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Crow's Nest : 2017 : 08 : 21

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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Ex-VP elect sues school over assault claims 

A former Student Government leader says he was kicked out of school in May after he was found guilty of sexually assaulting a female student in his dormitory room. Now he is suing the university, contending that the charges were false and he was denied due process in contesting them.

In his suit, filed June 28 in Pinellas Circuit Court, the student asks the court to overturn his expulsion and remove a cloud over his future.

“Although I am not looking to ever re-enroll at USF, an expulsion will effectively end my future anywhere else,” he says in documents included in the lawsuit. “I will lose all opportunities to obtain a good education as well as to pursue my dream of going to law school.”

The lawsuit does not name him, calling him John Doe, but it says he resigned from Student Government last spring after he was elected vice president of the student body.

That would be Samuel Goetz, then 19, whose resignation on April 17 — just seven weeks after he was elected — caught student government officials and Student Government president-elect David Thompson to name a new vice president.

Goetz, who is now attending university elsewhere, declined to comment on the lawsuit. Dean of Students Jacob Diaz, who upheld the university conduct-board’s decision to expel Goetz, declined to discuss the case with The Crow’s Nest, citing the pending lawsuit.

But documents in the lawsuit spell out the reasons the university board decided to expel Goetz. The board concluded that Goetz was guilty of non-consensual sexual contact and non-consensual intercourse.

“Instinct does not deny that Goetz was guilty of non-consensual sexual contact and non-consensual intercourse,” says a part of the lawsuit. “...instinct does not deny that Goetz was guilty of non-consensual sexual contact and non-consensual intercourse.”

See “LAWSUIT” on P2

By Timothy Fanning

ttanning@mail.usf.edu

Campus gears up for one of the largest classes so far

The new University Student Center was opening five years ago when The Crow’s Nest began publishing stories that raised questions about the way the facility was being financed.

The reaction of university administrators was quick and fierce. Editors Christopher Guinn and Ren LaForme went to the Tampa campus expecting to conduct follow-up interviews on the financing issue.

But when they got there, they said, they found themselves surrounded by half a dozen college officials who heatedly took issue with their reporting and lectured them on the difference between fact and opinion.

“In that conversation, we pushed back and said we would keep doing it because we think there is something here,” said LaForme, who is now the digital tools reporter for the Poynter Institute, a school for journalists in St. Petersburg. “But having two people in their 20s, sitting at a conference table at the top of a building in Tampa with administrators around us, it was very much an intimidation tactic.”

That scene — student journalists butting heads with college administrators — has played out repeatedly on American college campuses in recent years.

At some schools, student editors have found their budgets cut, their public records requests ignored or their advisers fired, or all three, and some disputes have ended up in court.

In recent months, the debate has returned to USF St. Petersburg.

At issue is a proposal to put The Crow’s Nest, which is largely independent, under the control of the Department of Journalism and Digital Communication.

That approach was raised by top university administrators and Student Government President David Thompson, who say it might improve the paper and enhance educational opportunities for journalism students. But the journalism department doesn’t want that responsibility, according to its chair, Deni Elliott, and journalism professors agree it is best to leave the paper under the control of student editors.

Several former Crow’s Nest editors-in-chief also oppose the proposal, which they fear is a ploy to try to rein in skeptical, sometimes unflattering, coverage of the university administration and Student Government.

“The paper has always been and was always meant to be a forum for students, faculty and administrators about the role and responsibilities of student journalists.”

See “ADMINS” on P4

By Brianna Rodriguez

Contributor

A s students move in and prepare for the first day of class, USF St. Petersburg’s community comes together to welcome the newcomers in a series of exciting and engaging weekend events.

Harborside Activities Board (HAB), Campus Recreation, Student Government and many other organizations put together numerous activities for the annual Week of Welcome, a week of events to give students a chance to get to know one another on campus.

“Meeting new people and getting more familiar with the school is what it is all about,” said biology freshmen, Katherine Lachick.

