Could it happen here?

Run... Hide... Fight

That’s the advice of campus police if a shooter goes on a rampage here. “These situations are dynamic and evolve rapidly,” police say, warning that “there may be no pattern or method” in a shooter’s selection of victims.

Run. If there’s a path to safety, run — even if others insist on staying. Once you are safe, try to keep others from walking into danger and call 9-1-1.

Hide. If you can’t run to safety, hide. Turn out the lights, lock the doors and silence the ringer and vibrator on your cell phone.

Fight. As a last resort, fight back. Working alone or with others, use improvised weapons — a chair, a trash can, a vase — to try to disarm the shooter and take him down.

Source: USFS police department, City of Houston

Shooting rampage at Oregon college is a grim warning for campuses everywhere

By Caitlin Ashworth

Staff Reporter

Terror swept over the Umpqua Community College campus in Oregon last week as a gunman killed nine people before killing himself.

“That could’ve been me,” said USF St. Petersburg junior Kaitlyn Brass, 19, who found the incident nerve-racking.

Freshman Andrew Deming, 18, said he isn’t worried about a mass shooting at USFSP. However, he said one of his professors expressed a fear of a disruptive student during one of his classes.

When the student showed signs of rage and suspicious activity, the teacher “called the cops,” said Deming. “He was taken out and searched.”

The University Police Department has a detailed plan and procedures to prepare for a possible armed intruder or active shooter on school grounds. University police Chief David Hendry said the officers are prepared.

“We would rather respond to a lot of false alarms than miss something real,” he said.

Hendry has been university police chief since October 2013. Before that, he was police chief at Tallahassee Community College for two years and officer at the Tallahassee Police Department for nearly 29 years. He grew up in St. Petersburg and has a bachelor’s in criminology and a master’s in executive management from Florida State University, according to his resume on LinkedIn.

“We have a very powerful emergency notification system,” said Hendry, “and it is triggered as soon as we’ve identified a threat.”

Those who are subscribed to MoBull Messenger, the university’s mobile emergency alert, will be notified through text messages.

One system is tested every day. At noon a “church bell” chime is emitted by five outdoor speakers throughout campus. That is a test of an emergency notification system designed to deliver a verbal message to people outdoors.

To notify people indoors, in addition to the text alerts, the computer desktops have an immediate pop-up alert and the university web page will update information regarding the emergency.

As soon as a threat is validated, the university will trigger the emergency notification system, which will automatically send text messages, desktop pop-ups and web page updates. Depending on the situation, the police will send a verbal message through the speakers.

If a shooter were on campus, Hendry said, the university police would immediately call the St. Petersburg police, who have trained with campus police and are familiar with the campus, and would immediately go to the gunfire and engage the shooter.

Within a minute and a half, officers would be on the scene to confront the shooter.

For students on the scene, Hendry advises a plan of action: Run. Hide. Fight.

“It’s very direct,” said Hendry. “If you’re able to run, you run. If you’re able to hide, you hide. If not, you have to fight.”

All three tactics were used by survivors of the Oregon campus shooting.

“I heard one shot and said, ‘We need to get out.’ Then I heard a second and third, and I ran,” Sarah Cobb, 17, a freshman in a classroom next door, told the New York Times. “I was sprinting. I never ran so fast in my life.

According to the Times, other students crawled into hiding, cared...
Harbor Hall renovations concern students

BY IVELLIAM CEBALLO
Crow’s Nest Contributor

Harbor Hall is home to the department of verbal and visual arts, where classes rely heavily on mobile, up-to-date technology and materials. Graphic design students – juniors and seniors chosen by faculty members – are limited to just one classroom.

The renovation project started in the Fall semester to construct a new, updated space for students. The university acquired the building in 2011, which originally was the Salvador Dali Museum. The structure’s empty gallery space will be constructed into classrooms and design studios.

Sophomore Gaby Mena, 20, said the noise from Harbor Hall’s renovation disrupted her quiet drawing class. Mena said construction workers walked in the middle of a figure-drawing class with a nude model. “I just thought, how disrespectful,” she said.

