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University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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half a year in the southern latitudes, but their migration revealed their adaptability to a completely different ecology. Thought to mainly keep to the warm waters of the Caribbean, the team found that tiger sharks will migrate to the colder, deeper waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

Tiger sharks can grow to be 11 to 13 feet in length, weighing more than 2,000 pounds. Like many of the "bloody fish," their large size puts them at the top of the food chain, with virtually no predators of their own.

Harvey’s team’s research set a new record for studies of tiger sharks with 50 sharks tagged within three years.

Tiger sharks remain closer to the surface than other species of sharks, so their dependable nature was simple to track, Harvey said. Forty of the 50 sharks were captured and studied around Bermuda.

The team was composed of shark experts including geneticist Mahmood Shivji, tracker Brad Wetherbee, researcher Samuel Gruber, diver Jim Abernethy and veterinarian Neil Burnie. Filmmaker George Schellenger captured every step of the research process, from chumming to dissection.

The team had access to the latest technology for a tagging system and assistance from numerous professional staff, including the Bahamian National Trust.

Tiger sharks, like many species, face dangers in the fishing industry, Harvey said, explaining that their immense size and slow rate of maturity make them vulnerable in places prone to overfishing and shark finning.

See HARVEY, pg.3

Student works to save Boyd Hill

Ray Wunderlich and Hayden Hammerling volunteer up to five days a week at the Boyd Hill Pioneer Settlement.

By Ryan Ballogg

The volunteer gardeners at Boyd Hill Nature Preserve in South St. Petersburg plant onions in the September heat, sweating into the dirt and liking it.

Among them is Hayden Hammerling, a USF St. Petersburg student completing an internship under the guidance of head gardener Ray Wunderlich.

Wunderlich directs his intern on proper form as they dig deep ridges in seaweed compost with gloved hands.

Hammerling, a USF St. Petersburg student completing an internship under the guidance of head gardener Ray Wunderlich.

The seaweed keeps moisture in and meddlesome pests out, Wunderlich said.

"Coffee grinds are good too," he said. "Nematodes don’t like organic matter."

See BOYD, pg. 2

World of Wings is a hit among students

By Thomas Reese

With the addition of two new locations and the ability to pay with meal plans, students now have a completely new dining experience on campus.

Last year, the Reef was the only place on campus that was meal plan friendly. While it did have the Red Mango Café (now the Coral Café), students could only make purchases with cash, card or individually purchased Sharkbites credit.

Now that all three locations accept the new system of declining dollars, students can get Starbucks coffee drinks whenever they want with just a swipe of their meal plan card.

"Compared to last semester, the hours are longer and it’s much easier to get what you want when you want it," Lizzie Desorsiers, a freshman said.

"There are so many more options and the World of Wings Café is awesome. I love being able to go play pool with my friends and enjoy a meal at the same time."

Open only since the beginning of the semester, WOW Café in the Coquina Club has gained popularity among students, offering three TVs, a pool table, air hockey and foosball.

Along with its alluring amenities, WOW Café can also attribute its popularity to its food.

The Crow’s Nest took a convenience sample of students throughout campus who were dining at the Reef or WOW Cafe or walking to class. The Crow’s Nest took a convenience sample of students throughout campus over the course of a week, asking them where they thought was the best dining option on campus. Though some students were unaware of WOW Café’s existence, it still won 38 percent of the votes, more than any other dining option acquired.

"The wings are my favorite and there are a ton of different sauce options," freshman Kenneth Haynes said. "They’re not like those small wings you would get at any other place, they are actually really big and definitely worth it."

The Reef still offers daily entrees as well as a variety of other options. For the first time it is offering freshly made sushi.

Twenty students were asked in another poll to rate items such as cheeseburgers, sushi, chicken tenders, pizza and deli items on a scale of one to five. The sushi averaged a 4.4 rating, beating everything else on the list. The least popular choice was the chicken tenders with a rating below three.

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The Crow’s Nest

The Crow’s Nest

Jump, set, spike

Association of Volleyball Professionals comes to St. Petersburg pg. 8

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St. Pete puns vintage record store reopens

pg. 4
Community supports “Save Boyd Hill” movement

As they work, their conversation spans subjects like determining the gender of papaya plants, the metamorphosis of stink bugs and just how much space should be left between seeds.

