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President Barack Obama smiles after he signed the $787 billion stimulus package on Feb. 17, 2009.

Stimulus package approved: is it enough?

Amanda Smith
Staff Writer

President Obama signed the $787 billion stimulus package on Feb. 17, calling the measure "the beginning of the first steps" to repairing the economy." That same week, according to the Labor Department, marked the fourth consecutive week of record breaking national unemployment recipients. 170,000 laid-off workers were approved to join nearly five million American citizens already collecting unemployment checks.

According to the U.S. Labor Department, 2.77 million Americans collected unemployment benefits in February 2008 and almost five million are collecting unemployment benefits so far in February 2009.

Obama's claim of "four million jobs" echoes in the ears of the suffering - especially in the state of Florida. Home of the highest foreclosure rate in the country, the state of Florida endures significant burdens of a failing economy - with some residents losing both their home and occupation in the span of a few months. 255,200 Floridians lost their job in 2008, second only to Californians, with 257,400 jobs lost, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. As layoffs and hiring freezes become the norm, college graduates in Florida ponder how to make use of their new degree.

Charlie Park, a business management professor at USF St. Petersburg, said he knows the bleak employment outlook in Florida is a heavy weight on the minds of his students. He has doubts that the newly passed stimulus plan will drastically improve it.

"It's a question on everyone's mind - what will the stimulus package actually do for Floridians," Park said.

A recent poll of Florida voters reflects the sentiments of Park, as survey results show a clear split on the anticipated effect of the stimulus. The survey polled thousands of Floridians from Feb. 11 to 16, with 51 percent reporting they were confident the plan would make a difference, while 49 percent reported they thought the plan would do little or nothing to positively affect the state's economy.

"This money is going to have to be spent wisely by our representatives if we want it to make any difference," Park said.

While Governor Crist will stand to receive about $12.2 billion from the stimulus package, composers of the bill made sure to include strict accounting regulations associated with the spending of stimulus funds. With a figure he repeats over and over, President Obama has clearly stated that the goal of the stimulus is to create four million jobs.

The official White House Estimate Report predicts 218,000 jobs for Floridians, in a range of fields from clean energy to healthcare, with 90 percent of the jobs in the private sector. In addition to creating new jobs, the stimulus package plans to offer incentives to nearly all working citizens, with Obama's initiative called, "Making Work Pay."

The "Making Work Pay" tax break will give 95 percent of Florida workers and their families a $1,000 tax break. To reward those contributing to the working Florida economy, the funds are expected to start immediately and will be directly paid out into workers' paychecks.

To better prepare a new working force in Florida, the plan will provide a $2,500 tax refund for four years of college, in an effort to make higher education within reach to more families in Florida and nationwide.

Still, state officials will dvy much of the stimulus money up. USF St. Petersburg senior Daniel Lubosco said he doubts the effectiveness of the stimulus plan and isn't too optimistic about "proper allocation."

"$12 billion is a lot of money and it's hard to imagine that it wouldn't have any impact - if it is properly allocated. But I don't really think that's likely to happen. We aren't exactly known for wise government spending, are we?"

Lubosco will graduate with a finance degree this May and plans to continue onto business school. "I'd like to get my MBA in Europe - get out of Florida for awhile," he said. "The job market here sucks."

Kristian Weinandt, an economics major at USF St. Petersburg said he sees different problems with the stimulus package.

"We're still coddling people with this. This plan is encouraging people to stay at home and be unemployed by offering them extended unemployment benefits," Weinandt said.

He speaks of the stimulus plan's provision to add an additional $100 per month in unemployment insurance benefits to 761,000 workers in Florida who have lost their jobs in this recession and provided extended unemployment benefits to an additional 170,000 laid-off workers, according to the National Employment Law Project.

While Florida stands to gain immediate and tangible benefits like funding to modernize 485 Florida schools and stimulus checks to most Florida taxpayers, the newly passed federal stimulus package and the American Recovery and Reinvestment plan, the lasting effects of the plan still remain to be seen.
Perspectives

Curbside recycling not a priority for city

Emmalee Schmidt
Assistant Editor

Three cities in Pinellas County do not participate in curbside recycling—including St. Petersburg. City of St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Baker is the reason for the lack of green bins in your driveway every week. The positive long-term effects of participating in curbside recycling significantly outweigh the short-term effects. The majority of City Council members are on board for curbside recycling.

