11-28-2016

Crow's Nest : 2016 : 11 : 28

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/540

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.
Like Your Favorite Present, That’s A Wrap On This Semester

Fidel Castro’s Death Leaves Cubans with Mixed Emotions

By Evy Guerra
evelyng1@mail.usf.edu

On Sunday, Michael Jimenez’s grandmother opened a bottle of wine that was given to her years ago for one specific purpose. The bottle read, “To open the day that Castro is dead.”

Fidel Castro, longtime leader of Cuba’s communist revolution died at 90 years old, Nov. 25. The news was nothing but relief for the Jimenez family, who has had their whole lives changed because of him.

“Castro has affected my family in many ways,” said Jimenez, a sophomore criminology major. “My grandfather was arrested by Castro because he had a voice and spoke his mind.”

Jesus Jimenez spent time as a political prisoner and Castro made it impossible for him to leave Cuba for many years. Castro made it almost impossible for even his brother to leave the country.

Michael Jimenez’s mother made it to the United States before he was born he has still felt the effects in his own life. "Now I have family in Cuba that I am unable to meet," he said.

With nearly 50 years as self-appointed president, Castro served for the longest period as a non-royal leader in the 20th century. Castro seized control of the Cuban government in 1959 after leading a group of communist guerrillas against Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista.

Over the years he acted as a communist dictator, ostensibly bringing social and economic equality to the Cuban people while at the same time eliminating free speech, free and fair elections, private property ownership and opposing political parties.

Castro aligned Cuba with the Soviet Union and ruled in the model of other Soviet bloc dictators who used the USSR’s backing to keep a tight grip on power at the expense of civil and human rights.

Castro stepped down after barely surviving an intestinal illness. He’s been sick and rarely photographed ever since. His brother, Raul, officially took power in 2008 when elected president. The Jimenez family weren’t alone in awaiting the dictator’s death.

When the news broke, Cubans in Miami rushed to “Calle Ocho” or Eighth Street, Miami’s historic center of Cuban culture, to celebrate his passing. Police had to close off part of the busy street, knowing the event would draw a significant crowd.

Some held Cuban flags high while others bunched on pots and pans to Winter Wonderland: St. Petersburg held a lighting ceremony in North Straub Park on Nov. 25. On Dec. 3, Santas will parade through 64 tons of snow that will be spread throughout the park for the annual holiday Snowfest.


Got News? We’ll Cover It.
Contact Us: email usfcrowsnest@gmail.com office (727) 873-4113
@USFCrowsNest @CrowsNestStPete @USFCrowsNest

THE CROW’S NEST
The University of South Florida St. Petersburg
Since 1969
St. John had long been thought of as a self-serving body at USF. Petersburg. However, the new student-elect is hoping to change that opinion. After the sudden announcement taken by elected president and vice president, Laranje Ruiz, the Senate leadership stepped into the leadership role.

Ruiz is a business management major and dreamy image of Ruiz, inaugurated as a senator the summer after her freshman year recently stepped into the position of active student president.

How did you end up at USFSP? When I got to campus my first year I put my options. I didn’t even know USFSP existed. I was actually looking outside of Florida and this girl in my math class told me about it. She and I come up for a tour and I went with her and fell in love with the campus. I loved how it felt like a small community on the water. It’s in St. Petersburg and it thrives on local business and local entrepreneurs and I love that. I knew that the people were friendly here and so pro-sustainability. And here, we’re so close to everything. Miami is so far from everything, but we can get to Tampa in 30 minutes and Orlando in 2 hours. It’s awesome.

I was in JROTC in high school. How do you think that JROTC prepared you for leadership in college? Yes, I was in JROTC for all four years of high school. I didn’t consider ROTC in college because I wanted to experience things that were different from my high school experience. In JROTC the leadership style was very militaristic. There ranks. In Student Government, you get more done if you work in a team. Hence, my leadership style is like that too, but at a higher level. It’s hard for me to tell people what to do in Student Government, because I like to think that we are a team. It’s more of a community than rankings. Did you ever think that you were going to be president of Student Government? I depicted myself as president of Student Government. Ever. I wasn’t even going to run for treasurer for senator, because I hated the way Student Government was handling things. Then I realized, if you don’t like it, run for leadership and change how things are done.

