University housing rates to increase

By Tyler Gillespie
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For the majority of students who live on campus, the rent is about to go up. Under a plan approved by the university’s trustees, approximately 375 of the 540 students who live in Residence Hall One and the University Student Center will see their rent go up by 7 percent in each of the next two years and 4 percent in the fall of 2019. That means, for example, that a single in RHO that costs $3,922 this semester will increase to $4,200 per semester in the fall, $4,490 per semester in fall 2018 and $4,680 in fall 2019—or a cumulative annual growth rate of 6 percent. (See chart, page 2.)

An RHO single is apartment-style accommodations with four individual bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen and a common room.

The 165 students who live in rooms that have been reconfigured to add an extra bed or two will not see a rent increase. The university has raised housing rates only once in the past four years, said Joe Trubacz, the university’s regional vice chancellor for administrative and financial services.

During that period, several other state universities raised their rates every year.

“Housing rates are more like a rental rate and costs like electrical, utilities, and internet continue to go up,” he said.

“There comes a point when we need to raise our rates to get these costs covered.”

For four decades, USF St. Petersburg was strictly a commuter school without campus housing. But that changed as the university grew in size and ambition.

RHO, which houses 340 students on seven floors, opened in 2006, and the USC residence hall, which has 200 students on five floors, opened in 2012.

In 2010, the university began contracting with the nearby Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront hotel to handle the overflow. Twenty students are living there this semester under a contract that USFSP has with the hotel.

Rap duo Run The Jewels destroys Jannus Live

By Jonah Hinebaugh
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W rapping around the corner of First Avenue North and Second Street North were hundreds of fans, eagerly awaiting the sold out Run The Jewels show. Jannus Live was the 11th stop on the North American leg of their Run The World tour and fans were certain not to miss it.

The show featured hip-hop producer and DJ The Gaslamp Killer, who opened for the group. Sporting long, curly hair and a beard to match, the DJ remixed popular songs as well as performing his own psychedelic instruments while he ad-libbed about his distaste for Donald Trump.

The feeling of protest ran through the crowd throughout the gig.

Legend Has It: Run The Jewels leads the charts in vinyl sales and top hip-hop/rap album on Billboard. The crew visited Jannus Live, Jan. 24 and featured DJ Trackstar (pictured above) and the Gaslamp Killer.

Sailing students take Kennedy Cup from Navy

By Evy Guerra
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Sailing in class, Andrew “Ty” Baird listened to another student complain about the lack of competitive sports on campus. Baird sighed and lifted his USF sailing backpack, but didn’t say a word. It’s a comment he’s heard too many times.

“We’re literally out there all the time,” Baird said. “I mean, have you been on the waterfront?”

The USF St. Petersburg sailing teams, varsity and co-ed, often get overlooked. In November, the co-ed team won first place in the Kennedy Cup Intercollegiate Sailing Association competition, where the eight-man team beat the U.S. Naval Academy at their home in Annapolis, Maryland.

The victory allowed USFSP to advance to the 37th annual Student Yachting World Cup, which will be held in France in the fall. Baird, a junior business major, grew up in St. Petersburg, where both of his parents are professional sailors.

He spent his freshman year at Old Dominion University in Virginia, but returned to escape the cold weather.

Even with the team’s recent success, Baird doesn’t expect the popularity of the sport on campus to change.

“[Sailing] isn’t a spectator-friendly sport and it’s super tor-friendly sport and it’s super

See “Sailing Team” P4

See “Run The Jewels” P5

See “Housing Increase” P2

See “Kennedy Cup” P4

Sin the class, Andrew “Ty” Baird, a junior business major, participates in a team race outside Bayboro Harbor. Baird has sailed for 12 years, and plans to lead an Olympic campaign in the future. Baird was on the team that won the Kennedy Cup last November, along with seven of his peers.
**Housing Increase Continued from P1**

On average, a two-person room at the Hilton costs $1,000 more than a double unit on campus. The fall semester and $2,000 more in the spring semester, which falls during the winter tourist season, when more students raise their rates.

Increasing on-campus housing improves both student retention and graduation rates, university officials said. Students feel "more connected to campus," with greater access to university activities, resources and faculty.

Under the university's latest 10-year master plan, the campus would grow from its current student population of 4,725 to about 10,000 by 2025. Campus housing would increase as well.

The plan calls for additional housing for approximately 900 students that would be built in three phases.

