8-26-2013

Crow's Nest : 2013 : 08 : 26

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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Small campus, big responsibility

At the end of the spring semester, student body president Mark Lombardi-Nelson became the first student from a regional campus to sit on the USF Board of Trustees — entrusted with a decision-making position for the entire university system.

By Tyler Killette
Staff Reporter

Until the creation of the Student Advisory Council in 2011, the student trustee position was only open to the student body president in Tampa. Now, student body presidents from St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee get a chance as well.

The Student Advisory Council decides the fate of the student trustee position. It consists of new and outgoing student body presidents, student body vice presidents and senate presidents from all three campuses. Each campus gets three votes, with an additional vote for each 10,000 students in its population (capped off at six).

Lombardi-Nelson beat Tampa president Will Warmke 8-4, winning all three votes from both St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee and two of six votes from Tampa. "It was kind of magical the way it happened," Lombardi-Nelson said.

"He has a popular mentality and isn't someone who will sit idly by and be absorbed by the flashy perks of the position."

Warmke has a different opinion. "It's different," he said. "But it's not necessarily bad."

Former Tampa president Brian Goff, who held the student trustee position last year, advocated for Lombardi-Nelson instead of Warmke.

"[Lombardi-Nelson] had a good plan for keeping the campuses engaged," he said. "He has a popular mentality and isn't someone who will sit idly by and be absorbed by the flashy perks of the position."

Goff also noted that Lombardi-Nelson brought more leadership experience than Warmke, with senate and student body presidentcies already under his belt.

Earlier in Warmke's Student Government career, he served as Goff's attorney general. After realizing the position wasn't what he thought it would be, he stepped down and ran for senate.

Though he didn't state it as reason for stepping down, Warmke admitted his personality often clashed with Goff's. "We haven't always seen eye to eye, but we've maintained a professional relationship," he said.

Goff mirrored Warmke's sentiments in an interview, calling their relationship civil but rocky. He said he offered advice on running for the trustee position to both Lombardi-Nelson and Warmke before the Student Advisory Council voted.

Warmke recalls a "10-second conversation" with Goff on the subject. "I wouldn't call it advice though," he said.

According to Warmke, many Tampa students — those who were aware of the vote, at least — were not happy with the outcome. But after having the summer to "let it all simmer," he thinks most of their worries have been put to rest.

He said he and Lombardi-Nelson have a "healthy friendship," and is confident he'll be able to bring problems to him from Tampa. The most important thing though, is that all current presidents get along well, he said.

See COMMUNICATION, pg. 3

Tuition: more fees, fewer options

By Amanda Starling
Staff Reporter

Students paying tuition with a credit card will now face extra fees at the checkout, and those planning on using VISA will have to find an alternative payment method altogether.

As of Aug. 15, the entire USF system no longer accepts VISA for payment of tuition. Though American Express, MasterCard and Discover can still be used, an additional 2.5 percent of the entire payment will be tacked on to all credit card transactions made for tuition. Previously, the fee for using credit cards was a flat $10, but the school says credit card processing fees are costing it more than that.

According to the "Schedule of Fees" from 2009, about 150,000 transactions were made with VISA that year — more than any other company. The school was able to make it work with VISA until the 2.5 percent fee kicked in and increased costs.

Changes for card usage came with hiked expenses for the university system. Prior to the change, the university spent more than $800,000 from reserves to pay licensing fees from credit card companies.

See FEES, pg. 3
Advising office remodel limits accessibility for some

The remodel of the Academic Advising office was intended to provide visitors with more privacy but ended up causing problems for students with disabilities.

When the remodel was completed during the summer session, Robert Beasey, a USF St. Petersburg student who uses a motorized chair, noted the lack of space in the waiting area, which only provides six seats.

The cramped quarters create a problem for Beasey. “Sometimes I don’t know how to sit or put my chair so I am not in the way,” Beasey said. “The only place his chair could fit is by the office assistants’ new window.”

He also noted that the door to the office was not automatic, creating another accessibility issue.

