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**Students lose on meal plans**

Excess money in meal plan accounts will not roll over to nest semester

Chloe McCrea, a freshman, has been loading up on food from the Reef to use up the money in her meal plan account. She buys meals for friends, as well as coffee and smoothies from the Coral Cafe daily. Though McCrea purchased the cheaper of the two meal plan options, she still has hundreds of dollars to spend before it all disappears from her account at the end of the semester.

**By Amanda Starling  Staff Reporter**

Sophomore Alexa Burch thought her meal plan was deferred after her mother submitted the necessary paperwork. Five weeks before the end of the semester, she received notice that she would have to move out of campus housing if she did not purchase a meal plan.

Now, she has $1,500 to spend on food before the end of the semester.

“I’ve basically gone grocery shopping, anything bottled,” Burch said. “I have three people that I regularly buy lunch, dinner, snacks for.”

Students who purchased meal plans at the beginning of the semester are at risk of losing money too. Some still have as much as $1,000 to burn through in the next few weeks. If it isn’t spent before the end of the semester, it will not roll over.

In the initial contract, Sodexo did have a rollover option, however, it was altered in later revisions.

Though the policy changed, the Reef continues to advertise meal plans with a roll over option. A sign in front of the Reef titled “Not a Traditional Meal Plan,” reads “Too much money left over? No problem! It will carry over to the next consecutive semester provided the student returns and purchases a resident or commuter meal plan.”

Daniel McGarigal, a senior and executive branch member of Student Government, posted in the USFSP Know-It-All Guide on Facebook to ask students about excess money in their meal plans. He received more than 40 responses.

McGarigal and other members of SG have gathered student response and attended Dining Committee meetings, which invite student input on hours of operation, meal quality and other campus dining improvements. Sodexo can make.

“The only way anyone can help make a change is if we know the extent of the issue,” McGarigal said. “It’s pretty clear from the responses that something isn’t working.”

“Students have been buying products in bulk for the last eight weeks, i.e. cases of soda, or snacks, dozens of cookies, full pies,” wrote Louis Duran, general manager for Sodexo, in an email to the Crow’s Nest. “If a student has a special request we will always work with them.”

Sodexo allows students to purchase items in bulk but makes reservations for certain products. Companies such as Coca-Cola may not allow excess orders.

It’s essentially a business. They can’t refund those dollars or they would lose money as well,” said Christa Hedges, SG vice president. She thinks having bulk items for sale year-round would help decrease loss for students.

Students have launched Facebook efforts to spend remaining dining dollars. Let’s Feed St. Petersburg With Our Meal Plans, an event hosted by Trenton Barrow, encourages students to spend and take food to the homeless at Williams Park.

“This is a great way to give back to our community and do something meaningful,” Barrow wrote on the page. “Even if you don’t have a meal plan, find someone who does and get involved. Last thing please invite your friends to this event, I want all of USFSP to know it!”

Other students have used the page to warn against the dangers and legal repercussions of distributing food to the homeless. Local activist groups have been arrested for participating in mass homeless feeding programs in recent years.

See POOL, p. 3

**Waterfront pool to close indefinitely**

The pool at the USF St. Petersburg Waterfront closes every year for the winter season. But this year, when the pool closes on Nov. 27, it will not reopen in the spring.

Plumbing problems have plagued the pool since a leak was detected five years ago. Water from the pool has been spilling into the ground, missing the filter. There is no identifiable point of leakage and the condition continues to worsen.

“It doesn’t make sense to reopen in the spring because of the deteriorating system the structure of the pool is in,” said Zac Oppenheim, assistant director of Student Life and Engagement.

As the Crow’s Nest reported in October, repairing the pool would cost about $500,000, but the fix would not be guaranteed. Replacing the pool with a replica of the current model would cost about $750,000, but the Waterfront wants to build something new that will better serve the student body and take the school “into the future.”

A new leisure pool is projected to cost $1.5 million, but the Waterfront only has access to $1.1 million dollars, which comes from the Capital Improvement Trust Fund. Oppenheim plans to reassess the potential design to make it meet the requirements of both the students and the budget.

See POOL, p. 3
News Briefs

If you are staying at USFSP for Thanksgiving break, be advised that dining hours are limited Wednesday, Nov. 27, through Sunday, Dec. 1. Plan your meals accordingly.

Hours for the Reef:
Nov. 27: 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Nov. 28: 1 - 4 p.m.
Nov. 29 to Dec. 1: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 4 - 6 p.m.

World of Wings and Coral Café close at 5 p.m. on Nov. 27 and will not reopen until Monday, Dec. 2.

Monday, Dec. 2
You have two options for getting festive with winter spirit.
One: turn the air conditioning in your dorm room as low as possible and squint your eyes. You just might think you see snow.
Two: go to Winter Wonderland sponsored by the University Student Center. From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Harbor Lawn you can decorate your own Christmas ornaments. At 5 p.m. there will be a Menorah lighting on the patio between the USC and the basketball courts. This lighting is sponsored by USFSP Hillel, a Jewish group encouraging all students to learn about Hanukkah. Food will be provided. Between 7 and 9 p.m., the Reef will have cookie decorating and a station where you may stuff a plush animal. A Christmas tree will be lit in the USC around 8 p.m.

Oh, and let’s not forget, snow is rumored to be present at this year’s event. Yes, snow in Florida.