Trubacz said the first phase, a $500-bedroom facility, will be built on the north side of Sixth Avenue S between Third and Fourth streets, replacing the parking lot just south of the soccer recreation field.

That building, Trubacz said, is projected to be nine floors high with dining on the first floor, housing on the next seven, and a conference center on the top floor.

Five developers are bidding for the project and will present their proposals next month. The Florida Board of Governors -- the 17-member board that oversees the state's public university system -- is expected to give final approval of this spring. The building is scheduled to open in 2019.

The next two proposed housing phases have not yet been approved. One would add 200 to 250 beds on the west side of the USC. The third phase would add 150 to 200 beds for upperclassmen in a building on the northeast corner of the campus just east of RHO.

That would mean that in the future, "as soon as you come from downtown, the first building you see will be upper division housing," Trubacz said.

The rent for campus housing covers more than maintenance, electricity, cable and water, said Scott Hendershot, the university's assistant director of housing and residence life.

"At a regular (off-campus) apartment, you're paying for the space and that's about all," he said. "Living on campus you get the experience of having a residence life staff really build that community." 

Hendershot said campus housing is now at 121 percent capacity. One hundred percent means all the beds on campuses are taken; the additional 21 percent comes from adding extra beds to certain rooms and in some hallways.

"Being at 121 percent occupancy means that there is a definite need for students to live on campus," said Hendershot, "and there's a need for us to have more on-campus housing."

"Once people see there is an option for a more traditional residential experience, we're going to get even more students," said Hendershot. "It's going to be cheaper than living downtown."

For years, the university was within walking distance or a short drive of hundreds of modestly priced apartment buildings, duplexes and single-family homes that housed a number of USFSP students.

But when the city's long-dormant downtown core began coming to life in the early 2000s, those modest housing venues were gradually supplant-ed by high-rise condominiums and apartment buildings that dramatically drove up downtown housing prices.

For example, the 13-story Salvador condominium tower is near completion on Fifth Avenue S, just steps from RHO. Its 74 condos, now 90 percent sold, start at $350,000, according to its website.

Just up the street, at 330 Third St. S, the new 17-story AER apartment building charges monthly rents ranging from $1,795 for a studio to $3,300 for a three-bedroom, two-bath unit.

Trubacz said the university approached AER managers about getting a block of rooms for overflow student housing in an arrangement like its contract with the Hilton.

AER declined, but said it would rent to individual students who can afford it, Trubacz said.

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**Going up, up, up**

Here is a breakdown on the plans to create the site as the university's next major block.

There will be no change for students living in an RHO Shared Double and a USC Triple.

There will be no change for students living in an RHO Shared Double and a USC Triple.

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**Room type** | **Fall 2017** | **Fall 2018** | **Fall 2019**
---|---|---|---
RHO Studio | $3,784 | $4,049 | $4,332 |
RHO Single | $3,922 | $4,200 | $4,491 |
RHO Shared Double | $2,922 | no change | no change |
USC Double | $3,784 | $4,049 | $4,332 |
USC Triple | $2,922 | no change | no change |

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**Explanation of room types:**

- **RHO Studio:** Two students share a room with a kitchen and bathroom.
- **RHO Single:** Apartment-style with a shared facility or a studio.
- **RHO Shared Double:** Apartment-style with two rooms, one for two students.
- **USC Double:** Two bedrooms, two bathrooms, kitchen and common area.
- **USC Triple:** Three bedrooms, three bathrooms, kitchen and common area.

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**President Trump revitalizes pipelines with executive order**

By Lis Casanova
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Four days after being inaugurated, President Donald Trump signed executive orders to re authorize the construction of two major oil pipelines the Obama administration had previously halted.

The orders invited the re-submission of the Keystone XL pipeline project by TransCanada, the company behind the proposal, and an expedited review of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).

TransCanada’s proposal, if approved, would permit direct transfer of crude oil from Alberta, Canada into Nebraska, whereas the current route travels to Elkm n Creek before crossing into the U.S. Meanwhile, the expedited review reopens the environmental assessment over the unfinished portion of the DAPL that was to be set under the Missouri River, a request that was denied in Dec. 2016 for its proposed route through the Standing Rock Reservation.

It is too early to know whether these projects will come to fruition but so far the government under Justin Trudeau, Canada’s Prime Minister, has welcomed the revival of the Keystone project with enthusiasm.

