SG budget: Deep cuts, big salaries

By Emily Wunderlich
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E ntered in confusion and miscalculations, Student Government budget writers have proposed deep cuts in an array of student organizations and programs. But because of SG’s mistakes, it is not precisely clear how those cuts might be.

Under a plan recommended March 20 by the SG appropriations committee:
- **The Campus Movie Fest, which got $10,000 this year; the waterfront program, which got $45,000; and the Stampede spirit committee, which was funded with $14,668, would all get nothing next year.**
- **The campus’ seven biggest organizations, including SG itself, would take cuts ranging from about 6 percent to about 20 percent.**
- **The Crow’s Nest would take one of the biggest hits in the range of 19 to 21 percent.**
- **Although SG would take a cut, 21 students would continue to draw SG salaries totaling $70,398.75.**

The appropriation committee’s recommendations came during a chaotic, six-hour meeting marked by confusion, raised voices and — at times — laughter. One of the six senators appeared to fall asleep twice.

“I am a mess,” said Gregory Cote, chair of the appropriations committee.

“Perhaps I am a complete mess. In emails to The Crow’s Nest two days later, Cote said SG’s budget work papers have conflicting numbers on the amount of money that student organizations got for the current year.

The numbers on the summary page conflict with numbers elsewhere in the work papers, Cote said.

“Obviously one of these sets of numbers has to be wrong,” he wrote.

Until that mistake is resolved, it is impossible to calculate how much less money each student organization will be allocated in 2019-2020.

USF names Steven Currall next president

When Steven Currall becomes president of USF on July 1, he will take over a three-campus system for the third time in his academic career.

“I’ve seen (a multi-campus system) work very well,” he said in an appearance in St. Petersburg on March 21, the day before he was unanimously selected by the Board of Trustees.

“I’ve seen those campuses still retain their own unique footprint and their identity,” he said.

“I want you all to know that I’m very mindful of that, that I’m aware that this campus has its own identity and its own culture. And so we want to honor that.

I look forward to learning about that. The presidential search committee narrowed a field of 33 applicants down to four on March 18. After a public interview process last week with each of the four candidates, the BOT made a unanimous decision to select Currall, 60.

“I’m looking forward to learning more,” Currall said in a speech on March 22, shortly after getting the job.

“There’s much more to learn about the USF community and the Tampa Bay region, and getting to know each of our distinctive campus communities so we can continue moving forward as one university.”

Florida’s Board of Governors, which oversees the State University System, must ratify the decision and will vote on Currall’s nomination on March 28.

“I’m looking forward to meeting with the Board of Governors next week in Tallahassee, and then taking their approval,” Currall said.

“I’m looking forward to rolling my sleeves up and hitting the ground running and getting started doing the good work for the University of South Florida.”

The four final candidates were directed by the university not to speak to the press and had little public exposure beyond carefully staged appearances.

A Tampa Bay Times editorial published March 22 referred to the candidates as a “shallow, uninspiring field” and criticized the secrecy surrounding the search, which “did not serve the university, the region, taxpayers or the candidates.”

“It gives Currall a pinched view of his obligations as a public employee in a state with a tradition of openness,” the editorial said.

“Since Genshaft became president in 2000, USF has grown in enrollment and stature as a research institution and powerful player in the state and Tampa Bay region.”

In July 2018, USF Tampa joined Florida State University and the University of Florida as “a preeminent state university.”

The designation brings an additional $6.15 million to the university this year and puts pressure on the St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee campuses to raise their admission requirements and retention and graduation rates ahead of consolidation in 2020.

“Big shoes, amazing legacy President Genshaft has created here and lots of momentum, and I just hope that we can continue that and maybe even increase the upward slope of that trajectory as well, to take the university to even greater heights,” Currall said.

Although the end vote was unanimous, two members initially dissented.

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NATURAL HAIR, DON'T CARE

Assistant Editor Dinorah Prevost learned how to love her curls. Here’s why you should, too.
budget, continued from P1

The appropriations committee’s recommendations — and the conflicting numbers — go next to the SG general assembly, which meets at 5 p.m. March 24 in the University Student Center ballrooms.

But Ysatis Jordan, student body vice president, encouraged the committee to find $9,000 more to cut from the budget before that meeting.

An authorized “error”

Every year, Student Government allocates a little less than half the money from students’ Activities and Service Fees to organizations like Campus Recreation, the Harborside Activities Board and the Office of Multicultural Affairs. (The rest of the A and S revenue automatically goes to the University Student Center.)