Baker wrote his views on recycling in the St. Petersburg Times stating, "I have environmental concerns about the greenhouse gases emitted and fossil fuel consumed by the fleet of trucks required to pick up the material citywide. I also have financial concerns about the cost to the taxpayer."

The county has suggested a program that would cost the taxpayers nothing. The proposal offers Baker a reduction in carbon emissions, less waste in landfills and taxpayers the opportunity to participate in curbside recycling for free.

St. Petersburg residents created an online petition suggesting curbside recycling. At a 2008 Public Safety, Public Service and Infrastructure committee meeting, 384 residents were surveyed and found that about 88 percent would actively participate in curbside recycling and 66 percent confessed to currently throwing away recyclables.

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The short-term effect of costing taxpayers money has evaporated and Baker continues to resist the idea. He continues to say the environmental impacts from the fleet of trucks used to pick up the recycling will harm the environment more than benefit, yet scientific research has yet to be cited.

County officials have a difference of opinion. They told Christine Silvia of the St. Petersburg Times that "that a reduction in 4.8-million gallons of gas would be saved if 440 tons of recyclable material were picked up curbside instead of at collection centers. Greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced by 20,900 metric tons, the equivalent of removing 16,600 passenger cars from the road."

This struggle to convince Baker to approve curbside recycling has been an issue for almost two years. Running out of excuses, the mayor and the city council should reconvene to find a common ground and get St. Petersburg to follow the "green" trend of recycling.

THE CROW'S NEST

POP CULTURE GRID

by Ashley Jones

We asked . . .

Favorite Disney character?
Sara Ames 19, English
Tigger
No
Spring Break
"Girls Just Want To Have Fun"
Swahili

Ashley Lancer 19, Economics
Ariel
Yes
Spring Break
"Danger Zone"
Other language

Caden Hjelseth 18, Environmental Science
Aladdin
Yes
Fishing
Foreign language
As much as I can

Alyssa Money 20, History
Pocahontas
Yes
Archaeology volunteering
How to speak Spanish fluently

Lauren Fleckland 18, Fine-Art
Ariel
Yes
Spring Break
"Lucky Man", "We Don't Stand a Chance"
More about how the school is suppose to get a Veternarian program

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THE CROW'S NEST USF ST. PETERSBURG

Week of March 2nd, 2009
Flowers, food & 'shoebox' talk

Kaitlyn Laichak
Contributing Writer

On Feb. 16, the feeling was just right on the fourth floor lounge in the REHO as Ladies Night began. The evening covered everything from fondue and planting to serious issues faced by women on a daily basis. Hosted by Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, the night continued to draw students from around campus to the event.

"I like group [Intervarsity] because most people view Christian groups as boring, but everyone here has a personality," said Sarah Richardson, freshman and criminology major, along with Lindberg, Intervarsity staff member. After fondue, every one of the participants received a flowerpot to decorate. After filling the pots with dirt, flower seeds were chosen and planted. The lounge was almost full with 20 women crowded around a shoebox.

'Shoebox talk' was the last event to take place. Discussion questions were placed in the box and two or three questions were chosen. Some questions like, "How does society view women?" and "How do men view women?" brought on a heated debate.

Mary Rogers, freshman and criminal justice major, along with Lindberg, were in charge of planning. Ladies Night. Lauman felt 'Shoebox Talk' was important for discussing issues that women, especially in a college environment, deal with.

"I just wanted to talk about women's issues and see what everyone else had to say. Plus, I liked painting the flower pot," Claudian Anderson, sophomore and social work major said.

ADVICE GURU

My roommate is a total slob. Whenever I come home, I am stepping over dirty clothes, pizza boxes, or his sleeping body in the living room. He lets dirty dishes pile up until we have no more dishes and he leaves the kitchen a mess after cooking. I'm not a neat freak, but I don't like to feel like I have to wear a hazmat suit in my own house.

