4-1-2019

Crow's Nest : 2019 : 04 : 01

University of South Florida St. Petersburg
SG spared from cuts in ‘bleeding budget’

By Emily Wunderlich ewunderlich@mail.usf.edu

The Student Government senate unanimously approved the 2019-2020 budget changes on March 25. SG President Daniel "Kaeden" Kelso has until April 9 to either approve or veto the bill.

The student newspaper will lose $20,000 from the cash flow reserve, almost half of it — $19,000 — to pay its adviser. (The Crow’s Nest got $1,375 of it — to pay its adviser.) So SG allocated $174,576 from the cash flow reserve, and almost half of it — $87,178 — went to Student Government itself. (The Crow’s Nest got $1,275 of it — to pay its adviser.)

That gives SG a total allocation of $222,205 — an 18.9 percent increase over the current year’s allocation of $186,892.

SG threats to freeze paper’s funding

By The Crow’s Nest staff

The president of Student Government has threatened to cut off the funding of The Crow’s Nest.

In a letter to Editor-in-Chief Whitney Elfstrom on March 29, Daniel "Kaeden" Kelso said the newspaper’s registration as a student organization with the university’s Office of Leadership and Student Organizations has lapsed.

If the newspaper does not deliver "all proper documents" to renew its registration to LSO by 5 p.m. April 2, he wrote, SG will freeze its funding.

Kelso’s letter comes as Student Government finalizes the annual budgets for campus organizations — a process that has drawn scrutiny and criticism from the newspaper.

Elfstrom, who called the timing of the threat "certainly curious," said The Crow’s Nest will meet Kelso’s "arbitrary deadline.

The threat, she said, is "sophomoric harassment."
Curull confirmed as next president

By The Crow’s Nest Staff

It’s official: Steven Curull will become president of the USF system on July 1. He was unanimously confirmed on March 28 by the Board of Governors of the State University System. Curull, who is now provost and vice president for academic affairs at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, will be busy in the weeks leading up to the departure of longtime USF President Judy Genshaft.

According to the Tampa Bay Times, he will meet with faculty and community leaders, become familiar with the state’s sunshine laws and get media training from a consultant. He will also attend a seminar for new presidents at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, starting July 5.

BUDGET, continued from P1

In an email to The Crow’s Nest, appropriations chair Gregory Cote said he did not “wish to comment about budget specifics” at a March 25 senate meeting, he said expenses funded by the cash flow reserve should be interpreted carefully. “Because next year, there might not be the cash to fund it,” he said.

How it works

Each student pays $25.63 per credit hour in Activities and Services Fees every semester. Of that amount, $13.80 automatically goes to the University Student Center. The remaining $11.83 is divided among university clubs and organizations by Student Government.

Total A and S revenue this year was $3,142,238, with $1,450,358 of that going to SG to allocate. Since student enrollment was down, the A and S revenue coming to SG budget writers was down by 1.9 percent, or $28,392.

The shortfall prompted hours of sometimes-animated debate in both the SG appropriations committee and the general assembly, which met several times before approving a budget and sending it to student body president Daniel “Kaeden” Kelso.

Kelso has until April 5 to either approve or veto the budget. If he vetoes it, it goes back to the SG senate for revisions. If he approves it, it goes to the university administration, which last year rejected the budget and forced SG leaders to make changes.

On March 28, The Crow’s Nest sent the numbers and chart that accompany this story to Kelso, Cote, Yasatis Jordan, student body vice president, and Alex Williams, director of SG relations. The newspaper asked them if they saw any errors and sought their comment on the proposed budget.

Kelso, Jordan and Williams did not respond to the email, but on March 29, Kelso sent an email to the paper threatening to cut off funding “because of some comments” he had heard from editors. If editors did not complete requirements to re-register as “student organization” by 5 p.m. on April 2. (See story, Page 1).

Cote did not directly address the newspaper’s numbers, but he praised senators for their work on the budget.

“Everyone in the Senate has done their best job to represent the student body through this appropriations period,” Cote said. “While writing your article, please keep in mind the countless unpaid hours the Senate has worked, debated during, and lost sleep over, as we have tried to find solutions for the drop in enrollment and its impact on the A&S fee budget.

Criticism of the process

During the hours of debate over several meetings that preceded final approval of the budget, however, Student Government came under fire for what critics called a haphazard budget process marked by secrecy and confusion.

Shayla Fajardo, vice president of Harborside Activities Board, said the organization worked to meet the initial deadline for its budget presentation, which was mid-February. “But after that, we did not receive clear and time-efficient information,” she said.

On March 20, SG leaders pulled Daniel Ciccia, HAB’s director of special events, into the conference room at 8 p.m. to discuss possible cuts to the organization. He was just passing by at the time.

“We feel as though this wasn’t the best way to approach this situation, seeing as how it put Daniel on the spot where he had to think on his feet,” Fajardo said.