Because student enrollment declined this year, A and S revenue also declined by 1.9 percent, or $28,392. It’s also expected to decline next year.

Compounding the problem is a huge miscalculation that SG leaders made as they began planning the allocations.

To soften the blow to other campus clubs and organizations, SG leaders said they cut 60 percent of their budget.

But SG also requested $0 in operating expenses, which totaled $109,050 last year.

Instead, those expenses fell under a different category in the budget: the cash flow operating reserve, a “type of savings account for A and S initiatives,” according to Student body President Daniel “Kaeden” Kelso.

The reserve contains A and S funds that were not spent in previous years, Kelso said in an email to The Crow’s Nest. He called it “an emergency fund, or an account to fund major projects and initiatives,” including capital projects, large one-time programs, non-recurring funds and unexpected operating expenses.

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“If we were to not use

organizations would have
gone up,” Kelso said. Although Kelso said SG is “authorized” to use the reserve to fund its operating expenses, he said campus administrators advised him against it after a Crow’s Nest reporter inspected about it.

Kelso called it an “error,” and it forced the appropriations committee to cut a total of $78,927 from the budget at its March 20 meeting.

But Dwayne Isaacs, director of Student Life and Engagement, downplayed that error at the meeting, instead attributing the budget’s shortfall to the decline in student enrollment.

“The dip in enrollment was the biggest thing that hurt us,” he said. “So it wasn’t anything that Student Government did. It wasn’t any incorrect budget.

“If you look at the enrollment projections last year, you look at what the projections are this year, very stark difference. So that hurt.”

The $78,927 in cuts were only a portion of the $190,908.60 needed to reach a balanced budget.

Isaacs told the committee that the goal of cutting that much from an “already bleeding budget” would be unattainable.

Committee members should make cuts wherever they could, he said, and he would explain the difference to university administrators.

“What I’m trying to do is keep student life alive here,” he said. “So just keep that in mind as you all have your chainsaws and sledgeshammers out right now.”

Crow’s Nest takes big cut

The deep cuts proposed for The Crow’s Nest come at a time that the paper has drawn plaudits for its coverage of consolidation and the implications for the St. Petersburg campus.

On Feb. 5, the Tampa Bay Times praised the paper for providing “excellent news coverage of the consolidation issue.”

The paper also thoroughly covered the Legislature’s decision to abolish St. Petersburg’s independent accreditation last year, the

The chief of staff and chief financial officer positions were both increased from $5,100 to $5,250. (See list below.)

Here’s how much Student Government employees stand to make under the new proposed 2019-2020 budget.

Executive branch

Student body president: $10,968.75
Student body vice president: $8,325
Chief of staff: $5,250
Chief financial officer: $5,250
Chief legal officer: $1,400 (cut of $560)
Director of communications and graphic design: $3,264
Director of student government relations: $3,264
Director of events: $3,264
Director of sustainable initiatives: $3,264

Legislative branch

Senate president: $7,800
Senate president pro tempore: $5,550
Policy chair: $714
Appropriations chair: $714
University research chair: $714
Special funding chair: $714

Judicial branch

Chief justice: $1,260
Ranking justice: $714
Senior justice: $714
Prosecutor: $1,750 (cut of $700)
University defender: $1,750 (cut of $700)

Elections rules commission

Chair: $3,825

Total: $70,398.75
New scholarship funds in progress

By James Bennett III
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UF St. Petersburg will celebrate Giving Day on April 4. It will be a time for charitable alumni and advocates of the university to show their support and remind each other what they love about the campus. This year, Giving Day will be used to promote funding for the Help-A-Bull Emergency Aid Program. Three scholarship funds fall under the umbrella of Help-A-Bull: Stay AFLOAT, Feed-A-Bull and the Library Textbook Accessibility fund.

The scholarships are intended to help keep student retention rates at a level that maintains the university’s preeminence. Help-A-Bull is still in the discussion stages without a formalized program, but UF St. Petersburg’s Marketing and Communications department outlined the purpose of each fund in a press release published Feb. 27.

Stay AFLOAT is intended to help students facing unexpected, short-term financial difficulties that would hinder their ability to continue their education.

Dr. Martin Tadlock, regional chancellor of UF St. Petersburg, proposed the fund. “When I was a college student, we were a few days away from the next payday and a fan belt broke on the car,” Tadlock said. “We had no money to replace the belt and needed the car in order to get to class.”

