



WINTER 2025 • A UNIVERSITY PRESS MAGAZINE

UPbeat

**INSIDE:
RADIO STAR,
BIG BEND,
AND MORE**

THRIFTING IS COOL

**Reusing fashion
is stylish and
environmentally
responsible**

Page 8



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CONTENTS

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UPbeat

WINTER 2025

A UNIVERSITY PRESS MAGAZINE

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PEOPLE

PAGE 4

Behind the Campus Faces

THRIFTING

PAGE 8

Waste is fashion faux pas

RADIO VOICE

PAGE 12

Hall of Famer Harold Mann profile



BIG BEND TRAVEL

PAGE 16

Up close and personal with nature

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Monster Dreams

Text and photo by Maria Rodriguez

ELAINE YANG found her first Monster High doll on the aisles of Walgreens in 2019 and has been collecting ever since. Monster High dolls feature elements from monster movies and are accompanied by their own TV series. “I really liked the show, and I just like how cool everything looked,” Elaine says. The Brooklyn, NY, senior also recalls seeing the dolls on YouTube in toy reviews, yearning to own one. “A lot of it just comes from my younger self — I’m healing my inner child,” she says. Monster High dolls are inspired by an array of monsters such as Dracula and werewolves, but Elaine says her favorite doll is “Stitched in Style, Frankie Stein.” She attributes her love for Monster High dolls to the unique yet fashionable twist. “They’re not as basic as a Barbie, and it adds a hint of spooky,” she says. Although she keeps the dolls in their box, Elaine says she enjoys looking at them. “It shouldn’t be shameful to collect things that are deemed as childish,” she says. Now, Elaine can afford to build her collection and soak in the childhood nostalgia. “The world is too serious these days, and we need a little bit of whimsy and joy in our lives,” she says.

Stuffed Plushies

KARINA CHAVEZ has collected stuffed animals since childhood. “My collection first started when I was born, when my mom gave me my first stuffed animal — a sheep,” the Anahuac junior says. “Over the years, I continued to find stuffed animals around me, in stores, thrift shops, gifts, collab cafes — or my sisters didn’t want them anymore, so I took them in.” In middle school, the film major noticed she had accidentally built an extensive collection. “After my mom pointed out I had many, each time I saw a stuffed animal I liked, I bought one,” she says. Karina typically buys stuffed animals from her favorite TV shows, like “Hunter X Hunter” and “Pokémon.” Her favorite stuffed animal is Xie Lian from the show “Heavens Official Blessing.” Karina says she enjoys how soft and squishy her stuffed animals. “If I’m feeling upset, I can throw them. If I feel sad, I can hug them. And if I’m bored, I’ll juggle them,” Karina says. One day, she might let go of the collection and pass them on to her younger sisters. as they will probably need them more than her one day.

Text and photo by Heather Harmon



Building Sound Relationships



Text and photo by Heather Harmon

TAYLOR GRANT is a self-taught audio engineer. “I was at Youth Church one day, and I asked the guy that typically runs audio if I could just sit behind him and shadow him,” Taylor says. “One day he asked me if I want to try it, and it went pretty well; the rest is history after that.” The broadcasting major says he learned how to mix audio when he was 13, and has since worked to refine his ear. “I typically work with the same people,” he says. “So, over time, you kind of pick up on their patterns and things they do, and then your relationship with those people comes into play, too.” The Houston sophomore says he has a relationship with the pastor on top of knowing the pastor’s pattern and how they preach, for example. It’s the same thing with the musicians, he says. “Having a relationship with the musicians is another big part of that and having a good relationship with those people”



Twisted Imagination

Text and photo by Regina Ruiz

In a quiet corner, **WILLIAM-LUC HO** twists thin strands of floral wire. With steady hands, he loops and folds until a dragon appears — its wings arched, its tail curling mid-air. The simple wire becomes alive under his touch. The junior accounting major began making wire figurines in high school. “I get bored constantly,” he says, with a laugh. “I used to make them just to pass the time.” What started as a way to stay occupied soon became a creative outlet. Armed with only scissors and 26-gauge wire, the Port Arthur native spends anywhere from two to six hours on each piece. Dragons are his favorite subjects as they are easiest to make, he

says. William doesn’t plan his designs, “I mainly just think of something I want, and then I make it,” he says. “You have to loop the wires like sewing, or else they collapse on themselves.” Strong fingers, and a tolerance for a few pokes, are also required. William doesn’t attach meaning to his figures — for him, creation is enough. “It’s a really cheap hobby if you just want to make something for yourself,” he says. “You can make toys, decorations, anything. It doesn’t have to be fancy.” From a single strand of wire, William crafts entire worlds — proof that creativity can bloom from the simplest materials.