What were your expectations going into Student Government? I had gone to a lot of the meetings, but it’s different in the seat of a senator. As a senator you have to make legislation. So I didn’t really go in with a plan. I went in with a goal of learning the rules and the ropes. There’s a lot of things that I didn’t even know until I got there, like, the USC was created by students through Student Government. The sustainability initiative was created by students through Student Government. These are things that I had to find out on my own, so I just kind of observed for a little while before trying to change anything.

What is the greatest challenge you face? Well, you get what you put into it. You have to be the one to hear people’s opinions. You need to have a human moment that inspires you to make a change or be a part of a change. You don’t necessarily have to lead it. There are time requirements, but it’s beyond that. I put in my hours and got to be a part of changes within Student Government.

CASTRO, Continued from Page 1 10-part curriculum is at the center of the program, which teaches students life skills important for adulthood, with an emphasis on off-campus life. Students also take a college course each semester. In addition to this, faculty and student mentors, led by Mentor Coordinator and graduate student Eric Vaughan, help students in the Stingray Program to have a real college experience.

Student Takes Advantage Of College Experience By Collin Gustafson cgustafson@mail.usf.edu

CASTRO, Continued from Page 1

Student President: At the annual Late Night Breakfast, students like Quan Jones answer trivia questions in order to win t-shirts and other prizes.

Shorelines, Miami, THE CROW’S NEST

What changes have you seen in Student Government?

Back when I started, everything depended on who was in charge. There was a difference in leadership and ideas between the Senate and the president. There was a constant debate. There was a clear divide. Everyone was like shipshipped the whole night; no one really knew what the other was doing. There was a lot of talking about each other. My second year, we agreed that we needed to [be] more united. There wasn’t a divided house. We have goals established now. We aren’t going to be children and argue over small things. We have a responsibility. We have to take it at a time, if changes. I was Senate president and then had to jump over to the executive branch, so I can see from both sides of experience where this communication flaw is happening. This should not be dividing us. I try to my best to make everything open and public between the Senate and the executive branch so that everyone is aware that everyone is working on something.

When you graduate, do you want to go into politics? No, I want to stick to business when I graduate. In the real world, there are so many political games and you have to be kind of cold-hearted to get what you want and I don’t think that I am cut out for that. I think I’d like to go into something less cold. In politics, there are a lot of good things, but under that, there are a lot of unfortunate things. The public opinion of people in politics is awful.

Fun Fact: In three football seasons, I have only missed three home football games.

NICK PERKINS | USFSP CONNECT

Along with being the president of Bull Buzz, Jones has two internships on campus. He works at the Reef on the weekends and with Campus Recreation on Wednesdays. In his second year at USFSP he also interned at Nauti Landing Sailing Center on the Waterfront. In the past two years, Jones has taken marine biology, leadership in the great outdoors, environmental science and beginning reporting classes. This semester, Jones is taking photojournalism to hone his skills for his future career path.

“After I am done with the program I want to go to St. Petersburg College for two years and then go somewhere else to get my bachelor’s. I eventually want to be a wildlife photographer.” Jones has one more year follow spring semester in the Stingray Program under the current rules. As long as he’s at USFSP, he hopes to stay as involved as possible on campus.
Alumnus Loses Election, Gains New Perspective

By Jonah Hinebaugh
jonahh@mail.usf.edu

I n the most recent election, USF St. Petersburg alumnus Victor Sims ran for a seat in the Florida House of Representatives District 39 against incumbent Neil Combee.

Sims received 28,117 votes but it wasn’t enough to trump Combee, who received 46,353 votes. “I live in a very conservative and rural county, so for us it was hard to approach people in a conservative way while still representing the values I support,” Sims said.