Later, they take a break around a picnic bench in the shade for a few minutes, and the discussion turns to something that they have been talking about a lot lately—the fate of the strip of land on the western edge of the preserve.

In June, the St. Petersburg Country Club struck a deal with development company Taylor Morrison of Tampa to convert the 10 acres of unused land along the backside of its golf course into 115 townhomes.

The club has been facing financial difficulties, and the directors are pursuing the project in an attempt to make it more sustainable.

Though the club owns the land, it was originally designated for a road by the City of St. Petersburg. In order for construction to proceed, the deed to the land would have to be reviewed and city council would have to vote to approve a permit and change the zoning to multi-residence housing.

The land is also the only remaining buffer zone between Boyd Hill and surrounding development. A coalition of activists immediately formed to oppose the project. The group, organized through a Facebook page called “Save Boyd Hill,” currently has 2,460 likes. Awake Pinellas and Friends of Boyd Hill are among the organizations involved, and the Florida Native Plant Society, Audubon and The Sierra Club have expressed interest in the cause.

The activists describe this land as a “critical buffer zone” that keeps space between the wilderness and the outside world. It is made up of an oak hammock and pine flatlands ecosystem that could potentially house endangered and threatened species found throughout Boyd Hill, including the gopher tortoise, eastern indigo snake and Sherman’s fox squirrel.

Jim House is one of the central organizers behind the Facebook group.

“We can kill the project in a hundred different ways, it’s just putting the effort in to make one of them work,” House said.

House said that it doesn’t make sense to keep infringing upon green space, especially when “this is not even a development that is in line with the neighborhood itself. We’ve had no transparency from the club.”

Many home owners who face the strip of land have put up “Save Boyd Hill” yard signs. The president of the Lakewood Estates Civic association supports the development project, but House said that there is a rule that the housing zone can only be changed if the neighborhood association is in full support of it. He hopes to bring the issue to a vote.

House said a major disappointment so far has been how few local students have come out in support of the issue. He currently works and studies at USF, and he “expected to see more environmental science majors involved.”

“Years ago they wanted to build a big lake, and that time actually on park property,” Wunderlich said. “They wanted to do a land swap. Two acres with no value for prime land in Boyd Hill proper. That didn’t happen, so we’ll see.”

Wunderlich has been visiting Boyd Hill since he was a child, and he is a lifetime member of the Friends of Boyd Hill association. He said he feels “people need to restore a lost connection with their food and with nature.”

“Heard it’s the best part of my day,” a volunteer named Dennis. “We can either let them do it or we’re going to have to buy it. The homeowners probably wouldn’t put enough up for it.”

“The city doesn’t have money, and the homeowners probably wouldn’t put enough up for it.”

“Their argument is that they will go eventually go bankrupt if they don’t do it. But it’s a short term solution that will have long term effects on the park,” Hammerling said.

For Wunderlich, one of the biggest problems will be caused by the road surrounding the townhomes.

“The road would parcel up the land. Then there would be road kill, runoff, grease and an altered water flow. They might use harmful fertilizer for their fancy landscaping,” another one of the volunteers said.

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Documentary tells story of five-year study

Continued from front page

The Guy Harvey Foundation, which sponsors research efforts in marine environments, contributed to efforts to alter fisheries in the Caribbean. The scientists presented the findings from the trip to the Bahamian government. For Harvey, the research findings require action. “The hardcore research part done by institutions very rarely gets into public domain,” Harvey said. “I’d like to push people to appreciate the need for more research work, to get people to volunteer to get involved, whether they are fishing for snook off a dock or tiger sharks in Bermuda.” Harvey will present “Tiger Shark Express” at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 11 in the University Student Center ballroom. The event will feature a screening of the film and a Q&A session with the scientist.

Small changes made to dining hours

Mea

By Jennifer Nesslar

Meal plan hours have frustrated USF St. Petersburg’s residential students since the semester began. On weekdays, students must eat dinner before 7 p.m. if they wish to eat at the Reef. On weekends, the Reef is only open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. It is the only dining open on the weekends.

Last week, sophomore Sophia Constantine was successful in petitioning the Reef’s management to extend its hours on weekdays (see chart for current hours). According to Constantine, Sodexo managers Michael Bush and Louis Duran wanted to allow time for students to get accustomed to the new hours before asking for a trial with longer hours.