Community Center Stage



Text and photo by Rayna Christy

You may think you’ve seen everything, but **ARWEN EWART** has truly “Scene It All.” That’s the name of the Nederland freshman’s nonprofit theater. The organization focuses on bringing the arts to children. “I knew I wanted to do something to help bring theater to the community,” Arwen says. “But, it wasn’t until this past summer when PBS got shut down that I knew I wanted it to be a way that parents could still educate their children and bring them out to go do things that would entertain them for free.” The theater and dance major works alongside other high school and college students, and says they are about to start working on their December show. “It will probably be our biggest thing yet, because it’ll be over the Christmas break,” she says. Alongside shows, the Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities student says they are working to make sure Scene It All lives on. “I want to make sure it’s something that can continue to thrive once we pass it on to people younger than us,” she says. Anyone interested can search Scene It All on social media.

Rising to the Top

Most people would find dangling hundreds of feet in the air terrifying, but for **AYMEE THOMPSON**, it's just a way to unwind. The Friendswood junior started climbing as soon as she could walk and hasn't looked down since. "I started climbing when I was a toddler," the music education major says. "My dad took me climbing when I was younger, and I found out I really like to climb things and push myself to the peak." Climbing is more than just a hobby, Aymee says. "Climbing is a great stress reliever for me — I love being able to work out in a way that allows me to problem solve, and feel like I am accomplishing something," she says. "When I am on the wall, the stress of work and school falls away." Beyond stress relief, the sport is a source of personal growth and determination. "Climbing has shown me the importance of perseverance and self-motivation," Amyee says. "Whenever you are up there, if you don't want to fall, you just have to keep going and push forward no matter what."

Text and photo by Josiah Boyd



THRIFTING

Story package by Rayna Christy



Caitlyn Blackwell, manager of Love Local Thrift Store in Port Neches, looks through a rack of secondhand shirts.

UPbeat photo by Emily Flores

Slowing Fast Fashion

Thrifting is stylish antidote to over consumption

Fast fashion, according to the dictionary, is “the rapid production of inexpensive, low-quality clothing that often mimics popular styles.” Think about Shein, TEMU, Tiktok Shop — any way to get cheap clothes quickly. How many of those clothing items do we wear every day? And how many have we thrown away because they fell apart or went out of style?

Unsurprisingly, 92-million tons of clothing is thrown away every year with 11.3-million tons in America alone. Donating clothes to thrift store ensures they don’t end up in landfills. It is both an environmentally conscious and trendy fashion option.

Why Fast Fashion is Popular

Fast fashion is easily accessible and often-

times extremely cheap. Looking at the biggest and most popular inexpensive fashion line, Shein, we find women’s shirts are priced as low as \$1.18 and men’s as low as \$1.28. Women’s bottoms are as low as \$2.02 and men’s as low as \$0.48. With the ability to get an entire outfit for less than \$5, it is no surprise the company had an estimated 88.8 million active shoppers in

2023, with 17.3 million in the U.S., according to David Curry in his article, “Shein Revenue and Usage Statistics (2025),” on businessofapps.com.

Alongside lower costs, fast fashion caters to the trends of the times, and this is especially evident on Shein. Scrolling through the app, crop tops, graphic tees, ripped jeans and anything that’s hot on the market is remade. However, trends rapidly change so production must be extremely fast-paced to make sure they don’t miss out. Can something made this fast be made in an ethical way?

Fast fashion ethics

Ethical concerns in the fast fashion industry were brought into the spotlight on April 24, 2013, in Mykhail Helm’s article, “Beneath the Seams: The Human Toll of Fast Fashion,” which focused on the collapse of eight-floor Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh which killed 1,134 people and left thousands injured. A day before the disaster, large cracks were found in the structure and shops on lower floors were closed. But garment factory workers were ordered to return to work on the upper floors the next day.