HELP!

-Trash Man

First, ditch the hazmat suit and get to talking. Explain to him that you appreciate him living there, but you really need him to help you maintain a clean living environment. You might also want to consider buying your own dishes. This way, you can wash them as soon as you use them and his dishes can continue being a science experiment. So, compromise with shared responsibilities and work together to make a clean environment that you both can enjoy.
M&Ms, Doritos, chocolate chip cookies and cheese crackers are a far cry from brain food. The vending machines on campus have a heart shaped sticker next to items considered to be healthier choices than other products in the machine. In the Davis Lounge, some of the items that boast these stickers include Skittles, Starburst, Fritos, powdered donuts and Butterfinger candy bars.

"That’s hilarious," said Jen Burns, senior management major. "Those aren’t healthy at all.

The vending machine service is controlled out of USF Tampa and is in a 10-year contract, which began in 2002, with Tampa Bay Vending. "The company is in charge of servicing and stock the machines," said Jeff Mack, assistant vice-president of campus business in Tampa. "The university receives commission on the sales from the vending machines."

The types of food stocked in the machines are determined by collaboration between Tampa Bay Vending and the university. "They look for trends of what is selling," Mack said.

However, there are trends other than profit to be considered. According to a survey performed by the Center for Disease Control, the rate of obesity among college students has doubled in just ten years. "That’s definitely a concern," said Marcus Berry, fitness and intramural coordinator at USF St. Petersburg. "Higher education administrators should be aware of that trend and take a more proactive approach.

Burns said she does not really look at the vending machines, except for drinks and in those cases would like the option to choose natural juices that come without added sugars. She also said there are no places close enough to campus to get a healthy snack quickly. "You could go to Publix, but you’d probably need your car." People are stuck here during the day," said Philip Reynolds, senior management major. "There are not a lot of options.

Berry believes healthier options in the vending machines will help students, not only with dietary concerns, but also with better performance in class. "You’d get a candy rush and then crash in class," Burns said in regards to the current options in the machines. "Better nutrients can help you stay awake."

"We try to balance it out," Mack said. "Tampa Bay Vending sets Mack know what is selling best and together they try to cater to what students want.

"We try to find different items to attract different customers." Healthier options are not the only concern with the vending machines. Those students who live in the residence hall have little to no options for breakfast on campus. The machine on the seventh floor of the residence hall has Pop Tarts, Nutri-Grain bars and a trail mix granola bar for students who do not have enough time before class to sit down and eat.

"It’s a good idea to consider," Mack said in regards to the break fast options. "When there is a interest we try to pursue it."

Even if the university consider creating putting in healthier choices, there must be a demand for it and the sales must back up that demand.

"It could be great and healthy but then sales may go down," Mack said.

"They would probably stick with the unhealthy choices," Reynolds said. "Some might switch.

"Given a choice, I would believe a college student would choose a healthier approach," Berry said.

Kaeli Conforti
Staff Writer

In a time when people are constantly losing their jobs and houses, an increasingly bad economy, it’s business as usual for student spring break plans.

A recent article by USA Today discussed how students in universities throughout the United States are not being deterred by the state of our economy. Rather than taking expensive vacations to far off locations, many are opting instead to stick to a budget and cash in on package deals that are a bit closer to home.

A group of USF St. Petersburg students are doing just that. Brent Stephens, sophomore criminology major, plans to spend his spring break onboard Royal Caribbean’s Navigator of the Seas, a five-night cruise out of Ft. Lauderdale that will stop in Georgetown, Grand Cayman and Ocho Riots, Jamaica. Stephens is traveling with a group of friends, including Emelia McNally, sophomore elementary education major, and Jacqueline McGibbon, freshman marketing major.

"Spring break is a big deal in my family," McGibbon said, describing her family’s past vacations to Florida’s beaches and trips to the mountains in Shenandoah Valley.

"It’s going to be pretty awesome," McNally said, mentioning that this is her first time going away for spring break. "It is three weeks away and I can’t wait." McGibbon said she has a friend who lives on Grand Cayman that will be meeting them once they arrive, providing with a personal tour of the island and a way to save money on shore excursions.