Proponents against the pipelines argue that the projects, which initially aimed to lift America’s reliance on gas from the Middle East and lower gas prices, no longer carry a major impact on America’s energy security nor contribute meaningfully to the economy.

President Trump has said that the project would provide 28,000 construction jobs though the State Department has estimated that these will only last during the construction phase, and ultimately yield less than 50. The State Department also concluded that Keystone’s carbon emissions would be equal to less than one percent of the total greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S.

"Keystone has never been a significant issue from an environmental point of view in substance, only in symbol," said David L. Goldwyn of the New York Times, an energy market analyst and a former head of the State Department’s energy bureau in the Obama administration.

The issue lies in that the renewed projects move away from the former administration’s aim towards environmentally friendly, renewable energy solutions. And while the emissions would not be significant enough to cause devastating changes to the environment, the pipelines could impact local communities, the water supplies, and cultural heritage sites.

...moving forward with this project would significantly undermine our ability to continue leading the world in combating climate change," wrote former Secretary of State John Kerry, who declined Canada’s offer of a presidential permit in Nov. 2015.

According to Brake Huber, an associate professor of law at the University of Notre Dame who specializes in environmental, natural resources and energy law, the projects will still have to face several challenges. TransCanada’s Keystone project requires state approval and landowners would likely resume the legal battles that initially impacted its construction and led to the withdrawal of their application from the state’s Public Service Commission in Nov. 2015.

In like manner, if the Army Corps of Engineers approves the DAPL, there will likely be lawsuits regarding treaty rights, something which the Sioux Tribe of the Standing Rock Reservation has already stated it will do.

Information from the New York Times, NPR and CNBC was used in this article.
Moneys from all over invaded Bayshore Boulevard this weekend to celebrate Tampa’s favorite extravaganzas of debauchery. The cold weather didn’t seem to deter the people of Tampa from their annual display of interpen- sion in palm garb. Truly like no other celebration in the world, Gasparilla is more than just Florida’s favorite college drinking day; it’s also an integral part of Tampa’s history and culture. Gasparilla is named after José Gaspar, a presumably apocryphal pirate, who is said to have terrorized the coasts of Florida in the early 1800s. He is rumored to have left his trea- sure buried somewhere along Florida’s coastlines.

The ship José Gasparilla II leads the sea portion of the parade across Hillsborough Bay along- side all the other boats who join the invasion. The José Gasparilla II is the only fully rigged pirate ship in the world, built in 1954. The ship docks at the Tampa Convention Center, where the mayor of Tampa “surrenders” the city key to the pinetas. The pirates then celebrate their victory by leading the land parade down Bayshore, nearly 3.8 miles. All the people who didn’t pass out under a palm tree already gather along the street to earn as many beads as they can.

The city first celebrated the Gasparilla Parade in 1904 and has occurred almost every year since. This year’s parade had only eight arrests, much less than last year’s over 20. Thirty-five people were brought to the hos- pital, one for trauma alert.

Tampa’s prime trademark lived up to its prestige this year once again.

Albert Whitted Airport runway study nears completion

By Ryan Callihan
ryancallihan@mail.usf.edu

Money was an integral part of the airport’s development” of airport “enhancing what he called “ver- ti- cal growth” of USF St. Petersburg. It’s allowed us to breathe a little bit with other things on the front burner.”

The next step would be to create a master plan, a step mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration, and clear environmental hurdles.

Some council members have already signaled they might oppose the runway extension. When the council authorized the study, three members – Steven Kornell, Darden Rice and Karl Nurse – voiced con- cerns about the proposal.

Kornell said he didn’t want to vote for a project that would damage the environment, and Rice said she didn’t think the extension would be popular among residents.

Albert Whitted could move forward with any plans without FAA approval. The airport must provide the orga- nization with a master plan. Lesniak said that the airport’s last master plan was completed in 2007 and the next one will be laid out in 2018.

Former Presidents: Obama repealed Clinton’s “wet foot, dry foot” policy from 1995 on Jan. 12. It was one of Obama’s last efforts to build a relationship with Cuba.

Pirates storm Tampa Bay at Gasparilla

By Anna Bryson
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the study was expected to take several months. Fourteen months later, however, the study is still not complete. Lesniak said he now expects it to be finished in two or three months.

The study took much longer than expected, he said, because of other airport enhancements – rehabilitation of the two runways, work on hangars and construction of a new hangar.

“But this is a precursor study, there’s not a real push to get it done within a certain amount of time,” said Lesniak.

