

These elections are important, and taking away voting sites will only make it harder for residents to cast ballots when not enough people are doing so to begin with. The more people who vote in November’s elec-

tion, the higher the chances are that lawmakers dedicate more resources and polling sites to the next constitutional election.

It is dangerous to categorize elections into subjective levels of importance when they all impact constituents to some degree. The Shorthorn Editorial Board encourages students not to neglect this November’s election.

It’s easy to get caught up in federal politics and races, but sometimes the changes that impact residents the most can come from elections they don’t expect.

The Shorthorn Editorial Board is made up of editor-in-chief Pedro Malcomes; managing editor Leslie Orozco; copy desk chief Rachel Kenealey; news editor James Ward; associate news editor Taylor Sansom; engagement editor Sairam Marupudi; design editor Haley Walton; illustrator Lillian Durand; and copy editor Tara Erry.

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The Shorthorn: Emmanuel Campbell

Movin' Mavs player number 14, right, passes the ball during a game against the Dallas Wheelchair Mavericks on Oct. 25 at the Physical Education Building. The Mavs are 10-time national champions.



The Shorthorn: Elvis Martinez-Cartagena

Freshman Quinn Meyer dribbles down the court during a game against the University of Arizona on Oct. 24 at the Maverick Activities Center. The Lady Movin' Mavs are part of UTA's long-standing adaptive sports tradition, which began in 1976.

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

Movin' Mavs return to the court

Both Movin' Mavs teams competed in their first fall tournament



The Shorthorn: Elvis Martinez-Cartagena

Freshman Harmonée Reutes reaches for a jump ball during a game against the University of Arizona on Oct. 24 at the Maverick Activities Center. Ruetes won Player of the Year in April.



The Shorthorn: Elvis Martinez-Cartagena

Above: Freshman Quinn Meyer yells in a huddle during a game against the University of Arizona on Oct. 24 at the Maverick Activities Center. UTA's wheelchair basketball program became an official intercollegiate sport in 1988.



The Shorthorn: Emmanuel Campbell

Right: Movin' Mavs player number 0, left, attempts to score while Dallas Wheelchair Mavericks player number 8 tries to block the shot Oct. 25 at the Physical Education Building. Nine Movin' Mavs have been named MVP.

PROFILE

JOHN SAUERHAGE

The heartbeat of UTA's running programs

UTA's longest-standing head coach connects strong leadership and Arlington roots

COACHING SUCCESSIONS

Inducted into the Southland Conference men's and women's All-Time Indoor Track and Field Honor Roll

OVER **100**
individual league track titles



Coached five athletes who have earned trips to the IAAF World Championships

COACHED **45**

student-athletes who earned All-America honors

2015

Four UTA athletes qualified for the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships

63

qualifiers for NCAA championships for track and field

2025

Eight UTA athletes qualified for the NCAA Division I West First Round in track and field

x33

Led teams to 33 conference championships

Coached an athlete who earned what is believed to be UTA's first international medal

Coached a least 43 NCAA Outdoor Championship qualifiers as of 2011

Recognized as a conference coach of the year 33 times, an athletic department record

Led the 2016 men's cross-country team to a record finish, third place, at the NCAA South Central Regional



Photo illustration by Jordan Johnson, photos by Mabel Cruz, courtesy of John Sauerhage

KALE IVIE
The Shorthorn sports editor

Running has been in head coach John Sauerhage's blood since before he could drive. He equated his desire to run to the movie character Forrest Gump's.

"I was addicted, and I liked that," he said. "I got a blue ribbon when I was 12 years old, and I just loved it and I started running all the time."

After establishing his dominance during elementary school field days, he enrolled at Bailey Junior High School, simply because it had better sports programs, he said.

He has carried that passion with him to this day, spanning nearly four decades of excellence that have defined him as the longest-tenured coach in UTA history. Since 1996, he has happily embraced track and field and cross-country head coaching duties, rooted in the place that holds many of his fondest memories.

As a runner, Sauerhage claimed second place in the Junior Olympics and was a six-time state championship qualifier at Arlington High School. After graduating, he went to Louisiana State University to begin his collegiate athletic career.

In Louisiana, he placed sixth in the Southeastern Conference in the 1,000-yard run and the indoor mile. He also recorded a personal-best time of 3:45.36 in the 1,500 meters.

He later transferred to UTA and graduated in 1986 with a degree in physical education, but not before setting a 6,000-meter relay school record and earning a Southland Conference title.

Sauerhage went back to school, earning his master's degree in education in 1988 from Northeast Louisiana University, now the University of Louisiana Monroe. While studying, he began his coaching career as a graduate assistant coach.

Even with the successes of his running career, he said he fell short. He took this notion and honed his skills to share them with the coming generations' athletes.