Jennifer Livaudais, 20, is a senior in the graphic design program. She said the construction in Harbor Hall has become inconvenient for her and her classmates. “It’s just noisy,” Livaudais said. “And sometimes these giant trash collectors come and block portions of the parking lot and take up several spots so you can’t park. It makes navigating the area difficult and unsafe.”

The project’s superintendent Tom Takacs from Willis Smith Construction said the new classrooms will be ready for the spring semester. However, the auditorium, with electrical data ports in each seat, and community room is expected to take longer.

Graduating students like graphic design senior Erin Morgan, 21, said she is disappointed. “We were told it was going to be completed by the Fall semester,” Morgan said. “Instead they widened the g——— sidewalks along Poynter Park.

According to Morgan, the graphic design classroom is limited to three wall plugs and one student decided to buy power strips so that others could charge their laptops. Coordinator of the graphic design program John Stanko has been with the university for three years and has hoped for the expansion since he started.

“We’d rather them do it right, than do it fast,” said Stanko, referring to the faculty’s opinion on the work.

According to Stanko, the project will allow for more students to be accepted into the program. Last year, 60 students applied to the graphic design program, but only 200 Pete Points in the process.

Residents such as Chick-fil-A and World of Wings. Students have been dealing with construction in Harbor Hall for the entire semester. The project should be complete by the beginning of spring semester.

Students have been dealing with construction in Harbor Hall for the entire semester. The project should be complete by the beginning of spring semester.

The Coquina Club located at Coquina Hall Room 102 near the pool.

Hours are Mon-Thurs 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sat-Sun 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

If interested in joining the Coquina Club Task Force, or have any ideas for the space, contact Josef Gherman at j佐etect@gmail.com.

“Since the project is to fulfill student needs, we need to hear student voices,” said Gherman. “This cannot be done by Student Government alone.”

“Vending machines offering sandwiches and drinks will be added during the week of Oct. 19. We want to make this the designation point for students,” Morrin said.

The furniture and gaming equipment from the Student Life Center’s former recreation room now resides in Coquina Club. The club will officially reopen on Oct. 19.
**Campus Shooting continued from cover**

for the wounded and, in one case, tried to block the gunman as he sought to enter a classroom.

The massacre in Oregon quickly became a focus of the continuing debate – and partisan standoff – on gun control in Washington and Tallahassee.

President Barack Obama and gun-control advocates renewed their call for legislation to expand mandatory background checks for gun sales – a position that a majority of voters embrace, according to national polls.

But pro-gun advocates countered that would not have prevented last week’s rampage since all the weapons were purchased legally by the shooter or his relatives over the last three years.

State Rep. Greg Steube, a Republican from Sarasota, cited the Oregon murders as evidence the Florida Legislature should enact legislation that would let Floridians with concealed weapons permits carry their weapons on college campuses.

“How many innocent people must die before college and university presidents wake up and realize that gun-free zones don’t protect anybody but the bad guys?” Steube said in an interview with the Sarasota Herald-Tribune.

State university presidents, police chiefs and the state board that oversees higher education, oppose the bill proposed by Steube and others, which is sure to be controversial when the 2016 legislative session begins in January.

Permitting concealed weapons on campus would make violence more likely, they say.

“There’s no study that says guns on campus make things safer,” said Hendry. “From a crime rate perspective, campuses are much safer than cities and municipalities.”

Hendry said potential shooters often share their plans in advance, many times through social media by posting threatening or aggressive messages.

Hendry said reporting suspicious activity is the best preventative method. He promotes the “If You See Something, Say Something” public awareness campaign by the Department of Homeland Security.

Reporting suspicious social media messages gives police the opportunity to investigate and determine the validity of the threat, Hendry said.

Students can report information anonymously through a “silent witness” submission on the university police website.

For less-threatening situations, a student who exhibits potential signs of harm can be reported to the Students of Concern Assistance Team through a referral form on the website. The team’s goal is to intervene before a student reaches crisis level and ensure safety of the student and campus.