Wednesday, Dec. 4
A mysterious murder happened at USFSP; and you are needed to solve it. Don’t worry, even if you fail, you will still be rewarded with Carrabba’s. Now that we have your attention, we should probably tell you the murder isn’t real, so don’t call University Police Services. Instead, go to the USC ballrooms from 7 to 10 p.m. and watch the Broadway Bulls’ dinner theater production of “Death Aboard the Duchess.” And no, we weren’t joking when we said the event will be catered by Carrabba’s. It is a semi-formal event, so dress pretty.

Thursday, Dec. 5
If exam blues are spoiling your holiday, the USFSP Leadership Team is here to cheer you up with a free late night breakfast in the Reef from 10 p.m. to midnight.

The Crown’s Nest congratulates all students graduating on Sunday, Dec. 15. We hope the future offers you success.

‘Do not rush to flush’

Monica Cook, a USF College of Marine Science student, is on a mission to improve water quality

By Jennifer Nesslar
Staff Reporter

During her seven years as a retail pharmacist, Monica Mion Cook heard many clients say they dumped their medication down the drain because they didn’t need it anymore. Then she started hearing stories about how animals and the environment were harmed by this practice.

After reading a 2007 Pharmacy Times article describing hormones in the water, Cook applied for graduate school. She enrolled as a Ph.D. candidate at the USF College of Marine Science with a focus in chemical oceanography, hoping to become a water quality researcher.

“Water is one of the most precious things on earth,” Cook said in an interview with the Crown’s Nest. “Water is our livelihood.”

In spring 2013, Professor Leon Hardy’s computational biology class used virtual technology, data-banks and models to explore protein structures or solve problems. As a part of her Ph.D. dissertation, Cook explored endocrine disrupting compounds, known as EDCs, and solutions to water pollution.

Hardy’s class presented at the Nov. 20 research colloquium in the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library. The endocrine system, Cook explained, is found in all humans and animals. This system communicates through hormones. EDCs are chemicals that interfere with hormones and disturb the endocrine system. The fragrance in personal care products and ingredients in pesticides and medicines are EDCs.

Cook recounted the 1980 pesticide spill in Lake Apopka, when alligators in the lake were nearly killed to extinction. Juvenile alligators were most affected, so the alligator population in the lake is still recovering.

Everything flushed down a drain was sent to a waste water treatment plant and filtered. The problem is EDCs, such as pharmaceuticals, are not filtered out because of their small size.

Looking for a solution to this problem, Cook experimented with electrocoagulation, or EC, technology. Using electricity and nine metal blades in a tray, the technology pulls water through the tray. In July, Cook ran experiments with it, and so far she believes it to be successful at removing contaminants from the water.

Cook’s passion for the water and the environment flows into her life outside of her studies. She has a husband to travel and explore the outdoors. They are also fond of scuba diving.

Ten years ago, Cook joined a meteorologist friend and chased tornadoes in Texas, Nebraska and Kansas. She said they saw “awesome hail balls” and “cloud to cloud lightning.”

Cook hopes to be working with a company involved in water quality research ten years from now. She also hopes to be involved in legislation of pharmaceuticals in the water quality industry. Currently, pharmaceuticals are not regulated, but Cook believes they will be soon.

For now, Cook encourages people not to flush their expired, unused or unwanted medicine down the drain.

“Do not rush, she said. Just use the trash can.

For more information: If you want to learn more about what to do with pharmaceuticals, visit dontflushyoumeds.com, disposeofmymeds.org, whitehouse.gov or fda.gov.

news@crowneststpete.com
USF veteran employee retiring after successful HR career

By Tyler Killette
Staff Reporter

After 41 years with USF, Sandi Conway, director of Human Resources at USF St. Petersburg, is saying goodbye to bull country. “I think I worked there when Asia was still connected to Africa or something,” Conway said, jokingly.

She began working at USF Tampa straight out of high school as a secretary in Student Affairs. She was hired by Phyllis Marshall, the namesake of Tampa’s Marshall Student Center. After getting married and having a child, Conway pursued higher paying career paths within the university, and ended up in Human Resources.

She worked her way through almost every area of the department, from an administrative assistant to managing employee relations and even working as a class analyst for USF Health. As Conway escalated through her classes, she led a trip to Moldova during spring break in 2013 to explore the namesake of Tampa’s Marshall Student Center. After getting married and having a child, Conway went on to earn a bachelor’s and master’s degree in counseling.

In 2007, she was offered a job at USF St. Petersburg as the director if its Human Resources department. At the time, the school was looking to have the organization change directions and become more strategic than transactional, Conway said.

Dr. Ashok Dhingra, former regional vice chancellor for administrative and financial services, felt she was right for the job. “I have nothing but positive to say about USFSP,” Conway said, touching on the small, family-like atmosphere of the campus. She explained that just as USFSP professors and students get to know each other personally, employees are able to form relationships with co-workers.

If it weren’t for the requirements of her retirement program, she doesn’t think she’d be leaving yet. In her time here, Conway is proud to have provided a strategic direction for Human Resources. Recognition has come in the form of employees not feeling the need to go to Tampa with their problems anymore. Conway went on to earn a bachelor’s and master’s degree in counseling. The St. Petersburg office is now equipped to handle their issues. When the department became part of the school’s leadership team, Conway knew she’d made an impact.

