11-13-2012

Crow's Nest : 2012 : 11 : 13

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.
Veteran students start a second act, see city, school and life in new ways

By Angelina Bruno
Crow's Nest correspondent

Tensions ran high as students sat on the edge of their seats, jumped up, whispered, shouted and prayed during Tuesday night's election results in the University Student Center.

"We really need to win, so we can stay in college," said M.J. Johnson, a Barack Obama supporter who prayed for a win with a group of his peers.

Danielle Mitchell, 19, said she believes in Obama because "he came through a lot of struggle." Mitchell also said the president "needs more time to fix the country." However, others, such as Emily Grant, 19, voted for Romney. Grant said she wanted the former Massachusetts governor to win because she "had seen Obama make a fool of himself too many times."

Other students had no candidate to root for, expressing a hopelessness about politicians. "The government is corrupt," said Anissa Fitz, 19, Danielle Freeman, a USF St. Petersburg resident assistant and student government senator, said that in America "there's no freedom of expression when everything you know comes from that," pointing her finger upwards towards a television screen.

When CNN announced Obama as the predicted winner around 9:30 p.m., relief and excitement washed over his supporters. Students jumped onto tables and hugged one another. To them, he could not pass up. A mentor who prayed for a win with a Barack Obama supporter, said "We really need to win, so we can stay in college." And moving forward was soon to come.

By Tyler Killette
Crow's Nest correspondent

War veterans, now students, Matt Garrison, left, and David Sutton say their experiences shaped, but not changed, who they really are.

With his athletic build and boyish face—aside from mild stubble for "no shave" November—David Sutton, a finance major, blends in with his fellow USF St. Petersburg students. So when people realize that he is a 25-year-old undergrad, they usually have questions.

Sutton welcomes these inquiries, explaining that he "took a detour" and served in the army for four-and-a-half years before moving to St. Petersburg to finish school.

Sutton knew he wanted to join the military since his senior year of high school in Indiana, but ended up receiving an academic scholarship he could not pass up. After partying away his scholarship and growing bored with community college, he decided it was time to enlist.

In 2007, Sutton entered basic training and was stationed at Fort Campbell in Kentucky. After that year, he was deployed to Iraq.

"It hits you when you're getting on the plane," Sutton said, recalling saying goodbye to his mother and his dog, Baze, before heading off to war in very a foreign place.

"It's hard to explain a year of your life at war," he said. "It's describing more of a mentality than an experience."

The first three months in Iraq were the most shocking as Sutton adjusted to life in a developing nation, learning a completely new culture. He saw his friends being put in harm's way and sometimes, being killed.

After a while, things got easier. "It's called desensitizing," Sutton said. "Eventually you get used to it."

Sutton explained that although he didn't quite know what he was getting into at first, the Army taught him how to take it one step at a time and to be prepared for anything.

Being deployed is "kind of like you're a rubber band," he said. "You get stretched out too far."

After serving in Iraq for a year, Sutton returned to Fort Campbell to train new recruits. Although coming home to the U.S. may seem like it would be a relief, Sutton would have rather been deployed. Being on base means strict policies and procedures whereas overseas, there is "time for self-evaluation and time to think about your future."

In 2010, Sutton was deployed for another two years, this time, to Afghanistan. By June 2011 he had completed active duty.

If you ask 24-year-old accounting student Matt Garrison what he did before coming to USFSP in August 2011, he might joke he used to be a mailman. Garrison, however, spent four years in the United States Marine Corps. Garrison enlisted the summer after his junior year at St. Petersburg High School. With everyone he knew going to college, he decided he wanted to do something different. Three weeks after graduating, in 2007, Garrison found himself in boot camp. In 2008, he was stationed in Hawaii and deployed to Iraq that same year.

"How the f**k am I going to stay here for seven months?" was Garrison's initial thought when he landed in Iraq. He described it as being like the movies where a guy is fresh off the plane, mind-boggled and scared.

He remembers flying over Kuwait and Baghdad and everyone thinking it was so cool because those places were all over the news at the time. Garrison was stationed at Fort Rucker for four-and-a-half years before moving to St. Petersburg.