The first event, a back-to-school bingo and residents life ice cream social, took place Friday. Sponsored by the Residence Hall Association and HAB, students had the chance to socialize, eat ice cream, play bingo and win free groceries.

On Saturday, students

Welcome Bulls: On Saturday, students gathered on Harbor Lawn for a free BBQ. There were also multiple inflatable activities, leader games and a DJ. WOW events are meant to give students a chance to get to know each other.

Pleasure of the Fly Catchers

A do-it-yourself fly catching method solved the Tavern at Bayboro’s summer-long fly problem. Owner Tom Herzhauser estimates he trapped around 100,000 dead flies while using a makeshift fly trap commonly used by fishermen.

See “LAWSUIT” on P2

Whether President of the United States, or student body president of a small university in the Tampa Bay area, your words matter. When USEFP president David Thompson saw events unfold in Charlottesville, Virginia, he was speechless.

WHY THE CROW’S NEST IS THE WEEKLY STUDENT NEWSPAPER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG. ALL CONTENT IN THE PUBLICATION IS PRODUCED BY USFSP STUDENTS. SINGLE COPIES FREE.
the sexual contact and sexual- 
intercourse occurred," the 
board found. 

"He also admits to "fake 
crying" to try to make the other 
student feel better about what 
happened and to "conco " her.

The board also found that 
the woman – called Jane Roe 
to protect her identity – tried to 
designe with Goetz by repeatedly telling her no.

A national debate 

The expansion and lawsuit 
come at a time of renewed 
national debate over sexual assault 
on U.S. college campuses.

During the administration of 
Barack Obama, the U.S. De-
artment of Education warned 
that campus sexual assaults 
had become a major problem. 
It directed school officials to 
crack down on alleged sexual 
offenders or risk losing some 
Federal funds.

The Obama administration 
also ordered that sexual assault 
complaints should be investi-
gated using a "preponderance 
of evidence" standard. That is a 
lower burden of proof than the 
"clear and convincing evidence" 
standard previously used by 
many schools and the "beyond 
a reasonable doubt" standard used 
in criminal courts.

In recent weeks, Betsy 
DeVos, the new secretary of edu-
cation in the administration of 
Donald Trump, has signaled that 
she would reconsider the 
Obama-era guidelines. Critics 
of the guidelines say they go 
too far, creating a bias against 
students accused of assault.

"I think that on one level it 
makes sense that the Office of 
Civil Rights (in the Department 
of Education) should be calling 
into question things like "how 
are we providing the process 
and what is the most fair for all 
parties involved," " said Dean 
Diaz. "To me this is part and 
parcel of having any new presi-
dential administration in place. 
I think those accused should 
question the (Obama-era) poli-
cy. It's in their right to question 
how this is being applied in 
both an academic institution as 
well as legally.
The Goetz case marks the 
second time in three years that 
a student accused of sexual 
assault has been expelled by 
the university.

In May 2014, Darren Lasso 
was arrested on sexual bat-
tery charges and kicked out of 
school after he assaulted a fe-
male student in her dorm room. 
Lasso, who faced up to 15 
years in prison if convicted, 
later pleaded guilty to a lesser 
charge of felony battery. He was 
sentenced to five years' proba-
tion and ordered to perform 100 
hours of community service and 
pay $1,334 in court costs. 

Through his attorney, he ex-
pressed remorse for his behavior. 
According to USESP's (annual 
security and fire safety report, 
there were four reported cases 
of rape on campus from in 2013 -
2015. Data that would reflect 
was the necessary remedy, why 
did they wait nearly an entire 
year to impose the sanc-
tions?" his lawsuit says.

The lawsuit also contends 
that Goetz was denied due process 
by the university throughout its 
investment and the university 
"failed to meet the burden of 
proof of providing competent 
substantial evidence." 