Duran said the first hours available during the school year were based on a record from the previous year of how many transactions occurred every 15 minutes. Management decided to change the hours because they saw a pattern of students coming in more often but buying less food.

Constantine knows the problem is not yet solved. She says she will wait about three weeks before asking students how they feel. If students aren’t satisfied, she will ask for a trial period to extend hours even further.

She says the Reef is hesitant to stay open after 7 p.m. because of the failure of last year’s Late Night Bites, where the Reef offered select items until 11 p.m. However, students could only pay for Late Night Bites with Sharkbites credit, which was purchased separately from meal plans.

Constantine knows students want more hours than what is available now. “I’m standing right by them,” she said.

Duran says he will not change the weekend hours until he sees more transactions during the weekend. Currently, the Reef gets one-third of the traffic during the weekend that they receive during the week.

“There are no classes during the weekend so students should be able to come and eat,” he said. Students find the weekend hours problematic. Chelsea Kuzel, a freshman at USFSP, returned from the beach just after 6 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 31, and discovered that no dining options were open on campus. Kuzel lives in the University Student Center and does not have a kitchen.

Duran says keeping the Reef open limited hours enhances the quality and freshness of the food served, a major concern of students last year.

Duran knows the World of Wings Café does not compare to the Reef in terms of buying power because it’s more expensive. He suggests students only eat there once or twice a week to get the most value out of their meal plan. Though WOW has a few vegetarian options, the management is working on incorporating more into the menu.

Constantine encourages students to attend Dining Advisory Committee meetings when they begin. The first meeting is Monday, Sept. 9 at 4 p.m. in the USC Regatta Room.
Grand Central welcomes vinyl shop

By Tyler Killellite

Band posters conceal the large window facing Central Avenue, allowing passersby not even a glimpse at the Tetris of cardboard boxes sitting inside.

The vintage record/reto toy store reopens this weekend, moving from the Furnish Me Vintage gallery at 1246 Central Ave, to its own 1,300-square-foot locale at 2414 Central Ave.

Record store staples like Jimi Hendrix, Lynyrd Skynyrd and Madonna line the orange and black walls and peek out of boxes. But according to Sexton, it’s the punk and hardcore music that make Planet Retro stand out.

Sexton, who played drums in Florida hardcore punk band Failure Face, active in the mid 1990s, describes himself as an “old punk rock dude.” He has collected vinyl since he was 5 — a hobby he attributes to his “pseudo hippy” parents, who raised him around music. The first record he ever bought with his own money was ZZ Top's 'Tejas.

Today, his most prized possessions include original Misfits pressings, as well as some early British punk albums. Other gems include rare unopened pressings by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.

Sexton’s secret to curating such a collection is simple — he pays more for it than anyone else around. Though he buys personal collections and goes to estate sales, according to Sexton, it’s the punk and hardcore music that make Planet Retro stand out.

Most of his customers are in their 20s and 30s, but he still sees his share of “old timer” collectors. He believes there are many motivations for buying vinyl.

“Some buy it and it’s art; it’s a commodity,” he said. Others do it for the sound.

At least once a month, a Planet Retro patron argues CDs and MP3s are better than vinyl, Sexton said. To him and Rozak, the biggest difference is volume.

“Until you’ve heard it side by side, you don’t realize how flat digital music is,” Sexton said.

Planet Retro also sells audio equipment like stereos and turntables — all used and refurbished, of course. The store’s back room houses a collection of vintage toys, mostly old TV and comic book action figures from the ’70s and ’80s. An unopened vintage Luke Skywalker and Taunton set sits high on a pile of boxes.

Though the move wasn’t planned (Sexton said their previous landlord rented their space “out from under” them just as they were about to expand), Sexton and Rozak are excited to be in the Grand Central District and in their own space.

“Now it’s Planet Retro’s door, not Furnish Me Vintage’s door,” Rozak said, noting warmth and support from the store’s new neighbors.

“There’s a pulse here,” Sexton said, explaining that unless one is going to a Rays game or partying at Ferg’s Sports Bar, the previous location was “sort of a dead zone.”

