Students support longer library hours

By Emily Wehunt
Staff Reporter

The Nelson Poynter Memorial Library closes at 10 p.m. on weekdays.

So when the end of the semester rolls around, the complaints begin. Students electronically voice their opinions through the student-run Facebook page, “USFSP Know It All’s Guide,” and share their dissatisfaction about how early the library closes.

The reason the library closes at 10 p.m. during the week is because there are not enough students using the space during the later hours of the day. The library is currently open 79 hours per week. More staff and security guards would have to be hired in order to allow for extended hours, said Carol Hixson, dean of the library.

USFSP student Jozef Gherman, along with two fellow students Nicholas Patides and Juan Salazar, devised a plan to show student interest in extending the hours. They started an event called “Pack The Library.” From Monday Jan. 12 to Jan. 15, the goal was to get as many students as they could to show up at the library during its final hour of operation.

To prove how many students showed up, Gherman had students sign in on a sheet of paper. The event was quite successful for the first two days, with about 50 to 60 in attendance. But for the next two days, the turnout was weaker, with only about 20 students attending.

Starting this initiative early in the semester is important to its success, because students usually wait until the end of each term to bring up complaints, Gherman said.

Security guard Desmond Henville, who can be found working at the library almost every night, said the plan won’t work unless all three floors are packed.

“The fact that you have to use nights like this to bring people is a problem,” Henville told The Crow’s Nest. “It won’t work unless it is something people want to do for themselves.”

Henville and library staff member Samuel Holloway said they would have no problem keeping the library open until midnight starting next semester.

Food service manager Carlyn Davis said, “If students want us to do it, we will do it.”

Sodexo gets three loads of produce a week. Their main provider is FreshPoint, who is also used at the new Locale Market at Sundial. FreshPoint delivers produce harvested from farms around the state in neighboring cities like Odessa, Plant City and Hawthorne.

The produce being sold, which will include veggies like lettuce, carrots, squash and zucchini, is the same that is used to fill the salad bar at The Reef. The prices for the market have not yet been determined, but they will be competitive with other farmers’ markets in the area. Students gather in the library at 9 p.m. Thursday to show their support for longer library hours. The library currently closes at 10 p.m. on weekdays.

Fresh produce makes its way to Harbor Market

By Emily Wehunt
Staff Reporter

A new farmers’ market is coming to St. Petersburg, but you won’t have to go far to find it.

At the next Harbor Market on Jan. 27, Sodexo, the on-campus food service, will have a stand set up where fresh local produce will be sold.

Sodexo chef leaves lasting impression

By Jeffrey Zanker
Crow’s Nest Contributor

After two years of cooking for and serving USF St. Petersburg students, The Reef’s Chef Ashley Morris had her last day on the job Saturday.

She accepted a chef position at Westminster SunCoast, a nursing/retirement home in St. Petersburg. Unlike her job at The Reef, she’ll be serving older retirees. Her job will also deal with nutrition.

Born in Savannah, Ga., Morris always had the desire to become a food chef. Morris graduated from Savannah Tech’s Culinary Art School in 2006.

She also spent four years serving in the Air Force until receiving a medical discharge in 2004. Morris worked as chef at Armstrong Atlantic University in Savannah before relocating to USFSP in 2012.

She said she was nervous moving to USFSP at first, but soon started...
News Briefs

Tuesday, Jan. 20
Let USF St. Petersburg administrators know sustainability is important to you! The strategic plan marked “care for the natural environment” as one of the five core values, so now it’s time to talk about it. Join the conversation from 3:30-4:30 p.m. on Harbor Lawn by the beach to talk about sustainability going on in organizations and classrooms.

Wednesday, Jan. 21
Feeling like a movie night? We are too. Well, no worries. Screen on the Green is back, starting with a viewing of Dear White People. The movie is a satirical telling of African-American students living at a predominantly white college. The film was the winner of 2014’s Sundance Film Festival’s Special Jury Award for Breakthrough Talent. Bring your blankets and head to Harborwalk. The film starts at 8 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 22
If you just can’t stop thinking about Dear White People, let’s talk about it. The Office of Multicultural Affairs is hosting a discussion about the movie at noon in the USG Ocean Room. Grab some lunch at The Reef and join the discussion. Bonus: You get 300 Pete Points for attending.

