

Editor: Henny van Dijk

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July, 2021

The Retiree Benefits Meeting



This Year's Annual Benefits Meeting will be a pretty unique one because it is a hybrid event featuring "in-person" attendance but virtual representatives. Jennifer Figueroa has organized an informative event as Jennifer's team and BCBS will be present (virtually) We may still be able to get silver sneakers as well – they just haven't responded just yet. Furthermore will have informative videos and a demo of our new benefits platform. Also we will have games and prizes.

All this will be taking place at UCT, 7000 Fannin, room 1505 on July 15 from 10AM to 12PM and those who can't attend in person there is a web-link. We are invited you all to join us in person or through WebEX.

<https://uthealth.webex.com/uthealth/j.php?MTID=m12c62ddf9c3bac7f84dfb3d567a7a4b0>
Meeting number (access code): 1200 65 7450

Parking at UCT is not free unless we can arrange complementary parking but don't count on that. We would like to see some good representation of UTHRO members that day and I will make sure to send out a reminder closer to July 15 with the final arrangement and that web-link again. Please wear your mask.

I would encourage you if you like to attend to let Gill Rittman know so she can inform Jennifer how many to expect that day.

713-542-1865 gillianrittman@gmail.com

Finally you can expect to get a email or mail specifying the changes if any in your Benefits package on July 7 from the Office of Employee Benefits. *Henny van Dijk*

Another UTHRO Event ...



Let's Get Together For Some Lunch...!

Please join us for a BBQ lunch at noon on July 22nd at Barry and Gill Rittman's house, 5039 Cheena Drive, Houston TX 77096

Meat, beans, potato salad and drinks provided, please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

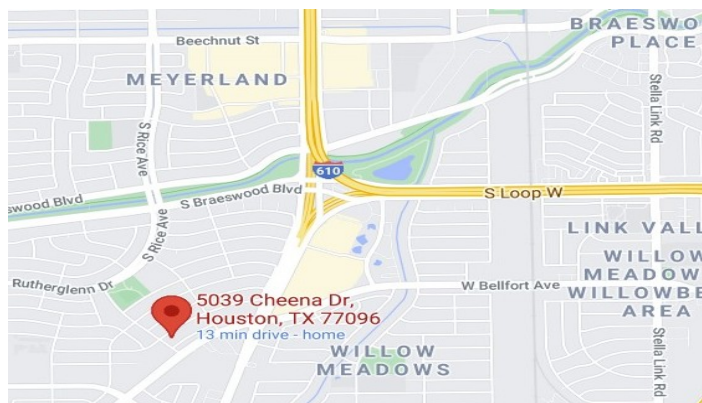
RSVP by July 17th to Barry 713-542-8108

barryrittman@gmail.com

or Gill 713-542-1865

gillianrittman@gmail.com

Limited to the first 25 to reply, we look forward to seeing you!



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Two Significant Historical Events



Two of the most consequential movements of the 18th Century still reverberating today, were the American and French Revolutions, both just 13 years apart and both in the month of July. The American is celebrated as Independence Day on July 4 and the French as Bastille Day or Quatorze Juillet on July 14. Both had their origins in displeasure with the powers-at-be at the time and maybe not so unusual with their monarchs and their absolute power. The American colonies wanted more say in their affairs (no taxation without representation) while the French were fed up with grinding poverty, food shortages, high taxes (as a solution to the King's debts) and the militarization of Paris. The French saw what could be accomplished in America when taking on the army of King George III and their own insurrection against King Louis XVI's army by storming the Bastille where a significant arsenal was kept. The French played a very important part in the Colonies' victory by blocking harbors that denied the English of supplies which ultimately lead to their surrender. It seems that that fact is not forgotten, because while the whole country of course celebrates the Fourth with fireworks and parades, there are quite a number of American cities celebrating Bastille Day on July 14. In fact over 20 cities conduct annual celebrations of Bastille Day. The different cities celebrate with many French staples such as food, music, games, and sometimes the recreation of famous French landmarks. In Texas, both Dallas and Austin celebrate. "Bastille On Bishop", in Dallas began in 2010 and is held annually in the Bishop Arts District of the North Oak Cliff neighborhood, southwest of downtown just across the Trinity River. In Austin, the Alliance Française d'Austin usually conducts a family-friendly Bastille Day party at the French Legation, the home of the French representative to the Republic of Texas from 1841 to 1845. So you see our state is not only celebrating our own Fourth, but also Bastille Day 10 days later. I guess we just like parties and BBQ and get-togethers.

Henny van Dijk

Another Look at Vincent...



Houston has been in love with van Gogh. Ever since the very popular 2019 MFA exhibit that drew thousands of visitors there was the very recent Hockney - van Gogh exhibit and the just announced "The van Gogh Immersion", a virtual extravaganza on August 12. We can't get enough of the iconic painter and his immensely popular works. However the man has not only been a mystery but a challenge for many scientists, both in art as in medicine. Who was Vincent van Gogh and what drove him to paint the way he did. A very recent article from the Department of Psychiatry's Mark Sanches, MD, PhD, an associate professor of psychiatry at UTHealth, has analyzed Van Gogh's work, aiming to determine what diagnoses might have been the root causes of his bouts of depression, mania, and mood swings. Sanches has also drawn parallels between his art and what was happening in his life to determine if his mental state had a direct correlation to his work as a painter. "Of course, this is just an academic exercise," Sanches said. "It is not possible to know for sure what Van Gogh's diagnosis was - these are just hypotheses, based on information assessed retrospectively, and any conclusions should be seen in light of the limitations inherent to this kind of method." Best known for his use of bold colors and brush strokes, an uncommon style during his time one question was why was he so enamored with the color yellow for instance, or what about those "starry night" glowing lights. In his analysis of Van Gogh's work, Sanches evaluated the research of other mental health experts, including Willem Nolen, MD, PhD, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands who analyzed self-reported symptoms the artist mentioned in his letters to friends and family, as well as other sources including notes from his doctors, to explore all possible diagnoses. Van Gogh moved to Arles and it was during this time that he seems to have developed a fixation on the color yellow. "The Yellow House" and "Sunflowers" both were painted during this time. One of the components able to cause a predominance of yellow in vision (xanthopsia) is absinthe, which we know Van Gogh used heavily. Another visual effect in Van Gogh's paintings is the halo swirling effect as seen in his painting, *The Starry Night*. It has been suggested that he may have suffered from lead poisoning, caused by the use of lead-based paints used at that time. One visual symptom of lead poisoning is the swelling of the retina, causing a halo effect around lights. Of course cataracts cause halos around lights at night too but since Van Gogh committed suicide at the early age of 37, it is unlikely that he had cataracts.