Both men get a “neighborhood vibe” from Grand Central. They plan to participate in the St. Petersburg Artwalk, an event in which local galleries open their doors to the public the second Saturday of every month.

“There’s a bunch of like minded people here who can get together and turn it into a destination, not just a bunch of shops on a street,” Sexton said. Doors open at noon on Saturday, Sept. 14 for Planet Retro’s Grand Reopening. Multiple local DJs, beer and food will be on site, and a vinyl inspired art show follows at 6 p.m.
USFSP Jewish community unites

By Jennifer Neslar
Staff Reporter

Dolphins swam past the Jenny Lynn, a USF St. Petersburg trawler, as Rabbi Ed Rosenthal lit the Havdalah candle before a group of 24 students, faculty and staff from USFSP, USF Tampa and Eckerd College. He fanned the flame and held it low to the deck of the boat, trying to shield it from the sea breeze.

The celebration on Saturday evening, just after sunset, signified the end of Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath day. It was the first official event for USFSP’s Hillel, a Jewish organization that seeks to unite Jewish students and staff and provide opportunities for them to explore their Jewish identity.

Performing Havdalah on a trawler is not a typical way to celebrate, but Rosenthal expressed fascination with the water.

The “greatest connection to God is water,” Rosenthal said. He quoted from Genesis 1:2, referencing a passage that states the spirit of God was hovering over the waters during the creation of the world. Rosenthal said the Hebrew word for hover most correctly translates to the present tense, meaning the spirit of God is currently hovering over the waters.

To celebrate Havdalah, Rosenthal passed around a chalice of wine, which represents gladness. He then passed around a ball of spices to remind those aboard the Jenny Lynn of the “sweetness of the Sabbath,” and lit a braided candle, which represents the intertwining of the sacred Shabbat to everyday life.

He encouraged the group to try viewing the light of the candle through their fingernails. This practice originates in the belief that the only vestige humans possess of the perfect bodies of Adam and Eve is the human fingernail. Rosenthal noted that when a fingernail breaks off, it has a rare beauty.

According to Lesa Shouse, assistant director for the Career Center, there are currently about 22 job openings on campus, including Federal Work-Study positions.

The Career Center, in Student Life Center 2300, offers assistance to those seeking employment on and off campus.

Because of the importance of a well-written and organized resume, Shouse advises students to use the Career Center as a free resource for help with resume writing. She recommends including extra-curricular involvement in high school or college and a list of skills that are transferable to the job.

“Come in and have your resume critiqued, use your resources, both online and in the Career Center, and make sure to network,” Shouse said.

According to Steven Bird, Senate President Pro Tempore for Student Government, most campus jobs pay about $8 an hour, but he has known some students to make as much as $9.

Some campus jobs require students to be eligible for Federal Work-Study, a federally funded program that provides part-time jobs for students with financial need.

“With my experience with financial aid (and Federal Work-Study), you are assigned to a job… Then, whatever you’re awarded is what your pay is,” Bird said, explaining that Federal Work Study students cannot earn more than they’ve been awarded by financial aid.

The Career Center is open Monday through Thursday noon to 5 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to noon. It is located in the SLC, room 2300. Visit the Career Center Facebook page at www.facebook.com/USFSPCareerCenter for updates and general information.

The Intersection of Death and Life: a playlist

By Erin Murphy

A lot of musicians compose cliché love songs, but it takes a true songwriter to pen lyrics about the delicate relationship between death and life. Turn off the radio and plug into this playlist about embracing the life you’ve been given.

“Soul Meets Body” - Death Cab for Cutie
This poetic release from inspiringly introspective band Death Cab for Cutie celebrates intentional living. Lead singer Ben Gibbard emphasizes taking notice of a ray of sunshine and banishing negative thoughts. Positivity: 1. Pessimism: 0.

“C’est La Mort” - The Civil Wars
The pairing of acoustic singer-songwriters John Paul White and Joy Williams is like audio PB&J: a sweet and savory sticky delight. Try viewing the light of the candle through your fingernails. This practice originates in the belief that the only vestige humans possess of an idyllic life is the human fingernail. Rosenthal noted that when a fingernail breaks off, it has a rare beauty.

“When you cry - and you will cry - no one will stop you,” Bird said, explaining that Federal Work Study students cannot earn more than they’ve been awarded by financial aid.