Attend a banquet honoring your peers who represent the ideals of Martin Luther King Jr. Good eats, good people, more Pete Points. What else could you ask for? It starts at 6 p.m. in the University Student Center ballrooms.

Saturday, Jan. 24
This week is just filled with inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr. So why don’t you go serve your community? Come to the Student Life Center atrium at 9 a.m. to sign up for a community service project. There are several projects happening throughout the community. Students will serve from 10 a.m. noon.

As if Picasso wasn’t enough, the Salvador Dali museum announced a new exhibit this week that will feature 75 pieces of art from Dali and Leonardo da Vinci. It will also display inventions they proposed. “Dali & da Vinci: Invention as Art” will run from March 8 to July 26. As always, present your USF student ID and get into the museum free of charge.

Hillary Terhune
Crow’s Nest Contributor
A portly black cat slouches across a counter near the entrance of Pet Pal Animal Shelter, almost like he owns the place.

“That’s Romeo; he works here,” said Scott Daly, the shelter’s executive director.

Romeo is one of a few permanent residents at the shelter. His job title is “experiment cat.” When the shelter needs to see if a dog would be safe around cats, they bring in Romeo.

“He’s never in any danger, of course, but he’s an important member of our team,” Daly said.

Since Pet Pal opened in 2006, its mission has been to give unwanted animals a second chance. It is a nonprofit, no-kill animal shelter at 405 22nd St S in the Midtown area of St. Petersburg. It houses about 50 animals on average.

The most important part of keeping the shelter running, Daly said, are the volunteers. Volunteering is the key to Pet Pal, and Daly wants everyone to know that it’s not just about walking the dogs.

“We have to take care of them and we have to love them,” he said.

Pet Pal sees many volunteers from local high schools, mostly students who need community service hours to qualify for Bright Futures scholarships. In order for high school students to volunteer, they have to meet specific qualifications.

“They have to be goal oriented, they can’t just want to come in and play with puppies,” Daly said. “It’s more than that.”

Many volunteers also come from local colleges, mostly Eckerd and the USF St. Petersburg. The shelter also has a partnership with the Salvation Army, which has a community service program for people who have had brushes with the law. These applicants are thoroughly screened before they can volunteer.

“We want this to be a safe environment,” Daly said. “We do not take sex offenders or people charged with domestic violence.”

The shelter’s staff doesn’t just take in cats and dogs. There’s room for everything from reptiles to pot belly pigs. At the end of November the shelter took in a baby pot belly pig whom the staff named Moonpie. The pig has since been placed in a forever home, but for the shelter it’s proof that every animal deserves a second chance.

Almost all of them come from shelters where they might have been euthanized because of “time limitations, illness, injury, or lack of training,” said Daly.

It’s not the shelters’ fault. There is an overpopulation crisis, and they don’t have the means to accommodate these animals,” Daly said.

The overpopulation Daly talks about is the reason that about 2.7 million cats and dogs are euthanized in the U.S. every year, according to the Humane Society of the United States.

It’s also one reason that Pet Pal doesn’t take in strays. The shelter is dedicated to giving animals a second chance at life and providing as many opportunities for this as possible.

According to Daly, if the shelter were to take in every stray that was dropped off, the opportunities to save animals from being euthanized would begin to dwindle.

“The shelter also prides itself on education. Its mission statement is about raising awareness and educating the public on how to be responsible pet owners. Daly says half the battle in combating over-population is educating people to spay or neuter their pets.

Daly is an animal awareness veteran. He has more than 20 years’ experience in veterinary clinics and animal shelters and was once an animal cruelty investigator. It’s no easy task taking care of all the animals that Pet Pal does, and it relies solely on donations, Daly said.

The shelter holds an annual silent and live auction event, called Puppy Love. Anywhere from 400 to 600 people attend the event. It is the facility’s major fund-raiser, Daly said.

Pet Pal also operates a thrift store at 1500 34th St. N in St. Petersburg. The proceeds from sales help run the shelter.

Pet Pal also gets a great amount of assistance for the Rays baseball team.

“We are very grateful for the Rays,” Daly said.

Evan Longoria and the Tampa Bay Rays are advocates for the animal shelter. Every season Longoria donates $100 to Pet Pal for every home run he hits.

The Rays also do a calendar every year that features shelter animals alongside Rays players and their dogs. Proceeds from those sales go to the shelter. The 2015 calendar, which costs $20, is available at Pet Pal, the Rays team store in Tampa or by mail by calling (813) 228-7157.