Cyndie Collins, the director of Academic Advising, was unaware of Beasey’s accessibility concerns prior to speaking with The Crow’s Nest. She said that during the remodel, the physical plan worked to adhere to the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Collins said they “deliberately took a countertop height that would be appropriate for someone in a wheelchair.”

Immediately following her interview with The Crow’s Nest, Collins contacted Barry McDowell, director of Student Disability Services, seeking to correct the accessibility issues.

As of Aug. 23, McDowell said Academic Advising resolved Beasey’s concerns by agreeing to greet and escort any student in a wheelchair or scooter directly into the office area. These students will not have to stay in the waiting area.

McDowell noted that the door to the offices is intended for advisors to walk out and greet the students. Since students with disabilities will be escorted, the door does not need to be automatic.

A new wall in Academic Advising was constructed between the waiting room and the advising offices to ensure student privacy.

Collins said that Advising wanted to protect the confidentiality of students who are talking to advisors. She noted that there was often an “overflow” of students into the hallway of the offices, causing a lack of confidentiality.

Collins said Academic Advising always wants feedback. Those wishing to give feedback regarding the new facility can fill out a survey found at usfsp.edu/advising.

USFSP hosts mayoral debate

Seats were filled in City Hall as USF St. Petersburg Regional Chancellor Sophia Winansikwa shook hands with mayoral candidates. Political gaffers and aspirers listened attentively as candidates traded jabs and thoughts on the fate of St. Petersburg for the first debate, hosted by USFSP.

Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Frank Biafora, moderated pre-screened questions composed by USFSP students and employees as well as members of the public.

All mayoral candidates were invited to the event. Those present included incumbent Bill Foster, Anthony Cates, Kathleen Ford, Paul Congemi and Rick Kriseman.

From the Lens to Leviticus, the topics of discussion and rebuttals were within 60 seconds. “We can look for efficiencies in our city budget,” Ford said. “I don’t think we truly understand what the cost of particular services are and our fees and our taxes should be based on what that cost is.”

Small business and community relationships were the most poignant topics of the night as candidates were asked to choose between a major company settling in the city versus a number of small businesses. Working with businesses and local business centers, Foster promised a continued effort in the Green House project, an initiative to strengthen and guide entrepreneurial growth.

“With the Green House, it’s all things small business, medium business, large business,” Foster said of his project with the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and USFSP. “You can plant a small business and grow it ... it’s a business garden.”

According to Ford, downtown St. Pete communities, particularly the arts and LGBT, deserve greater attention. Consensus was found with Kriseman, who agreed the city could facilitate further growth and regional recognition.

“It’s the arts that differentiate us from every other community in the state of Florida,” Kriseman said. “I would like to see us have more public art, not just throughout the downtown area but throughout the city. When you invest in the arts, the money comes back into your community multiplied.”

Student Body President Mark Lombardi-Nelson kept an eye on the timer as the candidates promised re-evaluation of their plans for the St. Petersburg Pier and boasted their career successes. Cameras panned over candidates, moderators and a section of members of Student Government who were selected to represent USFSP.

According to the city charter, if a candidate for mayor receives over 50 percent of the vote in the mayoral primary, the candidate is considered duly elected and a general election will not be required. A split vote in the primary election results in the two candidates with the highest percent of the vote to be placed on the ballot for the general municipal election.

Upcoming debates include a Sept. 10 debate for the general election, hosted by USFSP SG and LocalShops1.com.
The $10 fee for every credit card use for tuition didn’t add up to the $800,000, resulting in approximately $620,000 directly lost. The irony is that the $800,000 subsidy last year was almost a percentage charged for coming years. If students system-wide reduce their usage, the fee may drop to somewhere between 1.5 and 2 percent of tuition. "We’re basing our estimates on history," Condon said. "If the 2.5 ends up being high, we would reduce the fee. If it ends up being low, that would be up to the vice president’s office to determine what to do with it.”

