11-6-2002

Crow's Nest : 2002 : 11 : 06

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital.usfsp.edu/crows_nest

Recommended Citation

https://digital.usfsp.edu/crows_nest/326

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University History: Campus Publications at Digital USFSP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Crow's Nest by an authorized administrator of Digital USFSP.
BUDGET WOES CAUSE SCHOLARSHIP CUTS

The reductions affect more than 300 students at USF St. Petersburg.

By Matt Nelson
Staff Writer

More than 300 USF St. Petersburg students are now scrambling for money or will bypass the summer term altogether because of legislative budget cuts of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship.

For the second straight year, Florida's legislature has reduced the budget of the $225 million a year merit-based scholarship by eliminating money for the 2003 summer term. More than 100,000 students statewide receive this scholarship.

"A lot of students would not be able to go to school without this aid," said Jennifer Fraser, USF St. Petersburg director of financial aid. Fraser said she was shocked by the budget cut and that the program is in trouble because of an overall tuition funds. 75 percent of tuition and must keep a 3.0 GPA in college. Those who earned the Merit Scholars award receive 75 percent of tuition and must maintain a 3.0 GPA in college. Those who earned the Merit Scholars award receive 75 percent of tuition and must maintain a 3.0 GPA in college.

"A lot of students would not be able to go to school without this aid," said Jennifer Fraser, USF St. Petersburg director of financial aid. Fraser said she was shocked by the budget cut and that the program is in trouble because of an overall tuition funds. 75 percent of tuition and must keep a 3.0 GPA in college.

The campus holiday Fair, an event that's geared toward students and staff, takes place Nov. 16. All the proceeds of the Fair will be donated to the American Cancer Society.

Justice is afraid more money will be cut in subsequent years. One problem Justice has seen is in the new College

UMA'S NEST

Vol. 33, No. 4
University of South Florida St. Petersburg
November 6, 2002

WHAT'S INSIDE

From sitcoms to student
A former Hollywood script writer is now a USF grad student.

Page 3

Unusual neighbors
Alligators live closer to campus than students may realize.

Page 3

CEO search
The campus is looking to replace interim CEO Ralph Wilcox.

Page 4

Iraq debate
Three professors debate whether we should invade Iraq.

Page 6

Character education for children
An ethicist says children learn more from what we do than what we say.

Page 7

SHOT OF THE WEEK

Perhaps you thought your drive to campus was difficult?
Opinions

More diversity needed on board of trustees

Guest Editorial

Jimmy Grinaker

With the recent resignation of Patrick Swygert, the USF Board of Trustees is now entirely composed of Republicans and business people. Until Oct. 22, Swygert was the only educator, as well as the only African-American and only Democrat on the board. To many, this lack of diversity evokes suspicion — considering that the USF Board of Trustees is appointed directly by Republican Gov. Jeb Bush.

Two years ago Gov. Bush and the Republican-led Legislature pushed to have the 35-year-old Florida Board of Regents abolished. It was replaced by a Board of Education and individual Boards of Trustees for each university, entities that hold most of the power. This plan allowed the governor to directly appoint the Board of Trustees for each university.

The Board of Trustees sets policies, serves as the institution's legal owner and final authority responsible for use of resources. It also appoints the president of the university.

The president then appoints advisory boards for regional campuses, such as USF St. Petersburg.

But many people question what qualifies people such as the chairman and CEO of Outback Steakhouse, Chris Sullivan, and the president of TECO Energy, John Ramil, to serve on a board running a university. Some might conclude it has something to do with Sullivan's more than $100,000 in contributions to the state Republican Party since 1996. Tampa Bay Partnership, a business group that asks economic development agencies such as local chambers of commerce to identify people they recommend for consideration, handles finding nominees for the board. USF has no part in the recruiting process.

Further questions about the lack of diversity and right-wing composition of the board were raised after the revelation that they worked behind the scenes for months in favor of the dismissal of professor Sami Al-Arian. It's worth noting that Swygert, president of Howard University, was the only member who voted not to fire the tenured professor.

Some USF St. Petersburg students believe there is not enough diversity on the board. "Different points of view are necessary in a culture of higher learning," said student Leonard Kaul. "Stacking the board with appointees belonging to only one political party who are answerable to the state head of the same party is a recipe for disaster."