The Career Center is open Monday through Thursday noon to 5 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to noon. It is located in the SLC, room 2300. Visit the Career Center Facebook page at www.facebook.com/USFSPCareerCenter for updates and general information.

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Editorial

Gunman near Tampa campus raises concern over personal safety

The first text message sent out at 1:57 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 6. “ALERT USF TAMPA: There is an unsafe situation in the vicinity of campus. Remain alert. Avoid area north of campus. Emergency personnel responding.”

At first, we let out a sigh of relief that it’s not our campus. An incident in Tampa is unlikely to affect us. But then we remember our friends, our professors and all of our fellow bulls who may be in serious danger.

Clarification comes in the morning, when the next text tells us the event is over. But our stomachs remain queasy for a few more hours until the gunman is caught.

Beginning late at night on Thursday Sept. 5, Charlie Bates invaded three apartment buildings near the Tampa campus, threatening partygoers at gunpoint for money and raping at least four women, according to the Tampa Bay Times. Police didn’t have Bates in their custody until midday Friday, after fatally shooting him.

We rejoice in knowing that no one else was killed or severely injured, but feel for the dozens of students left in terror that night.

In 2010, The Daily Beast rated USF the 127th most dangerous college campus in a list of 458 United States universities. In the three years prior to the list’s release, USF saw 403 burglaries, 17 aggravated assaults, 34 forcible rapes and 1 murder.

As a relatively small campus, USFSP’s crime numbers are significantly lower. The University Police Services Annual Security and Fire Safety Report from 2011 shows 3 on-campus rapes and 10 robberies on public property that were reported by campus police. Most crime categories, however, have a “0” next to them.

Though Friday’s crimes didn’t occur on campus, the apartment buildings involved housed mostly students and are all less than a mile away from the Tampa campus.

It’s not uncommon for a college campus to be situated in a “bad” part of town, or at least close to one. USF St. Petersburg is an urban area, as are most universities.

We can feel relatively safe on campus, knowing that university police are patrolling at all hours and that blue light emergency phones are constantly within our site. But many of us don’t live on campus. We’re residents of downtown, the Old Southeast, Midtown, Childs Park, the Old North East, Coquina Key and Bartlett Park.

Many of us live on our own. What would we do if a gunman knocked on our door and invited himself inside? And who’s to say he’ll be as courteous as Bates was by knocking?

If a criminal like Bates found his way to our apartments, to the Beacon, Urban Style Flats, the Sage, the Madison; if he walked into a house party in Waterside at Coquina Key or happened upon a bonfire outside an Old Southeast bungalow, what would we do?

It would certainly be a case for the city police department, not campus PD. However, knowing that the Hillsborough County Police Department took more than 12 hours to catch Bates is unsettling. According to the Tampa Bay Times story, it took more than 100 law enforcement officers to catch one man.

Instances like this make us question our own safety and reevaluate our day-to-day practices. We’ll lower our guard once the “Gunman on the loose” headlines disappear from our coffee tables. But for now, we’ll give the lock on our front doors an extra turn before bed. Because that’s really all we can do.

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Marvelous Adventure

By Kati Lacker

On Sept. 9, 1945, the first computer software bug was discovered in a program when the operators at the Harvard Faculty in the Computation Lab were trying to figure out why there was an obvious error in the output from the Mark II Computer. Reduced to opening up the hardware to further problem solving they came across a moth who had somehow gotten inside the relay area, coining the term bug. They carefully removed the moth and taped it to the logbook for further documentation.
The woes of a left-hander

By Chelsea Tatham
Staff Columnist

I didn’t really think I was so different being left-handed until about fifth or sixth grade. At the beginning of a new school year, my teacher asked all of us students to raise our hands to answer various questions like “Who likes reading?” “Who hates math?” and “Who likes art class?”

Then the personal question came: “Who in here is left-handed?”

Proudly, I shot my hand up (my left, one of course). To my horror, I was the only one stupidly waving her hand. My classmates stared as if they had never seen such a creature before.

I got over my embarrassing moment as my years in school passed. Being left-handed wasn’t exactly a hindrance or something to be ashamed of in middle school and high school. Nobody really cared or paid attention anyway.

At the end of high school, I took the SAT and the ACT to secure placement in college. The proctor in my testing room for the ACT actually gave me a second desk positioned on my left so I could rest my arm while writing.