“It was the ‘last straw’ in a series of events that left us on the edge of dropping out of college. Fortunately, the shop let us post-date a check, and that one act of kindness let us make it until payday and continue going to class.”

The Feed-A-Bull Fund is intended to help with the operational needs of UF St. Petersburg’s upcoming food pantry.

Student Government President Daniel “Kaeden” Kelso and Senator Gregory Cote proposed the food pantry at the Jan. 28 general assembly meeting. The SG senate unanimously voted in favor of it.

The idea mirrored a program that has existed at UF Tampa since September 2015. Once the food pantry is open, staff members can notify the Dean of Students’ office about a specific student’s food insecurity. Afterward, Dean Jacob Diaz will reach out to the student in need.

University Advancement plans to give a preview of the food pantry in the Student Life Center from 4 to 6 p.m. on Giving Day and collect donations for the pantry.

The Library Textbook Accessibility Fund will support students who need help gaining access to the textbooks and electronic resources for their classes.

According to the USF Foundation’s website, $34,255 was raised for student success and scholarships at Giving Day’s inaugural celebration last year. The foundation originally set a goal of 500 donors. Once that goal was passed, they raised it to 400. By the end of the event, over 700 people made donations.

Mayor calls on residents to support small shops

By Anna Bryson
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St. Petersburg mayor Rick Kriseman created a Storefront Conservation Corridor Plan, which aims to protect small businesses on Central Avenue. He wants the public to turn out to City Hall on April 4 to show support.

Created two years ago, the plan limits storefront sizes on Beach Drive and Central Avenue from the waterfront to 31st Street. It also includes financial incentives to keep independent businesses in these areas.

City Council voted March 14 to delay the plan and rescheduled the meeting. Although Kriseman created a Facebook event inviting the public to attend the City Hall meeting and support the plan, only three residents took to the podium at the March 14 meeting.

One of them was Jim Grinaker, with the nonprofit Keep St. Pete Local. He urged the councilmembers not to delay the plan.

“We have businesses who are really in desperate need of this support,” Grinaker said. “People... are being forced to move as we speak. These businesses are really giving back to our city to help put us on the map and I think we can do a little bit to help them in their time of need.”

Emanuel “Manny Kool” Matalon, manager of Daddy Kool Records at 666 Central Ave., also took to the podium.

“What we’re asking is that the character of St. Petersburg with the number of small storefronts stays the same,” Matalon said. “Nobody is saying that the small storefront can’t be a Starbucks. That’s not what we’re here for... This initiative is about keeping the footprint similar. And I hope that everybody here appreciates that. Why we like this city is one of those reasons and there’s no reason to change that.”

Matalon’s iconic shop will close its doors March 31 due to rising rent prices on the 600 block. It will reopen on April 13 for Record Store Day in St. Petersburg’s Warehouse Arts District outside of downtown, at 2430 Terminal Drive.

“This isn’t save Daddy Kool or anything like that, that’s not what this is all about,” Matalon told a Creative Loafing reporter. “This is about preserving the mix of different sizes and how much they charge or anything like that.”

Would he be in favor of a stronger plan that protects small businesses or controls rent prices? Yes, but that’s unlikely.

Kriseman himself is a customer of Daddy Kool, and so are his children. At the City Hall meeting, Kriseman whispered to Matalon, “You guys rock.”

While small business owners have largely supported this plan for the past two years, developers and unknown interests have been urging City Council to delay the plan or propose changes.

Mack Feldman asked City Council to delay the plan March 14. He’s the son of Larry Feldman, the CEO of Feldman Equities. According to its website, Feldman Equities and its joint venture partners own or manage over four million square feet of office space in Florida.

“My concern right now is unintended consequences of this proposal,” Feldman said. “Things like the assumption that rates will go down. When we implement this, I don’t know that that’s true… I’m asking City Council, consider slowing down taking a look at this and working with the owners to find out what will happen is policy is implemented.”
The title is "Hypnotist comedian leaves students mesmerized".

The subtitle is "By Gabby Decosta Contributor".

The article starts with "In college, students expect to do homework, study, and take tests. They don’t usually expect to battle imaginary zombies or carelessly dance on stage.

Around 40 students acted bizarrely in the University Student Center ballroom, thanks to the hypnotic spell of C.J. Johnson on March 22.

Booming music and excitement filled the air as Johnson welcomed anyone to come to the stage who was open to being hypnotized.

Although some audience members were worried about doing something they didn’t want to, Johnson explained that a participant couldn’t be forced to do something against their moral beliefs.