"I still don't have a job," Garrison said. "I'm trying to figure out what I want to do."
First time voters give their reasons

**Story by Ren Laforme; Photos by Christopher Guinn**

USF St. Petersburg students hit campus polls last Tuesday and Wednesday. According to Vincent D eCosmo, election rules chair, 270 students voted in 19 new Student Government senators:

Steven Bird (113 votes)
Matthew Bull (86 votes)
Michael Cardozo (48 votes)
Bryce Fitzgerald (79 votes)
Jozel Gherman (64 votes)
Jacob Grimes (116 votes)
Thomas Hamby (199 votes)
Dasmani Harris (118 votes)
Teral Hilliard (73 votes)
Christina Johnson (121 votes)
Andrew Kramer (133 votes)
David McLaughlin (89 votes)
Laura Rodriguez (59 votes)
Cory Santero (57 votes)
Sarah Smith (168 votes)
Lauren Snodgrass (174 votes)
Joseph Vars (111 votes)
Jeremy Wade (68 votes)
Mikayla Zafir (122 votes)

USF St. Petersburg Assistant Director of Leadership Charlie Justice defeated Nancy Bostock in the Nov. 6 general election, winning the district three seat for Pinellas County Commissioner. Justice, a D democrat, received 221,683 votes, or 52.42 percent, according to the Pinellas County Supervisor of Election's unofficial results. Bostock, the Republican incumbent, received 201,136 votes—about 47 percent.

The first order of business for Justice as commissioner is returning fluoride to Pinellas county water. The fluoride issue became contentious and partisan last year, when commissioners voted 4-3 to remove fluoride from drinking water in some 700,000 Pinellas county residences. Local dentists and health officials urged fluoride to stay, citing dental concerns. Some tea party activists, however, said fluoride was dangerous, and compared the addition of the salt compounds as a practice reminiscent of Socialism or Nazism.

According to the Tampa Bay Times, Justice’s win helps end nearly 30 years of Republican Pinellas County Commission incumbents never losing re-election.

**The Wellness Center gives flu shots free of charge to students on Friday mornings, 8:30 a.m. through 11 a.m. No appointments needed; call 727-873-4422 for more information.**

For 18-year-old biology major Carl Broughton, this election was personal.

“I want anybody who comes to this country to have the opportunities that I had,” Broughton said. He thought Obama also seemed to care more about college students, a reason he believed USFSP was “generally for Obama.”

“I was really nervous but really excited,” the 18-year-old political science major said about voting. She cast her vote the day before in Dade City.

“Honestly, I’m excited it’s over,” she said as she waited for the votes to come in, glad tension built during the long campaign season was about to break. “I can have friends again.”

She’d been watching the news coverage all day, and would continue through the night, she said.

Voters between the ages of 18 and 29 were expected to stay home on Nov. 6. Instead, they showed up to the polls in larger numbers than 2008. With 60 percent of the vote, Barack Obama was their clear choice. The Crow’s Nest interviewed students who watched the numbers come in at the University Student Center on Election Day to find out who they voted for and why.

Teral Hilliard’s grandmother voted for the very first time in 2008. “It’s time for an African-American president,” the 18-year-old mass communication major remembers her saying as she beamed with pride.

This year, as a first-time voter, Hilliard didn’t side with his grandmother. After a lot of thought, and some agonizing conclusions, he voted for third-party candidate Gary Johnson.

“For the longest time I was supporting Mitt Romney, but he wasn’t lining up to my political views,” he said. “I came to the conclusion that the Republican Party was not my party.”

While Hilliard has always felt the Democratic Party was for giving more power to government, he only recently decided that the Republican Party cared more about corporations than the to American citizens.

“It’s not necessarily the party it used to be, the party for the common people,” he said.

Hilliard said he hopes students take the time after this election to examine the major parties and their ideals and see if they match up to what they actually do.

As a registered independent, Jonathan Boyd, a 19-year-old international business major, had no idea who he would vote for up until a few months ago. That’s when he went to an Obama rally at St. Petersburg College.

He came away decided.

“This country was in a bad spot when Obama was first elected,” Boyd said. “More than anything I think he should have another opportunity to fix it.”

Boyd listed the economy and unemployment as the issues he was concerned most about, adding Obama was “the perfect person to motivate people.”

“But change comes slow,” he said.