For students who seek to prepare themselves, the university police offers a 45-minute course on the website: FEMA Active Shooter On-Line Course, as well as safety and preparedness tips in the case of an armed intruder.

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**College campuses and mass shootings**

Since 1984, eight of the mass shootings in the United States have taken place on college campuses, according to lists compiled by the Los Angeles Times and CNN.


18 KILLED - Aug. 1, 1966. University of Texas, Austin. A former Marine killed 16 and wounded at least 30 while firing from a campus tower before police shot and killed him.


7 KILLED - April 2, 2012. Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. A 43-year-old former student killed six students and a secretary at the small Christian college.


5 KILLED - Feb. 12, 2010. University of Alabama, Huntsville. An assistant professor shot and killed three people at a biology faculty meeting.


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**USC Flooding continued from cover**

“I still don’t completely understand why they replaced the toilets,” Oberst said. “I mean, (the water) rose, but nothing ever came out of it. It was the shower, but they replaced our toilets.”

The university also battled the same problem throughout the 2014-2015 year and handled it differently.

Sophomore Alexandria “Ali” Howerton lived on the third floor of the USC last year. While off campus, her roommate called to tell her that the dorm had flooded with pungent, yellow water.

“I saw the pictures on Facebook, of everybody coming out into the hall because they couldn’t stand the smell of their rooms,” Howerton said. “They literally had to sleep out in the common area all night.”

The university tried to fix the plumbing, she said, but students never saw an end in the north-wing dorm rooms. Instead, they stayed on their toes waiting for tip-offs from the toilets.

“We figured out after a while that when the toilets started bubbling, (the flood) was going to be coming within the next few days.”

The residents moved to the opposite side of the hallway in the following semester, Howerton said, since the school failed to fix the overflow problems during winter break.

Howerton and other students expected the university to compensate them for their damaged property after dealing with the issue for so long, but the school responded by reminding the students of the housing contract.

According to the contract, “USFSF is not liable for damage to or loss of personal property.”

The university blamed the same “improper products” and student negligence for the floods and closed the case after residents moved out of the dorms that had plumbing issues.

Howerton recalled discussing the floods with the third-floor resident assistant, and was told students had experienced the same dilemma the year before.

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**New club seeks to raise awareness on mental illness**

NAMI on Campus educates students on the stigmas associated with mental disorders and supports those in need.

By Devin Rodriguez
Crow’s Nest Contributor

After her father was diagnosed with schizophrenia, USF St. Petersburg student Myranda Rodriguez noticed that people suffering from mental illness are treated poorly. Her personal experience inspired her to take action.

“Ending the stigma carried with mental health conditions is a vital part of respecting other people, ending mental health discrimination, decreasing incarceration rates and so much more,” Rodriguez said.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), one in five students face a mental health condition and nearly three-quarters of mental health conditions emerge by age 24.

To inform students about mental illness and gain peer support for those affected, the organization has student-led, student-run clubs called “NAMI on Campus” throughout the United States. The USFSP branch was established in April 2015 and is supported by two larger NAMI organizations of Pinellas and Hillsborough counties.

Upon transferring to USFSP, Rodriguez became president for the school’s NAMI branch.

Since then, she has organized educational events to help students understand the challenges and misconceptions of mental illness.

“Younger generations aren’t comfortable talking about mental health,” Rodriguez said. “And even if I don’t have all the answers, I...
Learning from the past
Florida Holocaust Museum puts on civil rights photography exhibitions

By Devin Rodriguez
Crow’s Nest Contributor

It’s important to remember our past, even the moments that seem the darkest—the ones we may want to forget.

The civil rights movement that fought for equal rights for African-Americans is chronicled in black and white photographs inside the Florida Holocaust Museum.

“The exhibit, “This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement,” is a collection of 157 photographs that combine the work of eight photographers who primarily worked with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The exhibit and the rest of the museum are free to USF St. Petersburg students.