"Hypnosis isn’t like it is in the movies," Johnson said. "You’ll be aware of what’s happening, you’ll be aware of what’s in the movies," Johnson said.

But dozens of students were worried about doing something they didn’t want to be forced to do something, he said.

"Well, there was a concern. It was a concern," Johnson said.

Johnson welcomed anyone to come to the stage who was open to being hypnotized.

Johnson explained that he loves the challenge of being a hypnotist and having to be consciously present at all times during a show.

Johnson said that he’s used to focusing and listening carefully from a respectful person is sex and orientation, because of their creativity.

"It allows us to serve our community and provide a feminist framework for others is huge," Sweet said.

"It’s a planet, it’s a whole of creative talent and resources makes the space an inspiring place to be. People can co-work at Venus for $10 a day or purchase a membership. Monthly memberships are $75, and three-month memberships are $200.

Students receive a discounted price of $7 for a day and $60 for a monthly membership. The membership offers access to the space Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wifi, outlets, free parking, limited printer use, communal art supplies, coffee and a supportive community are included with the membership.

The collective envisions the space to be used for coworking, but also as a place for people to give workshops or present projects in a safe, judgment-free environment, and as a gallery for local artists.

Women aren’t the only ones allowed in — the motto of the collective is "cool dudes are cool."

"Regardless of gender, sex and orientation, any respectful person is welcome," Sweet said. "But we are female-driven, and safety is one of the most important things for us.

We want to honor that and provide a feminist framework for the space."

The soft opening celebration and fundraiser is March 30 from 6 to 9 p.m. The collective will be there to welcome people and answer questions.

Live music, food and a cash donation bar from Green Bench Brewing Co will be available. There will also be opportunities to donate to Venus’s launch through its GoFundMe account, or by purchasing local art, or participating in a raffle.

“It’s a big step for us to really be able to open up and say ‘Hey, come to our space, we have space for you, we have things to share.’

Gordon said. “We feel like the barriers to connection have been removed.”

“It allows us to serve our mission on a greater level,” Sweet added.
For him, rollerblading is a practical passion

By Alyssa Harmon
Contributor

S

tudents at USF St. Petersburg get from class to class in many ways. Some walk. Others use longboards or skateboards. A few students bike, and others even ride Razor scooters.

However, Alex Strid rollerblades everywhere.

On Mondays and Wednesdays, you can see Strid, a 21-year-old English major, skating alongside the waterfront to his classes in Harbor Hall.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, you can see him skating from the parking garage to his campus job at the bookstore. Or maybe he’s seen him do a spin before he holds the door open for class.

Strid has been rollerblading for all four years he’s been in college.

“I could already skate, and I had a pair of rollerblades just collecting dust, so why not?” Strid said.

When Strid arrives at school, he throws his shoes into the trunk of his car, changes into his skates, and doesn’t take them off until he gets back to his car at the end of the day.

He uses his rollerblades to get around campus quickly, but he also wears them in the classroom. So far, his professors have never had a problem with him wearing them. One of his graphic design professors said she didn’t care how he got from place to place as long as he didn’t mess around and distract her class.

Some professors have even found it amusing.

Strid remembers a time during his freshman year when he rolled up to the front of the classroom to ask his statistics professor a question.

“He started giggling and pushing me around the room while I asked my question,” Strid said. “He wasn’t trying to mock me, but he just found it funny that I wear them to class and was fascinated.”

While professors and most people around campus don’t care, the library has recently taken an issue with it, despite years of silence on the matter.

Until recently, no one had complained when Strid cruised into the library. Even his managers at the bookstore didn’t care if he wore them inside, as long as he wasn’t on the clock. However, Strid said one day the librarians stopped him on his way out and told him that he wasn’t allowed to wear them inside anymore.

He didn’t argue with them, he just adapted and found other places to study, like the bookstore cafe, the Student Life Center lobby or an empty classroom in Harbor Hall.

But he refuses to take off his skates.

If you see him around campus, you may see him skating with ease, doing spins and making stops look surprisingly easy. He gained these skills from playing ice hockey for almost 10 years.

Unfortunately, he’s too busy to join a men’s league and lives too far away from his old ice rink in Brandon. Joining a men’s hockey league is too expensive for a college student who only works part time, so he gets his fix by rollerblading everywhere.

“It’s not the same, though. ‘I honestly feel at home on the ice,’ Strid said. ‘The skating feels natural, and it’s an environment where I can watch my support work truly unfold right in front of me and where I can get knocked down hard and get right back up. It’s something I can do that makes me feel strong and capable, even though I’m far from the best.’