The extent of credit card usage over time will determine the percentage charged for coming years. Chances of a fee increase are small, as rates for credit card companies rarely change. Credit cards can still be used to purchase parking passes and meal plans in the cashier’s office or online without a fee and VISA will still be accepted for anything other than tuition and student fees. Those looking to escape the fee can pay with cash, check or money order at the cashier’s office. Online options include virtual e-checks or debit card payments, both of which can be completed for free. Scholarships are not affected unless providers, such as the U.S. Army, pay the university with a credit card

Sodexo is implementing changes to the existing meal plan for the 2013-2014 school year based on feedback received from the Dining Advisory Committee from the previous year. Students now have a set number of dollars to purchase food, which can be used at four dining locations: the Reef, the Coral Café, World of Wings and USFSP Sushi. Students will purchase food through a “declining dollars” system, which allows students to use their plans as frequently as they wish. Previously, students had a set number of meals in which they could eat all they wanted, but only at select times. “We were not getting the usage from the students that we wanted,” Josef Rill, Assistant Director of Auxiliary Services, said. "The ideas for the changes came from the Dining Advisory Committee, a group of USFSP students and staff members that meets biweekly from September through April. The Reef will continue to offer the same dining stations, but has tweaked the menu per students’ request. New additions include a soft serve ice cream machine, more “Grab and Go” options such as snacks and bottled water and more protein options at the salad bar. Because the Reef will not be the only dining location, Rill said its hours will likely become shorter. However, Dining Services intends for at least one dining option to be open from 7:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day.

The second dining location, USFSP Sushi, will be housed within the Reef, next to the wrap station. "We saw a demand for this demographic," Rill said, noting the popularity of sushi among college students. The AFC franchise, the vendor Publix uses for their sushi, will serve USFSP students. The Coral Café will replace the Red Mango, offering Starbucks products, specialty sandwiches and breakfast options. Last year, this location only accepted purchases made with SharkBites (credit redeemable for a la carte items, rather than full meals) but the new cafe will allow students to use their regular meal plans as well. The World of Wings, managed by Sodexo, will be located in the Coquima Club. When asked if student organizations will be able to continue bringing their own food to Coquima Club, Rill declined to comment, saying that issue is currently being negotiated with Student Government and is ultimately the decision of the Regional Vice Chancellor. Despite confusion among some students, Rill said the changes will not affect financial aid usage and meal plan deferments will “absolutely 100 percent” still be awarded to students who qualify. For those who don’t qualify for a deferment, all meal plan payments are due at 5 p.m. on Aug. 30.

According to its website, the Board of Trustees is “responsible for cost-effective policy decisions appropriate to the system mission and the maintenance of high quality education programs within the laws the United States.” Its members include distinguished figures in law, medicine, education, philanthropy and public policy leadership. Lombardi-Nelson sits on the BOT’s Academic and Campus Environment board, which has the final say on subjects ranging from tuition and new academic programs to campus speed limits and student health fees. As a regional campus student, as well as the key to making decisions for the entire USF system. Whereas Goff’s leadership was mostly Tampa-centric, Lombardi-Nelson wants to facilitate conversation among all three campuses and promote tri-campus collaboration. "It’s not about what I want; it’s what the people want," he said. "It’s been that way since we started.”

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Staff Reporter

BY JENNIFER NELSLAR

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Dreams of a “Music Mansion” for downtown St. Petersburg

By Ryan Ballogg

Staff Writer

Imagine a Willy Wonka who craved concerts over confection, and built his factory to suit. Thomas Nestor and Eric Ihlenfeldt, two St. Petersburg music enthusiasts, have just such a dream, and they have started a collective called Historic St. Pete Inc. to see it through.

Trying to obtain the building that they plan to use has been the biggest struggle. The Historic YMCA on First Avenue South and Fifth Street South was built in 1926 with $550,000 of community funds, and remained opened from 1927-2000. Since closing it has been in the hands of various property managers. It is in danger of being demolished or sold to private interests, but Nestor and Ihlenfeldt want to return the building to the community.

Their “music mansion” concept would repurpose the roughly 52,000-square-foot building as a music conservatory of sorts. It would include an education center, a recording studio, a radio station and a concert venue.