Voting in his native Hillsborough County on Election Day, Boyd stood in line for longer than he expected, but came away feeling good about the process.

“I felt like I actually had a voice,” he said.
Coming home can be strange

Continued from front page

time. "And then you get to where you're staying and you're like, this sucks," he said.

The first half of Garrison's deployment in Iraq was spent at an observation post, in the middle of a desert, consisting of three tents, two Humvees and a couple of machine guns.

"It was cold in Iraq," Garrison said. So cold that if he didn't keep his water bottle inside his sleeping bag at night, he'd wake up with one big ice cube in the morning. The second half of Garrison's time in Iraq was a little better, as he spent most of it in helicopters and cargo aircrafts.

In late 2009, when it was time to return to Hawaii, Garrison also admits to not wanting to leave. "In Oahu it was very 'yes sir, no sir.' In Iraq we had a lot more freedom."

For first half of 2010 Garrison was back in Hawaii, stationed in Oahu but traveling to the Big Island for artillery shooting exercises. Later that year, he volunteered to go to Afghanistan for a P re-Deployment Site Survey, getting the "lay of the land" for those about to be deployed.

He found it was nothing like Iraq. "I would say [Afghanistan was like] camping, but camping would actually have more amenities," Garrison said. "In Iraq they have Burger Kings and Cinnabons and in Afghanistan you get old men selling rugs in a bazaar. I couldn't believe the lack of infrastructure."

Lucky for Garrison, he only had to endure Afghanistan for three weeks before returning to Hawaii. When the Tohoku Tsunami struck in 2011, Garrison was sent to Japan to complete his last mission on active duty. "I was so happy when I got out... ecstatic," he said. One of the last things he did in Hawaii was throw his boots over a telephone pole that had been adorned with lights—a ritual among those he was stationed with. He then plastered "I love Marine Corps" stickers all over his friend's car. That was the last time Garrison ever openly expressed that he was a Marine without being asked.

Readjusting to life in the states proved to be trying for both Sutton and Garrison.

After two deployments and moving to St. Petersburg, a city he'd visited but never lived in, Sutton found it hard to get back into the swing of things. In attempt to assimilate back into society, he became involved at USFSP, participating in intramural sports and taking a sailing class. Even for Garrison, who grew up in St. Petersburg, coming home was scary. He remembers seeing new roads running through the city, the places he used to eat lunch at every day demolished. While he had been so far away, St. Petersburg had gone on without him. But it wasn't just his hometown that felt foreign. "You spend all this time with these guys and really get to know everyone. Then your whole family feels like strangers," he said.

Sutton and Garrison both use the G.I. bill, formerly called the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, to receive full payment of tuition and living expenses. Although his veteran status has meant added respect from friends, Sutton likes to stay humble about his service. He said he's not too different from the next person next to him in class.

"We're just like you, we may have just been through a little more," he said, adding, only half-jokingly, "and don't make any loud, sudden noises next to us."

Sutton is currently a volunteer in the army reserves and goes to base in Orlando once a month. He wants to use his military experience to work for the government or a military contracting company.

Garrison, who plans on returning to the military after completing school, doesn't want to be judged as just "that military guy." He claims most people who know him would never believe he was a Marine anyway, a statement made believable by his modest autobiography: "I'm just Matt. I go to USFSP and like to eat ice cream...with brownies."

Concerns of young voters

Phil Pitarresi

"I say let's go up to Canada. That's what I say at this point," said 21-year-old Phil Pitarresi as he watched CNN tally the votes on election night. Pitarresi, a management major, comes from a family with conservative values. They taught him to appreciate fiscal conservatism, and the idea states should have more power than the federal government. So the clear choice for his first presidential election was Mitt Romney.

Pitarresi was particularly unhappy about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, known colloquially as Obamacare, as he believes it is unconstitutional to make people purchase health care from a third-party provider. A small majority of Florida residents disagreed, as Amendment 1, which would have banned such a mandate, failed 52-48.

Cynthia Wyre

A series of unfortunate events kept 18-year-old Cynthia Wyre from voting this year. But had she voted, it probably wouldn't have been for Barack Obama or Mitt Romney.

"I don't like either of them," said Wyre, a biology major. "The only thing I know about them is the trash they talk about each other."