“It’s allowed us to breathe a little bit with other things on the front burner.”

Even if the study finds the runway extension feasible, Lesniak said, that would be only the first part of a very long process that he estimated would take five or six years. The next step would be present- ing the study’s findings to the City Council. Before construction could begin, Albert Whitted would need to create a master plan, a step mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration, and clear environmental hurdles.

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Albert Whitted Airport runway study nears completion

By Ryan Callihan
ryancallihan@mail.usf.edu

City that could have implications for the long- term growth of USF St. Petersburg is still two or three months from completion. The study centers on the main runway at Albert Whitted Airport. Because the airport is so close to the university, campus buildings beneath its flight path cannot exceed certain heights. Advocates of the airport have proposed that the south- west-to-northeast runway be extended 1,300 to 1,800 feet to the east, into Tampa Bay. That would mean larger airplanes could use the airport, said airport manager Richard Lesniak. It might also mean that takeoffs and landings could be moved to the east, enhancing what he called “ver- ti- cal development” of airport neighbors like the university.

In November 2015, the City Council authorized a $50,000 study to explore the feasibility of extending the runway. The study was expected to take several months. Fourteen months later, however, the study is still not complete. Lesniak said he now expects it to be finished in two or three months.

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complex,” Baird said. “It would be cool to have people sit out there and watch but nobody would have any idea what’s going on.”

The co-ed team coach, Alan Capellin, explained that there are a number of variables in sailing that can’t be seen, like wind condition, equipment malfunctions and tides.

“The team is dealing with something you don’t see and the conditions are constantly changing,” said Capellin. Along with coach Allison Jolly, an Olympic gold medalist who’s coached the teams for over a decade, Capellin trains the sailors three days a week. He was confident in the sailors abilities going into the Kennedy Cup.

“I think it’s been a long time coming, now that we’re able to travel and get their name out there,” Capellin said.

The team practices to not only become better sailors, but Capellin said they are also learning life skills that will help them in the future.

“It’s a healthy distraction,” Capellin said. “They’re learning time management and we’re trying to help them with that.”

The team segments out time in their week for practices, which could take over three hours per day. They also maintain school work while traveling for regattas, which are boating competitions, that may take up to a week including travel time. For the Kennedy Cup, the team members were out of town for four days.

On the day of the race, the team boarded the boat. The weather outside was cold, dreary and fraught with wind. Baird said that any normal person would have gone inside, but the team was happy with the conditions.

Eight members raced for the cup on a boat called the Navy 44, a boat unique to the Naval Academy that the team doesn’t normally practice with. When traveling they sometimes get introduced to the boat the day of their competition.

On the day of the race, the weather outside was cold,
dreary and fraught with wind. Baird said that any normal person would have went inside, but the sailors were happy with the conditions.

Eight sailors on the team boarded a boat called the Navy 44, it was unique to the Naval Academy and a boat the team doesn’t normally practice with. They are used to sailing with two-man dinghies or five-man boats. The crew seemed to adapt well.

“Everyone was surprised that we didn’t practice on that kind of boat, just the five people ones they have here,” said Baird.

Orrin Starr, a junior business major on the team, was in the boat that day. He said that after they finished the race, a captain of the Navy team approached them to say congratulations.

The crew asked the Navy captain who had won the match, surprised he informed them that they were the winners.

“We pretty much erupted in celebration when he told us,” said Starr, a 20-year-old transfer student from USF Tampa.

Starr said that sailing is a game of limiting mistakes, and involves team coordination and trust.

“We have a lot of capable sailors on the team. It’s a very intuitive sport, you need to be able to recognize a problem and fix it automatically,” said Starr.

Starr is from a small island off the coast of Rhode Island. He’s been sailing since childhood and feels that it’s his passion. Starr prefers sailing in the larger offshore competitions, compared to the two man dinghy boats.

The next few months are going to be intense for the team. According to Starr they will be working hard and will not have a free weekend until August.

Each week they’ll be practicing or participating in competitions.

They have regattas in Charleston, South Carolina; Los Angeles, California; and then Paris, France in November.
Run The Jewels Continued from P1

by Michael Moore Jr.

El-P also commented on how the show was terrific and crowd and pull them into the stage and bear-hugging one another. A lighthearted throughout the performance from RTJ. Each time the beat dropped on a song, I knew it was time to get up and dance. The best songs throughout the night included "Lie Cheat Steal," "Blackbutter Night Part 1." Each time the beat dropped on these songs it was guaranteed the crowd's energy would ignite in a fever of passion and excitement for the group.