I had gotten so used to sitting awkwardly in the high school-designated right-handed desks that it was nice to sit and write normally.

To my amazement, in college I found a left-handed desk in the first classroom I walked in to. I didn’t even know those were made. Sure enough, there are left-handed desks in almost every classroom.

Unfortunately, I don’t always get to sit in these left-handed palaces. Sometimes there’s only one desk in the room, and it’s all the way up front. Or the desk is crammed in the back corner, because who wants to watch a freaky left-hander write?

If the lack of comfortable desks and being called out in class doesn’t get me down, I also get told I do things backwards. Others have difficulty explaining how to do things when I tell them I’m left-handed.

At meals, I make sure I sit in the end chair or at the end of the booth. I use a fork with my left hand and a knife with my right hand, which is apparently backwards to the rest of the population.

When I was learning cursive in elementary school, the teacher told us all to turn the paper just slightly in order to get that perfect slant with our words. My attempts turned out awful. The teacher noticed and said, “Oh, I forgot you’re different; you’ll have to turn the paper the opposite way.”

Besides the difficulty of teaching myself how to correctly write and position my paper, I also always end up with pen, pencil and marker smeared on the outside of my hand when I’m finished writing.

Nothing screams, “I’m left-handed” louder than black and blue smears and pencil shavings up and down my left hand and wrist.

Despite the set backs, embarrassments and overall annoyance with the right-handed part of the population, I’ve learned to be proud of my left-handed status.

Approximately 10 percent of the population is left-handed. I’m part of that 10 percent. I’m not a freak; I’m not backwards. My parents didn’t try to “correct” me. I’m left-handed and I’m proud of it.

Chelsea is a senior majoring in mass communications and the managing editor. She can be reached at chelsea11@mail.usf.edu

Do U know your U number?

By Matt Thomas
Staff Columnist

Sometimes last week I was carelessly lounging on my friend’s couch making use of his widescreen television and cable. Too busy to notice my obvious mooching, my friend, let’s call him Tim, was busy applying for campus jobs online.

He casually mentioned that he didn’t memorize his U number so he had to get his student ID. Being the great friend that I am, I made fun of him for this.

Shortly after, I remembered that I too hadn’t memorized my U number. You could attribute that short sight on my part to my laziness, but thinking back to previous attempts I’ve made to memorize my U number, I can say that I honestly tried. Disastrously. I could only remember the first four numbers of my U number for a day, at best.

It’s kind of weird that I’m able to memorize important information like my social security number, my phone number, the ton of information taught in all of my classes and the names of the original 150 Pokémon, but not my U number.

Why is my U number the outlier of that bunch?

Why should I memorize my U number? It is needed when I need to apply for campus jobs, which is a tedious process. It is needed when I want to handle anything that involves financial aid or tuition, which is a stressful process. It is needed when I need to schedule an appointment with an Academic Advisor, which is a pointless process.

I guess I never really associated my U number with anything positive. I think psychologically for that reason, my mind refuses to let me memorize my U number.

My actual student ID is great to have and swipe in The Reef, resulting in me leaving the USC with food almost everyday last semester. The number on it just reminds me of things I didn’t like to think about.

Your social security number defines you as a citizen of this country. A phone number is something you can give to people for a variety of reasons. Learning the information taught in class usually results in one getting a good grade in that class. My memorization of the original 150 Pokémon is something that comes in handy whenever I want to make a girl I’m talking to leave the room.

I am a little embarrassed that I haven’t memorized my U number because this is my fourth year here. Which brings up the point, if I’m graduating in the spring, what’s the point of memorizing my U number now?

Matt is a senior majoring in mass communications and the entertainment critic. He can be reached at matthew17@mail.usf.edu.

Grievances from a true nerd

By Amanda Starling
Staff Columnist

Spider-Man wallets and Batman shirts adorn the outfits of the average 20-something. But how many of these hip nerds know that there is an alternate ending to the death of Gwen Stacy in the Amazing Spider-Man series? Or that the latest Wolverine flick was based off Wolfc’s stand-alone series known as “The Wolverine?”