However, getting knocked down on concrete isn’t as forgiving as the ice.

Over the past four years, he has had a few scrapes and bruises. But these seem small in comparison to the time he broke his leg during his first semester of freshman year while on his way to class.

While he was skating, he accidentally stepped in concrete near the University Student Center. When he did that, his left foot slipped out from under him, and he fell the wrong way on his right leg, causing the bone to snap, ‘I felt the bones fracture,” Strid recalled.

That accident put him in a wheelchair for half a semester. After three months, he had to wear a boot and undergo physical therapy. His foot took a while to heal, and it wasn’t until almost nine months later when he was able to skate again.

I missed skating tremendously during that time period, and I felt much slower while my leg was healing,” Strid said.

Getting back on the skates wasn’t easy, though. Strid was unsure after his injury, so instead, he practiced on the ice where he felt more comfortable. Despite even that being a challenge, it helped him regain confidence in his skating.

Strid may be the only students dedicated to rollerblading on campus, but he may not be for long.

He said that he has never been judged for skating around campus, and other students have expressed interest in joining him.

Strid grew up playing hockey and still misses the thrill of being on the ice.
How I reclaimed my natural hair and stopped hiding

By Dinorah Prevost
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A fter 22 years, I finally left the house with my hair out. Not down — out.
This black girl learned to love her curls. And it’s been a long time coming.
At home, these days, if I don’t tie it up, I often find myself picking through my curls. I guess it’s my way of finally exploring my hair.
Before, there was always a rush to tame, tie and iron it down to “presentable” right out of the shower. It wasn’t until a month ago when I said “screw it,” in the bathroom mirror. I finished washing my hair, looked at myself and thought, “Why the hell am I hiding all of this?”
Last spring, I asked myself “Who am I burning it all for?” That’s when I stopped ironing my hair, which was often a three-hour process in a cramped bathroom. I always walked out of that room coughing from the smoke and fumes from the hair product.
For most of my life, getting my hair wet was the worst. It took me three hours a day I got rain-soaked out on a field during marching band practice. My high school band had the type of strictness that required everyone to stick it out when it rained — heavy or light, it didn’t matter.
The rest of that day, I walked around my bandmates feeling embarrassed about showing my real hair.
Hair texture and length always seems like a matter of self-esteem for black women and girls. Why else would we “relax” our hair, use relaxer or tuck it away under a wig?
Relaxers straighten coarse, coiled hair so that it’s more manageable and becomes “smooth” and “silky,” as many relaxer packages promote. Because of all the chemical processing, relaxers leave hair weak and fragile, and with that comes scalp irritation, breakage and hair loss.
I remember getting lots of relaxers when I was younger. That was one of the few ways my mom knew how to deal with my hair.
Then, a few years ago, I watched the movie “Good Hair.” In it, comedian Chris Rock goes to black barber shops and beauty shops to get a pulse on how patrons feel about relaxers, weaves and the politics attached to both of them.
One of the moments that stuck with me was when “Professor Berry, chemical genius,” talked about the particularly harmful ingredient, sodium hydroxide, found in relaxer. Chris Rock then explained that black people “put sodium hydroxide in their hair.”
“Why would they do that?” Berry asked.
“True. Why do we?”
The day that I let my hair out, I went to a bar with my friend, who partly inspired my change with her afro.
A white lady was passing by the table we were sitting at and stopped next to me. I was a little caught off guard and immediately wondered what was wrong.
Instead, she stopped to say that she loved our hair, that it was beautiful, and not to let anyone tell us otherwise.

Five years of veganism: Why the change?