“So hypothetically we could take a kid that’s never played, teach him, record him, put him on the air and then have him open for a big act,” said Nestor, who is a music promoter by trade. “All of the parts will complement each other.”

They also plan on offering their education programs with a “pay what you can, or don’t pay anything” philosophy.

Medieval Revivalist architecture is another big selling point for the project. The Historic YMCA is one of only four remaining buildings in St. Petersburg in the style, and it was recently designated number seven on the “11 Most Endangered Historic Sites” by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation.

“Artists are going to want to play here because we’re giving back to the community. No other for-profit venue can do that.”

The style was popular after World War I, and reflects the spirit of internationalism at that time. Mayan, American Indian, English and Spanish elements are combined in a minimal fashion. Nestor thought that it was a mish-mash of different influences when he first toured the building, but came to learn that it was eclectic on purpose.

“If all those cultures had gotten together in real life it would look like a Quentin Tarantino movie,” Nestor said. “I want to purchase it and return it to its 1926 glory. We would bring back the stone look and restore everything.”

The St. Petersburg City Council also voted 8-0 in favor of allowing them to pull up the asphalt around the building and put down traditional Augusta block, as well as doing some substantial landscaping. The councilmembers are very supportive of the venture, though they have offered no financial assistance.

Until a couple weeks ago, Historic St. Pete’s chances of even attaining the building were in jeopardy. They had been unsuccessful in finding enough donors to gather the $1.25 million needed to purchase it. Thanks to seven anonymous donors that Nestor refers to as “angels,” they were able to pay the $8,000 lease every month so that the property manager wouldn’t sell the building to any of the other interested parties. Other proposed plans for the building include a law firm, doctor’s offices, condomini ums and a private house.

Now, a construction and development company from Tampa has approached them with interest in the project, and they want to help Historic St. Pete Inc. purchase the building. Up until this point, every group they have talked to wanted to change their business model too much for comfort. After final negotiations are made between the two parties, they will close on the building in September.

The challenge of keeping control of the building was “like having sharks and snakes circling my feet for the property,” Nestor said, and he is looking forward to having that part of the process behind him.

He said that their model is best because it is the only one that will keep the building open to and involved with the community.

“We had no clue how much this building meant to people,” Nestor said. “I had a guy tell me he used to stay here in 1940 for 50 cents, and others basically grew up here.”

If the deal goes through, the next hurdle will be raising millions of dollars for restoration. Benedict and Nestor are considering all kinds of fundraisers and black tie events.

They will resume giving Saturday tours of the property once the weather is cooler. It will close at the end of the year, and construction will start in January.

In the meantime, they are looking for all the contributions they can get, financial and otherwise. This week they will launch an Indiegogo crowd-funding campaign asking for $95,000. Half of the amount raised will go to early music education, and the other half to awareness and promotion of the project. They are also seeking volunteers and idea-makers to help make their pipe dream a reality.

Historic St. Pete Inc. is on Facebook and online at historicstpete.org.

By Erin Murphy

Now that the first week of classes has arrived, you’re no doubt drowning in a pile of freshly sharpened No. 2 pencils and carefully worded syllabuses. But it’s what your professors don’t tell you to pack in that fashionably slouchy messenger bag of yours that you’ll need the most.

- Tissues. There will be tears.
- Colored pencils. Even if you’re not an art major, you somehow end up needing a 12 pack of these puppies for some activity or another.
- A book. Believe it or not, you will have some spare moments in college. Katniss Everdeen (of The Hunger Games) is one suitable companion.
- Paper. So much paper. Where does it all go?
- Snackage. That oatmeal raisin granola bar will be your savior between the classes you’ve sandwiched into your schedule five minutes apart. SANDWICH?! Yeah, you might want to pack that, too.
- Index cards. Perfect for scribbling down vocab words, math formulas or doodles of cats.
- An umbrella. Preferably one that can survive a substantial monsooning.
- An extra pair of shoes. Because sometimes one of your flip flops will decide to break in the middle of your walk back to campus from the Dali Museum. Surreal.
- Double-sided scotch tape. Infinitely useful, highly convenient and just plain amusing.
- A water bottle. Ideal for quenching thirst, or making odd crackly sounds to keep yourself awake during a particularly exhausting study break.