Most of the photographs document African-American life and the struggles many faced in Mississippi and Alabama during 1963-1966. Some of the photographers tried to capture the strength of people making their way through America that deeply limited their lives.

Other powerful photographs in the exhibit show Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders walking in the Meredith March Against Fear, a march that was held in honor of James Meredith, who was shot and wounded on the second day of a planned 200-mile trek from Memphis, Tennessee to Jackson, Mississippi. The collection finishes with the heart-breaking funeral of King.

The Center for Documentary Expression of Art organized the traveling exhibition. Support was also provided by the Bruce W. Bastian Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Bank of America helped finance the exhibition.

Julian Bond, an American activist and leader in the civil rights movement, narrates a walkthrough of the exhibit. Bond had a long career as a social justice advocate. He was president of the NAACP. Bond died in August.

On the third floor there is a new exhibit featuring artifacts and photographs of the civil rights movement in the Tampa Bay area, which displays the struggles of the African-American community in the St. Petersburg area. It is titled “Beaches, Benches, and Boycotts: The Civil Rights Movement in Tampa Bay.”

“This will be the first iteration of the exhibition,” said Elizabeth Gelman, the executive director for the Florida Holocaust Museum. “We are finding a lot of community support and are looking forward to 2017 to put on a 21st century presentation with testimonies and even more objects.”

“We were shocked to find that no one had created a civil rights exhibit in Tampa Bay, and it is really important to know our own history,” she said. “This isn’t something that happened a long time ago in some place far away. No, this happened right here.”

Both exhibitions will be on display until December. In support of the collection the FHM is holding a number of panel discussions with public speakers that look to explore the stories and history of the civil rights movement. These discussions are free and open to the public, but require an RSVP.

There are a variety of topics offered including St Petersburg testimonials and a panel discussion of the Freedom Riders, which will feature Bernard Lafayette, a civil rights activist from Tampa who participated in the Freedom Rides of 1961, and Dr. Ray Arsenault, a USFSP professor and author of a book about the Freedom Riders.
There’s a tall building under construction across from Residence Hall One, but don’t expect it to ease the student housing crunch. Why? Prices for the 74 units start at $315,000, according to the Tampa Bay Times, with most in the $450,000 to $800,000 range. Although the site is still little more than dirt and construction equipment, there are big plans for The Salvador, the 13-story condominium tower. According to its website, over half of the planned units – ranging from 964 to 2,795 square feet – have already been purchased. Plans include a two-story parking garage, a 11,000-square-foot amenity deck, a sculpture garden and an elevated pool deck with a spa and heated saltwater pool. The owners hope to attract residents by capitalizing on the nearby Salvador Dali museum. The first floor will include 3,400 square feet of retail space, but no tenants have been announced. According to thesalvador.com, it will also be the first condominium building in downtown St. Petersburg to be green certified by the National Association of Home Builders Green Building Program. Windows, roofing materials and doors will be Energy Star certified, the pool will be solar heated, with high efficiency air conditioning and water heaters. Construction is expected to be completed by fall 2016.

Three ingredient pumpkin spice chai ice cream

By Angelina Bruno
Staff Reporter

Pumpkin spice is back, and in full force. I’ve seen pumpkin spice lattes, granola bars, Greek yogurt and even dog treats on some store shelves. The only downside is that Florida hasn’t quite gotten the memo about the change of seasons.

Unfortunately, there’s no change of temperature request, so I came up with this recipe to enjoy the taste of fall – Florida style.

This pumpkin spice chai ice cream is dorm room friendly - it only requires three ingredients and a freezer.

INGREDIENTS:
- 3 tablespoons of instant Pumpkin Spice Chai Latte mix blended with 1 tablespoon of water (I used Trader Joe’s brand)
- 1/2 can of condensed milk
- 2 1/2 cups of whipping cream

DIRECTIONS:
Beat the three ingredients together, then pour into a container.
Freeze for 4 to 6 hours.
Scoop and Enjoy.