On the other hand, many think that the business-oriented makeup of the board is a good thing. Some feel a university run in a business-like fashion would, among other benefits, make it more efficient. USF St. Petersburg sophomore Tom Piccolo said, "I think a more business-oriented board is a good thing for the university, because it will attract more opportunities for fund raising.

But not all students buy this theory. "Unfortunately, the standard for-profit business model does not always apply to the operation of a public university," Kaul said. "While increasing class size and offering Internet courses is more efficient in terms of dollars, such measures tend only to degrade the quality of the education received by the student. What other businesslike approaches such as these can we expect in the future from a board comprised only of corporate executives?"

As it now stands, the USF board is not diverse enough. To best serve the university, the governor should appoint Democrats and Republicans, business people and educators, fiscal conservatives and liberals to the Board of Trustees.

Doing so will help ensure the best possible education for USF students.
From Hollywood glamour to USF substance
A USF graduate student once wrote for some of TV’s most popular programs.

By Jeremy Souliere
Staff Writer

Lisa Rosenthal’s credits

Head of the Class
1987-88
Married with Children
1989
Working Girl
1989
The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
1990-91
Martin
1992
The Trouble with Larry
1993
It Had to be You
1994
Party Girl
1996

Like many people at USF, Lisa Rosenthal hasn’t been a student in a long time. But unlike most, she isn’t here to earn more money.
The journalism graduate student has been there and done that.
For nearly 12 years she worked as a script writer for hit TV sitcoms like Married with Children, The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air and Martin. Most aspiring writers probably would perceive this to be the pinnacle of their careers. But for Rosenthal something was missing.

Just what was missing became clear to her during a meeting for the sitcom Martin. The executive producer was going through routine remarks when the subject of money came up. “We’re all doing this for the money,” he said. “Right?”

When Rosenthal looked around the room, she realized that everyone was nodding their head in agreement but her.

Rosenthal originally decided to become a script writer because she wanted to influence society in some way. She had hoped to be a part of a sitcom like All in the Family, a show that—between the laughter—exposed important societal problems like racial bigotry and male chauvinism.

Rosenthal thought that all script writers were in it for the writing, but instead, she concluded that “they were business people who wanted to make money, and I was a writer who wanted to make a difference.”

In 1998, Rosenthal joined a mentor program at the Mid-Valley Youth Center in Los Angeles, and it was this experience that would shape her future career decisions. The program was designed to help troubled teenagers, and as she spent time at the center, it became clear that the teens were very interested in learning to write scripts.

Rosenthal developed a script writing class for the young people, and it was during these classes that she realized she really could make a difference. The teens had become involved in writing about something that could provide an escape from their urban troubles.

Rosenthal decided to have the troubled teens create a full length sitcom script for their final project, and she allowed them to write for the show of their choice, just as if they chose That 70s Show and began writing. Eventually they developed a full length script, created sets and rehearsed their show for production.

As a final reward for their efforts, on the day the class was set to perform their show for families and friends, Rosenthal invited an actor and a producer from That 70s Show to watch them perform. “When the audience heard the first joke, the place erupted with laughter,” Rosenthal said, and the teens were left with a feeling of accomplishment for their efforts.

To this day Rosenthal keeps in touch with some of those she worked with. She remembers one young person telling her, “I’m going to end up in jail; that’s where my friends are, and that’s okay.” But since their class together that teen has gone to college. Another of Rosenthal’s students is attending Film school at the University of Southern California.

Ultimately, it was the real life-challenging stories like these that made Rosenthal quit her successful script writing career and decide to become a teacher. She had finally made a difference.

As a graduate assistant at USF, Rosenthal teaches the undergraduate course Mass Communication and Society. She eventually hopes to teach a university script writing course.

Besides planning to attend USF, family also brought Rosenthal to Tampa Bay. Her sister, a Tampa resident, recently had a baby, and Rosenthal wanted to live closer.

Rosenthal’s father once told her, “There’s always room at the top,” and that has stuck with her to this day. The top had always seemed to mean a Hollywood career, but for Rosenthal now, it seems the top spot is reserved for mentors too.

Meet your neighbors: alligators live near campus

By Jacqueline Dupuis
Staff Writer

USF students might just see a new, not-so-pretty face on campus one of these days. For five years, alligators have lived in the waters of Bayboro Harbor—close enough to campus to walk to class or the library.

Every day, employees and boat owners at the Harborage Marina see alligators lingering around Harborage Marina in Bayboro Harbor and in Salt Creek. Sometimes they even wander over to the USF St. Petersburg shore.