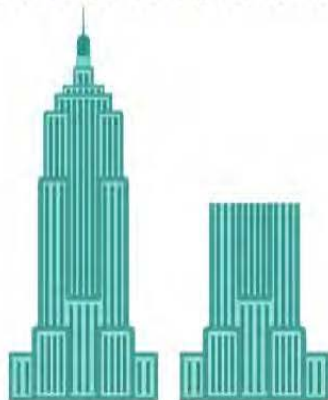
The article notes that 75% of fast fashion workers are women, who are often subjected to violence and harassment in the workplace. The Clean Clothes Campaign details the conditions Indonesian women face in the factories. The female employees report that, “Girls in the factory are harassed by male managers. They come on to the girls, call them into their offices, whisper into their ears, touch them, bribe them with money and threaten them with firing if they don’t have sex with them.”

These are not the only ethical concerns with fast fashion, though. UNICEF estimates in the article, “Children’s rights in the garment and footwear supply chain,” that more than 100 million children are affected in the garment and footwear supply chain globally. This estimate includes not only children of parents in the industry, but also those located near factories as well as children that are working in the industry themselves.

The majority of fast fashion items are made in developing nations, where workers face low pay and harsh work environments. According to the University of Alabama at Birmingham Institute for Human Rights Blog, in the article “Fast-Fashion: Unethical and Unsustainable” by Lindsey Reid,

FAST FASHION, FAST FACTS

20% of global wastewater is from dyeing textiles



92 million tons of clothes are discarded every year, enough to fill one and a half Empire State buildings every day



Many items are worn seven to ten times before being thrown away

earth.org

UPbeat graphic by Rayna Christy

only about 3% of clothes purchased in the United States are also made in the United States, down from about 90% prior to the 1960s. Helm’s article explains that “fast fashion is one of the most labor-intensive industries, with each piece of clothing handmade along a complex supply chain that stretches across countries in the global south such as Bangladesh, India, China, Vietnam and Indonesia.”

The industry employs about 60 million workers, but “less than 2% earn a living wage,” Helm writes. In 2023, protests in Bangladesh over inadequate wages led to four garment workers killed by government forces and more than 100 workers and advocates being imprisoned. The Bangladeshi

THRIFT — page 11



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government raised the minimum wage by 56% to \$113 per month, which still does not meet the \$210 monthly living wage nor the living wage of \$302 necessary to lift people out of poverty.

Another ethical concern was brought up when unique designs made their way onto Shein. The website Ethically-Dressed.com published the article “40+ Businesses Shein Stole Designs From: The Complete List” by Malu Hernandez where she cited the independent fashion brands that Shein has taken designs from. This is considered art theft and plagiarism, as these brands were not only not asked for permission but

are not given any portion of the sales.

When Shein steals these designs without partnering with or crediting the independent brand, they often take the brand’s prospective customers as well. With Shein’s low prices, it becomes more difficult for the brands to compete if their prices are higher. If they do not copyright their designs, they are often unable to take legal action in these scenarios.

However, these ethical concerns are not the only issues that have been explored in the world of fast fashion.

Environmental Impacts

Fast fashion, while it is convenient, has detrimental impacts on the environment. Most people wear an article once or twice,

and then it is often thrown away. This fast fashion waste is responsible for almost 10% of global carbon emissions according to earth.org, but that is not the only way in which it affects the environment. Martina Igini lists 10 startling facts about fast fashion waste in her article, “10 Concerning Fast Fashion Waste Statistics.” One of her statistics is that the average U.S. consumer produces 81.5 pounds of textile waste each year.

However, fast fashion items do not have to be thrown away. Thrift stores work to fill in the gaps, taking clothes to resell and to keep them out of landfills. Plato’s Closet is

THRIFT – page 21



Yesenia Mireles, assistant manager of Plato’s Closet, fixes a rack of shirts at the Beaumont store.

UPbeat photo by Rayna Christy

PROFILE

RADIO MANN



Local radio legend inducted into Hall of Fame

Heather Harmon
UP contributor

You might recognize Harold Mann's voice from the "Coach's Show with LU football coach Pete Rossomando which is broadcast every Wednesday from the Rec Center Patio. Or maybe you recognize the radio personality's voice from his show on KLVI 560. Or maybe you recognize him from his radio coverage of LU sports.