She had planned to take the short trip to Hillsborough County to vote, so she turned down a ride. "Now I don't have a say about what goes on so I can't complain," she said.

Logan Kelly

The most striking thing about voting for the first time was not the candidates, nor the lines, said 18-year-old marketing major Logan Kelly.

"It was just cool to feel like you're part of the country and electing your leader," he said. "It felt like being a citizen."

Kelly voted for Romney this year, though not because of any particular stance or policy. "I just thought he was the better choice," he said.

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- Keeping abreast of campus news and happenings
- Editing news stories from correspondents
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 Writers, photographers, cartoonists and opinion writers are always welcome at our weekly meetings. Stop by the USCG Ocean Room on the second floor on Mondays at 5 p.m.
Draped in anonymity and the cover of night, the artist known as STOIC finds his peace of mind in the solitude of dark streets and the application of wet paint to concrete. He works with his face half covered to protect his identity from unfriendly eyes. Some fail to see anything more than property damage in his masterpieces. That’s OK with him. He knows that it’s the right place for his work.

His tags appear on the backs of buildings, down narrow roads and in the periphery of anyone walking downtown. STOIC’s trademark skulls stare eerily out from their stone canvases, daunting any who might dare remove them.

Now for the first time, his art has come off of the streets and into a studio setting for an exhibit at the Venture Compound entitled “Cheaper than Arrows.” A press release for the opening announced that police need not show up, as STOIC would not be there in person.

“Most of the time I put my work up with people all around me, and I do it so relaxed that people don’t even noticed me. I have been caught as STOIC. There have been some very, very close calls, but I got away. I am a ghost that aimlessly wanders, leaving my marks along the way,” he said.

“By Ryan Ballogg
Staff Reporter

Like his love of art, the origin of his pseudonym comes deep from his past. The idea was spurred by an experience he had in 10th grade.

“My English teacher used to write a word of the day and I would always write the words in graffiti letters on my folders,” he said. “One day the word was ‘stoic’, and I liked the way it flowed. I looked into where the word stoic came from and discovered the Stoics, and ancient group of Greeks who studied the practices of stoicism. They would block out distracting emotions and discourse from the world around them in order to find peace within themselves.”

It stuck, and he’s been using it for over 10 years.

For inspiration, STOIC looks no farther than his immediate surroundings—especially to his love of art, the origin of his pseudonym comes deep from his past.

“A student of art history—especially art related to the cradle of civilization—he uses many ancient symbols for the afterlife and reincarnation in his work. “I believe our society is going through a death, and then a rebirth shall come from the broken pieces,” he said.

Through experimentation, he developed a palette of media that suited his artistic visions. Water-based paints give him the fluidity he likes, as each mark has “a mind of its own.” But he doesn’t limit himself to traditional painting materials, as he lists “items of impermanence” as “really his thing.”

“My street pieces go through this same process. They start out being these very powerful images and over time they break down into almost nothing. But their presence is still there.”

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STOIC laughs off questions about possible property damage in his masterpieces. “In retrospect, hasn’t the city caused way more damage than I have? I personally don’t believe my pieces are damaging. They mostly consist of stickers, paper, and paste. You can just peel that stuff right off if you don’t like it,” he said, questioning the city’s choice to paste “off-colored” squares over his work.

He has no doubt that the street is the ideal gallery for his art. “It’s nice to create work and get a response without people knowing who I am,” he said. “I have been doing this for so long I know exactly what I am doing. It is rewarding to walk away from a big piece. I don’t necessarily get a rush, but it makes me feel good,” he said. “Most of the time I put my work up with people all around me, and I do it so relaxed that people don’t even notice me. I have been caught as STOIC. There have been some very, very close calls, but I got away. I am a ghost that aimlessly wanders, leaving my marks along the way,” he said.

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Aside from visual art, STOIC also creates music—a further projection of his same artistic soul in his street work. He uses outdated samples and instruments to create “down-tempo, dark and airy” hip-hop. He has released four albums under his STOIC name, including a recent one titled “Cheaper than Arrows.” The title comes from a tale from when England was at war with France, he explained. As French stormed London, an army general asked the king if he should send out the archers. The king replied, “No, send out the peasants first, for they are cheaper than arrows!”