Told you it was easy.

Coming soon: An upscale neighbor for RHO

There’s a tall building under construction across from Residence Hall One, but don’t expect it to ease the student housing crunch. Why? Prices for the 74 units start at $315,000, according to the Tampa Bay Times, with most in the $450,000 to $800,000 range. Although the site is still little more than dirt and construction equipment, there are big plans for The Salvador, the 13-story condominium tower. According to its website, over half of the planned units – ranging from 964 to 2,795 square feet – have already been purchased. Plans include a two-story parking garage, a 11,000-square-foot amenity deck, a sculpture garden and an elevated pool deck with a spa and heated saltwater pool. The owners hope to attract residents by capitalizing on the nearby Salvador Dali museum. The first floor will include 3,400 square feet of retail space, but no tenants have been announced. According to thesalvador.com, it will also be the first condominium building in downtown St. Petersburg to be green certified by the National Association of Home Builders Green Building Program. Windows, roofing materials and doors will be Energy Star certified, the pool will be solar heated, with high efficiency air conditioning and water heaters. Construction is expected to be completed by fall 2016.
Booze or boos? Local fest gets mixed reviews

Expressive tastes, dozens of wines... what could go wrong? Plenty.

By Angelina Bruno  
Staff Reporter

About a week ago, I was gifted the opportunity to drink and dine at the St. Pete Food and Wine Festival. The annual fest boasts wines from all around the world and vibrant food from local eateries. The weekend-long tasting lasted from 1-5 p.m. in downtown St. Petersburg’s North Straub Park.

But here’s the catch: a $95 ticket is the cost per day for the four hour tasting, and half of the booths were served by volunteers in a sweaty tent. It makes me wonder where the money is going.

I can say that I’m quite glad I didn’t have to pay my way.

Let me start out with the good.

There were two tents that were completely covered, which was fantastic, as it rained on and off that day. There was no shortage of vino, both red and white, and I was able to sample pinot noirs, sauvignon blancs and some interesting blends like rhubarb wine. The food (for the most part) was well executed.

I appreciated that the chef’s used appropriately sized plates to make handling easier and limited their tastings of items that may have needed to be sliced up. All food vendors had napkins and forks and the chefs and servers were knowledgeable about the flavors they were serving.

I tasted items like watermelon bruschetta with goat cheese and a cold truffle oil corn soup, and most was executed well.

However, there is always room for improvement—and let me try and say this without being too wine-y.

My main concern, especially as a college student, is that of price, and with that, value. The fest is not worth the nearly $100 it costs.

First, the wines are mostly being served by volunteers, not wine reps from the vineyard or the owners of the company. This leaves drinkers with wine descriptions like: “Here we have dry and white.” Dry and white? Really? I would expect more than the Bulls offense could muster.

For a town that is so focused on “keeping St. Pete local” it was disheartening to see a big name brand, and even worse to be given promotional cards. It was like a free expo. A tacky move, plain and simple. Some of the food was duplicated, which wasn’t inspiring. I sampled two gazpachos (one with too much cumin) and while I was eating a cold curry soup from The Vine, a local eatery, I heard that the main stage would be doing a demonstration on a cold curry soup. Not so cool. (Fun intended.)

The heat was another issue. I got it. It’s Florida. It was September. It was going to be hot. I might even sweat a little. However, more than three small fans in the over sized tent would have been welcomed. After the first hour, I questioned whether I was in a green-house. My hair was wet with sweat. The ambience needed adjusting as well. Top 40 hits blared from one set of speakers and were inconsistently audible.

As a millennial, I am familiar and fond of some “top 40 music,” but I can’t be too sure the majority of the festival goers (many of them over 45) were too acquainted with the kind of event that requires you to juggle your glass, your plate and your bags.

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Homecoming Superbull XIX

By Lauren Hensley Staff Reporter

MONDAY, OCT. 5
Night At The Bay Kick Off
Harbor Lawn, 7 p.m.
Start homecoming week with a bang! This "Pep-Rally" style kick-off will commence homecoming activities. Join members of the USFSP community for music, fireworks, giveaways and activities. Let’s get excited Bulls!