Ten years ago, it would be shocking to see a young man running around in a heavy Jedi robe or a woman painted head to toe in blue paint to pose as one of the Na’vi from James Cameron’s “Avatar” film. Most of these people were ridiculed and the words “nerd,” “geek” and “weirdo” would be tossed around casually.

Tampa Bay Comic Con, hosted by the Tampa Convention Center just two weeks ago, had a record-breaking 20,000 attendees in one day. The dealer room of the convention, which offers a wide selection of comic books and memorabilia, was sparse in comparison to the thousands packed into the celebrity panel rooms, with stars from shows and movies such as “Game of Thrones,” “The Hunger Games,” and “The Walking Dead.”

In the eighth grade, I recall being teased for owning a collection of “Star Wars” action figures that would rival that of a seasoned veteran. Sometimes I would sneak a copy of a Timothy Zahn novel to the after school program as a child so I could read up on what is happening next in the expanded universe of the Star Wars saga.

As a result, I wasn’t viewed as someone cool to talk to. It’s a newfound sense of pride in college, knowing that people my age enjoy watching comic book cartoons and Anime. But there’s also this feeling of disappointment. Why didn’t I know people like this sooner? Why is it suddenly okay to talk about Dragon Ball Z and play Pokémon on the latest Game Boy?

Nerd culture has become the new cool thing with the word “hipster” redefining what is acceptable for people to like. Hit shows like “The Big Bang Theory” and “The New Girl” have made the awkward geek type someone to be admired.

Then there’s the cinematic take on comic books. The general audience swoons at the thought of Robert Downey Jr. cracking quips as armored robots swoosh by and the Man of Steel blasts away at Metropolis.

Some Hollywood interpretations are accurate (a huge thank you to the late Heath Ledger as the Joker in “The Dark Knight”). But many of these latest takes on heroes are a swift slap in the faces of fans with blasphemous takes on pivotal villains (yes, I’m talking to you, Mandarin of “Iron Man 3”).

It’s not that we veteran fans of comics are upset that the general public takes an interest in our passions now. It’s the consequences we face as those who don’t truly appreciate our fandoms the way we do suddenly are in charge of mega franchises. We’re suddenly the kid on the playground with sand kicked in our faces again.

This time it could be worse, since it’s what we used as an escape from the enemy.

Amanda is a junior majoring in mass communications and the news editor. She can be reached at astarling@mail.usf.edu
Rowdies continue winning streak

The Tampa Bay Rowdies extended their unbeaten streak to eight games on Saturday night, grabbing a 3-2 victory over the Carolina RailHawks on an own goal in the 90th minute.

The win is the Rowdies’ first in over a month, as the team had walked away with ties in each of their last four matches.

It appeared that Tampa Bay would have the same result Saturday against Carolina, until a critical error in the final minute of the game by RailHawks defender Paul Hamilton gave the Rowdies a husband’s goal win.

“We deserved a bit of luck; we haven’t had a lot of it in recent times,” Rowdies head coach Ricky Hill said. “It is great for the fans and it is a boost for our players. We created chances and luckily we were able to get the three points.”

Tampa Bay looked like a team that was determined to win rather than draw from the moment they stepped on the field. The Rowdies pressured the RailHawks early and had the first scoring chance of the match by forward Etienne Barbara, but would eventually concede the first goal to Carolina midfielder Tiyiselani Shipalane in the 34th minute.

The Rowdies have given up the first goal of the game in three of its last five matches. Attacker Etienne Barbara slotted a pass to Evans Frimpong, who then powered the ball past RailHawks goalkeeper Akira Fitzgerald in the 42nd minute.

“I got a glimpse behind me and there was nobody there so I kept it, and I saw Evans come in so I just went for the cross,” Barbara said as he discussed the first goal setup. “I didn’t have time to shoot, so I just put the ball in the box and I think God Evans was there.”

After a rain delay following halftime that could have potentially caused the Rowdies’ momentum to fade, Barbara made sure his squad stayed on the right track as he assisted Georgi Hristov in giving Tampa Bay a 2-1 lead at the 60 minute mark.

The Rowdies’ defense appeared to struggle in finding their foot during the second half, as they were unable to defend the one-goal lead for longer than four minutes. Carolina midfielder Enzo Agustín Martinez found the equalizer in the 64th minute off a shot that Rowdies keeper Diego Restrepo couldn’t stop.