Combee outspent Sims by $87,366.28 and received more than 11 times the donations than Sims. This was also Sims’ first time running for political office, compared to Combee who has held the position since 2012. “I learned about what the people in my district are going through,” Sims said. “There’s a lot of people that are retired and part of the elderly community, so I got to listen to a lot of different concerns they had. In the beginning I was coming in with the approach of how young people are represented, but there’s also the elderly (ages) 80 and above that aren’t being represented and I was trying to approach them also.”

Throughout his campaign, one of Sims’ strongest positions regarded foster care and representing the needs of young people in the program given his own experience being raised in a foster family. Sims said he wanted to supply changes to underrepresent-ed groups. “I serve on a few councils for foster care on a national and state-wide level,” Sims said. “One of them is the National Foster Care Youth and Alumni Policy Council. We talk to federal stakeholders which is why it’s a very unique group. There’s a lot of statewide speakers and I was able to be nominated for the national one.”

The campaign trail has provided Sims with a wealth of experiences and learning opportunities. When Sims met with the mother of a Pulse nightclub shooting victim he felt the urge to reflect on his values. “One of the girls that lived in my district was in that building and she ended up dying. I met with her mother after some time had passed and offered my condole-nces and also (talked) about how we can work together (to) help end gun violence in Florida,” Sims said.

The meeting led Sims to think more about gun control, something he had avoided throughout the campaign. “That really changed a lot, it made me want to run for more than I was potentially going for. I stayed away from gun issues throughout most of my campaign because I live in a conservative area, but after listening to [the mother] and seeing how the Pulse shooting affected the community that I lived in, it made me see where we can change something,” Sims said.

Another instance occurred in the second month of campaigning when he came across some boys in an impoverished area. The expe-rience has led Sims to think about different routes to take to make the most change. “I was talking to them and they were telling me about school and stuff. I told them if they made an A by Friday I would come and play basketball with [them]. They ended up making an A so I came back and played basketball. I told them my story and how I came up in a foster family and they were in awe,” Sims said.

Sims says that his conversation with these local children changed his plans for the future. “I know that if I don’t end up running for office again,” Sims said, “I want to be more of a moti-vational speaker. In the beginning of the campaign I was like, ‘I’m going again 2018’, but seeing those boys in awe is something I’m looking towards and just see-ing where I can go.”

Sims has no plans for now, but said he will announce what he wants to do going forward by January or February. “I do plan on running for something in the future, but at least until after Christmas time [I won’t announce anything]. I want to take some time with my family. This is actually the first time in my life that I don’t have any concrete plans going forward and so for right now it’s just kind of, ‘What next?’”

Coast Bike Share Program Cruises Onto Campus

By Luke Cross
lukecross@mail.usf.edu

U SF St. Petersburg is a continuously expanding campus, located in the heart of a city on the move. To answer the ever-growing concerns for space and transporta-tion, the university has partnered with Coast Bike Share, a program offering high-tech bicycles as a means of commuting throughout downtown St. Petersburg.

The current brigade of bikes is stationed at the corner of 2nd Street and 6th Avenue, outside of the Student Life Center, with plans for two more in the near future. The program offers a variety of plans, ranging from a pay-as-you-go service to an annual fee with 60 minutes of daily ride time, but students are offered a discounted plan for only $59 yearly, regist-tered members of USF receive an hour of daily ride time.

Coast Bike Share operates by using an electronic lock system and free app in tandem. A member of the program may reserve a bike through either the integrated key-pad on the bicycle itself or through the “Social Bicycles” phone app. From there, a unique pin disables the U-lock, and the bike can be taken anywhere around St. Peters- burg.

Each bicycle is an 8-speed cruiser, equipped with an adjust-able seat, a no-grease chainless drive as well as a headlight and hand bell. They also come with a GPS-enabled computer, allowing directions to be provided through the companion app.