According to Stephens, a fourth person will join them, allowing the group to split the total cost of the cruise four ways. Stephens said Royal Caribbean had them pay the full price for the first ticket, but every other ticket cost much less since there were more passengers in the group.

Many students are either traveling locally within the state of Florida, while others find inexpensive ways to travel abroad.

Ben Johnson, senior criminology major, will be spending his spring break traveling to Panama with a group of friends visiting from North Carolina. "I’ve traveled in the past for other spring breaks, but usually local. This is the first time I’m going outside the region."

Sorcha Sills, senior, English major, will be visiting relatives in Ireland during spring break. "I wouldn’t be going up there. I booked my own flight on one of those flight comparison sites."

A number of student discount travel Web sites are offering all-encompassing package deals in an effort to save students more money as they travel.

Studentuniverse.com offers spring break packages for anyone hoping to travel the world, with packages to London starting at $252, Paris starting at $316 and trips to Rome starting at $355, all of which include airfare, hotel and insurance. However, the departing flight and hotel accommodations will end up playing a factor in the final price.

The Web site also offers special deals for city packages to Los Angeles, New York and Chicago as well as classic spring break spots like Miami, San Diego and Cancun.

Startavel.com, which used to have a branch at the USF Tampa campus, boasts packages under $590 for New York and New Orleans, in addition to trips to Las Vegas from $342 per person and packages to South Beach, Panama City, South Padre Island and other popular beach destinations.

For students who would rather spend their spring break helping others, startavel.com offers one-week projects in Texas and Arizona and traveling to Mexican Pacific $399. Another deal mentioned on the Web site is a five-day party cruise to a resort in Fajardo, Baha­mas starting at $399.

Other Web sites, like eccofeleegebreak.com and contiki.com, offer cheap tours to students year-round. Students traveling through these companies save more money overall.

Local or abroad, students are not giving up their opportunity to get away.

Got Problems?
The Advice Guru is here to help you solve them.

E-mail the Advice Guru at usfadviceguru@gmail.com

All questions will be confidential.
In an astounding feat of wits, endurance and strategy, one student took on 10 opponents in separate chess matches at the same time. He won them all.

On Wednesday, Feb. 18 students arranged tables in the Davis Lobby into a square shape and set up 10 chess boards as they waited to witness the simultaneous exhibition of Robert S. Forman III, junior accounting major, who has played chess “for quite some time.”

The event started shortly before 6 p.m. and lasted until about 7:15 p.m. Forman arrived with his suitcase, having just returned from a trip to Nashville, Tenn., for a conference with other Harborside Activities Board members, another group to compete he is involved with.

In attendance challenged each other to a game of chess as they awaited Forman’s arrival, playing a few games and discussing predictions on how the night would turn out.

“I’ve seen him play before,” said David Ferguson, sophomore undecided major as he practiced on his Harry Potter Wizard’s Chess set. “Rob’s going to kill them all. He wins every game.”

As he entered the building, the 10 students waiting to play against him became quiet. He quickly explained the rules, telling the players to think wisely about their next move before he came to their spot at the table. If players felt like they needed more time, Forman would be allowed to pass by, however any moves must be made while he stood in front of their chessboard so he would have a chance to counter them.

As he worked his way around the tables, approaching each chessboard with guillotine and there’s nothing you can do about it.”

By 6:45 p.m. the tension in the room was evident. Players were starting to skip a turn more often as Forman himself seemed to be flustered by some of the competition.

“I just found a really good move,” Forman said after staring at one chessboard for a few minutes. “Cra, I feel silly now. I should have thought of that ages ago,” he said after he made his next move.

A few minutes later, as Forman played another student, he expressed his worry that the two players would end up with a draw, a case where neither could claim victory. After about an hour, Ferguson was able to step in for one of the players who had to leave before his game was through.

In about 20 minutes Ferguson was defeated. “I knew what was going to happen,” said Ferguson. “You could put this whole room on a chessboard and he’d still win.”