When the set ended and Run The Jewels walked off stage four the crowd demanded an encore. Two whole minutes of chanting brought the duet back on stage for an electrifying performance of "Close Your Eyes and Count to F--." The crowd was alive, and the entire venue turned into a moshpit. Afterwards, Killer Mike jumped off the stage to break up a fight that had started during the song, yelling into the mic for the two to make amends. The actions of Killer Mike really emphasized the group's focus on camaraderie in the face of strong political divisions and protests.

The show was terrific and Run The Jewels truly knew how to make things fun with the crowd and pull them into the moment. It was worth every penny and it's exciting to see two older artists who thrived in the underground finally break into the mainstream. Complex said, "the sound of the resistance."

The recognition of this problem is addressed via the aforementioned Dr. Karen Fletcher (Betty Buckley), who serves mostly as a device to explain the convoluted plot to the viewers. She identifies the personalities for you, sets up the disorder's supernatural abilities through pseudo-scientific word vomit and acts as the compassionate bystander whose presence is only a means to be contrasted with the growing evil of her patient. Little of the plot is revealed organically. McAvoy's performance is one of the film's saving graces. His ability to personify the different "alters" as separate, distinct characters in ways that make them interesting is impressive. That being said, the film could have accomplished just as much with only half the personalities. We are only introduced to a handful that are more organically. Devin and Miss Patricia find themselves in a struggle with his usually dominant personality, Barry. McAvoy, a 9-year-old boy, steals the show. His innocence and naivety amid the hostile environment is the one thing that succeeds in humanizing Kevin. Without him he would be flat and irreparable, even beyond McAvoy's abilities. A 24th personality is hinted at, and serves as the basis for much of the plot. The unwinding narrative of "The Beast" is fascinating at first, but quickly deteriorates into comedy for how far-fetched it truly is. Then there's the ending. Any knowledge of Shyamalan's body of work will leave the viewers expecting an intense search for his patented plot twist throughout. They may even be made to feel like they've discovered it early. I did. I was wrong.

If you enjoyed his early work, the reveal will likely leave you stunned and breathless. It is both powerful and unexpected and its payoff almost makes the entire movie and forty minutes that precedes it worthwhile. Almost. As an extension of his overall body of work, “Split” recapitulates much of the magic that once made his films spectacular. But as a standalone movie, it fails. If you are a fan of Shyamalan, this might be just the film you've been waiting for. But if you're simply looking for something to watch at the local movie theater, go ahead and skip this one.

The Crown's Nest rates movies between one and five stars, with five stars being the highest.

By Michael Moore Jr.
michaelmoor@mail.usf.edu

Night Shyamalan making a good movie in 2017 is the biggest plot twist of all. The once acclaimed Indian-American director responsible for such highly regarded films as “The Sixth Sense,” “Unbreakable” and “Signs” has produced nothing but stinkers since the early 2000s. His 2008 movie “The Happening” was nominated for four Golden Raspberry Awards for worst picture, worst actor (Mark Wahlberg), worst director and worst screenplay. His most recent outing comes in the form of “Split,” a psychological thriller featuring Scottish actor James McAvoy, who plays Kevin, a man with 23 personalities. In many ways, the film is something of a return to form for Shyamalan. While breaking away from the hopelessly terrible is, in itself, impressive - the fact that it has received a 74% score on Rotten Tomatoes is incredible, given his recent track record. But does “Split” actually warrant such a rating?

The movie opens with Kevin abducting three young girls: Casey (Anya Taylor-Joy), Claire (Haley Lu Richardson) and Jan (Vanessa Kirby). We are immediately greeted with awkward dialogue amid what should have been an unimaginably tense scenario.

Later, while the odd nature of Casey’s demeanor is partially explained by subsequent flashbacks, in the moment it is one of many obstacles to suspending disbelief. Shyamalan’s proclivity for contemporary stories with supernatural elements hinders him to this problem ever and over again.

Much to the dismay of mental health advocates everywhere, a complex psychological condition serves as the vehicle to the paranormal in this one. Our antagonist suffers from dissociative identity disorder, formerly (and still colloquially) known as multiple personality disorder.

This fits the long-held stereotype in Hollywood of people who suffer from DID as being violent serial killers. Not only is this wholly inaccurate, it’s lazy writing.