He was not allowed to see 
the text message evidence 
submitted by the woman or the 
statement of allegations she 
made against him, the suit says. 
He also was denied the oppor-
tunity to cross-examine her 
because she was permitted to 
submit written testimony rather 
than appearing for testimony at 
the conduct board hearing. 
"At Samuel's hearing, there 
were three students and one 
faculty member," Goetz's 
attorney, Mark O'Brien, told 
The Crow's Nest. "The 
complaining witness did not 
testify nor could we force her 
to testify. There is no right 
to cross-examination. At the 
end of an hour of hearing, three 
students ended Samuel's academic life, so, yes, the 
process is unfair."

Goetz, who withdrew from 
his classes before the hearing, 
has no intention of seeking 
re-enrollment at the universi-
ty, his suit says. 
He asks the court to over-
turn his expulsion and remove 
the blot on his record.

Goetz is "19 years old and 
standing at the proverbial 
fork in the road," the suit says. 
"He is hoping that you (the court) will allow him to pursue his education elsewhere without 
a formal expulsion on his 
record to follow him for the 
rest of his life and potentially 
prohibit him from ever pursu-
ing law school and his dream of 
becoming an attorney."
Parking meter rates increase 50 percent over summer

By Anna Bryson

I t's early in the morning, then the owner of The Tavern at Halo Bay is just back in town for the fall semester, you are bound to notice one big change in downtown St. Petersburg: Parking prices in the area have jumped 50 percent. The city increased the $1 an hour parking rate to $1.50 on Beach Drive, and ended free parking on Central Avenue over the weekend.

They also extended meter hours until 10 p.m. on Beach Drive and 8 p.m. on Central Avenue. Downtown residential permits in business areas will be scaled back, allowing residents to park for unlimited periods of time at no charge. Paid parking around campus will not be affected.

The new parking regulations were created following a downtown and Edge District parking study completed in May.

“Pharmacist turned manger”

“The intent of increasing the rates for the short-term time period is to help mitigate demands in these areas by encouraging people to park in areas that are cheaper and improving turn-over,” the study said.

A decade later, Herzhauser and Kennedy, Dale Mastry, owner of Mastry’s Alligator Bar, was one of the first businesses in the area to remove the bucket in the fall of 2016. Despite rate of addiction, some students turn to Adderall to focus

By Paris Hadley

Despite rate of addiction, some students turn to Adderall to focus

By Noel Mullins

The proofs in the bucket, Tavern owner solves fly problem

By Anna Bryson

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can publish things to other students,” said Devin Rodriguez, editor-in-chief in 2016 - 2017. “This is a place for students to grow, a place for students to speak unhindered, and any movement by faculty or administrators to put more nets or obstacles in that path goes against what a student newspaper stands for.”

“I think there’s a hell of an advantage to being thrown in the position to have to run this thing,” said Guinn, now a city government reporter for The Ledger in Lakeland. “I mean you can’t not have a newspaper, so you have to put something in it every week, and being responsible for that really sharpens the senses in ways that are so significant to your career later.”

Articles were ‘untimely’
The Crow’s Nest now comes under the university administration’s office of Student Life and Engagement, which is the umbrella over Student Government, the Handbook Activities Board, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and Campus Recreation department.

The budget for the annual budget, which this year is $48,387, comes out of students’ activities and service fees and is set each year by Student Government. The newspaper has an advisor – an adjunct instructor and former Ledge in Lakeland – but student editors make the final decisions.

Talk of a new home for The Crow’s Nest now began last spring, according to Martin Tadlock, the regional vice chancellor of academic affairs. He said Regional Chancellor Sophia Wisniewska asked him to inquire about various models of collegiate journalism and how the journalism faculty here interacts with the student newspaper.

“We were looking at academic planning all of last year. We have new initiatives rolling out over the next five years, and this was just one of those inquiries I was making about how things work here at USFSP,” said Tadlock, who became vice chancellor of academic affairs in July 2016. These inquiries came after the newspaper published articles that the university felt were untimely, he said.