For storage, a front basket and secure holster above the rear wheel are provided, which is locked by the same keypad system used to holster the bike. All on-board electronics are powered by solar panels alongside the energy produced by the rider.

The program came as an obvious answer to the campus’ growing commuter needs while adhering to St. Petersburg’s themes of sustain-ability. While the maintenance of the program costs the city roughly $1600 per bike, the long-term investment for both the university and the city is far more valuable.

“This is a way to help get people to jobs, to get people to buses,” said Councilwoman Darden Rice, publicly addressing Coast Bike Share’s most recent expansions. “Bike sharing is something strongly supported by the com-munity...this is a transportation choice that people want.”

More than just a transporta-tion option, the program fur-ther enforces the local push for eco-friendly alternatives. St. Petersburg is a city of sustain-able initiatives, and is the first city in Florida to be certified as a “Green City” by the Florida Green Building Council, among other recognitions. USFSP has also de-clared in the Climate Action Plan that the university will be carbon neutral by 2050.

The neutrality goal was orig-i-nally set at 2035 but had to be adjusted once emissions from commuters were calculated in. Coast Bike Share was instituted as a step toward correcting this, offering students an efficient means of travel while reducing their carbon footprint.

As USF and St. Pete are at the forefront of their respective green movements, so we’re in a position to reduce the amount of cars,” said Alana Todd, USFSP’s Secretary of Sustainable Initiatives. Bike sharing is also the first collaboration of many between St. Petersburg and USF in making the downtown area more accessible and bike-friendly.

“[Coast Bike Share] is about integrating efforts between the city and our university,” said Todd. “I’m happy to see St. Pete is working towards a safe, green downtown.”

Pedal Faster: A bike rack stationed on University Way, next to the JPB building, holds the Coast Bike Share bikes. The pay-as-you-go service is part of a much larger initiative to make St. Petersburg the first 100 percent green city, the first of its kind in Florida.
**Review: “Fantastic Beasts” is A Great Movie and I Know Where To Find It**

By Michael Moore Jr.

Michaelmoor@mail.usf.edu

I f you’re looking for Hogwarts, Dagon Alley or Platform 9 3/4, you’ll have to look elsewhere. You’re more likely to find those at The Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Universal Studios than you are in this film.

“Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them” is a different kind of Harry Potter movie. This is a series that has grown up with its audience, featuring adult characters who live and navigate in 1920s New York City.

The film takes place when Gellert Grindelwald, one of the most infamous dark wizards in history, was alive. It’s a point the film makes early and hard. Harry Potter fans will find familiar, J.K. Rowling has been teasing Grindelwald since the “The Sorcerer’s Stone.”

Movie fans will recognize the influence of director David Yates, who crafted the last four Harry Potter movies, beginning with “The Order of the Phoenix.” Yates is set to direct the remaining four films in the “Fantastic Beasts” series.

This film is representative of an expanding fictional universe, propelled by both new and existing characters in later, created by the characters that we know and love. This is Harry Potter without Harry Potter.

Instead of Harry, we have Newt Scamander, magizoologist and author of the fictional textbook from which the film takes its name. Played by Eddie Redmayne (Stephen Hawking in “The Theory of Everything”), Scamander is somewhat akin to the late “Crocodile Hunter” Steve Irwin in place of crocodiles there were boathurtles and hippogriffs.

Scamander is joined by exiled Auror Porpentina Goldstein (Katherine Waterston) and the fumbling “no-maj” - the American equivalent of “Muggle” - Jacob Kowalski (Dan Fogler).

While it remains uncertain what part these new characters will play in the upcoming movies, they are quite lovable in this one.

Scamander is both compassionate and knowledgeable in his quest to save magical creatures from extinction and educating their fellow wizards about them. Goldstein is driven by her quest to regain good standing with the Magical Congress of the United States of America - comparable to the Ministry of Magic- and Mr. Kowalski really wants to open up a bakery. They are far from perfect and sometimes even foolishly, but they make a great team.