Want to know more? Visit Pet Pal’s website at petpalanimalshelter.com

Pet Pal is a no-kill shelter that accepts animals from other shelters, rescuing them from potential euthanization.
More support needed to extend library hours

“The Library would be delighted to stay open longer hours if we received additional funding, and we would be happy to work with students on such an effort.” —Library Dean Carol Hixson

if it was approved. They both agreed that extended the library hours until midnight could be possible, but the library would “definitely not” stay open for 24 hours like the Tampa campus.

During the week before and during exams, however, the library stays open until midnight. Dean Hixson said this is possible only because staff is asked to volunteer an extra two hours at night and their schedules are modified accordingly.

Last semester during the extended hours, Hixson said the record for attendees from 10-11 p.m. was 87, and from 11 p.m. to midnight it was 64.

In reaction to the “Pack the Library” initiative, Hixson said it will be difficult to make a case to the University administration for longer hours without an ongoing demonstration of need for increased hours. A staged demonstration lasting for only one week won’t cut it, she said, especially a demonstration with a relatively low participation rate.

“i urge students to work with Student Government to discuss effective ways of documenting a real need,” said Hixson. “The Library would be delighted to stay open longer hours if we received additional funding, and we would be happy to work with students on such an effort.”

Fresh produce always available at The Reef

Continued from p.1

General manager Louis Duran has been running the Sodexo since it first opened in fall 2012. His goal for the market is to make it educational and hopes it will help build awareness around campus for the quality of food being served at The Reef.

“My idea is to let the students know where their produce is coming from,” Duran told The Crow’s Nest.

According to Duran, an increasing amount of students have been requesting fresh local produce, and he wants them to know it is something the campus already has. In addition to local produce, Sodexo also provides sustainable meats and dairy products from local farms.

But for now, the focus is on getting the word out about the produce. After all, the most popular meal sold at The Reef is the salad bar.

Sodexo posts information about the produce available that month on a flyer next to the salad bar. The flyer includes information on what farm the produce comes from and how far away from campus it is.

The plan for the market is to see how it goes the first time and to go from there.

“This is exploratory,” Duran said. “I want to make sure there is a general interest.”

The Harbor Market runs bi-weekly on Tuesdays at the Harbor walk. It is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Chef accepts job at retirement home

Continued from p.1

liking St. Pete’s scenery and the university.

Morris has been a popular chef at The Reef because she liked to spend time with students.

“It’s fun to talk with the students,” she said. “What I’ll miss most about the job is hanging out with students and looking at the fish tank.”

Morris’ favorite USFSP memories were making different food every night at the HotSpot bar and talking to customers and friends who stopped by. She was also a member of the Video Game Club. She enjoyed last year’s Super Bowl event at the Reef, and she liked to play ping-pong with Matt “Subaru,” who got his nickname “because he drives a Subaru,” Morris said.

Morris also loved cooking for the Residence Hall grill-out weekend last summer. Morris’ favorite foods to cook are soul food, Italian food and food that students request. The Sodexo staff also enjoyed working with her. Andrea Nguyen, a USFSP senior and marketing intern for Sodexo, said she learned a lot about the food business through Morris.

“Morris taught me about cooking, work ethics and pretty much everything else,” Brinson said.

Brinson’s favorite memory with Morris was cooking for last semester’s catering event.

Chef Morris will be missed, but she hopes that students will continue to have fun and abide by her favorite saying: “Teamwork makes the dream work.”

Chef Ashley Morris worked at The Reef for two years and made friendships with USF St. Petersburg students.
I'm addicted.

I've been playing on the app Trivia Crack for two days, and I can't get enough.

When my friend first told me about the game, I laughed at the name. "Crack." How funny.

It was more accurate than I realized. The game may not be an illicit drug, but it sure is addicting.

The app, also an online game, allows you to find your Facebook friends and challenge them to rounds of trivia. They can respond at any time throughout the day to answer a question.

This addiction is apparently not only my problem. Trivia Crack has been the No. 1 free-app download in America for the past month, beating out other popular apps such as Instagram and Facebook Messenger, according to Bloomberg Businessweek.

So we're all doomed to spend the next month staring at our phones and versing one another in trivia.

And then, we'll all forget about it.

We forget about a lot of things actually. I mean, whatever happened to these guys?