Harborage Marina employees want the gators to stay in the harbor. “We want them to stay because they’re in their home territory,” said Niles Johnson, Harborage Marina High and Dry manager. “We’re the ones who are invading their territory. We’re going to have to learn how to co-exist with these animals that have been here forever.”

The alligators originally came to Bayboro Harbor from Lake Maggiori, about two miles south of campus, through a narrow creek that connects the lake and the harbor. Employees, boat owners and their children see alligators travel up and down the creek every day.

Johnson named one of the alligators Pork Chop. “My customers here love him,” he said. He guesses Pork Chop is about 5 to 7 years old and 8 feet long. Johnson said he got the name Pork Chop because he has a round and fat belly. “He likes white herons and grackles and an occasional seagull,” he said. “He’s not all that fond of seagulls.”

Pork Chop is not an alligator’s natural behavior to pursue people or animals,” she said.

Jane Brooks, a Harborage Marina employee, said she has seen two or three different alligators there. She usually sees them early in the morning when she gets to work. Brooks said they don’t bother anyone. “They’ll look up at you and then just go on about their business,” she said.

We’re very protective of Pork Chop. He just needs to be left alone. ’’
—Niles Johnson, Harborage Marina High and Dry Manager

Johnson said.

One day, someone called for trappers to come to the High and Dry. After Johnson made a quick phone call to his boss to verify with him that he didn’t make the call, Johnson told the trappers to leave the property and not to return. “You will not be trapping alligators here,” he told them.

Customers were also visibly upset that trappers had come for Pork Chop. Johnson said that unless an alligator becomes aggressive or makes a dive at a person it needs to be left alone.

Jesse Smith, spokesperson for the Marine Research Institute of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in St. Petersburg, said that alligators typically keep to themselves. It’s not an alligator’s natural behavior to pursue people or animals,” she said.

Johnson said.

One day, someone called for trappers to come to the High and Dry. After Johnson made a quick phone call to his boss to verify with him that he didn’t make the call, Johnson told the trappers to leave the property and not to return. “You will not be trapping alligators here,” he told them.

Customers were also visibly upset that trappers had come for Pork Chop. Johnson said that unless an alligator becomes aggressive or makes a dive at a person it needs to be left alone.

Jesse Smith, spokesperson for the Marine Research Institute of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in St. Petersburg, said that alligators typically keep to themselves. It’s not an alligator’s natural behavior to pursue people or animals,” she said.

Jane Brooks, a Harborage Marina employee, said she has seen two or three different alligators there. She usually sees them early in the morning when she gets to work. Brooks said they don’t bother anyone. “They’ll look up at you and then just go on about their business,” she said.
The nationwide search for a permanent vice president/campus executive officer has swung into full swing at USF St. Petersburg. The 17-member committee appointed by Judy Genshaft intends to have a replacement for interim VP/CEO Ralph Wilcox by fall 2003.

Genshaft challenged members of the President’s Advisory Committee to “go out and find someone great.” On Oct. 29, the committee began the external process and released an advertisement that was submitted for publication to the “Chronicle of Higher Education,” “Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education” and “Black Issues in Higher Education.”

The ad briefly outlines the requirements of the new VP/CEO, who is to be an accomplished academic scholar and an experienced university administrator with the ability to guide the institution through rapid growth to national prominence. The ad also states the new vice president will be responsible for pursuing accreditation as well.

The search process is designed to recommend a few candidates to Genshaft, who will make a final decision. “Genshaft has removed herself from the actual search, but she will make the ultimate decision,” said Donna Krudsen, staff liaison to the search committee and coordinator of administration services. “She may consult the board of trustees, or she may not.”

“We have the pleasure of Genshaft,” Krudsen said. “He or she will report to Genshaft and will turn in reports to the board of trustees,” she said.

USF hired AT Kearney Inc. to assist in the search by looking among academic administrators to seek candidates for the position. “The firm will try to connect our position statement, description and characteristics to help find a good fit,” Wilson said.

Dr. Jan Greenwood, a consultant for AT Kearney, said, “I’m really looking forward to working with the committee to help them find this leader.”

Greenwood is using her expertise regarding Florida’s Sunshine Laws to assist in the search. The Sunshine Laws open government records to the public, thus, anyone applying to a state university is not protected from the press.