Edited from an article in UTHealth publication by Alexis Shelly



Email Warning Signs...



If your experience is a little bit like mine in this corona virus you might have experienced an increasing number of emails that show that cybercriminals continue to exploit the pandemic for malicious purposes. I was getting tired of threatening emails with final warnings and screwing with my mail. So I asked my good friend Don for help and I'm hoping that if you have those pesky problems too, this might help you. He eased my mind a lot with the following:

"First don't blame the messenger. It's akin to blaming the mail man for the junk mail you receive. However, there are a number of common indicators and knowing what to look for goes a long way to protect yourself against attacks. This is a good example of how to spot a phishing email."

Typos—If you receive an email from, say, your bank, and it is riddled with typos, awkward language, or formatting errors, it is most likely fraudulent.

Personal information requests—Reputable businesses do not ask for personal information—such as social security and credit card numbers—over email. This should be an immediate red flag.

Too good to be true—Beware of emails offering rewards, vacations, cash prizes, etc. If an offer comes with a request for personal information, a link to claim your prize, or an attachment to download. It's like the old saying, "if it seems too good to be true, it probably is." or the reverse an attempt to scare recipients into clicking a malicious link or providing personal information.

Mismatched URLs or Questionable senders—"First note the sender's address. Second thing to watch for is to hover your mouse over any hyperlinks in the email (don't click on them). If the link takes you to a Google website, not the senders or proclaimed sender **Don't respond to them.**

You get junk email and phishing emails from your email address being sold on the internet and the dark web. It will only get your name and email resold as a "live responder" and get you more junk. They hope to separate you from your money.

Henny van Dijk

It's A Texas Thing ...



Port Arthur to El Paso: 889 miles.
Port Arthur to Chicago: 770 miles
Brownsville to Texline: 956 miles
Texline to Canada: 960 miles

El Paso is closer to California than to Dallas

The Flagship Hotel in Galveston is the only hotel in North America built over water. Destroyed by Hurricane Ike!

The Heisman Trophy is named after John William Heisman who was the first full-time coach at Rice University

Brazoria County has more species of birds than any other area in North America

Aransas Wildlife Refuge is the winter home of North America's only remaining flock of whooping cranes

The worst natural disaster in US history was in 1900, a hurricane that killed over 8,000 on Galveston Island

The King Ranch in South Texas is larger than Rhode Island

Texas is the only state to enter the US by TREATY, (known as the Constitution of 1845 by the Republic of Texas to enter the Union) instead of by annexation. This allows the Texas Flag to fly at the same height as the US Flag, and Texas may choose to divide into 5 states.

Caddo Lake is the only natural lake in the state.

Dr Pepper was invented in Waco in 1885.

There is no period in Dr Pepper

Texas has had six capital cities: Washington-on-the Brazos, Harrisburg, Galveston, Velasco, West Columbia and Austin

The Capitol Dome in Austin is the only dome in the US which is taller than the Capitol Building in Washington

The San Jacinto Monument is the tallest free standing monument in the world, taller than the Washington Monument

The name "Texas" comes from the Hasini Indian word 'tejas' meaning "friends" and is NOT Spanish for Texas

The State Mascot is the Armadillo. An interesting bit of trivia about the armadillo is they always have four babies. They have one egg, which splits into four, and they either have four males or four females.

The first domed stadium in the US was the Astrodome

The name of the XIT ranch in Dalhart Texas stands for "Ten In Texas". That means 10 counties in Texas!

From ItsATexasThing.com

UTHRO

The University of Texas Houston Retiree Organization
5827 White Clover Dr.
Richmond, TX 77469

*To update your address or phone number
please contact us at 281-655-1983*

And Now For Something Completely Different... *Retired & Loving It...!*

BENEFITS OF A GOOD VOCABULARY!
I RECENTLY CALLED AN OLD ENGINEERING
BUDDY OF MINE AND ASKED WHAT HE
WAS WORKING ON THESE DAYS.

HE REPLIED THAT HE WAS WORKING ON
"AQUA-THERMAL TREATMENT OF
CERAMICS, ALUMINUM AND STEEL UNDER
A CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENT."

I WAS IMPRESSED UNTIL, UPON FURTHER
INQUIRY, I LEARNED THAT HE WAS
WASHING DISHES WITH HOT WATER UNDER
HIS WIFE'S SUPERVISION.

*I've become in-
creasingly enam-
ored with funnies
to share with you.
I've always main-
tained that copy-
writers and car-
toonists have a
way of looking at
our world in a
very "upside
down" and funky
way so keep turn-
ing to the back
page for a laugh
and a thought
provoking way.*



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