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Faith and purpose at campus faith group

BY TYLER KILLETTE
Staff Reporter

Songs of worship resonate from the University Student Center ballroom each Sunday morning as members of Aletheia, an on-campus Christian faith group, meet to sing, pray and discuss the Christian faith.

Former USF St. Petersburg student Emilio Marrero, 27, began Aletheia with his wife, Hannah Marrero, 24, about a year and half ago. While in the graphic design program at USFSP, Marrero discussed his faith with fellow students, which led to the formation of a bible study group. As the group grew, it evolved into Aletheia St. Pete as part of a national network that aims to connect with college students through God and elevation of the Bible.

The Greek word for truth, Aletheia literally translates to “being fully exposed.” This is important to Marrero, who believes absolute truth can only be reached through Jesus Christ. Marrero said he can relate to the struggles students are going through and understands their problems. He wants to help them find answers to their problems through Jesus.

“I want it to be a blessing to the city,” Marrero said. He explained that Aletheia targets key issues in St. Petersburg such as the racial/social divide, alcoholism, drug abuse and homelessness, primarily by teaching people about God.

“Underneath all of the artistic movements and cool downtown scene, there is a rokeness and loss of identity. People have no clue who they really are,” Marrero said. “Only in coming back to our designer can we unite and be restored to our original design. Every other way is insufficient.”

The group has held a basketball tournament and a rap concert in order to reach out to at-risk kids. It is also reaches out to the homeless in downtown and is uniting with Keep St. Petersburg Local, an organization that supports locally owned, independent businesses.

Aletheia invites people from all religious backgrounds to join them. Marrero, admittedly agnostic for 10 years, said many agnostics and atheists come to Aletheia, often looking for answers or guidance. He is interested in speaking with people of different religions through truth-guided conversations in which he can actually educate himself on the beliefs of others rather than simply tolerate them.

“We are open to everyone and here to serve. We are not isolationists,” Marrero said.

Since its beginning, Aletheia has been mobile, even being hosted inside Marrero’s home when necessary. For now, Sunday morning services take place in the USC ballroom at 11 a.m. and last for about an hour.

Aletheia also offers a women’s group on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m., a c oed bible study on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and a men’s basketball and bible study night on Saturdays at 6:30 p.m. More information can be found at aletheiastpete.com.
Editorial

Pols: don’t box in individuals

While this election is over, the analyses and rundowns haven’t subsided. It’s much like the Super Bowl, which mistakenly appears to mark the end of the hoots and hollers and opinions in your living room. The flying confetti only rings in predictions for the NFL draft. Then there’s the actual NFL draft. Then, NFL draft forecast.

Trying to pinpoint what demographic is responsible for Romney’s defeat has led to speculative, unfair pigeonholing.

While race and ethnicity cover an enormous spectrum of standpoints, these distinctions are proven to be a more accurate predictor of candidate preference than say, gender. And boy, has gender been the talk of this election. And pre-election. And post-election.

Referring to “women” as a collective demographic (void of class, race, ethnicity or age) oversimplifies the gender. What about jobs and economy? Foreign policy? Federal spending? Health care?

According to some analysts, all women care about is free birth control, or the right to use it. This is why so many women voted for Barack Obama. Specifically, unmarried women.

Of unmarried women, 67 percent voted for Obama, while only 31 percent voted for Mitt Romney. The reason?

A segment on O’Reilly Factor addressed this. It boiled down to the presumption that single women voted based on one issue: abortion and contraceptives.

Fox affiliate Gretchen Carlson noted that married women think “more about economics and the future of their children,” and abortion and contraception isn’t a huge part of their life.

And for unmarried women, it is? Is it assumed that unmarried women primarily focus on future pregnancy scares? And espoused women don’t think about such things? Do they become sterile after marriage?

Legal analysts Jeanine Pirro echoed these statements, saying single women are “married to the government” and rely on the elected to take care of them (keeping with the heterosexual, traditional way of life).

Women on other sides of the political line shouldn’t distinguish their counterparts as one-note ponies.

Aside from the horror of attributing women with only caring about contraceptive and abortion rights, the logic doesn’t hold up.

An average of 61 percent of singles reported that they hadn’t been sexually active in the past year, compared to 18 percent of married people, according to a recent study conducted at the Center for Sexual Health Promotion at Indiana University. Did married women never think about contraception? Or, pardon the taboo, abortion?