“Technically, this scares off people in secure positions who might have an interest in moving but don’t want their employers to know they are looking elsewhere,” said Bob Dardenne, chair of the Faculty Council of the College of Arts and Sciences at USF St. Petersburg.

The firm helps by taking them through the interview process without an application. AT Kearney will help attract the best candidates for the job because they do not have to fear their present institution knowing about their candidacy.

“It’s not the best thing for a search committee, which often doesn’t get to know who is a candidate for the job it is searching for until a week or two before a choice is made,” Dardenne said.

Wilcox is not expected to be a candidate, as he has publicly stated that he does not plan to seek the position. In addition, Wilson doesn’t know of any internal interest from USF community members for the position, but he said that can change. “The position is open to anyone who applies,” he said.

The 17-member advisory committee is comprised of representatives from the faculty and student body of USF St. Petersburg, members of the public and the Campus Board. Genshaft invited the members who are involved, and she didn’t ask for volunteers.

Genshaft appointed Howard Hinesley, superintendent of Pinellas County Schools and Helen Levine, a representative for St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Baker, “I appreciate President Genshaft including the city in this important decision making process,” Levine said.

Wilson said he is excited about the search, but acknowledged the committee has a lot of work ahead. “It is no small task, we have pretty big shoes to fill,” he said in reference to former chief Bill Heller. “The new vice president follows a tough act.”

The next committee meeting is on Nov. 14 at 8:30 a.m. in Davis Hall, room 130.
What you need to know about textbook theft

As the end of the semester nears, students may experience theft of textbooks and other unattended valuables. These ordinary but valuable items, especially textbooks, are a common target because they are easily converted into cash.

These thefts are known as crimes of opportunity that can be reduced or eliminated by keeping valuables in sight at all times. Thefts typically occur in libraries, labs, cafeterias, classrooms, activity centers or campus stores. Textbooks are an extensive and necessary part of your college education. Since they do not have serial numbers, USF St. Petersburg Police recommend writing your driver's license number on three pages of each text. Use the pages that coincide with your date of birth. If you were born on November 27, 1980, place your driver's license number on pages 11, 27, and 80. If your license is from another state place the two letter state code in brackets after your number. If you do not have a driver's license you can get a Florida ID card and number. These driver's license and ID numbers can be accessed 24 hours a day by campus police.

Most other items of value such as cell phones, laptop computers or calculators will have a serial number. Make a list of these items, including the make, model, color and serial number and keep it in a safe place. This information will make it possible to enter the item into the national computer system if it is stolen. This will also provide proof of ownership if necessary. As an additional precaution you may also etch your driver's license number onto these items.

By taking these precautions you can prevent theft or increase the chance of recovering your property if it is lost or stolen. Please report all incidents of theft or lost property to the campus police.

As an additional precaution you may also etch your driver's license number onto these items. By taking these precautions you can prevent theft or increase the chance of recovering your property if it is lost or stolen. Please report all incidents of theft or lost property to the campus police.

Advertise with us!
Call 727-553-3113 or e-mail crow'snesteditor@yahoo.com
Professors debate war with Iraq
By Brandon Keith
Staff Writer

What do you get when you put a political scientist, a law professor and a geography professor on the same stage? A good old-fashioned teach-in, of course.

Professors Thomas Smith, Robert Davis and Daanish Mustafa discussed, debated and fielded questions Oct. 31 regarding the looming threat of war with Iraq.

After a brief introduction, each panelist had ten minutes to present his opinion on the subject and had an opportunity to explain what led them to their conclusions.

Davis, a law professor at Stetson University and military reservist, explained his position in context of the current events. "I'll tell you right up front," he said, "I support the (presidential) administration."

Admitting that his perspective is influenced by his knowledge and experience of military duty, Davis supported his stance by declaring that he had access to privileged information that he could not discuss. He chronicled the history of the issue at hand and gave several examples of Iraq's lack of cooperation with UN agreements and policies.

"Can we afford to trust continued violations of UN resolutions?" he asked. "Many said we shouldn't have waited in World War II."

Smith, a political scientist and international studies professor at USF, brought a more optimistic perspective to the table. "I am going to do something political scientists aren't supposed to do," he said. "I'm going to predict we won't go to war."

He reasoned that as a political leader, Saddam Hussein would think rationally when it came to the safety of himself and his regime and take the pressure seriously.

"Hussein has a rational capacity and though he miscalculated before, he may not do it again," Smith said. "I think we'll see not a war, but a quite rigorous inspection."