After four decades on the air, the news and sports director for iHeart Beaumont was inducted into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame, Nov.1.

Harold grew up in a radio studio. His father was a disc jockey and Harold expected to follow in his father's footsteps.

"It's just always been part of my life," he said, "Don't know if I could do anything else. That's been my life. I mean, it's the only thing I've ever done since I was a little kid — going back into a little studio and playing around when my dad was doing something in his office."

As well as playing records, Harold's father would broadcast local high school games in his hometown of Fall City, Nebraska. When the younger Mann was a junior in high school, he helped his father in the booth.

"My big thing was getting to reading the stats at halftime," he said. "That was all I got to do, and maybe comment now and then."



Photo by Heather Harmon

Harold Mann, above left, hosts the Lamar football "Coach's Show" with Pete Rossomando every Wednesday, as well as calling Lamar sports. Mann also covers news for KLVI 560. He is shown interviewing LU provost Brett Welch, below, at a press conference earlier this year.

However, one day Harold unexpectedly found himself behind the mic during a basketball game. His father would leave the arena to smoke a cigarette at half time while Harold read off the stats. Typically, his father would

be back for the third quarter, but on this day his father didn't come back in time.

Instead of panicking, Harold broadcast the rest of the game. When he left the arena, he found out his dad was sitting in his car listening to see how Harold would handle that situation.

"I'm like, OK, what's going on?" Harold said. "So, I just started broadcasting the games. He basically, set me up from the beginning to start doing that."

After that experience, Harold realized he finally found his calling and continued to broadcast in the Midwest, in Tarkio, Missouri, until 1984 when he decided to move to Marble City, Texas to be closer to family.

Harold finally moved to Southeast Texas in 1991 when he was asked to broadcast his first Lamar women's basketball against the University of Houston.

"I was down here, and I was working over in Orange for a year — this was a bigger opportunity," he said. "I contacted them, and it fell into place. I started doing Lamar basket-



UP file photo

RADIO — page 15

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ball later that year and eventually worked into some baseball games and I've been going strong ever since."

Harold said working at KLVI offers him a chance to work with a great group of radio men, who are also in the radio hall of fame.

"We've got Al Caldwell here, an 89-year-old guy. We got Jim Love here. We have three of our members of our morning show in the Texas Radio Hall of Fame, and that's pretty cool," Harold said. "I don't know of any other radio station, in the state or the country, that can say three members of the morning show are in the Texas Radio Hall of Fame that went in individually. They're a big part of what I've

done radio-wise."

Harold said he has also found guidance within the Lamar athletics department, especially Dave Hofferth, his former broadcast partner, and Jack Pieper.

"Dave did Lamar athletics for us at KLVI for 30 years, and I took over for him, and I worked with him at times," Harold said. "When we shared broadcasts, I'd do some games, he'd broadcast some games. But Dave was a big influence on my radio career when it came to sports broadcasting. He gave me my chance to put my foot in the door at Lamar, and you know, I've been cool ever since."

Jack Pieper was the news director at KLVI when Harold started in Beaumont.

"Jack, or 'Slammer' as we used to call him, I owe a lot to him when it comes to the sports

side of things," Harold said. "Those guys are true professionals."

"When I got here to KLVI in 1991, I thought I knew everything there was about radio. I didn't know anything. These guys taught me basically all what I know — and half what they know."

Harold Mann joins a long list of larger-than-life Texas radio men, including Rod Ryan, Mike Rhyner, Craig Ryan and Bob 'Tumbleweed Smith' Lewis.

"You know I've lived in other states and I can't even compare what Texas radio is compared to the others," he said. "I've worked in radio in Iowa, Missouri and Texas, and it's amazing the people you meet in this industry. We're family, and so is the radio industry in Texas."

"Everybody gets along. I go to different high school or college games in the state, and you become friends with other announcers, and we help each other out."

Harold said Lamar University has also been an important part of his life, not just courtside calling the games. He became friends with the coaches and athletic staff. His fiancé, Jeri Ann, was a Lamar alumnae. Jeri Ann would often go to Lamar events with him until 2014, when she lost her battle with multiple sclerosis.

"I lost my fiancé about 10 years ago, and the way Lamar treated me was amazing," Harold said.

After her death, before every football game that season, the players and coaches held a moment of silence, and every coach in the athletic department called or texted him to check on him, Harold said, with some even kind enough to show up to the funeral.