“Her experiences here have been ‘crazy,’ ‘fun’ and ‘not so fun,’” knowing she made a difference has made it all worth it. She is thankful for the efforts of her employees and said she couldn’t have picked better people to work with.

In just seven years at USFSP, Conway has seen the campus grow and change tremendously. Then, the grassy harborwalk was a city street and the University Student Center and Science and Technology Building were nonexistent. The Barnes & Noble in the parking garage was just opening up.

Conway has seen an evolution in students as well: “We really have some students that are just outstanding,” she said. “They seem to be a notch above, more attuned and aware of the community.”

Though she has been on annual leave for a few weeks now, Conway hasn’t quite settled into retired life. She officially retires on Jan. 1, 2014. Conway remembers occasionally thinking, “God, I can’t wait till I retire,” but now that she has, it just feels like a vacation.

For now, getting ready for the holidays is keeping her busy. She hopes to have time to take a cooking class, get more involved with her home community in Temple Terrace, explore her family’s genealogy and travel. She and her husband, Michael, who used to be the police chief at USF Tampa, already have a trip to New Orleans planned for next month. She’ll also have more time to spend with her son Eric, who received a master’s degree from USF and played football there, as well as her dog, Cookie, a pibull-terrier mix.

Bidding adieu: There will be a retirement reception for Sandi Conway in the USC ballroom on Friday, Dec. 13.

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Pool employees will not lose jobs

Continued from front page

He said USFSP also lacks funds to tear up the existing pool. The damaged plumbing system will sit empty under the pool deck until other plans are made for the space. Oppenheim said the pool will be drained for environmental and health reasons. “We want to preserve the lounge and social space we have created here,” Oppenheim said. The Waterfront plans to make the pool deck a place for boat repairs, while the current boat repair station on the Waterfront will have lounge chairs for students to interact.

“The pool deck will remain an emergency exit for the Coquina Lounge and World of Wings.” Oppenheim said no student or staff member will lose their job at Campus Recreation because of the pool’s closure. Lifeguards and other pool staff will fill other positions within the Campus Recreation department.

“The Waterfront intends for new aquatic programming to begin around February and is currently planning an agenda. Some staff members will be reassigned to work with the new aquatic offerings. ‘We’re not taking this program away because we want to take this program away,’ Oppenheim said.

The pool is more than a recreation space. It hosts the Waterfront’s partners, which include the USF College of Marine Science summer camps, new student orientation and Safety at Sea, a program that teaches sailing safety.

The pool was built after 1939 as a part of the U.S. Maritime Service Training Station, located south of the pool from 1939 to 1950. It has served as a training area for the U.S. Army Corps and the U.S. Air Force, and as a pool for USFSP students.

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McLauchlan: district needs ‘long-term solutions’

Continued from front page

“Recently, the state has proposed changes to our general education curriculum for credit hours, courses students should be taking. State legislators have a very direct effect on what we do at USFSP on an everyday basis.” Scourfield McLauchlan hopes to increase global citizenship in university students. She connected USFSP to the Eastern European nation of Moldova. Taking an opportunity to teach American and Moldovan students about politics, she led a trip to Moldova during spring break in 2013 to explore the culture and politics of the fledgling nation. “I think that it’s important to recognize that we are a part of a global society,” Scourfield McLauchlan said. “The study abroad class is one way in which I’ve tried to enhance my students’ understanding of what it means to be a global citizen.”

Sen. Jeff Brandes, who currently represents District 22, comes across as “ideologically extreme” to Scourfield McLauchlan, and doesn’t provide “long-term solutions.” “We need someone to represent us in Tallahassee that is working hard and is bringing common sense solutions,” Scourfield McLauchlan said. “I think it would be helpful for someone to be in Tallahassee that knows what it’s like to be a college professor and works with our students directly.”

Despite press coverage of her decision to run, Scourfield McLauchlan has tried to keep the word about her candidacy from spreading among her current political science students. She prefers to keep her experiences in campaigns and politics to bipartisan and informative for her students. “My passion has been to get students involved regardless of their party,” Scourfield McLauchlan said. “Personally, I really enjoy her classes,” said Gabrielle Mitchell, a junior in political science. “You can tell she truly loves the subject and has an enthusiasm for it that you can’t help but have rub off on you at times.”

news@crowsnestpete.com
Lyricals and Life

Oh, thank heaven
By Erin Murphy

Life may have its irritating moments, but here at the Crow’s Nest, we contend there are quite a lot of things to be thankful for. Whether Thanksgiving break finds you stuffing your face with turkey and pumpkin pie or snatching up bargains on Black Friday, remember there is truly much to be thankful for. Especially these things.

Your pinky toe. Take time this Nov. 28 to be grateful for the least appreciated toe in your life.

Chocolate. White chocolate, dark chocolate, oh-my-goodness—this-is-amazing chocolate, oh-my-goodness—this-is-amazing choco—

Black Friday, remember there is truly much to be thankful for.

The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air theme song. If this doesn’t make you overflow with an overwhelming amount of gratitude, it is quite possible nothing ever will.

This adorable bunny.

Slurpees. What is it about sweet syrup and melted ice mosh that tastes so good?

Morgan Freeman. Those eyes. Those freckles. THAT VOICE. You go, Morgan!

Fat USFSP squirrels. Yes, they drive us nuts (ha). And yes, they stalk us while we try to down a peanut butter and jelly sandwich in between classes. But a squirrel-less campus is a joyless campus.

Professor of the month: Hugh LaFollette
Writer, philosopher, ethicist and beer connoisseur

BY RYAN BALLOGG
STAFF REPORTER

In the classroom, professor Hugh LaFollette’s teaching style is open and conversational. He often leads his classes, sipping from a clay mug as he expounds on ethics, philosophy and politics in a warm Tennessee accent.

Students sit around the room in a circular fashion, and raise a question whenever they have one. It is a democracy that he encourages.

LaFollette is an accomplished writer, editor and renowned ethicist who recently headed production and editing for a definitive, nine volume encyclopedia on ethics. But someone observing his class or striking a conversation with him wouldn’t know any of that.

Instead, he talks about his family, the mountains of Tennessee and his favorite films. Most of all, he talks about the rewards and struggles of teaching for 40 years.

The path that brought him to teach in Florida was much by chance — something LaFollette feels more people should be open to.

“As it turns out, I think much of life is a quilt,” LaFollette said. “You can completely over-plan your life. If you have detailed plans, you can end up closing off options.”

LaFollette, 65, was born and raised in Nashville. He said he didn’t do particularly well in school, and he was never exactly sure what he wanted to do with himself. He graduated from Belmont University (then Belmont College) in 1970 with a degree in psychology.

He then applied for a job at the local newspaper, the Tennesseean, on a whim.

“I thought it sounded fun at the time,” LaFollette said.

After six months of pestering, he was hired as a general assignment reporter, and soon got promoted to metro reporter, covering city politics. He enjoyed it but kept encountering situations on the job that troubled him.

While working, a Vanderbilt professor noted LaFollette had a philosophical streak.

“Journalism was why I went into philosophy. I was dealing with increasing ethical dilemmas at work and not knowing what to do about them,” LaFollette said.

He decided to take a leave of absence from the paper to enroll in some ethics courses at Vanderbilt. He hadn’t planned to get a degree, but he found he had a passion for the subject, and decided to quit reporting altogether.

His replacement at the paper happened to be a young Al Gore.

“The last two weeks I was there, I took him around to meet all the people in city hall,” LaFollette said.

LaFollette earned a masters and doctorate in political philosophy at Vanderbilt, but he said it was intimidating at first. Vanderbilt didn’t have anybody who specialized in ethics at the time, so he carved out a committee of ‘people he thought were ’smart and good critics.’”

Then he had to rush through getting his Ph.D. because money was tight. He also felt disadvantaged compared to his peers, who had gone to better schools and had prior experience with philosophy.

After a year and a half in the program, the university offered him a teaching assistantship.

LaFollette then taught three courses a term while also finishing his degree. Teaching was not only not as intimidating as he thought it would be, but he found he loved it, and he said it soon became a part of his identity.

After finishing his Ph.D., LaFollette took a visiting professor job at University of Alabama—Birmingham for one year before accepting a position at the East Tennessee State University. He was happy to return to the mountains.

The only downside to teaching, LaFollette said, was the thought of having to publish his own work.

“I was getting into the profession about the time that you had to publish if you were going to make it. At first I didn’t see myself as publishing at all, and then I saw myself publishing simply because I had to,” LaFollette said.

After a time, though, he said he began to develop a passion for writing, and a greater love of the revising process. Now his career work includes a long list of books, journal articles, contributions and editing on numerous publications.

Despite this success, writing has always remained a secondary passion.

“For only a handful of people in the field at any time will it be true that their influence is more profound by what they wrote than what they taught,” LaFollette said.

“For almost every one of us, the biggest difference we’re ever going make is if we make a difference in the classroom. When I look back over my entire career, there were about six teachers who made me what I am. If in a year I can influence one student anything like those people influenced me, I’ll consider my career a smashing success.”

LaFollette said he tries to use the challenges of teaching to improve himself, but it can be frustrating.

“When I get students who are surly or mad at me, part of me gets upset, but part of me questions myself. If I think I did a bad job in a class, I’m in a sour mood for two days. The joy of teaching is feeling as if you make a difference. The pain is having students who seem to despise what you do.”

The redemption comes in the form of those students that he has made a difference for.

“I’ve had students who have written me 20 years later about an experience in my class. All of a sudden, all of my complaints about what’s going on vanish, and I think, ‘Maybe I am doing okay.’”

During his time at UET, LaFollette had the opportunity to teach in Scotland for two years, so he took his whole family with him. He and his wife, Eva, still return whenever they can.

“One of these days, if I don’t kick over first, I’m inclined to write a book called ‘Confessions of a Scotsbology,’” LaFollette said. “The people, the climate, the land – it’s so diverse. And I never met an illiterate Scot.”

LaFollette said teaching at a Scottish university was very different and interesting, but he missed American students’ penchant for asking questions and challenging authority.

In 2004, LaFollette was preparing to take a job in Michigan when the offer was suddenly withdrawn due to financial trouble. He heard about an opening for the Marie and Leslie E. Cole Chair in Ethics at USF St. Petersburg. He didn’t know what to expect, but when he flew down for the interview, he was quickly attracted to the job by the diverse faculty and the city of St. Petersburg itself.

LaFollette said St. Petersburg is the only place in Florida he would consider living, both for the climate and the “small town feel with large town amenities.”

At USFSP, he teaches upper-level philosophy and ethics classes as well as Honors College courses, and is known for being a tough grader. Students remember the way he teaches his classes “as sufficiently rigorous, demanding and thought-provoking as you would get at a higher profile university.”

Despite his credentials, he despises titles and seeks to make his classroom as democratic as possible.

“I’m old. I could be almost every student’s grandfather or great-grandfather. But I’m also not good at being an authority figure, where you pronounce your authority. I think if you deserve respect it’s because you do things that merit respect, not because you have letters after your name. Being called doctor makes me cringe, personally.”

During his third year at USFSP, LaFollette was approached by the publisher Wiley-Blackwell to produce an encyclopedia on ethics and took on the project which would become a monstrous project.

In the end, he accepted 700 entries from 600 authors from around the world. The result was a nine volume work that LaFollette said he hopes will be the standard of the field for the indefinite future. The online version will be updated and amended every year.

“The farther away it gets the less painful the memories are,” LaFollette said, laughing.

His newest project is a book calling itself “The Ethics of Gun Control” that he has decided to take public input on — a chance that readers don’t usually get. Once a month, he will hold meetings at the university inviting students, faculty and members of the general public to come and offer their insights on the controversial topic. The first meeting was held on Thursday, Nov. 21, at the Dali Museum. LaFollette said he was happy with the turnout, but he would like to see more young people.

As for the future, LaFollette said, “I could go nowhere else but I feel like my brain hasn’t atrophied quite yet.”

His pastimes include spending time with family and watching movies (his all-time favorite is “Lawrence of Arabia”). He also keeps an eye out for the rare occasion when the Ale and the Witch (his all-time favorite beer, Smokey Nose Robust Porter, on tap).

“You can still taste it three hours after you drink it,” LaFollette said. Life@crowsneststpete.com
Turkey, Black Friday and Beyond

A Playlist

As you prepare your gullet for Thursday and your wallet for Friday, keep in mind what awaits you after Thanksgiving weekend

The grinding, grueling and grotesque final weeks of the fall semester. Another fact: the Crow’s Nest won’t be there to help you through with your profound playlists, seeing as this is the last issue of the year. That being said, we leave you with this compilation of songs for the upcoming weeks. Best of luck, turkeys!

Thanksgiving: "Home" — Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros

Zeros is right — here’s a cheery song for a cheery holiday. In any case, enjoy the time with family and try to be somewhat tolerant of their poor musical taste.

Black Friday: "Paint it Black" — Rolling Stones

The Rolling Stones are thankful — they have survived decades of drug abuse and screaming concerts, and they still have functioning junkies and the complexion of prunes (as opposed to raisins). Blast this as you speed down store isles in your stolen motor scooter.

"Turkey in the Straw" — Bill Monroe

The godfather of bluegrass shrugs Thanksgiving in a new one on this classic track. See if you can finish your first three plates of food before the song ends.

"Can’t Buy Me Love" — The Beatles

Remember not to get too wrapped up in shopping and commercialism this holiday season. Paul McCartney will remind you from atop his mile-high pile of royalty money.

Exam Week: "I Will Survive" — Gloria Gaynor

Listen to this song enough times, and you just may survive. You might also come out of the other side of exam week with big hair and disco lights in your eyes — but it’s worth it for those As. Or Bs. Maybe Cs! …

"Never Ending Math Equation" — Modest Mouse

This one goes out to all you paper writers. Don’t let those word counts get you down! And if this is your third time trying to pass statistics or algebra — this is the year you’re going to do it, kid.

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National Novel Writing Month

An amateur’s attempt at NaNoWriMo

BY ERIN MURPHY

STAFF REPORTER

Nov. 1

OK. I’m doing this. I’m actually going to write my novel, and not just talk about it. But wait — do I want to type it out on a word processor, or kick it old school with a notebook and pen? What if I make a mistake and have to rip something out? Is Courier New an acceptable font to use or does it look too contrived? HELP I’M GOING CRAZY.

I have to admit I’m kind of nervous to do this. I never just plunge into things. I always plan. And right now, I have no idea where my novel is going. Seven different drafts, so many variances of voices. Where do I begin?

Nov. 2

After not penning a single word yesterday, I think it’s time to start. Inspiration struck while I was cleaning my room, of all times. While throwing out old things, I ran to my desk and scribbled down a sentence until a paragraph smoothly flowed out of my ball-point pen. I don’t know if I like it, but at this point, it doesn’t matter — I’m writing. 56 words down. 49,944 to go.

Nov. 3

So, no word processor. I find that it’s easier for me to just pour out my ideas without editing them if I’m writing by hand. I sit in bed, unwind after a fun day, and write whatever comes to mind. I try not to think about what I’m writing and just let my protagonist tell the story. Let’s hope she knows what she’s doing.

Nov. 4

Seriously doubting my tone now. I wonder if I’ll use this draft? I fear the story I want to tell is trapped inside of me like a secret. I have no idea how to tell. At least I’m writing. NaNoWriMo has gotten me into a nice habit of writing daily, by hand, whether I’m inspired or not. That’s good. Often the worst words can become something great later on.

Nov. 5

So tired … can’t … write.

Nov. 6

Typed up the pages I’d written in my journal today. They totaled up to a meagly 2,260 words. Now I just have to do that 21 more times. It took longer to type up these pages than I thought. I’m WASTING PRECIOUS WRITING TIME! I’M SO UNPRODUCTIVE.