“There were some concerns about a couple of the stories that were published in The Crow’s Nest. One was about (Arts and Sciences) Dean Frank Biafora near the end of the search process with St. Pete College, and that story came out when he was a finalist for the (president’s) position, said Tadlock.

“The search was still underway, which is a very sensitive time to have an article of the dean over here who is a finalist for the position over there.”

(The Crow’s Nest story was published April 17 – seven days after St. Pete College announced the names of the five finalists for its presidency and six days after a story about it appeared in the Tampa Bay Times.)

“There was another story about a staff member who had left the university the same time that individual was applying for a position somewhere else,” said Tadlock.

“And the time again had a very negative impact on that person’s ability to get a job somewhere else,” said Tadlock.

Tadlock said he could not recall the name of the staff member.

“The timing of those two stories definitely contributed to me being asked about The Crow’s Nest, how it’s organized and how it functions,” said Tadlock. “I answer to (Wisniewska), so when she asks me a question about any area in the academic affairs I go and find out and get answers to help educate her.”

Wisniewska told The Crow’s Nest that administrators are looking for the best possible structure for the student newspaper.

“We’re looking at providing the most sensible and most educationally beneficial structure for the student writers,” said Wisniewska, who added that some students have complained to her about the paper. “We’re having conversations with the guidance of the journalism faculty but have not made decisions, as far as I know.”

Thompson, the Student Government president, said he brought concerns to Tadlock over the summer.

Thompson said he wanted to ensure the newspaper has better academic support and to avoid potential conflicts of interest between Student Government, which funds the newspaper, and the paper, which covers Student Government. In 2016-17, the newspaper’s budget was $50,155. Last spring, the student Senate – citing a looming decline in revenue from student activities fees – tentatively cut the paper’s budget for 2017-2018 to $42,648 while increasing the budgets for several other campus organizations.

After editors protested, the Senate raised the budget to $45,648. A Senate leader said the paper’s sometimes skeptical coverage of Student Government did not figure in the budget deliberations.

Referring to that episode, Thompson said he wanted to ensure that The Crow’s Nest is protected from any form of malpractice or abuse of power in the future.

“Run don’t Run: Frank LoMonte warned that the university should be cautious about giving the advisor too much editorial power over the newspaper.

“Education is a place for students to grow, a place for students to speak unhindered, and any movement by faculty or administrators to put more nets or obstacles in that path goes against what a student newspaper stands for.”

“We were also thinking that the (journalism) department has people in the journalism field who can assist and provide and potentially make contributing to The Crow’s Nest a mandatory part of the Journalism and Digital Communication degree,” Thompson said.

A ‘boutique department’
Frank LoMonte is a journalist-turned-lawyer who for nearly a decade was executive director of the Student Press Law Center, a mandatory part of the Journalism and Digital Communication degree.

Thompson, the chair of the journalism department, told The Crow’s Nest the department does not want that responsibility.

“I think there are some colleges and universities that have really good journalism departments that do collegiate journalism. We are not one of them,” said Elliott. “We’re a very small, boutique department. There are some things we do extraordinarily well, and I don’t think that our journalism faculty would be interested in picking up collegiate journalism as an area of focus.”

In a meeting Friday, the journalism faculty agreed with Elliott.

Members of the administration have complained to them about Crow’s Nest coverage, journalism professors said, but it is best to leave the publication in the hands of student editors who are learning the craft.

“Our university does a fabulous job of doing open meetings and being transparent in its operations,” Elliott said in an interview. “But at the same time it’s kind of like a philosophical question of how does a community like the university function well when it’s being scrutinized by people within the community?

“I would argue that is an important role for any university that is all about preparing students to be active citizens in a democracy,” she said. “The best practice we can give students in journalism or any other field is to help them learn how to think critically about the environment in which they find themselves.”

Elliott said she will seek to arrange “educational opportunities for the entire college community” – including top administrators – on the role of the student press on campus.