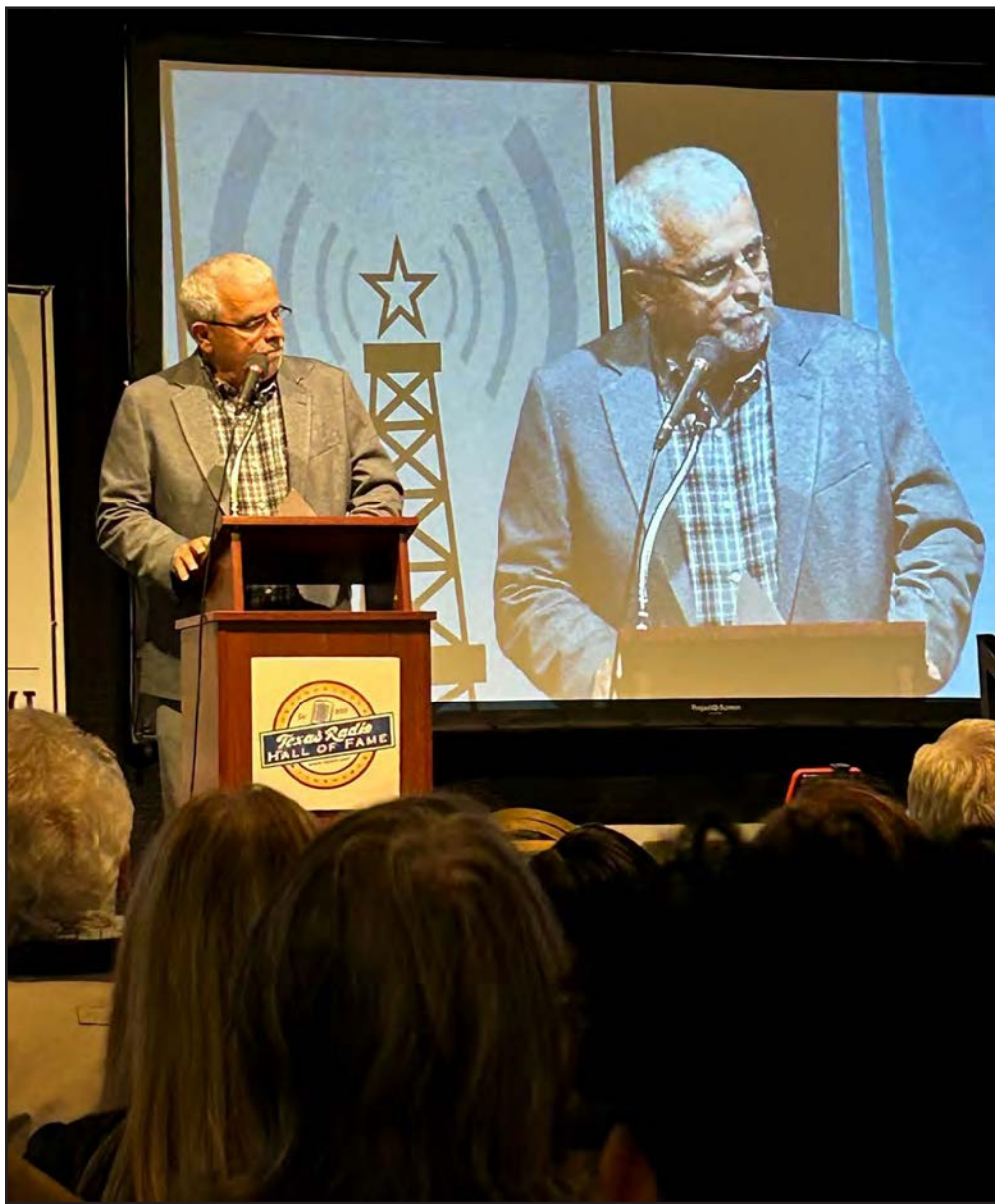
Lamar is a big part of his family, he said.

During his lengthy career, he has seen many changes in the radio industry, notably with technology. But the job remains the same.

"Honestly, I probably wouldn't change a thing," he said. "It really wouldn't change a thing, because you really can't prepare for the future, technology-wise, if you don't know what it is."