Much like the original Harry Potter series, this feels like a film series that will be primarily driven by its characters and the richness of the world in which they inhabit. In this way, it succeeds tremendously.

The new trio is great and makes you hope that they will receive more screen time together in the near future. They are funny and have the perfect mixture of conflict and chemistry.

J.K. Rowling’s dedication to backstory shows as the Harry Potter mythos gets shine and flex its muscle in this story, and it’s world just got a lot bigger. The variety and the uniqueness of the creatures exhibited in the film are impressive, beautiful and captivating. I often found myself wishing that they were real, longing to either pet them or adore them from afar.

The CGI effects used to bring these creatures to life are equally stunning and well employed.

While there has been a recent clamor in Hollywood for a return to practical effects, this is the perfect example of a film that really couldn’t survive without CGI.

The plot was neither stellar or stale. It just was. It gives the feeling that it will get better with time as the series progresses; that it is merely setting the stage for what is yet to come. My one major quibble is that the ending could have been better. The magical fix, which is ultimately called upon to save the day, while alluded to in the early goings of the movie, felt a bit clumsy and deus ex machina in its execution.

For me, the elements of characterization and world-building that serve as the backbones of the film are also by far its strongest traits.

Overall, not bad for J.K. Rowling’s debut as a screenwriter.

The Crow’s Nest rates movies between one and five stars, with five stars being the highest possible score.

---

**Review: “Gilmore Girls” Leaves Unanswered Questions**

By Tamiracle Williams

tamiracle@mail.usf.edu

i t’s been over 9 years since “Gilmore Girls” last aired on television. Created by Amy Sherman-Palladino, the show lasted seven seasons on The CW (formally known as The WB). Palladino and her husband Daniel left the original series after six seasons because of contract disputes.

However, in an interview with TV Guide in 2006, Amy announced that she had the last four words of the series planned, but refused to reveal them until now.

On Nov. 25, Netflix released “Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life,” a four-part miniseries featuring the ending Palladino-envisioned. The revival is broken down into four seasons, beginning with winter.

Stars Hollow, the picture-perfect town where everyone knows everyone, has not changed. It still has landmarks like Luke’s Diner and Miss Patty’s dance studio, along with the weekly town meetings run by Taylor Doose, Stars Hollow’s unofficial tyrant.

The reboot gives you a brief look into lives of some of our favorite characters, such as Michel Gerard, Paris Geller and Rory’s infamous ex-boyfriends.

Kirk Gleeson is still weird and Miss Patty is still firing. It’s nice to see Netflix calling back to specific instances from the first 157 episodes of the original show.

While the people and the setting haven’t changed, Stars Hollow is definitely keeping up with the times with references to the Kardashians and “Hamilton.” The town is even planning its first Pride parade.

Richard Gilmore’s (the late Edward Herrmann) death is the emotional foundation of “A Year in the Life.” Four months after Richard’s funeral, the Gilmore women Lorelai, Rory and Emily are trying to readjust and figure out what makes them happy.

Lorelai, the strong and independent woman that fans have grown to love over the original series seven seasons has changed.

She is with the man of her dreams, but unsure of herself.

Lorelai spends time reevaluating all aspects of life, including her relationship with Luke Daniels and the Dragonfly inn.

When we left Rory, she was a bright-eyed Yale graduate ready to tackle the world of journalism.

The goal-oriented, studious teenager always knew what she wanted and had a game plan for getting there.

Rory now wanders from job to job, place to place with nothing she can truly call her own. Her demeanor has shifted. The once over-prepared young woman is completely irresponsible, assuming that things will be handed to her.

The sudden death of Richard Gilmore leaves Emily alone and vulnerable. For 50 years she has lived in her husband’s shadow, now Emily must figure out how to live again.

“Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life” is an emotional rollercoaster. You laugh, cry and occasionally get frustrated, but it’s worth every minute.

Although there are many twist and turns, it’s refreshing to see how some of the characters have adjusted to modern-day life. Amy Sherman-Palladino’s dream ending final came true, but those final four words leave a lot to be desired. Her cherished cliche “stuff leaves the world wondering what’s next for the citizens of Stars Hollow.”