By Whitney Elstrom
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T wo years ago I wrote an opinion piece about why I chose to go vegan.
It wasn’t an article where I tried to shove my beliefs down the omnivorous throats of my readers, but rather one where I explained that the vegan lifestyle worked for me and I understood if it didn’t work for everyone.
At that point, I was celebrating my year of veganism, and I felt healthier and happier than I ever had before. In September of last year, all of that changed.
It wasn’t because I suddenly stopped caring about animals, the planet or my health. Actually, it was because of my health that leaving veganism behind ever crossed my mind.
Beginning in May 2018, I was sick every three weeks. My summer was filled with trips to the Wellness Center. My days off from my internship were spent in bed.
After I was stuck in bed with a 103.5-degree during my weeklong New York City vacation, I finally started to connect some dots.
Whenever I traveled, my immune system freaked out. Concentrating on anything for more than a few minutes was difficult. Completing even the simplest tasks left me exhausted. My nights were spent tossing and turning, and if I managed to fall asleep, I would wake up after a few hours.
My hands were like ice even in the heat of a Florida summer. A quick Google search of my symptoms clued me in that I might be anemic, and after blood work, it was confirmed. My first step was to take iron pills to see if anything would get better, and while my red blood count did increase, it still wasn’t as high as I would have liked.
I realized that while I was still in college, I had no idea how long eating big bowls of fruits or vegetables like I did when I first started out, not because I didn’t want to, but because my busy schedule didn’t allow time for home-cooked meals.
This meant the most of my meals were eaten while standing up in my kitchen before running to class and consisted of PB&J or veggie burgers covered in hummus.
My mom and best friend encouraged me to add fish and eggs back into my diet, but I wouldn’t hear of it. I had been vegan on-and-off again since I was 17, but during that conversation, I had been fully vegan for two and a half years and had no intention of changing again — even if it was detrimental to my health.
This was only further confirmed after I saw salmon being cut at the sushi restaurant I worked at. I frantically texted my mom that there was no way I ever consume fish again.
“My concern is for your health, not the animals,” she replied.
That conversation was in August of last year.
After doing some soul-searching, I realized the intention of my reasons for not adding animal products back into my diet was because I was worried about the backlash I would receive from the community that once warmly welcomed me. But basking in a decision as important as my health around what others might think seemed juvenile.
So, after three months of going back and forth, I ate shrimp fried rice, and the world didn’t explode.
When I ordered a fish salad at lunch with a vegetarian friend for the first time, instead of jumping down my throat, he accepted my change and moved on with our meal.
Six months later, after my boyfriend assured me it wouldn’t make me a bad person, I ate an egg and smoked salmon breakfast sandwich, and the sky didn’t fall.
These decisions weren’t made in a split second or without careful consideration. They were made after months of self-reflection and research.
I shouldn’t feel bad about choosing to forgo a set of rules I made for myself at 17.
This doesn’t mean I’m going to suddenly start eating chicken nuggets or order a prime rib next time I go to dinner.
In fact, I don’t see the need to add in any other animal products to my diet. With vegan brands like Gardein, Field Roast and Delicious or Kite Hill, I have plenty of options to pick from whenever I’m craving any meat and dairy replacements.
What I said in my last vegan opinion piece still stands.
I am a firm believer in everyone doing what is best for their own body. If it’s veganism, then that’s wonderful, and if not, well, then who am I to judge?
**Not just a minor league: The AAF is here**

By Bryce Lawson

Just when you thought football was over until fall, a new league is doing better than expected. Since there’s always a market for more football, the new Alliance of American Football started to play the week after the Super Bowl.

Unlike past professional leagues, like the U.S. Football League and World Football League, the AAF is not looking to compete with the NFL, but is working with it instead and even broadcasts games on the NFL Network. In a way, the new AAF acts as a minor league, or farm system, for the NFL.

Many of the players in the AAF have past experience in the NFL and are looking for a chance to get back into the NFL before the draft in April. In its inaugural season, the AAF has eight teams, six of which are in non-NFL markets.

Right now, the biggest star in the league is Johnny Manziel, a troubled former first-round draft pick who signed with the Memphis Express.

After off-the-field issues ended his NFL career, Manziel decided to take his talents to Canada’s CFL, but poor performance and more off-the-field issues got him banned from the league.

This third chance at playing pro football might be Manziel’s final opportunity. But without a league like the AAF, players like Manziel would have nowhere to showcase their talents.

The league takes the approach of making its coaches the faces of the teams, with big names like Steve Spurrier, coach of the Orlando Apollos, and Mike Singletary, coach of the Memphis Express.

In an attempt to beef up the league’s star power — since, at the end of the day, it’s all about TV ratings — the league inquired about signing Tim Tebow, who declined the offer to continue his journey of making it to the big leagues with the New York Mets.

The AAF also reached out to Colin Kaepernick, even offering him a $20 million contract, which is a considerably higher offer than the league-standard three-year, $250,000 contract. Kaepernick declined the offer, feeling he could still start on an NFL team.

If Kaepernick were to sign, it would bring more legitimacy to the league, which is one thing it lacks. Yes, we all love football, but if we don’t know any of the players, who’s going to care?

The AAF needs to find a way to create new stars to keep fans invested, especially since these teams are brand new and don’t have a built-in history like fan favorite NFL teams do.