Of course, this is not to say that mental illness should necessarily be off limits for creative purposes, but it is sad to see it tackled yet again in the same old predictably played manner. Despite Kevin’s 23 unique personalities, there is little about him that feels complex or real.

Not only is he vilified for his condition, he is “super-villified.” Each personality has unique abilities, some of which border upon the superhuman. This complements a disturbing theme present throughout the film that paints trauma as something that enhances us. It feels exploitative and fetishizes real life problems that affect people every day.

The story itself is complicated and often difficult to follow. As if by a myriad of personalities isn’t enough to make things confusing, the personalities often impersonate one another and make it a habit to try to trick their psychotherapist into thinking that she is talking to someone she isn’t.

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The NCAIA is coming!

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The Utah State University Wellness Center
Is violence an acceptable method of protest?

By Summer Multar
Freshman Mass Communica-
tions Major
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T he internet went nuts over video footage released by the Australian Broadcasting Company of Richard Spencer, a well-known white nationalist, getting clocked in the jaw by a protester on Inauguration Day. It’s become fodder for internet memes, one of the most notable being footage of the punch being replayed over and over to the beat of Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the U.S.A.”

This controversy raises the question of whether it’s acceptable to use physical violence against those who perpetuate hateful ideologies. First, let’s talk a little bit about Richard Spencer. He is the president of the National Policy Institute and the man who coined the term “alt-right.” Before Inauguration Day, Spencer was recently in the public eye for shouting, “Hail Trump! Hail our people! Hail victory!” at the end of his speech at a National Policy Institute conference a few weeks before the 2016 presidential election. This was met with Nazi salutes from some members of the audience, although Spencer claims they were in the spirit of “triumph and exuberance.”

Spencer has also called for “peaceful ethnic cleansing.” One should note, that the definition of ethnic cleansing in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is: “the mass expulsion or killing of members of an unwanted ethnic or religious group in a society.”

I was extremely saturated when I saw the yet unnamed assaulter sucker punch this white supremacist in the head. Upon first seeing the footage, images of Captain America, one of my favorite superheroes, punching Adolf Hitler in the face on the cover of the first issue of his namesake comic book series in 1941 came to my mind. I’m sure that this person thought they were channeling their inner Captain America when attacking Spencer in the middle of an interview; heroic, daring, and most importantly, sending a message to those that their hateful words won’t be tolerated. The high of feeling like doing the right thing can be invigorating, but with every high, comes a low, and every action comes consequences. The alt-right has turned Spencer into a martyr for its cause, placed a $4,000 bounty on the head of the anonymous attacker and labeled him or her a “domestic terrorist.”

Spencer posted an ominous tweet that warned of the alt-right taking measures to “protect themselves” if law enforcement won’t, alluding to a creation of an alt-right vigilante force. White supremacists aren’t people I want patrolling the streets. So is it okay to use physical violence on people who perpetuate hateful ideologies? Personally, I wouldn’t do it, but I believe he deserved what was coming to him for spearheading a movement that calls for ethnic cleansing and segregation.

However, this video has had a major effect on the alt-right community, and the controversy may have strengthened their resolve. Remember when Milo Yiannopoulos, another white nationalist figurehead, was banned from Twitter after racist abuse towards “Ghostbusters” star Leslie Jones? That resulted in an alt-right outrage against Twitter, with the political movement claiming that Twitter was teaming up with feminists to censor conservatives.

Stand with government leaks and whistleblowers

By Devin Rodriguez
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F ormer President Barack Obama commuted the prison sentence of whistleblower Chelsea Manning during his final days in office. Manning was serving a 35-year sentence, the longest ever given to a whistleblower. She has already served seven years of her prison term. Now, she will be released May 17 of this year.

The commutation is a welcome rescue for Manning, who tried to kill herself twice while serving time as a trans woman in a men’s military prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Manning’s commutation has been met with stark Republican opposition. Rep. House Speaker Paul Ryan said, “President Obama now leaves in place a dangerous precedent that those who compromise our national security won’t be held accountable for their crimes.”