The Crow’s Nest rates TV shows between one and five stars, with five stars being the highest possible score.
Brighten Up: Another tip to brighten up a blue week: find an event around town that you can participate in. Pictured, North Strab罕 Park displays its holiday light show. Walking the light show while a crisp breeze blows around you is sure to pick you up.

By Lauren Brogan
lbrogan@mail.usf.edu

Holidays are a time for rejuvenation, spending time with loved ones and stuffing your face. But what happens when things don’t go as planned? It’s easy to be disappointed when you have the holiday blues. We want to help you fend them off when you have the holiday blues.

In order to think is “wrestler,” right? I’ve wrestled since I was 8, “said Nikki Sawyer, a professional wrestler.

VOLUNTEER

LEAVES ARE-changing (in places other than Florida) and cuddling with family finally arrived - but you’re single.

It’s easy to feel bad about it, think of it as a blessing in disguise. You save money on gifts, you can use all the food you want, you can enjoy the cold weather that cute outfit while you meet his family and you can play Christmas music 24/7.

Things to do when you can’t get your mind off of it:
• Call that old friend that you keep promising to catch up with.
• Use this time to relax and focus on yourself.
• Get in some extra hours at work and make more money instead of spending it.
• Set goals for the new year.
• Build a stronger relationship with your family.
• “Try to think of the good you have in your life, instead of beating yourself up over being single,” said Rickey Whiteman, a business major at St. Petersburg College.

YOU CAN’T AFFORD GIFTS

The best gifts are those that come from the heart. I know it sounds cheesy, but you don’t have to have the most expensive, extravagant gift to show someone you care about them.

Pro-tip: Throw a list of inexpensive and handmade notes or crafts together to really win family, friends and classmates over. Put the effort in shows that you really care. Pinterest and Eivy are lifesavers for fast and affordable gifts.

I have made coupon books for family members when I was little,” said Cassidy Power, a Hilton St. Petersburg employee. “I would put your car or breakfast in bed, along those lines. They don’t cost a dime and I promise they will surprise your family for sure. It’s a lot of work, but it’s free!”

The holiday season is more than a break from school. It’s a chance to get some well-needed relaxation to motivate you for what lies ahead. Keep these holiday tips in mind and you’ll be ready to bounce back into the spring semester feeling better than ever.

COURTESY OF BURCH

Student Finds Balance Between College and Wrestling

By Nikki Sawyer
nicolesawyer@mail.usf.edu

cheers, boos, sweat, blood, tears and injuries. These are just some of the things that go on during a match while wrestlers risk it all to entertain a crowd.

When you see a petite girl, the last thing you’re usually going to think is “wrestler,” right? I’ve encountered this more times than I can count. But this is what I do and who I am: I’m Aria Blake and I’m a professional wrestler.

Balancing a wrestling career while being a full-time college senior is difficult. When I’m not in class, I’m busting my butt training, working out six days a week in the gym doing cardio and lifting, traveling to shows and studying different wrestling techniques.

I sleep when I can, but my life, more often than not, is go, go, go. 

Every since I saw my first match, I was hooked. I knew that all I wanted to do in life was be a professional wrestler. When I turned 19, a wrestling school opened about 30 minutes from my house. My destiny felt within reach.

I began training in April 2014 under Jay Lethal, a wrestler currently signed with Ring of Honor, a promotion company. I had always been passionate and knew he was a big name in the industry. He’s been in top compa-

nies, wrestled all over the world and trained many other wrestlers. I knew his guidance would be key to a successful career. Training began with learning the basics: chain wrestling, running the ropes, taking bumps. I also learned easier things like hip tosses and arm drags, before I moved on to more advanced moves like DDTs, suplexes, head scissors, body slams and more.