Lucky Mkosana, who made his Rowdies debut, took a shot from the right flank that was deflected off of Hilton and into the net.

Tampa Bay is now in first place in the NASL standings. Carolina and Fort Lauderdale are tied for the top spot but their plus-4 goal differential puts them on top.

“I’m delighted tonight for the players, for their confidence and for the effort they put in so that we managed to be on the right side of the result,” Hill said. “We’re not looking at the table, we’re taking it one game as it comes. It’s just nice to get a win.”

BY: SAMANTHA OUMETTE
STAFF REPORTER

The best volleyball players in the world will coincide this September weekend of Sept. 13-15 for The Association of Volleyball Professionals Tour events at Vinoy Park.

The AVP St. Pete Open is the fifth event in the 2013 AVP season. The seven-event season is the first full schedule since 2010.

Financial difficulties forced the cancellation of the tour in 2011 and limited last season’s tour to only two events.

Based in Costa Mesa, CA, the AVP was founded in 1983 and has become one of volleyball’s most prominent organizations. The Pro Beach Volleyball tour is the most prominent volleyball tour in the United States.

Among the players expected to play in the event are Kerri Walsh, who partnered with former pro Misty May-Toomoor to win three Olympic gold medals. The men’s tournament will feature former Olympic gold medalist and Florida native Phil Dalhausser with his partner Todd Rogers.

Canterbury High School graduate Brooke Sweat will also be a part of the tournament. Originally from Fort Myers, Sweat (formerly Youngquist) was a member of the inaugural volleyball team at Florida Gulf Coast University.

Sweat was also the American Volleyball Coaches Association player of the year in the South region and was awarded second-team Atlantic Sun Conference honors in her junior year.

Preparations for the event began last week with a qualifying tournament in Gulfport for local players. Play will begin on Friday at 10 a.m. and continue Saturday and Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Fans can purchase a one-day general admission ticket for $15 or a three-day ticket for $30 at AVP.com or at the tournament site.

The tournament will feature a men’s and women’s tournament. Each will have 16 two-person teams. The preliminary matches of each tournament will be on Friday and Saturday. The quarterfinals, semifinals and finals will all be on Sunday.

Fans unable to attend the event can watch the tournament on AVP.com. The finals will be broadcasted on CBS Sports Network on Sunday afternoon.

BY MIKE HOPEY
STAFF REPORTER

American Athletic Conference commissioner Mike Aresco flipped the coin for the first football game to break a 14-14 tie.

The Owls jumped out to a 13-9 halftime lead but could not score in the second half.

The Houston Cougars racked up 524 yards on offense but could only punch it in for one touchdown. Kicker Richie Leone booted two field goals in the win.

Louisville had no problem with Eastern Kentucky, rolling to a 44-7 victory. Quarterback Teddy Bridgewater continued the build up to his Heisman Trophy campaign with 397 passing yards and four touchdowns.

After losing by a point to Fresno State in the opener last week, Rutgers bounced back with a shutout of the Division-I Football Championship school, Norfolk State. Scarlet Knight running back Paul James rushed for 119 yards and scored three of the team’s four rushing touchdowns.

Cincinnati had a convincing win last week against Purdue but was handled easily this week by Illinois. Quarterback Nathan Scheelhaase led the second-straight Big 10 opponent for the Bearcats. Scheelhaase threw for 312 yards and four touchdowns. Connecticut’s Munchie Legaux struggled with a touchdown and an interception. Legaux was replaced by Brandon Kay.

Booby McCain’s 75-yard interception return for a touchdown was the lone bright spot for Memphis in their season opener against the Duke Blue Devils. McCain picked off Kent State starter Anthony Boone in the second quarter to tie the game 7-7. Boone was replaced by Brandon Connette and threw two touchdowns in the fourth quarter to break a 14-14 tie.

Southern Methodist scored nine fourth-quarter points to slip past Montana State 31-30. Chase Hover kicked a 39-yard field goal and Darius Joseph caught a touchdown pass from Garrett Gilbert to complete the comeback.

Central Florida has had two games and has scored 38 points in each of them. Quarterback Blake Bortles didn’t match his first career 300-yard passing game from week one but did add one of the Knights’ four rushing touchdowns. In two games the Golden Knights have only given up seven points.