This pool will be restored for community use by day, and as a private retreat for traveling artists staying at the venue by night.

“There is a substantial rumor that Elvis has been in this building. We’re trying to get ahold of the photo,” Nestor said on a tour of the property.

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By Ryan Ballogg/The Crow’s Nest

Ryan Ballogg/The Crow’s Nest

August 26, 2013 | Volume 48 | Issue 01

crowsneststpete.com
Endless Summer: A Playlist

By Erin Murphy

Ah, August. That dreaded eighth month in which we trade sunny skies for a fistful of fall classes. Although you’re more likely to be surfing the Web than actual waves now that the semester has started, why not hold onto the fading summer sun for just a few moments longer? Relive the glory days of summer ‘13 with this Endless Summer Playlist.

“Sun King” - Fleet Foxes
What could be more summery than the gold-tinged harmonies of this dreamy Fleet Foxes track? Oh, right. Nothing.

“In My Arms” - Jon Foreman
Jon Foreman, best known for his current gig as lead singer of rock band Switchfoot, also released some more melancholy solo EPs back in 2008. Ever the fanatical surfer dude, “In My Arms” compares embracing a loved one to the marriage of shore and sea. Kowabunga.

“Summer Nights” - Grease Soundtrack
Boy meets girl. Boy loses girl. Boy sings about girl while wearing impossibly tight black pants. Tell me more!

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“She Loves the Way You Lie” - Eminem & Rihanna
The final battle between Superman and General Zod destroyed an entire city in “Man of Steel.” Last but not least, “The Conjuring” managed to send chills down moviegoer’s spines.

“Here Comes the Sun” - The Beatles
It would be a complete and utter shame to compile a summer playlist without including the most iconic song about the sun, ever. Only with moody Florida weather it’s more like “Here comes the rain. No, wait, here comes the sun. Ugh, here comes the rain again.”

“Fan Fun Fun” - The Beach Boys
If there was ever a band to listen to while you drive along the coast (or as you sit in your dorm miserably, wishing it could be July again) it would be none other than sixties’ surfer group, The Beach Boys. For more end-of-summer jams, give their entire Endless Summer record a listen.

“Portrait of a Season” - The Happiness Machine
This local St. Pete band makes music that sounds like a blissful summer day. With poetic lyrics, cheery keyboards and guitar solos that make you want to hug the sun, The Happiness Machine inspires smiles for miles. Even if the only place you’re driving to is to and from the parking garage.

I know what you watched last summer

By Matt Thomas
Entertainment Critic

As the summer comes to an end, let’s take the time to reflect on the movies that have come and gone this season. Earlier this year the usual deluge of trailers were released to entice audiences to the upcoming attractions and distractions. But once audiences got a chance to see more than just the high-explosives highlight reels, which movies were actually able to deliver what was promised?

“Iron Man 3”’s big twist divided audiences. “The Hangover Part III” failed to make audiences laugh. “Fast and Furious 6” finally took the series’ timeline past “Fast and Furious: Tokyo Drift.” Seth Rogen and Jay Baruchel fought to survive the apocalypse in “This is the End.” The final battle between Superman and General Zod destroyed an entire city in “Man of Steel.” Last but not least, “The Conjuring” managed to send chills down moviegoer’s spines.

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“Pacific Rim.” It was action packed and kept my ADHD at bay. I really liked it. There was not really a plot. The scenes were beautiful. It had so many heart wrenching moments. And action!”

“I really enjoyed ‘This is the End.’ It had a cast of a lot of stars. Also it had some dark humor.”

“I think my absolute favorite was ‘The Wolverine.’ It was pretty awesome, and it introduced some really cool supporting characters. Also at the end it sets things up for the next X-Men movie. I love X-Men, they’re my favorite superheroes.”