The Ice Bucket Challenge. In August, if you weren't dumping ice over your head or donating a fortune to the ALS Association, people thought you were heartless. Now if you dump a bucket of ice over your head, you might get some strange looks.

Flappy bird. OK, yes, this app got pulled from the app store. But how can we forget the countless people who spent innumerable hours tapping a screen? And then the gut-wrenching moans when the bird hit the pole? On second thought, maybe it's better this game died. At least Trivia Crack is sharpening our brains a bit.

Instant messenger. Ten years ago, we didn't text. We logged on to our computers and talked with funny screen names like catdogfishbird23. I guess social media added in messaging and took the market right away from those chat rooms. Apparently they're still around, but since when have you used them to talk to your friends?

Rest in peace, AIM.

Matthew McConaughey and Anne Hathaway star in Interstellar, a movie that melds truthful science principles and fiction.
Artist, rapper help bridge gap between St. Pete and Tampa

By Juliet Morales
Crow’s Nest Contributor

One is a visual artist who has been drawing since he was a toddler decorating the walls of his family home. The other is a rapper who finds inspiration at every turn in life, jotting down ideas and lines on an ever-present notepad.

Will Kunce and Hagan Lee are not exactly kindred spirits, but both were featured in November at an event called “Bridging the Gap” at Sly Bar at 2061 Central Ave. in St. Petersburg’s Midtown district. The event is the brainchild of Tiffany Taylor, 26, an event planner who works to bring together visual and performance artists from both sides of the Howard Frankland Bridge.

“I’ve never seen someone try to unite artists from different areas together,” she said. “I think it’s very important in St. Pete because we try to keep everything local, we try to keep artists working together.”

Taylor calls her endeavor Rose Gold Creations, so named because her grandmother’s favorite flowers were roses and she loves rose gold. At first, Rose Gold Creations was a name to showcase photography and other creative projects, but it turned into something much larger when she decided she wanted to shine light on the growing area of Midtown.

Kunce, 30, a visual artist from Largo who now lives in St. Pete, said his fascination with art started early when his mom would allow him to draw on the walls of their home as a toddler. Being an introverted child, Kunce, who said he gets his inspiration to create art from people, uses marker, ink pen and acrylic on everything from wood fencing to aluminum foil.

“Finding a style is hard and easy at the same time,” he said. “You start by battling yourself and experimenting with a set goal of trying to find a new way of doing things. Once you stop pressuring yourself and start to let go, I found that it just started to flow.”

Lee, 31, is part of a rap group called Mickey Spixx. He said writing is something he feels he can do anywhere, from being in the comfort of his home, to the workplace -- but the best place to write is in the studio where he can bounce ideas off people.

“Sometimes the moment will strike (and) I’ll get certain lines or ideas and concepts and I’ll write those down. There’s just a bunch of sporadic things I have on my notepad.”

Food fight: froyo vs. ice cream

By Sarah Norcini
Crow’s Nest Contributor

As a college student, going out for a frozen treat can be expensive. So we decided to compare two places within walking distance of campus, located on Beach Drive.

We reviewed Kilwins, an ice cream and sweets shop and My Yogurt Cafe (MYC), a business that sells frozen yogurt.

To some, the debate over flavor and healthiness with frozen treats may not be a big deal. For others, however, it is an important detail. So based on our experience at the two shops, we will try to offer some help in the debate over frozen yogurt or ice-cream.

The first and probably most important factor to any college student is price. We just can’t spend $5 on one scoop of either dessert. That’s where Kilwins doesn’t cut it. The price for a cup with one scoop of ice cream is $4.69.

MYC does things a bit differently. There is a selection of cup sizes, frozen yogurt and toppings. You have the option to pay as much or as little as you want at $0.99 an ounce. Not only that, but MYC is a part of the Bulls in the Burg program, so we get a 25 percent discount. So in terms of price, MYC comes out on top.

The next factor is flavor options. Kilwins takes the cake. There really is something for everyone. The flavors range from traditional chocolate to more creative selections, such as orange-pineapple.

MYC, on the other hand, lacks in the flavor department. There are 12 flavors of more standard fare, like coffee and vanilla. But the toppings more than make up for that. Fruits, hot fudge, myraid chocolates and nuts make the simple flavors into a one-of-a-kind creation.

The last factor is distance, which shouldn’t be an issue since Kilwins and MYC -- located almost right next to each other on Beach Drive -- are an easy 10- to 15-minute walk from campus. And even if you don’t live on campus, it’s not too out of the way for anyone living in St. Petersburg. With plenty of parking on the street, there isn’t much competition to get to either of these places.