At the Democratic National Convention in September, women’s rights activist Sandra Fluke was incorrect when she said the issue of contraception “aff icts nearly every woman.” It takes two to tango. When did contraception become solely a woman’s issue?

“Sex without making a baby every time is a w inning proposition for men too,” said Amanda Marcotte in a recent Slate article about the subject.

Maybe analysts are grasping at straws to fill airtime. Honing in on more than 50 percent of the population and treating it as a single demographic is no longer a r if between party lines, but something more oppressing.

Editorial Cartoon

No Idea
a series by Elizabeth Malley

Throwback

In 2007, Congress approved motions to establish November as A national Homeless Youth Awareness Month. An estimated 2.8 million youths are homeless for a night in the United States. One-fourth of all foster children experience being homeless after leaving the system at 18.

An average of 13 homeless youth die each day due to assault, illness or suicide.

“These girls and boys do not choose to live on the streets or be homeless. It is the sad truth that they feel safer there.”

-Singer songwriter Jewel Klicer, who was homeless for a year when she was 18. She used to wash her hair in the sink at Denny’s.
A day working at the ballot box

By Robert Heasly
Guest Columnist

October was Disability Awareness month, but it’s never too late to mention some helpful tips to help people with disabilities feel welcomed and respected. Remember, a disability is only one aspect of a person’s identity. Disability doesn’t mean inability.

In general, ask individuals with disabilities if they need help before proceeding with them with any kind of assistance. Also, don’t let fear and uncertainty keep you from getting to know fellow students with disabilities.

For people with mobility impairments:
If possible, speak to the person at their eye level. Make sure the space you are using is accessible. Difficulty with mobility does not indicate cognitive or hearing difficulty.

For people who are deaf or hard of hearing:
Speak directly to the person, regardless of whether they use an interpreter. Speak slowly and clearly.

Making disabled feel welcome

For people who are blind or low vision:
Keep walkways clear of obstructions.

Never put their service animals without permission (they are working).
Difficulty with sight does not mean "odd." They may have difficulty seeing other people’s eyes.
They often have difficulty maintaining eye contact.
For people with hidden disabilities” (learning, ADD/ADHD, or psychological):
They do not have a low IQ, but have difficulties with processing information.
They may need to adapt to different strategies to learn material.
If anyone needs more information about people with disabilities and how to support their education, you can contact me at rbeasey@mail.usf.edu or the Student Disability Services office at Terrace 200. We will be moving to the Student Life Center in December.

Making freedom count?

By Justin Duplain
Staff Columnist

A volunteer handed me the circular "I VOTED" sticker as I walked out the door of my polling place.

I smiled, thanked her, flipped the disk between my fingers as I considered placing it on my T-shirt.

Walking back to the car, I gave a cursory glance to the secondary message of the badge. My demeanor waned. "I MADE FREEDOM COUNT," said the disc in all caps along the top. "I MADE FREEDOM COUNT," it reaffirmed along the bottom.

I repeated the phrase in my head as a question. I had voted, but could I really bring myself to wear this sticker?

Back in 2008 I was excited to vote for Sen. Barack Obama, but this time around it was more about voting against his opponent than for him.

To be explicit, I do support the president’s domestic accomplishments, including progress in the areas of health care, marriage equality, women’s rights and education reform. In fact, I can only wish that he had pushed these reforms further. His handling of the financial situation seems to be working generally for the better, but at every turn he has been entirely too deferential to Wall Street for my liking.

"This is where the Republicans come into the equation: Even though the president has made notable progress in those areas, it has been entirely overshadowed by the cloud of regressive initiatives that could be imagined during a Mitt Romney/ Paul Ryan presidency. Not only would Romney have a congressional majority in his back pocket, but when you factor in the possibility of Supreme Court appointments, a Romney proposition would have set back the clock decades on many of these issues to a time long before Obama was even on the political stage."