TUESDAY, OCT. 6
“All That Glitters” Homecoming Ball
USC Ballroom, 8-11 p.m.
Time to break out the formal wear. Come to the annual Homecoming Ball dressed in your finest dresses and suits for a night full of dancing and fun. The 2015 USFSP Homecoming Court and King and Queen will be announced and crowned during the event.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 7
Regatta & Cardboard Boat Race
Waterfront, 3 p.m.
The competition gets fierce as teams race hand-made boats out on the water during this annual event out on the Waterfront.

THURSDAY, OCT. 8
Bulls Country Fair
Harborwalk 3-8 p.m.
Come out to Harborwalk on Thursday for the Bulls Country Fair. There will be lots of music, games, prizes and carnival foods at this festive event. Various student organizations and departments will be hosting carnival game booths.

FRIDAY, OCT. 9
Tampa Campus Carnival Parade and after party
Bus from campus, 3 p.m.
Celebrate homecoming festivities with our USF Tampa family! A bus from USFSP will bring students to USF Tampa to experience the legendary Running of the Bulls Homecoming parade. Stick around after the parade for an awesome concert featuring rapper Big Sean. Don’t forget to pre-register online for tickets for the concert.

SATURDAY, OCT. 10
USF v. Syracuse Homecoming Game
Raymond James Stadium, bus from campus. Game starts at 3:30 p.m.
Cheer on our USF Bulls as they take on the Syracuse University Orange! Be sure to wear white to the game as this is a white-out event. The first 5000 fans to arrive will receive a free white shirt at the gate.

Tickets available at http://usfbullstix.com/

NAMI
continued from p.3

think being able to offer someone resources or advice is a great first step.”

The club plans to educate members on the correct way to discuss and cope with issues surrounding mental illness.

The club’s first event will be Masked, a masquerade ball held in Davis Hall, room 103 on Oct. 9 during Mental Illness Awareness Week. People suffering from mental illness will often hide or mask the fact that they are afflicted. The masks are a symbol of acceptance and understanding. The event will be open to the public.

From Oct. 1 to Dec. 10, NAMI Pinellas is offering peer-to-peer education programs taught by three nationally trained peer mentors who have experienced mental illness. The confidential meetings run about two hours and are free to attend.

“Peer-to-peer groups are a great way of having a support system, especially if you’re away from home or your typical support group,” Rodriguez said.

“Sometimes it’s nice to be heard, especially if there are people around who you can relate to and connect with.”

Crossword

Edited By Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis
By Jeffrey Wechsler

ACROSS
1 7th-century privateer
2 Rock worth unearthing
3 Military groups
13 About
14 Downtime for Mars?
15 Absorb
16 Imperfect produce?
19 Rob’s “West Wing” role
20 Domestic tourer
21 “Wedding”:
   “The Simpsons” episode involving a fortune-teller
23 Nocturnal picket-line crooner?
26 Wild partner
28...Alamos
50 Screened gp.
50 Woodstock performer before Joan
51 Kid’s comeback
34 Reconnaissance team
40 Romance novel features
41 1963 role for Shirley
42 In the same way as
45 Defensive question
46 It merged with Coors in later than
48 Result of a London tea cart mishap?
52 ...Blades, Latin jazz star
53 Oster onem
54 Uma’s “Pulp Fiction” role
57 Feature of a taped hardware punk performance
60 Stage direction
62 Relative of -uie
63 Ruined quarters
64 46s’ campus org.
65 Their Christmas feast included roast beast