Taking all of these factors into consideration, we believe that My Yogurt Cafe and frozen yogurt is the winner. Its prices, 25 percent student discount and overall selection of flavors and toppings make it the better choice. Kilwins is not entirely out of the race, because of its equal distance and edge in flavor. But the prices may be a little too expensive for a college budget due to the lack of a student discount. So in the debate, frozen yogurt wins this round.

life@crowsneststpete.com
What the editors think

Let’s talk about library hours

Your editors weigh in on the news about the recent push for longer library hours.

I support the hours movement

By Emily Wehunt
News Editor

I share the frustration that many students have about the library hours.

I am a night owl, so I get a lot of my school work done in the later hours of the day. In addition, almost every semester I have taken a night class that doesn’t get out until 8:50 p.m. So by the time I get to the library and get situated, I have roughly an hour to do school work before I am rushed out of the library at 10 o’clock sharp. On weekends the hours are even worse.

I do appreciate the extended hours given during finals week, but this isn’t the only time we have loads of work to do … it is all semester long. Keeping the library open 24/7 doesn’t seem to be what the students are looking for, and it certainly isn’t what I am asking. But I do, however, think keeping the library open till at least midnight Monday through Thursday would ease the demand and desire for longer library hours.

Almost all professors have assignments due at 11:59 p.m. on Canvas. Keeping the library open till midnight would give students who don’t have internet access or a computer a better opportunity for success.

At most universities there are places either on or around campus for students to study all night. And yes, our campus is much smaller than many of these schools, but that doesn’t mean we don’t deserve similar privileges.

If the university’s main goal is for students to be successful, then the issue shouldn’t be taken lightly. Students need a quiet, safe place to go to study with access to computers, printers and other materials. And as USFSP continues to grow its student body, the demand for longer library hours is also going to grow.

The need for longer hours is present. As a senior heading towards graduation, it is possible that extended library hours is something that I won’t see happen during my last few months here. But I hope for the sake of current and future students that administrators think this something worth considering.

It’s no secret how expensive college is, so let’s help give the students what they need to succeed.

Students need more places to study late

By Emily Tinti
Arts and Life Editor
Chat Conversation End

We don’t always get what we want. We can stand up and have a long list of all the reasons why we should have that thing. We can even recruit our peers to join us in support. It could seem like the most obvious, rational thing to have, but we will not always have that thing. Equal voting rights? Check. Child labor laws? Check. Widespread marriage equality? Almost, we’re getting there. Longer library hours for USF St. Petersburg students? We’ll see.

Nelson Poynter Library hours are not ideal for those who take advantage of the quiet and resourceful location later in the evening and on weekends. It may not seem as colossal a need in comparison to other landmark movements, but I don’t think that matters. If there is an issue and more than one person is willing to (figuratively) fight for it, then I’d say that’s awesome. Do it. Progress to any degree is still progress.

Organized, peaceful acts to convey dissatisfaction can be successful. The students who brought dozens of fellow Bulls together in the library had it right. The idea, unique and constructive. The demonstration, not as effective as it could have been, but still a step in the right direction. The demand has been vocalized, and will hopefully be proven soon.

But just because presence might have dwindled down, the necessity doesn’t evaporate. A number of discussions and complaints can be seen on social media at least during final exam week, but the need extends further than that: students, even if they aren’t regulars and only visit a couple nights a week, recognize the desire for longer library hours, for the benefit of individuals and the university as a whole.

I wouldn’t view the lower attendance in a completely negative light. It’s still the beginning of the semester. Students are probably trying to get as much out of these slower weeks as possible, in terms of having a social life. Maybe they didn’t show up not because they wouldn’t take advantage of longer hours, but because they had prior engagements!

That didn’t make it necessarily right; students should participate in every opportunity to better their university. Students should remind themselves of how convenient extended hours are during final exams, and consider how useful the extension would be throughout the entire semester.

I am anticipating some kind of extension on library hours because I believe in our student body. If enough people come together, if enough people show their support, I think it will happen.

Have an opinion on the library hours? Send your thoughts to jnesslar@mail.usf.edu

Photo of the week

MLK Parade

Karl Dujour marches with housing and residential life at the Martin Luther King Jr. parade on Monday, USF St. Petersburg students gathered with their campus organizations and represented USFSP during the parade. The parade started at Tropicana Field and ended at Vinoy Park.