The level of play on the field is on par with the NFL, but with fewer penalties and harder hits, which help the league stand out from the more watered-down NFL.

One major difference that the league offers is the lack of special teams plays. In the AAF, a team must go for two after every touchdown.

With all that being said, is there really a need for more football? With Vince McMahon’s reboot of the XFL coming in 2020, which is attempting to compete with the NFL, the market might become oversaturated.

Is there room for three pro football leagues? As a football junkie, I say yes. As long as the AAF stays in its lane and doesn’t try to become “NFL-lite,” it should be able to grow and give fans their football fix until the April draft.

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**CONTRIBUTORS WANTED**

WELCOMING ALL WRITERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS AND DESIGNERS

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**What to do this week: March 25-31**

By Bryce Lawson

**MONDAY**

The Chihuly Glass Museum, 729 Central Ave., will showcase the new exhibit “Perspectives in Glass: A Science in Optics.” The exhibit will highlight the different approaches of glass art, such as blown glass work, cast glass, and kiln installation. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with $13 tickets for students.

Pinellas Ale Works, 1962 First Ave., will host the yoga class “Bends and Brews.” You just need to bring a yoga mat and purchase a pint of PAW beer to join the free yoga class from 6:15 to 7:15 p.m.

**TUESDAY**

Buya Ramen, 911 Central Ave. will host A Night of Dreams whiskey tasting event featuring The Balvenie and Glenfiddich. The event has no cover charge, and the whiskey tasting will be available from 8 to 10 p.m.

What’s better on Taco Tuesday than tacos and techno? Oak & Stone, 199 Central Ave., will have a Techno, Tacos, & Tequila event. All tacos are $2 off, and Sophee, a music producer from Tampa, will play your favorite techno hits from 8 p.m. to midnight.

**WEDNESDAY**

The Betty Fox Band, winner of Best of the Bay’s “Best Local Blues Band,” will perform at The Hideaway Cafe, 1756 Central Ave., from 6 p.m. to midnight. The show is free with drinks available to purchase.

Boost your LinkedIn with Networking. After Hours St.Pete at Iberian Rooster, 475 Central Ave., from 6 to 8 p.m. This is an opportunity to meet local professionals. The cost for the event is $15.

**THURSDAY**

The Rays opening day game against the Houston Astros will be at Tropicana Field starting at 4 p.m. Tickets vary in price depending on seating.

Since it is the last Thursday of the month, the Bends, 919 First Ave., will present Blet with guest No. 5. Listen to some great tunes by Bletstan, a local Noise Pop band plus other local artists, from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. This is a free event with drinks available for purchase.

**FRIDAY**

Ella Jet & Future Soul will bring rock and Neo Soul vibes to Ruby’s Elixir, 115 Third St. N, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. This is a free show with drinks and cigars available to purchase.

Art Fridays at The Vinoy will be from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at 501 Fifth Ave. NE. One of the area’s local artists will be in the main lobby, presented by the Bella Unica Art Gallery. This is a free event.

**SATURDAY**

Get your gardening skills on point with Veggie Gardening in Florida at Sunken Gardens, 1825 Fourth St. N. Learn clean, sustainable tips on soil and fertilizing from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. The class is free with admission to the garden, which costs $10.

Judy Jean will perform at The Ale and the Witch, 111 Second Ave. NE, from 8 to 11:30 p.m. The local duet offers a folk blues indie vibe. The event has no cover, but drinks are available to purchase.

**SUNDAY**

The Palladium, 253 Fifth Ave. N. will present The Secret World: The Music Of Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush from 6 to 9 p.m. The Florida Bjorkestra will perform a curated set list of songs from Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush. Tickets for the event are $25.
The little things to miss about the old Daddy Kool

By Dinorah Prevost

Daddy Kool opened at 666 for the last time yesterday. The record store moved to the 600 block from Bradenton in 1999.

Of one the memorable scenes from the 1995 movie “Empire Records” involves a heavy metal band named GWAR. Mark, an employee, sits on the couch in the record store’s backroom, watching as a GWAR music video on an old-school television set while eating weed brownies.

All the band members are wearing what look like space monster costumes, with a few wearing what look like space suits.

Two summers ago, when I had whole afternoons to myself, I’d regularly stop at Brew D Licious across the street. There, I’d unwrap the plastic and pour over the liner notes. Yes, I’m a nerd. But just as I’m graduating and moving on soon, so is the store. Bigger ambitions for me, bigger store for Daddy Kool.