DOWN
1 Petrucho’s request of Kate
2 Empire whose last stronghold was conquered in 6572
3 Ginger Baker specialty
4 Diet, entry
5 Ready for business no later than
6 Pizza cuts, essentially
7 Halfway house resident
8 Flash drive letters
9 Roit et roit, par exemple
10 “The drinks were on me”
11 Affects, as one’s heartstrings
12 Divers’ weapons
13 Future yearning
14 Hunting lodge decoration
15 25. One taking costs, perhaps
26 Used to be
27 Tolkien terror
28 Chanel creations
29 Grain generally puritanized
31 Isaiah’s Black Swan
33 Green workers
34 “Amazing Grace,” e.g.
35 Big name in pies
36 Comic Philips
37 Indian flatbread
38 46s’ LAZ flat
39 Adjustable door feature

To get more information on NAMI on Campus USFSP visit:
Facebook: NAMI on Campus USFSP
Instagram: namioncampususfsp
NAMI Pinellas
Peer-to-Peer course
Enoch Davis Center
1111 18th Ave. S
Every Thursday, Oct. 1 – Dec. 10, 10 a.m. to noon.
For details and registration call (727) 826-0807
The Local Spotlight

Saturday Morning Market is back

BY EMILY TINTI  
STAFF REPORTER

In a Florida weather miracle, the seemingly endless season of rain ended just in time for the anticipated return of the Saturday Morning Market.

After its routine summer hiatus, the market reopened on Oct. 3 and was greeted with consistent sunshine, a refreshing breeze, and the familiar sense of community that downtown St. Petersburg knows and loves.

The Al Lang Field parking lot, showcasing beverages and market souvenirs was bustling with families, millennials, retirees and friendly dogs. A woman hauled bundles of kale and Swiss chard. A child sipped juice from a pineapple. An Italian greyhound sported a vibrant bandana.

The market was packed. Even the signature sunflower bouquets from the organic Worden Farm were gone by noon.

St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman was joined by volunteers at a voter registration booth, greeting passersby and encouraging people to register before the Oct. 5 deadline. The mayor said he loves the Saturday Morning Market, not just “because it’s cool,” but because it serves as an “incubator” for new and growing local businesses.

The market, which began in November 2002, seems to garner a more remarkable variety of vendors each year.

Mike Ewashenko of Ewa’s Peace Fish showcased an array of handcrafted metal artwork. Ewashenko, nicknamed “Ewa” in his childhood, uses an acetylene torch and polyurethane to transform recycled satellite dishes, filing cabinets and other metal products into fish, dragonflies, turtles, peace signs and more.

“And I have the burns to prove it,” said Ewashenko with a smile.

Other distinct vendors include Natural Mystic Inc., a handmade soap company; Brimstone Originals, a food manufacturer specializing in gourmet pepper jellies; and Living Art Studios, where natural stones are carefully chosen and sold or used in the making of silver wire jewelry.

Food continued to be the center of interest, as dozens of traditional and international ready-to-eat options lined the street, along with packaged specialty goods to save for later.

But one type of food in particular has become the highlight of the market: fresh or organic plants and produce.

Saturday’s main event consisted of local farmers, who sustain and grow on their own land within St. Petersburg or a short distance away.

The Wild Guava, an exotic tropical plant nursery in Plant City, made its debut at the market. Jessica O’Toole, surrounded by her inventory of plants, said she is excited to be a part of the market’s local farming culture.

“We use natural growing practices,” O’Toole said. “I’ll tell you exactly what I sprayed, how much and when. We feel that transparency is important in this market, since farmers are dealing with their consumers directly.”

Little Pond Farm, owned and operated by Tampa native Cole Turner, marked its second season at the market, and third year of growing. After graduating, he moved to Georgia to learn the process behind organic farming, later returning to Florida to start his own farming business.

The three large farms that have consistently been represented at the market had people browsing every inch of every table, scooping up fruits and vegetables by the handful.

Workers could be seen restocking the aisles with produce by 11 a.m. when the market had been going on for just two hours, and again at noon. And again one hour later.

The acclaimed market is the ultimate Saturday destination in St. Petersburg, offering something for all walks of life – food, entertainment, art and leisure.

A five-minute walk from USF St. Petersburg, on-campus students can take advantage of the opportunity to break from cheap dormroom cooking.