Role and responsibilities
The first opportunity came Aug. 14, when LoMonte came to campus at Elliott’s invitation to speak about the role and responsibilities of student journalists.

His talk attracted more than three dozen people, including five former Crow’s Nest editors-in-chief and most of the current staff and journalism faculty. Wisniewska and Tadlock both put in brief appearances.

LoMonte spoke to the problems that college newspapers face when housed under a journalism department – as proposed here – or a school’s student life department, where The Crow’s Nest is now.

LoMonte said one of the benefits of putting student media under student life is that it establishes journalism as more of an extracurricular activity. “I think that journalism should not be regarded as an academic activity because then you get academics, well intentioned or not, trying to micromanage,” he said.

LoMonte said.

The College Media Association, a collegiate media advocacy group, frowns on advisers who require student reporters to submit their work to them before publication, LoMonte said.

Instead, advisers should have an open door policy, where students can bring drafts of articles to be looked over and edited before publication.

“It’s only when the adviser says, ‘I’m going to take the ‘run-or-don’t-run’ decision’ out of the hands of the student editors,” said LoMonte.

“That runs a bit of risk of blurring that otherwise clear line of non-responsibility on the part of the institution. Keeping that relationship truly advisory in nature and not where the adviser wears the super editor or the super publisher hat is really the safest thing legally for everybody.”
government elections are held in a body called the Senate, and a cabinet led by President.


equate students in 2016-2017), had 1,608 undergrads and grad students in the College of Education.

The 13-member Board of Trustees, which is made up of multiple teams that work together to plan and promote events for students to attend.

Why is a school in the southernmost university in Florida? The University of South Florida was one of the first places I go to share my work. As an alum, it's one of the places I go to share my work and professional opportunities. I'm still a powerful communication medium if moderated properly. As an alum, it's one of the places I go to share my work and professional opportunities. I'm so excited to get back into the flow and confusion of graduation.

Compiled from Crow's Nest contributors. By Kayla Jensen

The Know It All's guide is a public group and everyone is welcome to join, including graduates and professors. Members compose posts of all types, including direct questions about upcoming events or courses; updates on campus or local policies; requests for roommates, volunteers and nannies; advertisements for items for purchase; and towards the end of the year, questions filtered in during the rush and confusion of graduation.

"It's still a powerful communication medium if moderated properly. As an alum, it's one of the places I go to share my work and professional opportunities. I'm so excited to get back into the flow and confusion of graduation."
Dear students,

This fall semester is upon us. The dog days of summer are almost over, and the new academic school year is set to begin and your local campus newspaper is back.

My name is Michael, and I am the editor-in-chief of The Crow’s Nest, a paper written and edited by students for students. I speak for all of the staff when I say that we are here for you. One thing that won’t change, despite the shift to digital platforms, is our commitment to bringing news to you in a more timely, engaging way.

When I ran to be student body president, I wanted to be president for the entire campus, not just for those on the Harbor-side Activities Board or in the Black Student Association — or even in Student Government. As one of the first African-American student body president at USF-St. Petersburg, I’ve worked hard to achieve a balancing act: representing the entire student body but also knowing what being a minority is like, and how harmful it can be when your leaders don’t show concern for your wellbeing.

However, it is in moments like these that I’m acutely reminded of my blackness. In an era still dominated by white men, I must make sure that minority voices aren’t pushed to the side, like they so often are. For many of those who are reading this, what happened in Charlottesville may seem distant — both physically and historically — but for people like me, it seems like yesterday. Slavery, the Civil War, Jim Crow and segregation were only a few generations ago. I can directly trace my lineage back to Jamaica and identify slaves my great-great-grandparents when they were held, and others can too. For many of us, the wounds of the past are still fresh.