Daddy Kool from campus during freshman and sophomore year (back when I had a lot more time on my hands and before journalism took over my life). The door cheekily announces “Push it. Push it real good,” in reference to the Salt-N-Pepa song “Push It.” I definitely noticed it. Yet, the two aluminum handles tricked me, and I always pulled it instead.

I’d like to think I gave the employees sitting at the registers a few chuckles. I’d like to think that 666 Central Ave. has the “hole-in-the-wall” feel that St. Pete’s other well-known record stores don’t have.

Planet Retro Records moved out of its hole on Central and into a standalone building over two years ago. Bananas Music’s retail store has been a spacious standalone on 22nd Avenue N for ages.

Daddy Kool’s small aisles, packed with six rows of vinyl and CDs, were delightfully cozy.

By Anna Bryson

Graham Johnson started his clothing brand, Garbaj, out of his garage in 2015. Now comedian Andre wears his tops.

The company’s slogan is “quality clothes meant to get dirty.” Garbaj is pretty hot in the Tampa Bay streetwear world, but what many people don’t know is that the brand is environmentally sustainable. Johnson’s newer clothes are made partially from recycled waste.

Garbaj into Garbaj.

“I want to make the world a better place.”

Johnson, 22, said. “Even before I came up with the name Garbaj, the idea was I wanted to do something, and I wanted it to be sustainable because I’m going to go all the way with it. When I’m high up there, I don’t want to feel guilty about things I’ve done.”

With each new line that’s released, Johnson only creates about 30-40 of each item.

It’s an art piece. And if there were just a ton of them, essentially the value would be diminished,” he said.

When Garbaj releases a new line and it sells out, that’s it. Johnson has only recreated one item, a logo T-shirt. Some items have sold out in as little as 8 hours.

With exclusivity, it makes the art piece more important,” he said. “It creates drive, a little more desire for it, and for me that’s more fun.”

There’s no set schedule for releases, but Johnson said the next one is expected to come out in April.

Of course you get people saying, ‘Yo, when’s this coming out, you gotta make this come out soon.” And that drives a little anxiety of production because I’m not going to rush anything,” he said. “It’s gonna come when it comes and that builds suspense for it, which is key.

Although the brand can be hard to get your hands on, it’s affordable; T-shirts average $20.

“I like to make the price really good and then you know you’re not being robbed,” Johnson said. “That way a friend can say, ‘Oh, I can afford that, that’s awesome.’ And that gives you a good feeling.

When you see something you love and it looks good on you but you think, ‘Ahh I’m really pulling out my wallet for this one...’ I don’t want to generate that feeling with my company.”

When a cool shirt is over $30 and printed on an irregular T-shirt, that’s “literally garbage you’re paying for. That’s trash,” Johnson said.

When Johnson was creating his brand he thought, “What if I had a clothing company that was named garbage and it just got bigger than (the other brands) and then a clothing company named garbage was above their ranks.”

Garbaj clothing is graphic-driven. Some pieces have extensive pseudo-hidden imagery, some bear the logo. One of the first Garbaj shirts read, “7-11 was an inside job.”

Johnson, 22, who has been into graphic design since he was 15, creates his designs using Photoshop.

In addition to online sales, Johnson sells his clothes at events at local venues like Black Crow Coffee and The Bends.

He eventually wants to set up a storefront and travel to places where he can help people.

“I just can’t tell you how much I can’t wait until I have power, I’m going to say power because power is money in this world, to go changing things and to go fix things and see things the way I want,” he said. “I’m going to do so through canvassing and creating art.”

You can find Garbaj on Instagram @garbaj_clothing.

Johnson turns garbage into Garbaj. His clothing brand is cool, but it’s much more than that. It’s also an eco-friendly company that’s made from partially recycled material.

THE CROW’S NEST

March 25, 2019

By Dinorah Prevost

dprevost@mail.usf.edu

One of the memorable scenes from the 1995 movie “Empire Records” involves a heavy metal band named GWAR. Mark, an employee, sits on the couch in the record store’s backroom, watching as a GWAR music video on an old-school television set while eating weed brownies.

All the band members are wearing what look like space monster costumes, with a few in jockstraps as well.

After a show at Jannus Live one time, a 6-foot-tall monster costumes, with a few wearing what look like space suits.

Two summers ago, when I had whole afternoons to myself, I’d regularly stop at Brew D Licious across the street. There, I’d unwrap the plastic and pour over the liner notes. Yes, I’m a nerd. But just as I’m graduating and moving on soon, so is the store. Bigger ambitions for me, bigger store for Daddy Kool.

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