"I thought I was going to go to the Olympics," Sauerhage said. "What I didn't get accomplished in track was one of the reasons I got into coaching — I still felt like I could help people by being a coach."

Now, as a head coach at UTA, Sauerhage's loyalty permeates every aspect of his role, and most times, it doesn't even feel like a job, he said. Throughout his tenure, he said, he may have considered leaving but only made the move once.

"Back then, I wanted to be the head coach at Oregon or LSU or something," Sauerhage said. "But I fell in love with being here at home with my family in Arlington and making UTA into a top-notch, mid-major track program."

Toward the end of his assistant coaching stint at UTA, which he assumed in 1989 for seven years, he joked about leaving Arlington to coach at UT Austin's program with Bubba Thornton, at the time Texas Christian University's sprinter coach.

Thornton got the job, and Sauerhage followed, serving as UT Austin's distance coach. While Thornton would stay at UT, becoming the head coach for men's track and field, Sauerhage was lured back to lead the charge at Maverick Stadium after just one month in Austin.

Monte Stratton, UTA's track and field head coach at the time, left the university and took Thornton's former role at TCU, leaving a burning hole in the UTA running programs. Sauerhage said a lightbulb went off when he heard about the freshly opened position.

"They called and I couldn't say yes fast enough," he said. "Who knows how it all would

have turned out for me if I'd stayed down there, but it was fun coming back and I feel like I made the right move."

Trophy after trophy, each shiny accolade accumulated proves he's capable of doing what he has done for so long. But for him, all the hardware simply tells stories of the talented athletes who have passed through UTA's Gilstrap Athletic Center.

"I tell the guys, 'You're going to go on and get a job and get on with your life, I'm still here,'" he said. "I was here before you got here and I'll be here after you're gone, well, hopefully."

Many student-athletes who have gone under Sauerhage's wing have won outstanding awards or competed at some of the highest levels.

One of Sauerhage's fondest memories was of then-senior Justin Domangue finishing in the top 40 in the 2019 NCAA Cross Country Championships while becoming the first Maverick to earn cross-country All-American accolades.

The relationship between Toby Eaton, current sophomore cross-country runner, and Sauerhage began before the runner even set foot on UTA grounds. Eaton said Sauerhage came to him for recruiting while he was still at Mansfield Legacy High School.

After Eaton's freshman year at Tarleton State University, he met with Sauerhage during the 2025 summer to look toward running for UTA, something that was not a surprise to Eaton.

"I was just really looking forward to getting back to work and starting out in a new place," Eaton said. "I knew Sauerhage was already a great guy and he did a lot for me over the last few years, just keeping in touch. And so we built a good relationship, so coming here just felt like coming back home."

Eaton said Sauerhage is authentic on and off the track, and carries a strong desire to win, sharing Eaton's beliefs as a runner. He said the head coach puts time and effort into each runner, ensuring they make the most of their time at UTA.

"There's not one person on this team that he doesn't know their name," Eaton said. "If you're ever having any problems to the side, he's not just going to ignore those and tell you to run, he's going to want to be there for you and want to work them out with you."

His impact is known by many, even by staff members who have only been with the university for a handful of years. Athletics director Jon Fagg, who has been in his role since 2022, said he has had opportunities to get acquainted with Sauerhage.

Fagg said Sauerhage cares deeply about UTA, its track program and the sport itself. Speaking of the many traits that make up the coach's personality, Fagg joked that Sauerhage sometimes uses being hard of hearing to be funny, even if he did catch what was said.

"Every once in a while, he doesn't hear things and so we all laugh sometimes about the things he hears and doesn't hear," Fagg said. "Every once in a while it seems like he uses it to his advantage to try and get a kick out of everyone."

The imprint of a coach like Sauerhage rarely comes — a kid who stuck with his passion and has excelled in spreading his wisdom. In traditional coaching fashion, he would rather boast about his athletes and recall their feats in his honor.

"I vicariously live through these guys' performances," Sauerhage said. "What I learned as an athlete and where I came up short has made me a better coach."

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COACHING CONTINUED

NCAA Division I-AAA Athletics Directors Association trophy

2016

Had two athletes advance to the NCAA Cross Country Championships in the same year for the first time in school history



Led teams to four "triple crowns" (winning the conference championship for the cross-country, indoor and outdoor track seasons in the same academic year)

Head coached the El Salvadorian national team at the 2009 World University Games in Belgrade, Serbia

At least eight qualifiers in the NCAA Cross Country Championships

PERSONAL SUCCESSIONS

1985

Won Southland Conference indoor mile run

Ranked among the top five in UTA history in the 1,500-meter runs in both indoor and outdoor

6TH

Placed sixth in the Southeastern Conference at Louisiana State University

Won the Class 5A state title in the mile run in 1979 at Arlington High School

x6

Was a six-time state qualifier for Arlington High School

Claimed second place in the Junior Olympics