“I think ‘The Internship’ and ‘We’re the Millers’ were my favorites.”

“My favorite was ‘We’re the Millers’ because it was the funniest comedy I’ve seen since the first ‘Hangover’ movie.”

“My personal favorite movie of the summer and quite possibly the year is ‘The Way Way Back’ which made for a fun addition to the coming-of-age genre by telling the story of a 14-year-old who spends his summer working a job he loves at a water park while dealing with a family that he’s growing distant from. With plenty of laughs and lots of heart, this is the feel good movie of the summer.”

USFSP students give feedback on the movies they saw over the summer:

“I saw a bunch [of movies] and none of them were actually good, except ‘Pacific Rim.’ It was action packed and kept my ADHD at bay. I really liked it. There was not really a plot. The scenes were beautiful. It had so many heart wrenching moments. And action!”

“I think my absolute favorite was ‘The Wolverine.’ It was pretty awesome, and it introduced some really cool supporting characters. Also at the end it sets things up for the next X-Men movie. I love X-Men, they’re my favorite superheroes.”

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Welcome back USF Lifesavers!
Campus Blood Drive is this week.

USF St. Petersburg Blood Drive
August 29th, 10:00am – 6:00pm
All student and faculty donors will receive a USF Bulls T-shirt and a voucher for a $10 IKEA Gift Card to be redeemed at IKEA Tampa.

Call us at 1.800.68.BLOOD (25663) or visit www.oneblood.org to schedule an appointment or find a donation location near you.

*One offer per donor, per donation. While supplies last. Blood donors must have photo ID.

OneBlood.org
Editorial

Students, don’t be a ‘Type 3’

Students who actually pay attention to campus happenings are hard to come by. At USF St. Petersburg, there are three kinds of students — those who care, those who don’t and those who go on novel-length Facebook rants complaining about something that did or didn’t happen when it’s already way too late to make a difference.

If you’re a Type 1, that’s great. Come by The Crow’s Nest office in the Student Life Center and we’ll have a chat about how to make our school a better place. If you’re a ‘Type 2, that’s great too. Keep doing what you do and make good grades. Please don’t be a Type 3. Get angry, take a stand, pick a fight, start a riot but don’t attempt to do so from behind your computer screen. Be proactive. Don’t wait until it’s too late to make a difference. If you don’t want Student Government to use your Activity and Service fees on a $37,000 fish tank or a $10,000 anatomically correct bronze bull statue, find a representative and tell them how you feel. Taking to social media after the fish tank has been installed and filled with sea life and the bull’s manhood has been firmly established on the lawn will get you nowhere.

Don’t just assume Campus PD’s fancy new off-road golf cart was purchased with your tuition money and take to Facebook complaining about it. I can guarantee you that’s not where your tuition money is going. It’s natural to question where the thousands of dollars you’re pouring into this university are being spent; however, if you think you’re going to get a straight answer from a bunch of kids on the USFSP campus, you’re kidding yourself.

So, it isn’t necessarily what the Type 3s say that irks me — it’s the approach they take in saying it. If you want to know where your money is going, ask. Not on Facebook or Twitter, but in person. Informing yourself is not as hard as you may think. Student Government assemblies are always open to the student body. They usually happen on Wednesday afternoons in the University Student Center. Go and listen to what your representatives are talking about. If you can’t make the meetings, read the minutes on Oprype. What’s next on the agenda? What bills are being spent on? What are the senators voting on? What are they doing with your money? If a bill makes it all the way, it most likely took a decent amount of time to get there. Use this time to your advantage, because once the votes are cast, you’ve likely lost the battle. And no matter how much you tweet about it, the fight will be infinitely harder than it would have been had you acted proactively from the beginning.

Students, don’t be a ‘Type 3’

Dorm Life

By Kati Lacker

On August 26, 1835, the New York Sun published several articles alluding to the discovery of abundant life forms on the moon. It would forever be known as “The Great Moon Hoax” and was credited to Dr. Andrew Grant, who was a colleague of Sir John Herschel, a prominent astronomer of the time. Herschel stated that he had seen unicorns and two legged beavers and winged humans that were similar to bats. Also, the articles were incredibly descriptive of the moon’s supposed geography, as it listed massive craters, huge amethyst crystals, whitewater churning rivers and dense, green vegetation.