Obama’s action was a surprise from an administration that has had a complex relationship with leaked information. Throughout Obama’s term in office, he has strengthened whistleblower protection laws for federal employees who report “waste, fraud and abuse of authority in government.” But Obama has done little to protect whistleblowers in the intelligence community, exemplified in former NSA contractor Edward Snowden. Snowden’s pardon application was denied by the former president. Snowden continues to be harbored by the Russian government, one of the many thorns that have contributed to a bad relationship between the U.S. and Russia. The Obama administration has prosecuted more government leak cases than all other previous presidencies combined. Moving forward, President Trump has limited communication between governmental bodies and the public, barring tweets from various Environmental agencies. Trump also tweeted that Manning was an “ungrateful TRAITOR” who “should never have been released from prison.”

Our future as a democracy relies on the systematic check of our government. Often that government can be complex and shrouded in secrecy. It takes brave men and women to speak out and inform the public about inhuman and unethical behaviors acted out by any administration. The leaks by Manning and Snowden are priceless. The information they shared has contributed to public discourse and brought attention and accountability to U.S. government actions.

Manning was sentenced after sharing hundreds of thousands of military documents that indicated that the number of civilian casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan were much higher than reported. She also released a video of an American helicopter attack in Baghdad that killed two Reuters journalists and evidence of mistreatment of captured prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. Chelsea Manning shouldn’t be rotting in prison, and former President Obama made the right decision. While her actions violated the law, the intent to inform the public about illegal actions was admirable.

We, as a people, should stand by our whistleblowers. They are the fifth-estate and help to establish a more transparent government.
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 drodri-guez7@mail.usf.edu with subject title “letter to the editor.”

Please Recycle

F E B R U A R Y  C O M M U N I T Y  E V E N T S

Feb. 1
11 am-2 pm: Campus Black Out @ Campus Harbor Walk

Feb. 4
10 am-5 pm: Localtopia @ William’s Park
11 am-3 pm: Exhibition - Artlink Japan begins @ Creative Clay
11 am-4 pm: 2017 Rays Fan Fest @ Tropicana Field

Feb. 7
7 pm: Swing Dancing in the Park @ Sundial

Feb. 8
7 - 9 pm: Black History Showcase @ USC Ballrooms

Feb. 9
6 pm: A Taste for Innovation: Food and Foodies in St Pete & Beyond @ USFSP Lynn Pippenger Hall

Feb. 11
5 - 9 pm: Second Saturday Artwalk @ Downtown St Petersburg

Feb. 15-17
St Petersburg Conference on World Affairs

Feb. 18
7:30 pm: 2017 Rowdies Suncoast Invitational- Rowdies vs. Philadelphia Union @ Al Lang Stadium

Feb. 23-26
7:30 pm: St Petersburg’s Shakespeare Festival @ USFSP Williams House

Feb. 25-26
10 am-5 pm: St Petersburg’s Fine Arts Festival @ N. Straub Park
Recent grad launches vintage apparel business and fashion line

By Timothy Fanning
tfanning@mail.usf.edu

U 
nder the name Worldthrift, alumnus Alessandro Cocozza hopes to sew together the seams of his first business.

Cocozza, 24, graduated from the Kate Tiedemann College of Business with a marketing degree in December. Since then, it’s been his dream to bring St. Petersburg the best range of vintage styles from around the world.

“I just want to make my custo 

mer happy and give them the feeling I get when I find something great,” said Cocozza.

Based out of a spare room in his home, Worldthrift’s single pipe rack inventory is rich with treasures. He began collecting while he was in college, and has everything from classic Adidas jackets and U.S.-made splatter-painted men’s shoes to Italian-made Yeezy-style shirts.

“Anytime I meet someone who says, ‘Hey, I can sew,’ I usually try to bring them over here to see what skills I can squeeze out of them.”

Although he has taught himself how to sew with help from home economic classes and Youtube, his family and friends are the greatest help because they aide Cocozza with his attention to detail. The biggest obstacle he faces is patience. “I’ll be sitting there really trying to focus,” he said. “It’s time-consuming, but if I take my time, the results are going to show.”

Cocozza hopes that as his skill builds, he will be able to make things from scratch. By the end of 2017, Cocozza’s goal is to open a store in the heart of downtown St. Petersburg. Before going big, he wants to test the waters with exclusive pop-up appearances.

A pop-up is a temporary retail event that is here today and gone tomorrow. With this kind of plan, he can set up anywhere from inside a coffee shop to a record store, or even take up a temporarily vacant building. Cocozza has had a few unsuccessful attempts at pop-ups in Charleston, South Carolina, and Des Moines, Iowa. He said they were unsuccessful because he didn’t know enough people in the area.

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