Looking back on his legacy, Harold said he's grateful that things turned out the way they did, but most notably he's grateful for being himself.

"My dad was Harold Mann, but he went by Hal Mann on the air," Mann said. "And in my last two years of high school, I was Hal Mann



Courtesy photo

Harold Mann was inducted into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame in October 2025.



TRAVEL

BEAUTY IN THE ROUGH



Big Bend National Park perfect vacation spot for nature lovers

BIG BEND, Texas — In West Texas, there is vast, empty, unlit land dotted with small towns and massive natural formations.

This is Big Bend National Park. The 800,000-acre park is located along the Rio Grande on the U.S.-Mexico border.

The park is home to more than 1,200 species of animals and has many diverse ecosystems throughout its forests, deserts, mountains and rivers.

Visitors must be prepared for the intense heat near the Rio Grande. The area around the Santa Elena Canyon has a year-round dry and hot climate. One side of the canyon is in Mexico and the other is in the U.S. Kayakers can navigate through the canyon

and be in two countries at once.

Up in the Chisos Mountains, there is a massive temperature difference. The average temperature is typically 15- to 20-degrees cooler than the Rio Grande area, creating a climate that allows for a forest to surround the mountains.

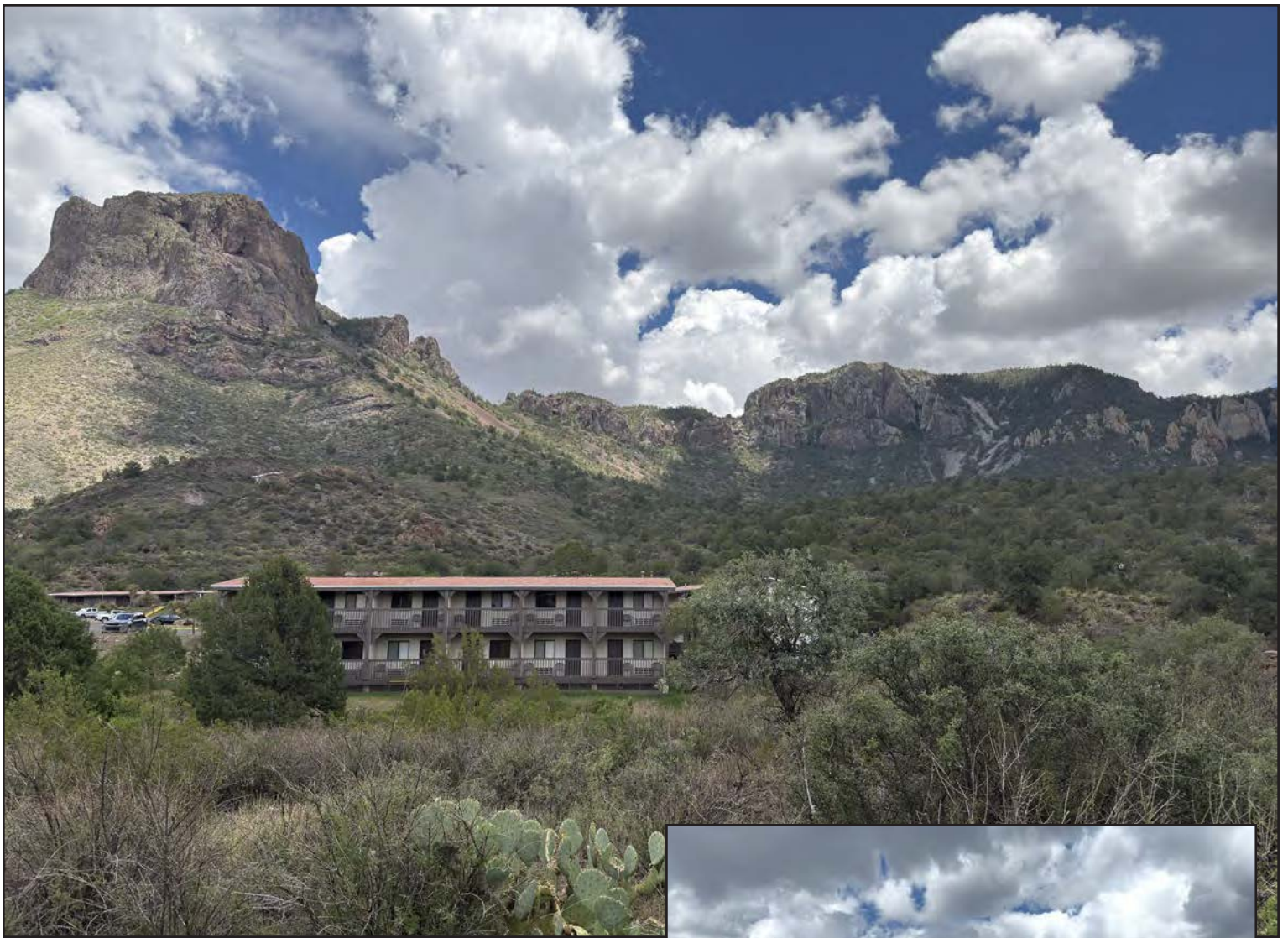
In the Chisos, one may encounter some of nature's most fierce predators. The area is home to mountain lions and Mexican black bears.