Mustafa, a geography professor, began by listing several reasons to support military action in Iraq and then explained the fallacies behind them.

"USF professors debate war with Iraq."

By Jacqueline Dupuis
Staff Writer

USF St. Petersburg police officers include, left to right, Sgt. Kenton Mattingly, officer Ada Bell, officer Wes Shaw, Chief Robert Slwik, officer Jonathan Dye, and officer Jon Wierzbowksi.

USF police—not just ordinary security

"We're always out there. We're always looking for something that we can use to our advantage. But we're always out there working."

— officer Jon Wierzbowksi

Inkjet test, followed by an interview by the head of the USF Tampa psychology department.

A background investigator, usually a current USF St. Petersburg police officer, checks the applicant's previous employment and credit history, criminal background and even talks with friends and neighbors. It's standard required background check procedure, Wierzbowksi said.

The applicant selected for the position begins training immediately.

"Even though we are already trained for CPR, first aid, and self-defense techniques, we have to take refresher courses," Wierzbowksi said. "Every four years, we have to complete 40 hours of mandatory retraining classes. They include a combination of several different topics, like interview and interrogation, and supervising techniques for law enforcement officers."

In addition, retraining agendas include handling domestic violence, human diversity and courses to deter discriminatory profiling. "We have a strict policy against profiling," Wierzbowksi said. "We take no action on someone for their appearance or economic status, but solely based upon what they are doing."

Twice a year, the officers attend shooting practice at St. Petersburg College's Allstate Center.

Efficient use of self-defense techniques with pepper spray and the expandable baton requires one day of training each year, including a written exam and a practical exercise. All officers are required to attend firearms and character training, and bicycle training is optional.

Police Sgt. Kent Mattingly said he enjoys working at USF for that particular reason. While officers on the city and state levels focus on a specific area, such as S.W.A.T. or detective work, the type of work at USF encompasses all levels of specialty work. "We are generalists versus specialists," he said. "That's why some people are attracted to working here."

Many students don't know that the police officers are so qualified.

Political science senior LaQuisha Hall, 21, was impressed. "I didn't know it was that in-depth," she said. "That's a lot to be at USF."

With one to five officers on duty at any given time, they use police cars, including one unmarked vehicle, scooters and bicycles to patrol the area.

The patrol routes and times vary, he said, but the officers continuously cruise the area. "We're always out there somewhere," he said.
Speaker addresses character education for children

By Lisa Rosenthal

Staff Writer

It seems so simple. Love the good. Do the good.

An internationally renowned ethicist said teaching this theory to children around the world is the first step toward peace and compassionate governments.

It's called character education, which is Dr. Mary Williams' specialty. As co-director of the International Center for Character Education, she spoke Oct. 28 about the promise of instilling a sense of "character" in today's children.

"We've had instincts toward the good, and instincts to fight our foes, both since the beginning of time," she said. "But the ethical bottom line is to build bonds of caring and compassion."

Character education often brings to mind judgmental radio talk show hosts who rail about instilling conservative "values" through uncompromising discipline. But Williams said that's not only misguided in terms of ethics, it doesn't work. Her research has shown that kids learn how to act not by being told how to behave, but by modeling others' behavior.

"Children are watching us all the time," Williams said. "They learn more from what we do than what we say, from our living it and breathing it."

For example, she described a father who chastised his son for stealing from school, but instead of correcting the behavior she said, "If you need anything, I'll get it from work."

It's ethical standards like these that lead to corporate scandals like Enron, contributing to racism and even foster terrorism, she said.

Williams' organization offers an online certificate in character education, as well as advanced degree specializations. In addition to working with teachers, parents and community members throughout the country to set up character education programs, she also is a professor of education at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. She's written books on the subject, including the bestselling "Educating Hearts and Minds," which is part of a five-book contract.

Williams has assisted educators in Brazil, Singapore, Japan and Canada. During a consultation in Russia, children confided in her that the social system was so corrupt, they were afraid they couldn't get jobs without adapting the corruptive schemes of their elders.

An education guru, Williams began her career teaching math, history and literature. She noticed that kids behaved differently around different teachers, and that behavior was linked to achievement. Certain teachers seemed to motivate students more than others, and she wondered why.

Her doctoral dissertation found it was the character and qualities of the teacher—not the curriculum—that made a difference. That's when she started to look into how kids learn moral values in the classroom.