Forman even managed to beat Frank Biafore, Chess Club faculty advisor and Dean of Arts and Sciences at USF St.-Petersburg.

“It’s frustrating because you have all the time you need and he still beats you,” Biafore said. “He tells you how many moves before you’re annihilated. That’s the worst part – you’re walking up to the guillotine and there’s nothing you can do about it.”

By 7 p.m. it was down to the final three players. Other players who had been knocked out of the tournament began to advise those who remained. Despite their assistance, Forman defeated the last player within 15 minutes.

“I thought since he wasn’t fully concentrating, I could beat him, but unfortunately I was wrong,” Abby Bennett said.

Forman defeated eleven chess players in about an hour and a half, but despite his impressive victory, he still remained humble about the whole experience.

“Throughout the game, there were several people that caught me by surprise,” Forman said. “If and when we do this again, I could very well be caught. The mark of a really good chess player is you don’t win all the time.” Forman explained how a very good chess player only wins about 64 percent of the time. “I’m somewhere around 57 percent against people at my level.”

Forman described how despite his confident appearance, some of the players made him nervous throughout the tournament. “I was getting caught and falling into traps when I was going around really fast. Anybody could have won and several people here came really close to it.”

In case any students missed this event, the Chess Club plans to hold another simultaneous exhibition on Wednesday, Mar. 11, starting at 5 p.m. in the Davis Lobby. Any students and faculty members are welcome to compete.
Dali exhibit showcases in Poynter Library

Katrina Swenson
Contributing Writer

The University of South Florida St. Petersburg will open a student-run tennis club to anyone wanting to play, experience or rent.

Organizers of the USF St. Petersburg Tennis Club are in the process of completing the constitution and establishing the new organization on Blackboard.

Graduate student Brooke Thomson will introduce the new club to interested students at the Student Recreation Center at 6:15 18th Ave. S. An announcement for the date and time of the first meeting will be sent to students who join the club through Blackboard.

The club will be a student-run organization and the first meeting will be to allow students to decide the structure of the club and the best time to meet.

Professor Jay Sokolovsky accepted the request from Thomson to be the faculty advisor to the Tennis Club because he believes that tennis is a wonderful sport and has played since college.

Five years ago, Student Government paid a single fee to St. Petersburg Tennis Club to allow students access to the tennis courts for free because tennis courts on campus are unrealistic, Sokolovsky said.

Student Government stopped paying the fee because of lack of student use of the courts. With the completion of Residence Hall One, more students remained on the campus and interest in use of the courts grew.

Sokolovsky worked with the United States Tennis Association Florida Community Coordinator Jeff Davis to develop a competitive club to be housed at the St. Petersburg Tennis Center.

The club would be a good way to spread tennis through the community and the university, Thomson said.

The club will be a social arena to have fun in the beginning stages and will welcome all students with or without experience, Sokolovsky said.

Four courts are available to students anytime for free.

Thomson feels confident about the start of the club. She has nearly 45 students who have contacted her with interest in the club and has played with eight students regularly since the fall semester.

She hopes the club will continue to grow and remain active through the summer for the students who want to continue to play.

The goal of the club is to become competitive and participate in college level tournaments by next year. Serious training will be available to students who want it.

In addition to playing tennis, students will have volunteer opportunities available to them at the St. Petersburg Tennis Center. The center has a classroom to supplemented an after-school children's program. Tutoring opportunities for club members to work with children on their homework are available in the afternoon.

Interested students should contact Brooke Thomson at stathomaso@mail.usf.edu or Sokolovsky at jsokolov@usf.edu.

In a sectioned-off room is a display which shows “Cave Canis,” meaning ‘be aware of the dog.’ Nine boxes are hung on the walls and publications from “10 or 15 different artists,” which fit inside each box, are placed in a collage.

Mason, in pull-out drawers allows guest to view them up close.

The close proximity of the Dali Museum, he said. The process of completing the exhibition in the United States, he said. The process of completing the exhibition in the United States.

The Web site for the exhibition, Jeffett said. The major curators decided to put multiple copies of the books so you could see more than one page of the book and not have that problem of being curious about the other pages.