In January 2015, I made my debut in a student battle royal against others I trained with. It gave me a comfortable start because I was in the ring with people I trusted and who had experienced the journey with me. Throughout my first year, I had booked a few events and was getting my name out there. Since I was still a rookie, I didn’t earn the most exciting accomplishments.

This year, my experiences have been unreal, but in the spring I got the needed and had surgery. Thankfully, the condition wasn’t serious, and once I got back in the ring I felt like a new performer. As a result, my drive and passion grew.

I’ve had bookings all throughout Florida and put a good number of miles on my little Honda Civic traveling around the state.

I’ve been in the ring with many different competitors. Some my size (though few and far in between), many larger, some more experienced, others less, some female, some male - my preferred opponents.

Intergender wrestling, when men and women are opponents, is controversial. Many oppose it under the belief that a man shouldn’t put his hands on a woman. Personally, I love it because I support equality between genders. You have to think of it as two consenting adults with different strengths working together to perform for the masses.

To me, wrestling guys help me more because they can take certain moves that women physically cannot and they are more likely to share tips on how to perform for the masses.

This November, I wrestled in Connecticut. I was selected to participate in Rise, which is part of a larger promotion called Shimmer Women Athletes, the top women’s promotion in the world. Rise is essentially preparing new wrestlers for the big leagues.

Surrounded by strong, empowered women performing at the top tier of the independent wrestling business, I was in my element throughout the entire weekend. I was enamored with the amazing in-ring performances, athleticism and dramatics, as well as the dedicated fans in the large venues.

My weekends are nearly full for what remains of 2016 and I’ve already secured bookings for 2017. Upon graduating in the summer, I’ll be heading to Japan for three months to wrestle and train in their “strong style” method. Wrestling in Japan is quite different, but being offered the chance to go with a woman’s company for an extended period of time is an immense honor.

Although my life is hectic, I wouldn’t give up what I’m doing for anything in the world. Seeing my calendar full of bookings and traveling to do what I adore is the best thing.

I’ve learned that it is possible to chase your dreams. You can do anything regardless of the endeavors. Believe in yourself and you can make it happen.
Is the System Unfair? Tear Down the Electoral College

By Luke Cross
Junior Journalism & Media
Studies Major
lukecross@mail.usf.edu

Citizens of our fair country have a right to the most potent and influential power in shaping government, their inalienable democratic voice.

This power, however, is not fully demonstrated in letters to local policymakers, the signing of petitions or even in voting for the leader of the free world. Instead, we carry our civic engagement in what is most important: long-winded complaints on social media.

Now, our most recent election certainly provided more than enough to rant about. No matter where your partisan allegiance lies, a common thread from both sides seems to be a call for ridding ourselves of the outdated Electoral College. These railing cries are often backed by rationales such as, ‘We’re a democracy, the popular vote is what matters’ as well as ‘The election shouldn’t be decided by a handful of states!’

Frankly, you’d be hard pressed to find anyone opposing these, because they’re true. America is a nation by the people, for the people, so shouldn’t it be the people that pull the strings?

As with most things political, the problem isn’t quite that simple. In order to truly understand the Electoral College and its purpose, we first need to understand a bit of history. Instead of boring you with a full lecture on the Apportionment Act of 1911, I’ll just drop the relevant points.

The nation was experiencing unprecedented growth, and the Act was passed to address equal representation in the House for both rural and urban communities. In doing so, the total number of representatives was set at 438, to be divided amongst the states based on population.

The people’s majority awarded every electoral vote to the respective candidate in a winner-take-all fashion. This tradition continues to this very day, meaning that your vote doesn’t directly decide who the next president will be, but instead decides which electors are sent to D.C. a month after the election to make the official decision.

Even though that was an extremely simplified summary of how our complicated bureaucracy works, I’m sure you could ferret out half a dozen issues, at least. The United States has grown exponentially since the early 20th century, population has drastically shifted from rural communities to ever expanding cities, electors are not bound by the popular vote and the list goes on for ages.