However, it is also an area of beautiful hiking trails. The absence of light pollution makes some of the most beautiful night skies in the world visible.

If one is looking for beauty in the rough, Big Bend is the place to visit.

.....
From the ghost town of Terlingua, top, to the Santa Elena Canyon, far left, the beautiful landscape draws visitors from all over the world — just be careful of what may be lurking in the area and beyond.





The rugged landscape of the Big Bend National Park allows visitors to experience nature in its purest form. Even the hotels, top, look like they are retreating into the landscape. The birds, right, watch on unfazed.



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just one of the corporations that allow customers to sell their unwanted clothing.

“You can earn some cash from it,” Yesenia Mireles, assistant manager of Plato’s Closet in Beaumont, said. “But also it’ll be the little grain of salt that we all pitch in to help the environment.”

Thrifting

The dictionary defines thrifting as, “The activity of looking for or buying goods from thrift stores or other places that sell used things such as clothes, books, or furniture.” It allows you to not only pitch in your grain of salt, but to find styles that one might not have been able to find shopping new.

“I think thrifting became more popular once people really realized that a lot of old styles are coming back,” Mireles said. “So, Y2K, vintage — a lot of these things you can only get if you thrift. You won’t find it at a new store like Hollister.”

While some people have noticed price increases as thrifting has become more popular, it is not the same for every thrift store.

“Personally, our pricing never changed,” Caitlyn Blackwell, manager of Love Local Thrift Store in Port Neches, said. “We always wanted to be accessible to everybody, and so although thrifting became a trend, we decided to leave it the same because we would be able to help more people that way.”

Mireles personally thrifts her own clothes.

“When I was younger, I just wanted brand new — brand new sneakers, Hollister, everything new,” she said. “But once I grew older, I was like, ‘Wait, why do I actually need that?’” Since I started working at Plato’s, I have not shopped at the mall unless I need the outfit that day.

“It’s saved me a lot of money. I’ll sell stuff that I don’t need anymore, or that I don’t use, and then I use that money to buy stuff from Plato’s. It’s kind of like a repeated cycle, but it’s good knowing that none of that is going to waste.”

Fast Fashion’s Impact on Thrifting

While the two concepts might seem like they are on very different sides, they connect more than just being ways to consume fashion articles.

“Personally, with our store, I think (fast



UPbeat photo by Emily Flores

Caitlyn Blackwell, manager of Love Local Thrift Store, reaches for a shirt at the Port Neches thrift shop.

fashion) has helped,” Blackwell said. “People get fast fashion. When they decide to get rid of it, then they donate it to us, and then we allow our customers to be able to try something they wouldn’t normally try.”

Going into thrift stores, you can see Shein tags helping to fill the racks. Buying from a thrift store, somebody can wear the top without contributing to the brands themselves and ensure that the shirt does not get thrown away immediately.

Virtual Thrifting

According to Lindsey Sparkman’s article, “Unraveling the Impact of Thrifting,” the global secondhand apparel market rose from \$138 to \$211 billion from 2021 to 2023. This rise is not surprising when we understand that buying secondhand is not only available in brick and mortar stores now, but has become something available at a person’s fingertips.

Facebook Marketplace has allowed people to buy and sell their used items for years, offering a way for people to earn a bit of cash while staying active on the social media site. Everything from clothing, furniture and even vehicles are available among the wide variety of items, all for prices determined by the seller and oftentimes available for debate.