“Even though everything is protected under glass...you could see them better than you would in most normal exhibitions of books.”

Architecture and industrial design is of "great interest in Barcelona" and particularly inspires furniture design. Jeffett is a journalist and particularly inspires furniture design.

"This is a very wonderful and ambitious exhibition that looks at art, design and books," Jeffett said at the podium.

Visitors to the exhibition and Daniel Giralt-Miracle, the exhibition's curator, and Emili Padro, who designed the exhibition, stood nearby as Jeffett explained their involvement in the exhibition's production.

After Jeffett closed his foreword, he invited students to "mak[e] pre-view" of the exhibition's two unfinished sections in the Dali Museum.

The foreign curators and guests chatted with the help of Jeffett and other translators. USF St. Petersburg students, who watched the exhibition's construction during the week, trickled into the library and peppered the curators with questions from the unconventional publications.

Melissa Reyes and Robert Hamond, both juniors in bio-medical sciences, stood by a glass case and compared the English translation to the Spanish text of an artist's piece.

Hamond said the picture of what appeared to be "burning shoes" caught their attention.

The close proximity of the Dali Museum to the library allowed guests to quickly get out of the rain as they ventured to the incomplete second portion of the exhibit. Inside the museum, Jeffett said the majority of publications came from vendors primarily from Spain. Jeffett said some of the publications "kind of explode beyond the framework of slip cover" and a typical, flat book.

The designs of both opened publications and display were the heart of the exhibition. But Altai6, Giralt-Miracle and Padro were the stars of discussion amongst the curators and guests.

Altai6, who wrote glass es and a hat from Bueno Aires that covered up a book’s spine and a poster. Giralt-Miracle grew up alongside book production, Jeffett said. His father was "one of the most important" typographers in Spain. Giralt-Miracle said he knew Dalí and worked with him on several books.

Padro, the designer of the exhibition, presented the exhibition in a way to make the material appealing "because sometimes books being little objects are normally hard to make interesting in an institutional display context," Jeffett said.

"Emilia's is a design that make the [exhibition display] lively, vivid...the curators decided to put multiple copies of the books so you could see more than one page of the book and not have that problem of being curious about the other pages," Jeffett said.

"So even though everything is protected under glass...you could see them better than you would in most normal exhibitions of books.

A book, with eight students regularly since the fall semester. She hopes the club will continue to grow and remain active through the summer for the students who want to continue to play.

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Changes comes to Major League Baseball

Peter Pupello
Staff Writer

This year, Major League Baseball’s Spring Training will begin the same way it has the last 22 years. Ballparks in new locations serve as temporary springtime homes, with new faces within their walls. There isn’t much else that has changed throughout the last two decades: except teams are no longer built, they are simply bought.

Because of free agency and demographic urban sprawl, baseball has lost a sense of identity that defined it for so long among Florida’s coastal communities. One team in particular, the Tampa Bay Rays, will build a new tradition in a foreign city that now serves as their winter haven; a tradition they are simply bought. identify as their own.

The Rays will attempt to create that same sense of community in the recently renovated Charlotte Sports Park. Yet, this is the current state of Spring Training. Relocation has stripped baseball communities of pride and tradition, free agency has eliminated teams’ identity and some of family and steroids have destroyed innocence and purity. Clubs are seen more as corporations than teams and baseball has transitioned from a game into a business. Unfortunately these things have become additions to what we all still look forward to every March. We will see if Bowa was right in the coming years; has the game of baseball lost something?

1. When was the last time before 2008 that the National League had a 20-game winner?
2. How many times did Kansas City Royals great George Brett lead the American League in batting average for a season?
3. Name the last season in which the Florida State football team did not go to a bowl game.
4. Who was the last player to win the NBA’s MVP and Defensive Player of the Year awards in the same season?
5. The San Jose Sharks set an NHL record in 2008-09 for the best start to the season (25-3-2). Who had held the mark?
6. Who were the two race-car drivers The Associated Press named “Driver of the Century”? in 1999?
7. In what year was the first class inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame?