Gun law prompts distress

An update to weapon regulations throughout the USF system allows students to store unloaded guns in their cars while on campus

BY JENNIFER NESSLAR
STAFF REPORTER

Since the university-wide weapon policy was updated on Jan. 3, allowing guns to be stored in cars on campus, Lt. Reggie Oliver, of USF St. Petersburg police services, has dealt with what he calls “overreaction” from students.

He is often asked why the school would allow weapons on campus. In response, Oliver stresses the policy change only applies to possession of firearms stored in cars -- guns still cannot be carried on campus.

“People reading the articles or listening to the media think they can carry a weapon on their person,” Oliver said. “That is a misconception.”

The policy change was a response to a December 2013 court decision. Alexandria Lainez, a student at the University of North Florida and a single mother, felt UNF’s gun policy caused her to “choose between her family’s safety and her education on a daily basis while attending college,” according to Florida Carry Inc.’s website.

Lainez and Florida Carry, an organization supporting gun rights, sued UNF, prompting state courts to consider the ban unconstitutional. The ruling in Florida Carry’s favor would affect university police stations that have proper weapon storage.

On Jan. 10, Florida Carry filed a lawsuit against the University of Florida for failing to do more than add an “intent” footnote to the bottom of its current gun policy. Florida Carry is suing UF to allow guns in cars as well as dorm rooms in a holster designed for the gun, in a locked area like a glove box or in a secured trunk separate from the vehicle. Students must also have the correct permit for the weapon.

Oliver said the change will not greatly affect police operations. If necessary, they will respond to calls about policy violations, such as if a gun is spotted in plain view. Oliver said campus police have never received reports of weapons in plain sight in the past.

The Crow’s Nest talked to several students who were unaware of the change as well.

In order to keep guns in their cars, students must comply with the Florida State statute that outlines rules for guns stored in cars on public property. Guns must be out of sight and kept securely in a holster designed for the gun, in a locked area like a glove box or in a secured trunk separate from the vehicle. Students must also have the correct permit for the weapon.

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Sailing coach, gold medalist

By Jennifer Nesslar

Allison Jolly described her entry into sailing as an "accident."

The USF women's varsity sailing coach and 1988 Olympic Gold Medalist in sailing grew up in St. Petersburg. She continues to sail throughout college and lived in Georgia and California, working as a chemist and a computer programmer. In 1984, the Olympics came to California, and for the first time, women were allowed to sail. Jolly's participation in the Olympics was also a self-proclaimed "accident."

"I never dreamed sailing would open to the women," she said. Her husband at the time was ambitious and told her she would regret it if she decided not to try out for the 1988 Olympics in Korea. At the Olympic Panel in the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library on Jan. 14, she told the crowd she was "lucky."

It's more difficult to make the Olympic team in sailing than it is to actually win the gold medal, she said.

"I don't have a bad sailing memory," she said, but went on to describe her favorite memory as "horrible."

Her final race in the Olympics was the windiest race in the history of the games to date. She and her teammate had to finish in 11th place in order to win the gold medal, but boats were capsizing all around them, so it was impossible to tell what place they were in. After the race, they had to sail two hours to return to shore before knowing what place they finished in.

She remembers crying as the news cameras surrounded her, still not knowing how she finished. Finally, the media told her: They won the gold.

After the Olympics, Jolly returned to California as a computer programmer. When she moved to Florida in 2001, she couldn't find a job in her field. She compared her medal with the medal won by Jennifer French, the silver medalist on the U.S. Sailing Team at the 2012 London Paralympics. French's was heavier than Jolly's. The back of the medal was decorated with waves personalized for sailing by a London artist.

Jolly rolled her eyes. "I have a scantily clad Greek goddess on the back of mine," she said.

Along with coaching, Jolly still competes in sailing competitions. She also enjoys exercising, gardening and reading sci-fi novels.

Petersburg before most houses had air conditioning. To stay cool during the summers, she said there were four choices: go to the only air-conditioned department store downtown, swim, waterski or sail. Jolly's preference was swimming. So, when her parents put her in an introductory sailing program at age 9, she wasn't happy. And after being caught in a horrible thunderstorm at sea, she was ready to quit.

Forced by her parents to finish what she started, she completed the course, ready to be done with it. However, the man running the sailing program stopped her. He asked her to join a race team. Jolly agreed and won a medal her first race. Suddenly, she realized she was better at sailing than she was at swimming.

Jolly took home a gold medal at the 1988 Olympics in Korea. To this day, she calls both her sailing career and her Olympic experience an "accident."

Want to work for the Nest? Join us in SLC 2400 at 5:15 p.m. on Wednesdays for our contributors' meetings. Come with story ideas and suggestions to make the paper better. Getting writing experience now will make you more marketable later, whether later is when you graduate or when you're applying for a job at the Crow's Nest at the end of the semester (you know you want it).
Journalism students learn from Pulitzer Prize winner

BY AMANDA STARLING
STAFF REPORTER

Neighborhood News Bureau, a required course for mass communications students, is undergoing a makeover.

Lane Degregory, a 2009 Pulitzer Prize winner and Tampa Bay Times reporter, is returning to USF St. Petersburg to guide students in experiential reporting. Students are scheduled to attend a city council meeting at the Gulfport City Hall and explore breaking news, police reports and other events in St. Petersburg's Midtown district. Guest speakers for the course may include Times editors, public relations officers, radio personalities and more.

Degregory studied at the University of Virginia and worked as the editor-in-chief of the Cavalier Daily. Although there was no journalism program at her university, she loved writing for the campus daily paper because she “could get out there and do it.” Degregory has been writing as a journalist since she was 18. She joined the Tampa Bay Times 13 years ago to feed her passion for reporting, but her curiosity for teaching has drawn her back to the classroom. She previously taught a graduate course in USFSP’s journalism and media studies program.

Now, Degregory, 46, balances it all. She can tell you why the first thing they just turned in was an obit. She had them interview family members since they’re new to that very first one. They were really good. They really picked it up and know what they’re doing. We’re going to send them out to the community to do their thing. I was excited about the syllabus as working field days because I want them to get used to juggling a sort of schedule. When I tell them about being a journalist, I tell them it’s kind of like being a paramedic, because you’re always on call. I think that’s very important, especially in their senior year, because they’re doing it, they’re not just reading about it or studying it.” – Lane DeGregory

Colloquium showcases St. Pete architecture

BY MATT THOMAS
STAFF REPORTER

Florida Studies graduate student Kyle Pierson can tell you why the Williams Park Bandshell looks like an unfolded paper plate and why the Pasadena Community Church looks like a wing.

Pierson credits William B. Harvard Sr. for bringing modern architecture to St. Petersburg in the 1950s by designing some of the most well-known and iconic structures around the city. This was the subject of her presentation at the research colloquium held on Wednesday, Jan. 15, in the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library.

Pierson has seen many of the St. Petersburg’s developments in her 30 years living here, particularly in downtown.

Her major encouraged her to study the literature, arts, environment and sciences of Florida’s past. It allowed her to further connect with the state and use it as a starting point for work in different fields.

For this project, Pierson’s research started with a simple question about a particular building’s design. Working with Dr. Thomas Hallock, Pierson researched details about St. Petersburg’s architectural history: the attitude, theme and the thinking behind it all.

Pierson centered her presentation on Harvard’s transition of St. Petersburg architecture. She said helped move the city from Europe’s highly decorated influence in favor of a more geometrical design.

Her slide titled “Less is More” highlighted Harvard’s belief that a building’s beauty lied within its logic and structure. His signature “folded plate construction” can be seen in the Williams Park bandshell and the Pasadena Community Church which “looks like a wing,” Pierson said. Looking back, Harvard’s achievements are seen as making strides in new thinking. At the time, his designs were seen as controversial and his finished products were not at all what the people envisioned, such as the pier’s inverted pyramid design. The William’s Park bandshell design was also not well received when it was built in 1953, yet it won The American Institute of Architects’ “Test of Time” award 30 years later.

Today, Harvard’s architecture firm, Harvard Joly, ran by his children, specializes in designing schools, libraries and universities, among other structures.

Pierson was glad she was asked to do her presentation because it gave her a chance to talk about her research and also find out who is interested in it.

Show you stuff: Have you been working on something worth sharing? Student research colloquiums, never thought about it before, so I’m offering extra credit for anything they get published, five points extra credit. There’s some grade incentive there as well. I know that once you see your name in print, you get that rush of ownership and I want them to feel that. I want them to be proud that other people are reading it and not just me.

CN: How are you stacking the hats of journalist, mom and teacher?
LD: I was excited about the opportunity [to teach]. It’s close so it’s convenient. I wouldn’t be able to drive to Gainesville or Miami or somewhere to teach. I had nine extra vacation days that carried over this year, so I’ve spent a lot of time away from the Times trying to plan for this class (and) get geared up.

news@crowsneststpete.com
The name Threadish comes from cleaning her mother's IMAX screen at a movie theater. Although she's a junior at USF St. Petersburg, she owns her own graphic tee and shirt making company, which features a whole line of cat-themed T-shirts, and a number of other humorous designs. They range from “The Office” character Dwight Schrute in cat form to “Star Wars” and “Lord of the Rings” references.

Chisholm, 21, said she has loved graphic tees since high school. In her senior year she was shopping for them so much that she started to wonder how hard it would be to make her own.

One small investment from her mother later, and Chisholm had enough basic equipment to start production. The first shirt making method she tried was “direct to garment,” where an image is printed straight onto a garment with a special printer. Chisholm said she quickly found out the method was strenuous and expensive, and the shirt designs eventually came off in the wash.

From there, she switched to screen printing, where images are inked onto a mesh screen and pressed on to shirts, and transfer printing, where images are printed onto transparent paper and applied to the shirt with heat. Between the two methods, Chisholm was able to make shirts she was happy with. In 2011, she decided to see if other people would like them too.

“Just about any way that you can print on a T-shirt, you will see it there,” Chisholm said. She said she hopes to look into laser printing equipment for Threadish.

“Computers are my backup,” Chisholm said. “Making shirts lets me be a lot more creative.”

Carpentier, who is also a former president of the Entrepreneurship Club, said, “I’m a big fan of student entrepreneurs as a member of the USFSP Entrepreneurship club. I’ve been in at least one class with her for four semesters in a row and had no idea she was running an online T-shirt store of her own designs until two months ago. Having a USFSP student entrepreneur be able to supply the demand of clubs and organizations for shirts is absolutely invaluable.”

Right now, Chisholm runs the company completely out of her Seminole home with the help of her mother, whom she calls her “partner in crime.” However, Chisholm said she would consider opening a shop if business continues to grow.

She is also interested in having other artists contribute to her line of graphic tees.

“Some people do that and actually make money,” Chisholm said. “I think cats are the coolest things.”
Goodnight Moon
A Playlist

So, you’ve survived the start of another semester! The past few weeks have found you editing essays, downing lattes and sprinting from Davis building to the PRW wing more times than you can count. And, naturally, you’re really, really tired. If it’s time for a nap, hit snooze and spin this sleep-inspired playlist until the morning.

By Erin Murphy
Staff Reporter

“I’m So Tired” by The Beatles
This song is brief enough to hold your attention, but droning and drowsy enough to have you slowly lulled into slumber.…

“Ode to Sleep” by Twenty One Pilots
If you need help staying awake during that 8 a.m. class, this synth-y tune is just as potent as a cup of cappuccino.

“I Guess I Should Go to Sleep” by Jack White
If chaotic piano solos and White’s impossibly raspy voice don’t accurately embody end-of-week exhaustion, I don’t know what does.

“Go to Sleep” by the Avett Brothers
Banjos, harmonicas and the soulful vocals of these Southern gentlemen all encourage you to get some shut-eye. Exhaustion never sounded so…twangy.

“Comforting Sounds” by Mew
Nine minutes of rhythmic, overlapping melodies will lull you to your happy place (despite the track’s less than cheerful lyrics) as this song builds momentum to a powerfully dreamy instrumental conclusion.

“Enter Sandman” by Metallica
This is the perfect song to set as your alarm to wake you up after a good REM-filled sleep. If you can’t appreciate waking up to heavy metal music filling your ears with guitar riffs and children’s nightmares, then you’re wrong.

“Dreams” by The Allman Brothers Band
Waking up and pulling yourself out of bed can be pretty tough when your dreams are filled with more excitement and happiness than your reality. Gregg Allman wrote this number about his unrealized dreams that was actually one of the songs that helped form the band.

“Mr. Sandman” by The Chordettes
Can’t seem to fall asleep? Listening to Mr. Sandman and saying his name three times in a row might just summon the sandbag-carrying fairy to make your eyelids heavy with sand and sleep.

“Wake Up” by Arcade Fire
When nap time is over and you’re ready to snap back into reality, rejuvenate yourself with this sad yet super catchy Arcade Fire track. Starbucks not included.

Warhol invades downtown St. Pete

A group of USF St. Petersburg students, sporting short blonde wigs and red plastic framed glasses, swarmed downtown on Saturday, Jan. 18, to promote the opening of the Warhol art exhibit at the Dali Museum. In the photos at left, the group posed with local psychedelic rock band, Sons of Hippies, and even made it into their new music video.

The exhibit, called “Warhol: Art. Fame. Mortality.” lasts until April 27 and is admission is included with the normal museum entry price, which is free for USFSP students (just be sure to have your student ID). In addition to the artwork, the exhibit features free lectures and educational program. Private tours are also available upon reservation.

Editorial

A different kind of killer

Imagine waking up one morning and seeing the mug shot of a familiar face on the news. The anchors say he has committed monstrous acts, recklessly endangering multiple lives. And then it hits you. You remember how you knew this man, and now your life is changed forever.

When 32 people decided to have sex with Michael Johnson in his Lindenwood University dorm room in Missouri, they didn't know they were being filmed. Nor did they know Johnson was knowingly exposing them to HIV. More than likely, they discovered their fate while watching or reading the news.

It's reported that Johnson -- known as Tiger Mandigo online -- found majority of his partners from his six social media accounts. While his victims willingly engaged in sexual acts, they were not aware of the hidden cameras or the life threatening disease they may have been contracting from within Johnson's small, dark dorm room.

In October, Johnson was charged with five felony counts of exposing partners to HIV. The recent discovery of the secret sex-tapes, however, may bring that count to more than 30. If convicted, Johnson faces life in prison.

None of Johnson's victims were identifiable from the videos and few have come forward to police. From their decision to meet up with a muscular, averagely attractive, African-American man for what one might call a "good time," these people didn't put their lives at risk.

No news outlet has reported whether Johnson used condoms with his victims. Regardless, a thin layer of latex does not exempt one from criminally exposing a partner to a sexually transmitted disease.

Since news broke of the sex-tape discovery, Johnson's story has made headlines across the nation in both print and on social media.

Johnson's victims may not have been murdered, but their quality of life has forever been diminished. Their killer did not take their lives in full, but he took parts -- greedily and uselessly.

Knowing one is being filmed while having sex with a stranger, Johnson's victims may not have been aware of the disease they were exposed to. Whether they did or not, it's a frightening story.

Johnson's victims were not the only ones affected. The discovery, Johnson's story has made news relevant to the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

A different kind of killer.

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Mission Statement: The Crow's Nest is committed to providing its readers with news relevant to the University of South Florida St. Petersburg and its surrounding community. The Crow's Nest abides by the highest ethical standards and focuses on stories that help readers make informed decisions on current issues. We take seriously the public's trust in our news reporting and strive to uphold the highest ethical standards and by taking drugs. It became a serious criminal offense in the late 1800s when doctors sought to eliminate the competition of abortion practitioners.

Throwback

Jan. 22, 1973 – The U.S. Supreme Court rules in Roe v. Wade that a woman is legally allowed to terminate her pregnancy in the first two trimesters. States are given the ability to regulate the third trimester abortions.

In the first 100 years of U.S. history, abortion was not only not uncommon, but it was also not considered immoral. Women terminated pregnancy by "quickening" and by taking drugs. It became a serious criminal offense in the late 1800s when doctors sought to eliminate the competition of abortion practitioners.

Preserve yourself: The USF St. Petersburg Wellness Center, located upstairs in the Student Life Center, offers testing for sexually transmitted infections. Make an appointment online through the university's website, by phone at 727-873-4422 or in person.

editor@crowsneststpete.com
The pros of procrastinating

**By Matt Thomas**  
*Staff Columnist*

I'm impressed with what I can do when you take choice away from me. Well, actually, I still have a choice. It's just that, in that last hour, I'd rather finally write the paper or article than see the look of disappointment on a professor's face or earn the ire of my editor. Though it's a familiar process for most of us, unless your last name is Nessler, I want to explain the process of how I write a paper.

Let's say the paper is due Monday morning, and it's the weekend before. The paper is in the back of my head Friday night. I briefly consider working on it, but I don't have any ideas for it really.

Oh well, it's not like it's due tomorrow.

I think about the paper more Saturday night until I realize I have the entirety of Sunday to take care of it. Next thing you know, I'm walking around Sunday. This weekend-end sure is moving fast. I have nothing to do all day, but I can't help but lie in bed and just enjoy knowing that, for several hours, I'll end up taking the time I like to call a "conscious nap."

Now it's dark outside. I begin to panic a little. I even go as far as to open up a Word document, but I notice something fun to do online. I'm still keeping the paper in mind, but there's always that point where I say screw it and give into the distraction. It is truly a wonderful feeling. I'll just do it Monday morning.

That first paragraph is done, but suddenly, as if time, new thoughts are popping into my head. I'm making new points and connecting ideas left and right within seconds. I actually stop writing in awe of how I'm doing any of this. After a forced and awkward conclusion, my first draft is finished. I do the once over, I fix my errors -- at least the ones I notice -- and then I think of a way to make the paper even better. After that, the paper becomes something worth turning in.

Is it the best way to work? Certainly not! Has it always worked perfectly? Nah. Regardless, I promise you there are papers I have written under those conditions that could not have come out better had they been written sooner. I firmly believe it's not until there's a gun pointed straight at your head, metaphorically speaking, that you learn what you're capable of.

Professors Keeler and Silva, I promise you I have never done what I describe above for any of your assignments. Readers, I also promise this column was thought out and written to completion several days in advance.

**Thrifting for memories**

**By Erin Murphy**  
*Staff Columnist*

While sifting through a stack of magazines at the thrift store, I found a photograph.

I didn't notice it at first; perhaps I was too mesmerized by Thrift City USA. A recent court case ruled that allowing guns on campus would distract students and make them feel uncomfortable. At worst, it would result in more shootings. Many people have said that guns are not necessary on a college campus because terrible acts of violence, such as Virginia Tech and Sandy Hook, are very rare.

But while such violent acts are thankfully rare, they still occur. And should something like the tragedy at Virginia Tech happen at a USF campus, wouldn't you rather be equipped to defend yourself or those around you?

Guns are not currently allowed to be carried by students while on campus, even if the student is the lawful owner of a concealed weapons permit. The firearm must be kept in the student's personal vehicle or the student must request permission to store the firearm with University Police, leaving people without a means to defend themselves during their time on campus.

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Where were the people who had taken it? And why was it left behind?

Technology may seem like a big part of our lives, partly because we're grown up with it. Facebook, Google, email and online classes are all common ways we use the Internet daily.

Sometimes I like to do, to break away from the click-clack-clatter of keyboard keys, is to take an ink pen and write words in a journal. I write about my day, and things I aspire to do. I write prayers and lists, memories and moments. Sometimes I'll even tape in movie stub tickets, wristbands or old photos.

I walked to the cash register that day and asked if I could keep the photo. The sweet cashier let me take it, free of charge. She imparted to me that someone had come to the store. They had tried to sell their family photo was lying alone in a thrift store. They had tried to sell their family photo was lying alone in a thrift store.

I'm impressed with what I can relate to them as friends.

Sometimes, in my journal, I write letters to my future grandchild. I'll tell them about my adventures as a 20-year-old, about the things I'm learning, and my best friends.

I even write about Facebook and iPods, the technology that will be long gone by the time they're teens. I hope that one day they will want to understand those that came before them.

Next to one of my entries, I taped a photo.

In it, a woman I don't know has a smile, a story and a brown paper bag.

**Guns on campus could promote safety**

**By Jacob Ferretti**  
*Guest Columnist*

A recent court case ruled that students are allowed to keep a firearm in their personal vehicle on any Florida college campus after the issue was raised at the University of North Florida.

People traveling to and from campuses by car are travelling in their own private property and should be able to defend themselves. And the courts have ruled in favor of this. But what happens when you leave your car and are walking to your dorm room or classroom, whether during the day or at night?

Guns are not currently allowed to be carried by students while on campus, even if the student is the lawful owner of a concealed weapons permit. The firearm must be kept in the student's personal vehicle or the student must request permission to store the firearm with University Police, leaving people without a means to defend themselves during their time on campus.

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Where were the people who had taken it? And why was it left behind?

lawful permit holders should be reached at jferretti@mail.usf.edu. If you learn how to safely handle and utilize a firearm as well as undergo a criminal background check and fingerprinting.

While many people who hold a permit do not carry a firearm very often, those who do generally take a great deal of their own time practicing and becoming competent with their weapon, and also understand the serious responsibility of carrying a firearm on a regular basis.

While this doesn't guarantee that they are trained for a combat or shooting scenario, it does mean that they are less likely to have a foolish accident while carrying, and that they are able to better defend themselves and those around them as an absolute last line of defense.

While campus police do the best they can to keep such tragedies from occurring, they cannot be everywhere at once. If only one bad guy with a gun managed to get into a filled classroom, a lot of lives would be lost before police officers would be able to respond.

Instead of banning lawful and competent civilians from carrying firearms while on campus, colleges and universities should be allowed to collaborate with police department- ers or other properly trained officers to offer programs for students to learn how to safely operate firearms and how to act should a terrible event, like a shooting, occur.

Jacob Ferretti is a junior majoring in business management. He can be reached at jferretti@mail.usf.edu.
No more ‘bull’

By Mike Hopey
Staff Reporter

With Doug Woolard as the athletic director of the University of South Florida, the Bulls had a great deal of success. But with last week’s announcement that a search for a replacement will begin immediately, the mindset of school officials is, “What have you done for me lately?”

Citing the poor performances of the football and men’s basketball teams in the last two seasons, USF officials announced that Woolard would retire when his current contract expires on June 30, 2015. Once a replacement athletic director is found Woolard will stay with the school in an unspecified advisory role until his contract expires.

The announcement comes just two years after Woolard signed a three-year contract extension worth $700,000 a year. Under Woolard’s leadership, the USF football team joined the now defunct Big East football conference and rose as high as number two in the Top 25.

The men’s basketball team also reached a new level of success. In 2012, the Bulls under coach Stan Heath, who was hired by Woolard, made it to the NCAA Tournament for the first time in 20 years. The Bulls defeated Cal in a play in game and upset No. 5 seeded Temple before losing to the No. 13 seeded Ohio. However, since those on-field achievements, the football program has had three straight losing seasons including their first 10-loss season in program history in 2013-14. Woolard’s first major hire, Skip Holtz, was fired after two losing seasons.

The announcement that a search for a new leader of USF athletics will begin immediately is a blow to fans of the Bulls. Woolard’s tenure was marked by improved facilities, increased revenue, and an improved academic profile for the Bulls. Under Woolard’s leadership, the Bulls football team reached the NCAA Tournament for the first time in 20 years and the men’s basketball team made the NCAA Tournament for the first time in 14 years.

There is no convenient way to predict how the next athletic director will perform. However, since those on-field achievements, the football program has had three straight losing seasons. The men’s basketball team has had three straight losing seasons including their first 10-loss season in program history in 2013-14. Woolard’s first major hire, Skip Holtz, was fired after two losing seasons.

This season the Bulls got off to a 10-7 start with a 1-3 record in the American Athletic Conference at the time of the announcement.

South Florida Athletics have enjoyed some success with Woolard serving as athletic director. In USF’s last season with in the Big East, the men’s golf team and the softball team were conference champions. Most recently, the men’s soccer team won the inaugural American Conference Championship over Connecticut.

Woolard joined USF in 2004 to replace the retiring athletic director, the late Lee Roy Selmon. Prior to joining South Florida, Woolard served as the athletic director at St. Louis for 10 years.

Opinion
Finding my team, my way

By Mike Hopey
Staff Columnist

When NBC landed the English Premier League television rights and planned to broadcast every single game either on television or over the Internet, I found myself in the same situation as many other American soccer fans. I needed to pick a favorite team.

Fans had access and, in true sports spirit, I was asked to invest myself into the most recognizable soccer league in the world. After all, fans over in Europe pick favorite American football teams.

NBC was happy to help American fans looking for a club to cheer for. Handy guides went up online and television specials broke down each team so fans could identify the qualities they liked best. NBC even had a questionnaire that told you what your favorite team would be based on one of those web-based personality tests.

None of that was for me. Any way for me to pick a favorite team seemed so arbitrary. How was I suddenly going to start investing emotionally in a team I have never cheered for in a city and country I had never been to?

So I decided that if it was going to be an arbitrary choice, then it would be my arbitrary choice. I would decide the criteria for picking my favorite English football club.

I decided that because Great Britain was a place I had always wanted to visit, I would pick the team in the city I wanted to visit most. For me, the city I wanted to visit most was Cardiff, Wales. The Cardiff City Bluebirds was my new favorite soccer team.

After week two I looked like a genius. In their second game of the season Cardiff upset Manchester City. The underdog team that hadn’t been in the top-flight of English soccer since before I was born had beaten the team that just two years prior were league champions.

I sat in the Crew’s Nest office watching the game on my iPad as I put together an issue of the paper. When Cardiff striker Frazier Campbell scored the go ahead goal, I threw my arms in an air in silent celebration.

Just two weeks before I had never heard of the team but now I was in, fully invested. My arbitrary choice was starting to look like the right one. I could hold my head up high.

I simply wasn’t a fan of whatever team was in Vogue at the time. I was a fan of the plucky underdogs who were going to make a mess of the Premier League for the teams that were stupid enough to underestimate the new team on the circuit. My routine became that on Saturday mornings I would roll out of bed, take care of the dogs and turn on NBC Sports Network to see my favorite side in action. Later in the day I would tell my fiancé, who works Saturday mornings, about how the game went. I’d give her all the highlights and explain whatever I needed to -- much to her dismay.

As I would recount the day’s action to my uninterested partner, I realized the results were negative more often than they were positive. Cardiff was losing, and losing a lot. My enthusiasm was tested but I did not waver. A tie against Manchester United and a win over rival Swansea City in the South Wales Derby had me believing that this was still the scrappy underdog team I had thought they were.

A disaster Christmas holiday put the Bluebirds hovering just above the relegation zone of the table. Two losses and a tie had nearly doomed them to an uphill fight just to stay in the Premier League.

In many European sports leagues, not just soccer, the worst teams in a given season are sent down to a lower league while the best teams in a given season are sent to the elite. This is not just soccer, the worst teams in a given season are sent down to a lower league while the best teams in a given season are sent to the elite.

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