Readers were so entranced with the story it was mistaken for a factual discovery.
**Ask the Health Educator:**

**College is full of new experiences. USFSP’s health educator offers advice on staying safe.**

I’m 18 years old and I recently lost my virginity. As much as I hate to admit it, I did not use protection. It was a heat of the moment thing and it is the only thing I regret about it (although I knew it was just as much my partner’s responsibility as it was my own). My menstrual cycle is usually pretty regular now that I have been taken off of the birth control pill I was on. I’m worried about noticing the difference between any spotting and my actual period. I guess my biggest worry is pregnancy. I’m a young girl and I have a lot going for me. I guess the biggest question I have for you is whether or not there is a definite way to tell if it is my period or not. Please help!

- A Virgin No More

Dear A Virgin No More,

First of all, thanks for sharing this with me! I know it takes a lot to reach out to ask something so personal, so I really appreciate it! You will want to get a pregnancy test as soon as you possibly can. If you’re having challenges telling when you’re having a period or just breakthrough bleeding, the longer you wait, the more it will complicate your ability to make a decision if you do turn out to be pregnant.

The only true way to find out if you’re pregnant is a blood test in a doctor’s office. We offer this at the Wellness Center, and if you’re a USFSP-registered student, it doesn’t cost you anything to see a nurse! Or you can go to a pharmacy and buy a pregnancy test for around $30 to see if you may or may not need a follow-up blood test. Ask your partner (if that’s a possibility) to help chip in for a pregnancy test if you can’t cover the cost.

I would really recommend you not to google “pregnancy center” or “What do I do if I’m pregnant” because the first sites that will show up may be pregnancy crisis centers, and those are religious-based centers that do not use medically accurate information to help you.

I recommend you work with your doctor to find a longer lasting method of birth control, either an IUD (intrauterine device) or an implant or even another type of birth control pill, to help you not have to deal with a pregnancy scare in the future. And don’t forget condoms! If your future sexual partners are not long-term, monogamous partners, and you both have not been tested, make sure you also use condoms to protect yourself against any sexually transmitted infections.

Don’t beat yourself up! We are sexual beings, and sometimes passion really does take over. You wouldn’t be human if it didn’t happen to you. You just have to make sure you quickly take a pregnancy test and see your doctor as soon as you can, and your stress will definitely be less.

I hope that helps. Good luck!

-Victoria M. Beltran, MPH, CHES, Wellness Center Health Educator

Have a question related to health & wellness? Ask the Health Educator! Email usfspwellness@gmail.com with “Ask the Health Educator” in the Subject line.

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**St. Pete Pier is ‘comfort’**

**By Amanda Starling**

Staff Columnist

Piers have been cycled in St. Petersburg since the late 19th century. Boardwalk styles, fancy titles like “The Million Dollar Pier” and inverted pyramids have occupied the downtown stretch of unnatural land for more than a century.

The changing of the guard in the pier is necessary, but what is it about the Lens that disturbs native St. Petersburgers? Is it the giant aluminum “sidewalk to nowhere” that swirls stretched out across the bay, contrasting with the eclectic city vibe? Or is it local government’s approach to finance a project with minimal voice from the citizens?

The current pier structure is a little tattered and worn, but it’s comfortable, like a favorite blanket from childhood. The beat down mom and pop shops generated little income, but there was little support from locals for them to grow. Renovation of the current structure is too costly, so a new structure is necessary. St. Petersburg does need another iconic venue, for tourists and locals, but the Lens won’t answer for the needs of the city. The Columbia’s return to the Lens would be the only secured source of revenue versus the mom and pop shops that were sprinkled throughout the pier.

Mayor Bill Foster and the city council have hired various artists, designers and contractors to envision a pier replacement that would entice the local public and bring tourists to the city. About $4 million of taxes spent and little communication with the community leaves a disgruntled public.