As commander-in-chief, President Obama’s policies on homeland security and foreign policy have been severely disappointing. While there is no doubt that his approach and tactics are miles better than that of G.W. Bush, let's not forget that this is also the president who authorized the indefinite detention of Americans and signed into law the "anti-occupy" bill, which restricts First Amendment right to protest. Meanwhile, overseas, Obama has expanded drone attacks on human targets to unprecedented levels. I have yet to find a convincing argument that articulates how any one of these policies works to foster democracy and goodwill rather than simply being reactionary tactics that have the sole effect of restricting the rights of dissidents, all in the name of American “safety.”

Is this freedom or just thinly veiled cowardice?

The most pointed statement that 1 h e 1ard from Romney during the entire campaign was "We can’t kill our way out of this mess." And he’s right; we really can’t kill our way out of this mess, so why did his budget propose huge increases in defense spending that the military didn’t even ask for?

Maybe there was a favorable third party candidate with whom I could have sided? Certainly, there were options, but were any of those candidates really able to participate in the discussion? No; and the possibility of weakening the Obama vote just enough to give way to Romney’s victory was unthinkable. When the odds are this close, that gamble could turn sour mightly quick.

In the end these were our two options: polarized politicians and parties that have a stranglehold on the debate and election system—candidates that pose at opposite ends of the domestic spectrum while varying only in approach on defense and corporate welfare.

When it comes to true liberty, the liberty embodied within the bill of rights, did America have any real choice? Did my vote “make freedom count”—as it were?

I reflected on this as I drove home, then I threw the sticker in the trash.
Bulls women win b-ball opening day

**By Mike Hopey**

**Staff Reporte r**

A win’s a win. The South Florida women struggled early on against the Stetson University Hatters. At half time the Bulls lead only by a point, 31-30. But the Bulls turned their game around by the second half and pulled away to win the opener 70-48.

USF were trailing Stetson 38-37 before going on an 11-0 run to swing momentum their way and pull away from the Hatters. The Bulls forced three turnovers in the backcourt and got a b lock from Akila McDonald on the first four possessions of the run that started at the 11- minute mark of the second half.

During the run the Bulls were aided by defensive rebounds. They didn’t score off of every one but did not give the Hatters any second chance opportunities. The Bulls outrebounded Stetson 60-35. Pulling down boards was something Fernandez wanted the team to be better at this season. A 25-rebound advantage is a good start.

Andrea Smith led the Bulls in scoring in her first game since missing all of the 2011-12 season with an ACL injury. She went X-for-X for the game with 18 points. She also hit two shots from behind the three-point line and knocked down two free throws to go perfect from the line.

“I calmed down and let the game come to me,” Smith said. “I’m not really 100 percent yet. In the next few weeks I think I’ll get my legs and everything else will fall into place. It felt really good to be out there and do something you’ve been missing for a real long time.”

In the second half Stetson shot 1-7 in the first four minutes. The Hatters also picked up two quick fouls but went on a five-point run to take the lead 38-37.

“Everybody was probably a little worried and concerned,” head coach Rudy Fernandez said after the game. “We didn’t play particularly well in the first half. We missed open shots.”

The Bulls shot 47 percent in the second despite shooting poorly in the first half. Fernandez thinks that his team is a much better shooting team. He says they need to improve from the free throw line. USF was just 13-26 for the stripe for 50 percent.

“I was a little bit worried after the first half,” Fernandez said. “But we got it going again in the second.”

Early on the Hatters shot better from behind the three-point line to keep themselves in the game. Stetson was 5-12 in the first half but cooled considerably, knocking down just one in 13 tries in the second half. The Bulls were 5-20 from behind the line for the game.

The Hatters and Bulls are familiar opponents. USF holds the all-time lead 23-11 including a current five-game winning streak that now stretches to six games. The teams meet last season in Tampa and the Bulls topped the Hatters 77-62.

Forward Tahira Johnson had a career-high 13 rebounds in the win while contributing three points. Tiffany Connor and Courtney Williams tied for second on the team with nine points each.

The game was the Bulls first back in The Sun Dome, which under went a multi-million dollar renovation during the 2011-12 season. The USF women played their home games at the USF Recreation Center or at the University of Tampa near downtown.

“We haven’t done much in the Sun Dome yet,” said Fernandez. “We just got to get it here. It’s a great building.”

As part of USF opening day festivities the team honored former members of the of the women’s basketball team. Alumni played for the Bulls as recently as 2007 and as far back as 1979.

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