Submit a picture with a caption for photo of the week to jnesslar@mail.usf.edu by Friday at 5 p.m. The best photo submission will run next week.

By Emily Wehunt
News Editor

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It’s no secret how expensive college is, so let’s help give the students what they need to succeed.
The Dawn of Orion

BY JOEY VARS
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

For those of you who think NASA and the U.S. space program ended years ago with the retirement of the space shuttles, think again. Last month, while we at USF St. Petersburg were cramming for finals, NASA took its first major step toward the human exploration of our solar system.

The Orion spacecraft, conceived as the space shuttle’s successor in 2005, flew its inaugural test mission the morning of Dec. 5. Known as Exploration Flight Test 1, the four-and-a-half-hour mission tested the spacecraft’s systems, flight profile and heat shield.

While there were more than 87 different goals of the flight, the primary objective was to test the capsule’s heat shield at near-lunar return velocities. Since the Space Shuttle was not designed to fly to the moon, its heat shield needed only to withstand temperatures of around 2,732 degrees Fahrenheit. Since Orion will send humans to the moon and beyond, it will hit the Earth’s atmosphere at far greater speeds -- upward of 4,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

Orion marks a departure from NASA’s activities of the last 39 years. No crew-capable space capsule has been flown since 1975, and since 1981, when space planes were first used to move crews to and from low-Earth orbit. Although the space shuttle was instrumental in constructing the International Space Station, it was never designed for exploration. It was the equivalent of a pickup truck -- capable of bringing large payloads to orbit, but not for long-distance travel.

Originally slated for a Dec. 4 launch, numerous issues, including a wayward boat, high winds and rocket issues, ultimately delayed the launch 24 hours to Dec. 5. The Delta IV Heavy rocket, produced by the United Launch Alliance Corporation, lifted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station Space Launch Complex 37 at 7:05 a.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Shortly after liftoff, the first milestone of Orion’s flight occurred when five aero-dynamic panels that protected the spacecraft during launch were jettisoned. An hour into the flight, the real test of Orion began as the upper stage of the Delta IV Heavy rocket propelled the spacecraft into a high-altitude orbit. It crossed the lower Van Allen Radiation belt twice during the flight, testing out the capsule’s radiation shielding. The space shuttles never flew to the altitude where the radiation belts are located, so such shielding techniques had not been practiced since the Apollo program of the 1960s.

About three hours after liftoff, at 10:16 a.m., Orion topped out at a maximum altitude of 3,604 miles above Earth and began its return descent. Reaching speeds of 20,000 miles per hour, Orion slammed into the atmosphere at speeds similar to what it would reach upon a return from the moon.

Four and a half hours after leaving Florida, the capsule splashed down in the Pacific Ocean, 640 miles southwest of San Diego. Splashdown occurred at 11:29 a.m. just three miles from the center of its projected landing zone. The U.S. Navy amphibious cargo dock USS Anchorage recovered the capsule.

Following a return to shore, Orion was placed in a special transport container for a four-day, cross-country road trip back to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Starting in mid-January, the capsule will begin to be disassembled for detailed analysis and inspection. Data that NASA gathers from both the flight and the capsule’s subsequent analysis will aid the agency in completing the final design review for the spacecraft, which is set for March. The changes that will be made will be incorporated in the Orion capsule slated for launch in 2018.

My reflections on Exploration Flight Test-1:

The day before the first launch attempt, I had the opportunity to visit the rocket and spacecraft on the launch pad. Standing only 200 feet away – closer than the rocket itself was tall – with the mechanical Titan towering above me, I could not help but contemplate how different this flight was compared to the space shuttles I had grown up with.

Growing up, NASA was the space shuttles I had grown up with. It’s what was ingrained in the public consciousness for decades. Most people read about the moon landings in history books, and some older folks remembered it, but for my generation, it was all we knew. For a future generation, Orion will be all that they know. They’ll grow up admiring the sleek conical spacecraft that was about to take its first baby steps to the stars.

This was the first flight of a completely new spacecraft. I remembered the day that President George Bush directed NASA to build the Crew Exploration Vehicle – the successor to the space shuttles and the evolutionary predecessor to Orion.