Nov. 7

So tired. Forcing myself to write. The inspiration faucet is dry but I don’t care. What I’ve learned so far is to let words pour out of you uninhibited. Say what you never intended to say! Editing can come later.

Nov. 8

I wrote one sentence today, but at least I wrote.

Nov. 9

Headed North to my family’s cabin. Nothing says inspiration like a road trip to a tiny abode.

Nov. 10

Spent most of the day reading. That’s close, right?

Nov. 11

I’m actually getting excited to write now.

Nov. 12

It’s my last morning at the writing cabin. I did some character sketching, and ended up filling my writing notebook with drawings of characters. A picture’s worth a thousand words, right? Fingers crossed.

Nov. 13

5,346! That’s how many words my pitiful small-town novel consists of right now. I just got an (automated) email from the folks at NaNoWriMo encouraging me to keep writing. I’m at what they call the “halfway point.” And, I’m only 10 percent done. That’s unfortunate.

Nov. 14 — 21

I would really like to say that I wrote. That I didn’t waste a week, an entire seven days of this truly glorious Novel Writing Month, but that would be a lie. Instead I did homework, took walks, ate Greek yogurt. Chalk it up to gathering inspiration?

Nov. 22

I finally eschewed the by-hand journal writing and sat down at my computer to type out as many paragraphs as possible. Even if they didn’t mesh with my story, even if they were written out of order. The result? 7,625 words. I’m obviously not going to hit my goal, but if I could just hit 10,000 before the month is over, I will have done something right. #thestrugglesarereal

Nov. 23

Well, today is the day. The day I reached the glorious grand total of 56,007 words. That’s not quite 50,000. Nowhere near. In fact, my novel is only 19.214% finished. But, if there’s anything I’ve learned by participating in NaNoWriMo, it’s that actually writing works wonders. Don’t give it time. Just start creating, and see where the characters take you. And, if you find yourself with only seven days to write the last 40,000 words of your novel, give it a try. You just might make a masterpiece.

Give it a try: For more information on participating in NaNoWriMo, check out their website at nanowrimo.org.
Editorial

Get the most out of next semester

By Kati Lacker

With two weeks left in the semester, exams looming overhead and holiday spirit spewing from our kitchens and car radios in the form of honey baked hams and “Jingle Bell Rock,” there probably isn’t much room in your oversensitized brains to think about the future. Since most of us at the Crow’s Nest have a few years at USFSP under our belts -- some of us preparing to graduate in six months -- we’ll offer some insight on how to get the most out of your spring semester. Whether it’s your last semester or only round two, here’s to a successful 2014.

Raise your hand. We aren’t all talkers. Some of us prefer to sit in silence and take in the perspectives of fellow classmate, agreeing with or debating them in our mind rather than out loud. Next semester, raise your hand in class and voice your opinion. If you’re not used to speaking up in class, doing so can be an enthralling experience, especially when a conversation evolves from your remark. And in most classes, participation will boost your grade.

Join a student organization. Think about what interests you, whether extracurricular or academic, and join the associated organization. If you’re an avid kayaker, join the Marine Adventures Club. If you’re passionate about writing and storytelling, attend a Writer’s Club meeting. One of the best things about joining an interest club, is that everyone involved shares your passion. There’s no better way to find lifelong friends than by seeking people who enjoy and appreciate the same things you do. Whether you’re crazy about politics, music, gardening or tightrope walking, there is someone else on campus who gets it. And if there isn’t a pre-existing outlet that suits you, start your own club.

Learn something different. Take a class on something you’ve never considered before. Step outside your major (your degree requires you to) and explore. Fill an outstanding credit with a class on pirates and maritime history or the rivers of Florida (yes, USFSP offers both). It may end up being the most interesting class you’ve ever taken. Research well-liked professors and take a class from someone you know you’ll like, regardless of the subject matter. Escaping from classes related to your major is refreshing and can offer healthy perspective.

Get to know your city. You live in one of the most diverse and beautiful cities in the state. Take advantage of it. Take a drive to St. Pete Beach or Treasure Island. The weight of your 200-page reading assignment will be eased by the salt air and sound of rolling waves. Spend a Saturday morning on a tour through downtown with the St. Petersburg Preservation Society. The buildings you overlook daily will suddenly have meaning.

Find a hideaway. Take a break from your dorm room or the library and find a place to study off campus. Sometimes it’s necessary to step beyond white walls and musty book shelves for inspiration to manifest. Walk to Kahwa on Second Avenue South or Hooker Tea Company on Beach Drive. Both spots are cozy caffeine suppliers perfect for writing A+ essays or working through business calculus exercises.

Take an internship. There’s only so much you can learn in the classroom. Practical experience in the working world is one of the most valuable things you can earn to supplement your degree. Enroll for class credit or find a paid internship to take place of a part-time job (though that’s easier said than done). Spruce up your resume (the Career Center can help with that), put on a tie and find a position that will give you a taste of your potential. In today’s market, internships are basically a requirement for getting a job. Chances are, taking one will make you more eager to break into the real world after college. But it’s also a good test to make sure you won’t be miserable in the field you’ve already tied yourself too.

Meet your representatives. Twenty students were just elected to Student Government Senate to serve you. Introduce yourself and let them know how they can make your experience at USFSP better. That’s why they’re here. Go to a SG general assembly meeting in the University Student Center ballroom at 3 p.m. on a Wednesday and make your voice heard.