My grandmother was born in an era where most black people couldn’t take out a mortgage or even buy a home if a white person wasn’t there to vouch for them. When my parents were born in \( \text{1960s} \), they were treated. My parents were born in an era where most black people couldn’t take out a mortgage or even buy a home if a white person wasn’t there to vouch for them. When my parents were born in \( \text{1960s} \), they were treated.

In fifth grade, it was singing the lunch menu items during the school’s morning news segment, trying to inform the student body about the latest happenings on campus. A few fun facts about me: I’m a trivia geek and national quiz bowl champion, a craft beer enthusiast, a black belt in taekwondo and an obsessive sports fan — especially when it comes to combat sports.

But here’s the only thing you really need to know about me: I am so fiercely passionate about journalism and am dedicated to bringing you the news that you need and deserve.

I spent the summer interning for my hometown paper, the Bradenton Herald. There I braved the winds of a tropical storm, chased a fire at a tire factory and spent a few 15 hour days covering a murder trial. All of this prepared me to be your campus newspaper editor.

But it’s not just me: I am so proud of this year’s staff. We have a team of editors, reporters and staff members that are poised and capable of giving you the best product possible. Our team has worked tirelessly over the summer to ensure that your campus paper is the best it can be.

So, what can you expect from this year?

For starters, a stronger digital presence. We aren’t just your school newspaper, we are your source for all things happening around campus. While our weekly print publication will remain central to what The Crow’s Nest is, we are constantly evolving. This year, you can expect videos, audio and more.

We will also be rolling out a different news cycle — one that not only features the weekly stories in print that you’ve grown accustomed to for nearly 50 years, but one that will see smaller, daily online stories, bringing news to you in a more timely manner.

We aim to be more interactive. Here at The Crow’s Nest, we value your feedback. We don’t just want to give you the news — we want to know what you think about it. As such, we aim to provide you with more opportunities for things like letters to the editors, guest columns and social media engagement.

Expect to see a lot of changes in this paper over the next year. One thing that won’t change, however, is our commitment to bringing you the news that is important. With your help, we will always do our best to be the campus newspaper that you deserve.

If you have an event you want covered or know of an issue around campus that should be highlighted, come see us on the second floor of the Student Life Center in room 2400 or contact us via e-mail at usfcrowsnest@gmail.com or feel free to come to one of our contributor meetings, held Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m. Our office is always open to you, our readers.

Sincerely, Michael More Jr.
Review: Netflix's new supergroup rallies after slow beginning

By Jeffrey Waitekевич

A
fter Marvel’s “The Avengers” crushed its opening weekend, superhero team-ups have been spreading out across the screen. Now, Netflix wants to bring that recipe for success to their streaming platform, in full binge-worthy glory.

Released in full Aug. 18, “The Defenders” hits all the right notes of a superhero mash-up tying together the heroes of the other four Netflix Marvel shows. The heroes from Netflix’s four other Marvel TV shows: “Daredevil,” “Jessica Jones,” “Luke Cage” and “Iron Fist.” Opposing this super-team is Alexandra, played by Sigourney Weaver, and The Hand, a group that was previously featured in “Daredevil” and “Iron Fist.”

Similar to the Avengers, the Defenders are battling to protect New York City. However, rather than fighting off an alien invasion, this Marvel team is combating the five villains that make up The Hand.

But where the Avengers team felt larger than life, “The Defenders” harnesses a gritty, street-rat realism that feels closer to Hell’s Kitchen than Manhattan.

Jessica Jones and Luke Cage have superhuman strength but they never feel unstopable. Iron Fist actually seems to use his glowing fists for more than making doors out of walls. The result is a bunch of ragtag underdogs fighting The Hand, a well-equipped team with Kung Fu mastery and fading immortality.

While Alexandra is supposed to be the main villain, she’s mostly all talk. Her team of villains does nearly all the fighting and her only real battle is with her newfound mortality.

Thankfully, Alexandra resurrects a major character from the “Daredevil” series, Elektra, who outshines her in every way.