"Leaders tell us to improve schooling, but it's not just about academics," she said. "Education started out originally about character. Now it should be about both."

Williams shared statistics about the drastic increase in cheating, stealing and lying in teens, and reminded the audience that these youth are going to be the next generation of corporate executives, police officers and politicians. Riddles of factors contribute to these statistics, and she doesn't minimize that parents don't care.

"There are so many things working on kids," she said. "MTV, radio, TV, the Internet. They aren't bad in themselves, and I'm opposed to any kind of censorship. But it's not just parents raising their children these days. It's all these things."

Polls indicate people want character education in schools, and even agree on the most important values—honesty, respect and responsibility. But some principals and teachers say there just isn't time to add it into their packed schedules.

The key, Williams said, is integrating character education into the content of every lesson plan every day. Teaching character education doesn't have to cost a lot of money, but it does have to be a community effort.

She noted that a peer mediation program at Columbine High School had been voted down a few years before the shootings. School officials decided the money was better spent on raising test scores, yet character education has been proven to increase scores.

"It really does take a village," Williams said. "It's the collective example, everyone participating in the expectations and the rules to influence the morals and values in youth."

She emphasized that it didn't matter if the program was based on her course or was of the "homegrown" variety. The important thing is to teach kids about caring, and to show, through example, how good it feels to do the right thing. That is what will prepare them for "the moral blizzard" ahead, she stressed.

"Each one of us," Williams said, "can contribute to world peace."

The Character Education Partnership, at www.character.org, is what Williams called "the single most important Web site" for help with implementing a program. Additional information is available at the International Center of Character Education site, teachvalues.org.

After she described successful character education programs, George Sherman, P&J Education Coordinator, spoke about how these programs were being implemented in Pinellas county schools. He said middle schools are the hardest areas to crack into. However, the Florida legislature has mandated that every school must have a character education program for kindergarten through 12th grade by 2004.

The audience asked Williams questions such as how to get a reluctant principal interested in character education and how to reconcile it with today's emphasis on the financial bottom line.

William's lecture, "Homeland Security: The Ethical Bottom Line," was sponsored by USF St. Petersburg's Program for Ethics in Education and Community, chaired by Dr. Jay Black. It's the first of three "ethicist in residence" lectures hosted by the group this fall.

"However, when he did that in the 1980s, he was a United States ally," he said. "He said that the United States said little about that and did nothing. Mustafa went on to give his reasons why he opposes a war. He was, however, adamant that he was not a supporter of Hussein.

The floor was opened to the audience to ask questions of the panelists. Audience members asked questions varying from what defines terrorism to how people can get involved in fighting terrorism.

Despite the opposing viewpoints of Davis and Mustafa about whether or not Iraq is truly a terrorist state, the atmosphere surrounding the debate was calm. Smith said the teach-in was a success, notwithstanding the short notice given to publicize the event. He said the audience of about 50 was larger than expected, though he felt the interest in this issue is waning.

Classifieds

Position Available!

Student Government is currently looking for an administrative assistant.

Job requires basic office skills including typing, copying, and filing.

Pay is $6.00 per hour.

Federal Work Study or OPS position.

Wanted

Marketing intern or marketing focused student for part time work.

Will be helping Financial Consultant with marketing area of business.

Flexible hours and a good atmosphere.

Please call Sydney McClure between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (727) 799-3400.

Serious inquiries only.
Johnson once saw a woman sitting on the dock at the High and Dry with her feet splashing in the creek. An alligator came as close as 15 feet from where she was sitting. He saw her feet, turned around and traveled back down the creek.

Occasionally, alligators will approach the shore at USF St. Petersburg, Jonathan Dye, a USF St. Petersburg law enforcement officer, said he saw an alligator in Bayboro Harbor a month ago for the first time. "He actually came up to the beach where he was sitting. He saw her and went nose to nose and the alligator backed off and swam off. It was like the alligator was afraid of the bird."

Dye said that some people question the presence of the alligators, especially when the animals are crocodiles rather than alligators, because they are able to survive in the bay. "They are freshwater alligators and not saltwater crocodiles," Johnson said. He said crocodiles are considerably larger and more aggressive. The alligators are able to survive in Bayboro Harbor and Salt Creek because of the freshwater run-off from the lake.

"It's very protective of Pork Chop. He just needs to be left alone," Johnson said.