The Crow’s Nest staff wishes you all a restful, stress-free winter break, abundant with happiness and homemade pies (which are essentially the same thing).
A lifetime of melodies, memories

By Erin Murphy

Staff Columnist

One of my first musical memories is of my father playing the piano, singing songs about potty training. (Don’t judge. It was comforting.)

My worst nightmare is that I will be the person who got an A+ on all of their spelling and grammar quizzes and successfully read all six required books for a class. I’m at the end of the fall semester, and I’m looking forward to graduating. Now is the time for more internships and job searching. Our desire to be left alone shouldn’t be ignored—or downplayed with an apologetic tone—devout of a romantic/sexual partner or not. This bogus technique, our easy exit, signals to the person we’re attempting to deflect that we’re not about it (but it’s still awesome, and we’re not about it). We’ve all done it. Made up an excuse, which we use as a go-to tactic, as to why we’d rather not continue talking with a person who’s approached us at a bar, maybe even a grocery store aisle or the gym. Instead of expressing our lack of interest in a direct way, we dance around the issue.

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We voluntarily forfeit our ability to speak for ourselves and to make our own decisions about the interactions we have with others because we fear rejection.

A guaranteed way to ward off undesired come-ons

By Meaghan Habuda

Staff Columnist

If a person’s coming on to us and we’re not about it (but it’s still awesome, and encouraged, if we are), our disinterest should go like this: “I’m not interested.” Simple enough. But we’ve learned to succumb to quick, no-questions-asked phrases like “I’m already in a relationship,” or “I’m here with someone else, actually.”

As writer Alecia Lynn Eberhardt notes in a reprinted article for xojane, it’s unreasonable to dub people who initiate conversations with us, regardless of the setting, as “creepy.” However, conversations can, and do in some cases, change gears, resulting in a need to draw the line.

Leaving my mark at USFSP

By Matt Thomas

Staff Columnist

Four years from now, I can’t help but wonder, besides a diploma, what evidence will there be that I ever came to USF St. Petersburg? If anything were to happen to me, would it have any impact? Probably not, and that’s chill because I haven’t done much of anything worth remembering. That’s something I would like to change.

I’ve been trying to figure out something I could leave behind here that people would remember, and I decided that thing would be a story.

Before I picked journalism as my major, I wanted to become a screenwriter. When I was 15 years old, I started writing a different script each week in hopes of getting a movie made and becoming the youngest person to ever win the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay.

Those scripts were awful. Despite being a terrible writer, I still wanted to tell stories, so I fell back on journalism. With this major, I could still tell stories; they would just have to be true. Even with the new goal, I never lost that desire to tell a good original story.

There’s been a story that I’ve been trying to tell for two years now. It has been through a number of changes, but the concept has remained the same. A guy writes a paper for someone in exchange for money, he starts to do it more and more for different people and it all snowballs from there.

I tried making it into a web series two years ago, I was way in over my head, and I never finished shooting the first episode. I apologized to my friends for wasting their Saturday morning. A semester later, I attempted it to make it into a short story for a class. Since it was on paper, and I didn’t have to shoot it, I let my imagination get the better of me and placed my characters in unrealistic situations.

I’m going to try it again, this time as a short film. I’ve been making different videos since my freshman year, and I think I’ve learned a lot through each at least enough to properly tell this story. The biggest hurdle would be, can I actually shoot everything I have in mind? I think so.

Of course the whole thing wouldn’t be about my fictional story, it would also reflect my four years here. I have plenty of source material to incorporate, experiences with friends, professors, school policies and a number of inside jokes. It wouldn’t just be my story, but ours.

There is something beautiful about the myriad of musical memories I’ve accumulated over time. It’s not just an art form, it’s a moment in time. Chris Tomlin’s Hello Love album will always take me back to my youth missions conference in 2009, and whenever I hear the Luminsteers, I remember fall 2012. One day, hopefully, I will spread the joy of singing and sound to my children, and make musical memories with them. Even if it involves playing “the potty song” on piano.

Experience required: lots of it

By Chelsea Tatham

Staff Columnist

That $20,000 piece of paper presented to you at graduation is not a golden ticket for a job. Your clean cut, free of spelling errors, beautifully decorated resume and cover letter will not get you a call for an interview. Most job and internship applications don’t even have space for a cover letter, let alone a复试 (usually just a phone number). It’s not enough to say “available” probably wouldn’t change anything.

We’re only rejecting them because we’re attempting to deflect that we’re not about it (but it’s still awesome, and we’re not about it). We’ve all done it. Made up an excuse, which we use as a go-to tactic, as to why we’d rather not continue talking with a person who’s approached us at a bar, maybe even a grocery store aisle or the gym. Instead of expressing our lack of interest in a direct way, we dance around the issue.

Our desire to be left alone shouldn’t be ignored—or downplayed with an apologetic tone—devout of a romantic/sexual partner or not. This bogus technique, our easy exit, signals to the person we’re attempting to deflect that we’re only rejecting them because of our lack of interest. We’ve all done it. Made up an excuse, which we use as a go-to tactic, as to why we’d rather not continue talking with a person who’s approached us at a bar, maybe even a grocery store aisle or the gym. Instead of expressing our lack of interest in a direct way, we dance around the issue.