What many envision, aside from voices heard in the discussion, is a structure that fits in with the charm of old St. Petersburg. A Mediterranean nod to the Renaissance Vinoy in a fresh design or a structure that fits into the shabby-chic vibe of downtown should compliment the city, not contrast. The Salvador Dali museum already acts as our eccentric waterfront structure.

The 828 Alliance discussed the best solutions in the event of a pro-Lens or anti-Lens victory following the vote on Tuesday, Aug. 27. The overall theme: lawmakers must communicate every step with the citizens, from venue creations to the events suitable for families.

With a $50 million budget for the new pier, the options may not be grandiose, but can’t they at least be thought through?

Amanda Starling is a junior majoring in Mass Communications and is the news editor for The Crow’s Nest. She can be reached at a.starling92@gmail.com

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**Lens fits city’s culture**

**By Mike Hopey**

Staff Columnist

When it comes to the new pier we are beyond talking about the condition of the old inverted pyramid or the necessity of a new one. Like a married couple, the citizens of St. Pete are arguing about how it will look and how much it will cost.

At the heart of of the issue is the $50 million collected to pay for the new pier. That money was collected from businesses in the downtown area and can only be spent in that area. So what would you have them build instead? Something along Beach Drive that blocks the view of Tampa Bay?

Even if the city wanted to use that money for something else it would have to be OK’d by the Pinellas County Commission and that could prove more difficult than all this pier nonsense.

The project is estimated to cost $37 million and the firm building it, Skanska, has accepted the liability for finishing the Lens on time and on budget.

Whether or not it is OK that all this money was collected for such a specific area of the city is not the issue. It is there and it needs to be used. The Lens is simply the best way to do that.

When the Lens is up and all this noise about it has quieted down, no one is going to care as much as they do now. Millions of people will enjoy it. It will stand as a unique structure that will identify the city.

St. Pete is the cultural center of Florida. It is its hippest city and the Lens reflects that. Leave the touristy t-shirt shops where they belong on Clearwater Beach. Build this pier and have something visitors and residents will flock to, pose for pictures in front of and enjoy for generations.

One of the great things about St. Pete is the pier. While some cities have waterfront districts, St. Pete boasts an area that sits above the water. To imagine St. Pete without a pier is to imagine Boston without Faneuil Hall or New York without Times Square.

Mike Hopey is pursuing a master’s degree in Journalism and is the sports editor for The Crow’s Nest. He can be reached at hopey.mike@gmail.com
Football season is finally here. The great American tradition of college football realignment has given the nation a new league, the American Athletic Conference. Popular opinion might not be high but all ten teams can compete for the conference title and a BCS bid.

The Knights have officially made the jump from Conference USA to the American Athletic Conference, joining the Bulls once again after impressive 2012 season which is a plus but three of them. This was after 25 touchdown passes and just seven interceptions for his junior season after joining the Bulls once again after being the coaches in a preseason poll, the Knights lost a large chunk of their best talent, 11 players from last season, and has seen action in 2012, threw for 300 yards or more in five of 10 starts last season. However, Houston will be feeling the loss of RB Charles Sims, who transferred to West Virginia Houston must also sort out the defensive issues that plagued the team last season, as the Cougars gave up an average of 36 points per game.

The Bulls veteran defense should be a threat on the field and the offense will have to play well. Former Penn St. QB Steven Bench and WR Brandon Coleman with him so there won’t be much drop off from the loss of RB Jawan Jamison. On defense, the Big East No. 11, 12-7/Memphis will continue to be a threat on the field. The Mustangs don’t have to play Louisville in the regular season which is a plus but three of their first four games are against in-state juggernauts.

The Mustangs have been to four straight bowl games and won three of them. This was after 25 years of futility after the NCAA gave the team the death penalty following several recruiting violations. Head coach June Jones turned Hawaii into a potential BCS buster. SMU starts the season with the Mustangs don’t have to play Louisville in the regular season which is a plus but three of their first four games are against in-state juggernauts.