The Orion was finally ready to take flight 3,978 days later. It has been over a month and a half since Orion launched on that chilly December morning. The dawn of America’s new age of space exploration was one of the most inspiring events I have ever experienced. Having worked for NASA previously, as well as a reporting on launches for the past two years, I have seen many things which excite and inspire me. But none of them compared to Orion.

On Jan. 6, while working at the Cape, I was allowed to see Orion once more. This time, instead of on top of a rocket and encased in a protective shroud, the capsule was at ground level right in front of me, with its black tiles exposed to the elements. It was the first time I saw the capsule following the December launch.

The scorch marks from the fiery re-entry were clearly visible on both the black tiles of the capsule and the head shield underneath. The balloons that helped keep the vehicle afloat following splashdown sat deflated at apex of the capsule. At various locations, small circular samples of the vehicle were already removed for laboratory analysis. Red protective panels covered the vehicle’s four primary windows from toxic fuel that had yet to be drained.

Orion was a large vehicle compared to the Apollo capsule, a fact we were reminded of when we approached. We weren’t allowed closer than 20 feet to the craft, but engineers and technicians were directly next to the capsule, further highlighting the spacecraft’s size compared to a man.

The sight was beautiful to behold, especially after the significance of its mission and the inspiration it brought.

For the past three and a half years, the U.S. space program seemed to disappear behind a political and financial black cloud. Orion’s developmental life was far from easy – in fact, the original rocket it was supposed to fly on as part of the Constellation program was canceled.

But through all this, Orion survived. It flew into space three years after the last space shuttles did. To the public, that meant the end of NASA. But in the aerospace industry, optimism remained. America would again fly a new crew-capable spacecraft.

This first test launch is something that every American should be proud of. Yes, their tax dollars paid for it, but in the grand scheme of things, it proves that our country is trying to regain a stellar dominance it lost. Space exploration showcases a country’s technological power. The space shuttle was ahead of its time and a spectacular vehicle for over three decades, but it proved to be unable to adapt to the changing paradigm in the space industry.

Orion’s versatility and 21st-century design evoked memories of the first space ships in the 1960s that were equally ahead of their time – flags of their countries technological prowess and political dedication.

The turnout for the flight alone proves that the pride Orion instilled was infectious – more than 27,800 people flocked to the Titusville/Cocoa Beach/Cape Canaveral area from Dec. 3-5. This was the greatest number of attendance for a NASA launch since the final flights of the Space Shuttle in 2010/2011. Additionally, #Orion trended on Twitter for almost 20 hours – far longer than any NASA program had in years.

Not only was it the dawning of a new era of American space exploration, but also the first moment in many years when NASA could be seen publicly preparing to send humans back into space domestically. Orion was more than just a test flight – it was the dawn of the future, and it inspired a new generation of explorers, engineers and scientists in four and a half hours on a December morning.

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### Bulls kicker shines in Shrine Game

**Andrew Caplan | Staff Reporter**

On Saturday, college football players from around the country gathered in St. Petersburg for the fourth straight year to play in the 90th annual East-West Shrine Game.

The game provides seniors one last chance to shine for NFL scouts before training for the NFL combines, something USF's Marvin "Money" Kloss took full advantage of in the 19-3 victory over the West team.

Kloss, a former Lou Groza finalist, was named the game's Offensive MVP after scoring all the game points heading into the fourth quarter. Kloss finished 4-for-4 on field goal attempts, hitting from 47, 39, 31 and 19 yards out and he also made an extra-point kick for the East team.

"I didn't think I was gonna have this type of exposure, just in one game, but I was hoping I would," Kloss said. "Just being able to showcase your skills and really show the scouts what you can do and what you can do for their organization has just been great."

Joining his teammate was fellow USF wide receiver Andre Davis, who holds 13 USF receiving records, caught three passes in the game for a total of 36 yards.

"We had a great group of guys," Davis said. "My receiver group was great. I feel like everybody on my team came out here and performed." Pro football hall of famer Mike Singletary coached the East team against former NFL coach Jim Zorn. Kloss said Singletary taught him a lot during his week with the team, not just game plays, but life lessons.

"The event is much more than a game. It is played to bring awareness and raise money for the Shriner's Hospital for Children.

"I wish the whole NFL was set up that way, where every game you play, for every point you score, somebody donated," Singletary said. "That way, it'll bring a whole new meaning to the game. To me, when you play football and you go out there and you're playing, it's like the gladiator, but you're playing to help kids. There's no better reason to play."