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Brazillian dance fighting: giving new meaning to high kicks

BY ANNA VODOPITANOVA
CROW'S NEXT CORRESPONDENT

Two people squat by the berimbau player at the head of the roda, the circle of people playing instruments, singing or clapping. Before entering the circle, the two respectfully greet each other. To the rhythm of the berimbau, the toque, the two players begin their performance.

Kicks fly into the air. One player moves, then the other. It is a dialogue of movement. The opponents watch each other closely, and they never get hit unless one of them attempts trickery. Spins, jumps, sweeps, drops to the ground, flips, handstands and cartwheels are performed to dodge the opponent’s strikes. This art, called capoeira, appeared a long time before the fighting scenes from the first Matrix became popular.

There is no capoeira school in St. Petersburg. Instead, local capoeiristas gather at the Suncoast Cathedral Church on 62nd Avenue North every Tuesday night to practice this Brazilian art of music, dance and fighting.

Cory Hekimian-Williams and Andrea Mendolia, recently married, are long-time capoeira students. Mendolia was involved in the creation of St. Petersburg’s capoeira following by chance.

“‘The capoeiristas refer to it as ‘playing, not fighting,’” Hekimian-Williams said. However, capoeira is, primarily, a martial art that interweaves fighting with dance, acrobatics, song and music by traditional instruments.

Three years ago, Mendolia met a man in a St. Petersburg park who “was wearing all white and playing the berimbau, and doing crazy flips,” she said. He turned out to be a Brazilian by the name of Bocó. Mestre Bocó is what they began to call him when, with Mendolia’s assistance, he established St. Petersburg’s first capoeira school.

According to Hekimian-Williams, African slaves brought to America by Portuguese colonists originally developed capoeira in Brazil. Capoeira flourished in Salvador da Bahia, a major seaport where slaves were traded to labor on tobacco, sugar cane and coffee plantations.

“As slaves, they weren’t allowed to practice martial arts,” Hekimian-Williams said. “So, they didn’t call it martial arts. They called it dance. But, in reality, they were training to defend themselves.”

Capoeira was “looked down upon, as a slave martial art,” Hekimian-Williams said. As it spread through Brazil, the government outlawed capoeira. Its legalization occurred when a Mestre by the name of Bimba made the art structured, labeled the moves and opened a school.

“He formalized it so that it could be taught,” Hekimian-Williams said. “He is now considered the father of capoeira.”

The music is very important in capoeira.

“We have to learn to play instruments. We had to learn Portuguese songs. All of it encompasses capoeira. You can’t have one without the other,” Mendolia said.

“And you have to play the berimbau well to be considered a good capoeiraista,” Hekimian-Williams added.

The berimbau is a wooden bow about 1.5 meters high with a caraca, or gourd, attached for resonance. The bow is held by one hand while the other holds the baqueta, a wooden stick, for stringing.

The berimbau is called “the soul of capoeira” by its players, according to Mendolia. It is the instrument that sets the rhythm of the play and decides the speed and the technique used in a game. Other instruments include the pandeiro (hand drum), atabaque (tambourine) and agogó (double bells).

When the toe is slow, the style is called Angola, and the players move slower, stay close to the ground, “like seaweed intertwining in water,” Mendolia said.

When the tempo rises, it becomes a style called Regional. Players speed up and intensify their movements. They may jump and incorporate a variety of high kicks, as well as a wider range of acrobatic movements.

Capoeira fighting involves more kicks than arm techniques. The hands are usually held close to the face for shielding, or used for balance in acrobatic movements.

“It’s a striking martial art, not a grappling martial art, the opposite of jujitsu,” Hekimian-Williams said. “If you take [your opponent] down, you kick and run away.”

Capoeira is “a very showy martial art,” Mendolia said. It is very playful, and a lot of trickery and malicia, is involved. “Maybe you do a certain kick all the time and [your opponent] start[s] expecting it and dodging, and all of a sudden you come at them with something different,” Hekimian-Williams said.

According to Hekimian-Williams, capoeira teaches body control, balance and acrobatics. It also improves flexibility and provides exposure to the Brazilian culture.

“It’s a good workout,” Mendolia said. “It’s a lot more fun comparing to other martial arts. You get people clapping and singing, it’s a different energy. It’s very social. I like doing different things, and this one seemed very weird. It challenged me in different ways.”

Unfortunately, the first school in St. Petersburg was short-lived. Without a goodbye, Mestre Bocó disappeared from his students’ lives as abruptly as he showed up. The students were left without a leader. Some began driving long distances to capoeira schools in Tampa and Sarasota, and others continued searching for opportunities to practice locally.

Eventually, finding an interested group in St. Petersburg, Mestre Pica Pau began commuting from Tampa to lead the Tuesday class. They do not have their own studio, but the classes are free, and the students get the capoeira experience without having to travel 50 minutes away.

The St. Petersburg capoeira group is very tight-knit. All of them were present at Hekimian-Williams and Mendolia’s wedding in September.

The bride and groom figurines on their wedding cake were uniquely shaped – the groom was shown performing a kick while the bride was performing a kick a matrix backward bend in her wedding dress. Capoeira class was where the couple first met, and they continue to carry their passion through the years.

Men’s Basketball
Monday
USF vs. Oklahoma State, 7
Saturday
USF vs. Detroit, 7
Football
Southern Methodist 16, South Florida 6

By Anna Vodopiyanova

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