A lot of the supporting cast from the four source shows bring some much needed character and comedy to the show. Misty Knight, from Luke Cage; Colleen Wing of Iron Fist; and Claire Temple, who has appeared in every show, all combine with solid B-story plots.

The two memorable characters Foggy Nelson and Karen Page from “Daredevil” and Malcom and Trish from “Jessica Jones” are essentially useless. It almost feels as though they were only included so every show would be equally represented.

The plot is fantastic but is dragged down by a slow start.

The first three episodes provide half-baked introductions to the characters that essentially erase any overlying themes from their respective shows. Only giving minor nods to the racial conflict in “Luke Cage” and the sexual assault themes in “Jessica Jones” – Daredevil’s and Iron Fist’s identities are completely the only ones that carry over.

Once the team comes together and the Defenders are formed, everything seems to be exceptionally executed. Elektra’s development is riveting, while the team learning to co-exist fuels the rest of the plot.

Asthetically, the show is also sound. The fight scenes – of which there are plenty—are beautiful displays of finesse through martial arts, brutality, super strength and steel-hard skin.

However, the fight scenes get redundant when too many henchmen get involved. The transition between scenes is also a glaring weakness.

Instead of a smooth transition into the next scene, randomly cut visuals throw the audience out of any new scene before a new scene opens.

The soundtrack was a weak side character which mostly flurled scenes and was barely noticeable. This is a surprise, considering that “Luke Cage” and “Iron Fist” both had powerhouse soundtracks that radically affected the atmosphere of the show. In “The Defenders,” it felt like the soundtrack was thrown in as a formality, rather than as something with purpose.

As for the future of the Marvel Netflix universe, “The Defenders” set up the following seasons of the four individual shows well. It is hard to tell if there will be a second season of “The Defenders” or if it was used like one of Marvel’s annual comic book events.

Nonetheless, it should allow for more crossover among the superhero shows in the future—something DC Comics has done well with its own quasi-superhero TV shows on CW.
Protesters gathered in front of St. Petersburg City Hall Wednesday in the wake of the recent violence between white nationalist protesters and counter protesters in Charlottesville, Va.

The rally, organized by Communities United for Reparations and Economic Development (CURED), marched from City Hall on Fifth Street N to the Police Department on 13th Street N as a stand against white nationalism.

Speakers at the event included International People’s Democratic Uhuru Movement mayoral candidate Jesse Nevel and District 6 City Council hopeful Eritha “Akile” Cainon.

In their speeches, they drew parallels between violence in Charlottesville and the systematic white nationalism they say continues in St. Petersburg.

Standing on the steps of the City Hall, Nevel referred to the building behind him as the headquarters of white nationalist violence against the black community. He drew a parallel between the white nationalist who drove a car through a crowd of counter protesters in Charlottesville, and the city of St. Petersburg running an interstate through the black community, displacing an entire neighborhood.

Nevel also cited the construction of Tropicana Field as an instance of white nationalist violence. According to him, it was built on what was the oldest black community in the city.

In Cainon’s speech, she said that white nationalists don’t always hold tiki torches and yell Nazi chants. She said they hide behind police badges and in city hall.

Citing an auto theft incident last year where three African-American teenage girls drowned after driving a stolen car into a pond during a police chase, she believes that the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Department murdered the girls, calling the department criminals.

Cainon and Nevel both believe the solution to racism and white nationalism is to tear down the social systems where they thrive. They have hopes that St. Petersburg will be a model to the world to seek unity by giving reparations to its black community.

Taylor Russell, a literature and cultural studies graduate, attended the march and said that although the candidates’ platforms were something she could get behind, she was perturbed that very little was said of Charlottesville.

“The events in Charlottesville were sickening. I feel like it’s our responsibility to show up to any event that allows us to voice our anger and intolerance towards white nationalist and neo-nazis,” she said.

Russell believes that not enough has been done to the injustices and violence against the black community in St. Petersburg.

“It is our duty to stand up for those voices and groups,” she said.