Theoretically, a presidential candidate could win the election with less than a third of the popular vote, thanks to the aptly named swing states produced by electoral distribution. Thankfully, an election has never been this drastic, but the popular choice has lost four times in the history of U.S. elections, effectively undermining the very notion of democracy.

Thankfully, it hasn’t even touched on the fact that the thousands of U.S. citizens living within the territories have no representation at all, and that the popular vote could be disregarded completely, regardless of statehood. So, it seems our path is clear: move on from the 19th century and abolish the Electoral College.

There’s no debating that our current process for elections is flawed. In an effort to protect the interests of small rural areas, it’s fairly obvious that we’ve gone too far.

Let’s say in answering this problem, we successfully transform elections into a directly democratic system. Sure, we may eliminate current swing states, but every person’s vote still won’t be equal. For instance, California’s population alone is roughly equal to the 20 least populous states. The five most populous states contain nearly half the voting age population. Each state is still its own entity, with individual needs and cultures. A promised subsidy on cattle productivity would easily garner votes from South Dakota, while being irrelevant to nearly every other state.

Tyranny of the majority is more than an antiquated term used only in the context of elections, it’s a very real threat to our country.

The Electoral College in its current form may be barely engrained, but the interest of the minority, but was created in our best interests. Abolishing the current system and its perpetual set of problems, far too similar to the ones we struggle with today, will allow us to make America a country. The United States is the model of democracy, and it’s about time we start acting like it.

Taking Responsibility for the Spread of Fake News

By The Crow’s Nest Staff
drodriogues75@mail.usf.edu

While seeking a scoop for the election of Donald Trump, people on the internet railed against the hand that feeds: social media sites.

Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, has been forced to respond to the allegations that the lack of responsible policing over false news has lead voters astray.

Critics said that the clickbait headlines and confirmation-bias nature of the articles help provide and own the service, the amendment doesn’t apply to them, but are these sites exerting too much power?

The rules that Twitter utilize to designate hate speech are unclear and extremely ambiguous in a way that allows Twitter to further an anti-right agenda. If done correctly, both the user-base and the site itself, would benefit. People would know how they’re expected to behave on the site, and the site in turn would have a viable defense against accusations of bias.

It’s important to point out that hate speech and fake news are not the same thing and they should be weighted differently. Yet, social media sites could learn something about the importance of transpar-
The Crow’s Nest accepts letters to the editor. All submissions should be no more than 250 words. Writers must include their full name. In addition, USF faculty should include their title, department and extension. All letters are subject to editing for clarity and length. Letters can be sent to drodriguez7@mail.usf.edu with subject title “letter to the editor.”

We’d Love to Hear from You

The Crow’s Nest accepts letters to the editor. All submissions should be no more than 250 words. Writers must include their full name. In addition, USF faculty should include their title, department and extension. All letters are subject to editing for clarity and length. Letters can be sent to drodriguez7@mail.usf.edu with subject title “letter to the editor.”
I was out on a Tuesday night and a woman walked up to me and said, "I didn’t realize you were a lawyer!"

"I think it’s pretty obvious." I replied.

She then proceeded to tell me about her experience with one of the local law firms. She said they had provided her with bad legal advice and charged her a lot of money.

I asked her what kind of legal advice she needed. She said she was facing a high-level, multi-party divorce and needed help navigating the legal process.

I offered to help her, and she was grateful. She told me she was unable to afford the legal fees charged by the law firm and didn’t know where to turn.

I told her about a local nonprofit organization that offered legal services to low-income individuals. I arranged for her to meet with one of the attorneys there and see if they could help her.

The next day, I received a call from the woman. She was very happy with the legal advice she received and was able to settle her divorce quickly and inexpensively.

I felt good about helping her, but it also made me realize how important it is for people to have access to affordable legal services. Unfortunately, many low-income individuals cannot afford the high fees charged by law firms.

I believe it is the responsibility of the legal community to provide pro bono services to those who cannot afford to pay for legal representation. As a lawyer, I will continue to volunteer my time and resources to help those in need.