However, Facebook Marketplace is not

the only location where people can buy and sell secondhand.

In the world of secondhand apps, Depop is a popular source. According to the Depop Newsroom, “Depop is a circular fashion marketplace where anyone can buy, sell and discover desirable, affordable second-hand fashion.” Depop was founded in 2011, and now has 43.5 million registered users.

Whether it be digital or physical thrift shopping, there has been a noticeable rise in thrifting.

Thrifting As A Trend

“The Rise of Thrifting Culture in a Modern Society”, an article by Teri Silver published on planetaid.org, details how thrifting has become more popular in recent years. Silver begins by explaining that out of all generations, “Millennials and Generation Z are most often associated with the rise of thrifting culture.” She also writes that thrifting culture has not only gone digital in the manner of secondhand fashion apps, but has become popularized on social media.

Looking on Instagram, influencers such as @izzy_manuel publicize the importance of shopping sustainably and give inspiration to those who may be a wary of starting to shop secondhand. Francine Vito in her article, “Explainer: What Is Slow Fashion and How Can You Join the Movement,” states that slow fashion is, “A movement that advocates for environmental and social justice in the fashion industry” and “zeroes in on the problem of overproduction and overconsumption.”

Looking at fashion influencers often inspires and encourages people to continue shopping secondhand by making it a fashionable option.

Putting It All Together

All around, fast fashion has many ethical and environmental concerns. While fast fashion might be convenient, thrifting clothes allows a person to consume fashion without feeding into the business. Advocating for slow fashion helps to lessen the impacts of fast fashion. Donating used clothes can be a small step towards creating a more sustainable industry and environment.

After all, one’s choice of fashion truly shows their personality. Choosing creative pieces and forming a unique style by thrifting paints a more personal image, rather than simply following the trends of fast fashion and dressing like everyone else.



RADIO— from page 15

Jr. Early on, I wanted to be me and develop my own identity on radio.”

Harold said he was excited when he was told he’d be inducted into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame with his peers and co-hosts.

“(It was) awesome,” he said. “I mean, you look back and you see the guys I’ve worked with, and the talent I’ve come across in the state of Texas over the years — from the news guys across the state to sports guys,”

It is clear that for Harold Mann, radio is more than just a job. It’s an extended family.

“Texas radio is special, it really is, and that’s why being in the Texas Radio Hall of Fame is really cool,” he said. “I mean, you just look at the number of people here in Texas and the talent that has come out of the state of Texas and radio, and it’s like, ‘Wow I’m part of that now.’”

Harold Mann, left, chats with LU head football coach Pete Rossomando during their weekly radio show.

Photo by Heather Harmon



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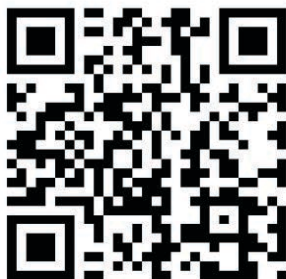
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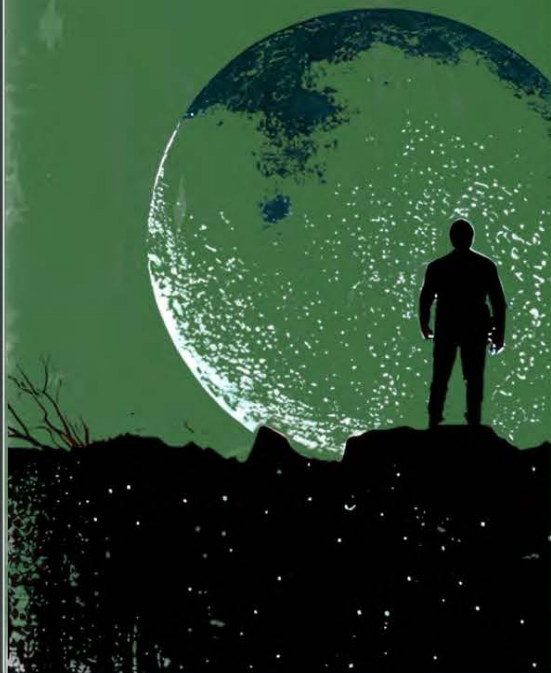
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