“We believe that this whole process needs to be made more open to the students in order for things to happen,” Fajardo said. “There are no documents or general guidelines … which leads to a lot of confusion and misunderstanding.”

As the senate deliberated March 25 on how much to allocate its “discretionary fund” (for expenses excluding office supplies and the committee that oversees special funding for clubs), the appropriations committee even drew criticism from its own chair.

“I think it is absurd for senate to be a money lord. I’ll say it — greedily using money to fund our own dinners when we could be working on our transparency, because we used to be that to the student body,” Cote said.

The senate’s discretionary fund was cut by $500 to $2,000.

Whitney Elliston, Editor-in-Chief of The Crow’s Nest, said editors were never advised that there was a budget shortfall this year and were not consulted before SG started making cuts.

She also called out the budget writers for protecting SG Government from slashing other organizations’ budgets.

Particularly galling, she said, was SG’s decision to cut two assistant editor positions (saving $2,640) and freeze the paper’s top two salaries (saving $776), while leaving the top SG salaries untouched.

(The editor-in-chief’s was cut from $5,808 to $5,440 and the managing editor from $4,488 to $4,440. The SG president makes $10,968.75 and the vice president makes $8,325, with four other SG positions paying more than $5,000. See chart, page 2, in the March 25 issue of The Crow’s Nest.)

The deep cuts proposed in The Crow’s Nest budget prompted an expression of dismay from the University of the District of Columbia, a part of the Department of Journalism and Digital Communication.

In an April 1 letter to Jacob Diaz, the assistant vice chancellor of student affairs and dean of students, the faculty urged him to “consider intervening” and address what it called “haphazardly distributed cuts (which) are unacceptable to us and will impact our ability to help our students succeed.”

The faculty stressed that it “does not fund nor edit the newspaper but does supply skilled students to work” at the paper, which it called “a crucial component” that is in order for things to happen,” Fajardo said. “There are no documents or general guidelines … which leads to a lot of confusion and misunderstanding.”

As the senate deliberated March 25 on how much to allocate its “discretionary fund” (for expenses excluding office supplies and the committee that oversees special funding for clubs), the appropriations committee even drew criticism from its own chair.

“I think it is absurd for senate to be a money lord. I’ll say it — greedily using money to fund our own dinners when we could be working on our transparency, because we used to be that to the student body,” Cote said.

Finally, two high-level administrators also resigned or were fired, according to the Orlando Sentinel. Sean Slouf, 63, who had been overseeing development of UCF’s new downtown Orlando campus, says he is not interested in the permanent job.

Correction

The waterfront program was allocated $40,000 in the proposed 2019-2020 budget. A March 25 story incorrectly reported that the program was not allocated any funds.
SG drafts resolution opposing Title IX changes

By Dylan Hart
dhart4@mail.usf.edu

The SG senate has drafted a resolution opposing recent changes to Title IX legislation by the United States Department of Education.

The resolution, which was drafted and sponsored by senator Naya Payne and co-sponsored by nine other senators, says that “under the new policy, schools will likely investigate fewer complaints, and the Department of Education will hold fewer schools accountable for ensuring campuses are free of sexual harassment and assault.”

Title IX is a federal law established in 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination on the basis of sex at federally funded schools. It has had a lasting impact on college sports and how sexual harassment and assault are handled at colleges and universities.

The law recognizes sexual harassment and assault as potential barriers to one’s educational access, and therefore schools can be held legally responsible for ignoring sexual harassment or assault under their supervision.

Proposed changes to the law under Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, who was appointed by President Trump in 2017, were established in November. Significantly, the changes would adopt the Supreme Court’s standards for sexual harassment, establish rules about the processes of accusation and appeal, allow schools to choose their own standards of evidence, and establish a requirement for schools to try to cross-examine the accuser.

The Department of Education’s changes to Title IX legislation were made in an effort to give accused students more due process, the department’s website said in a Nov. 20 press release.

But the changes have come under much scrutiny from university administration and student governments throughout the country. A Jan. 31 Stanford Daily article cites as many as 76 college student governments formally opposing the changes.

Payne says that Student Government at the University of Florida contacted him to inform him that a “network” of universities across the country, led by UF, is seeking to pass similar resolutions opposing the department’s changes.

The network consists of several universities in Florida and elsewhere, including Florida Atlantic University, Emory University, Boston College, Kansas State University, Pitzer College and Duke University. UF has reached out to “all major universities, and will be reaching out to more in the coming weeks,” Payne said.

“The SG Senate is trying to pass resolutions in as many universities as possible,” Payne said in an email to The Crow’s Nest. “I have gotten USFSP involved in this and have drafted a resolution similar to what is being recommended. I think that it is imperative that the USFSP Senate take lead and join in on this.”

Eventually, USF Student Government plans to take the network’s collective resolutions and present them to the Legislature.

SG’s resolution raises many issues with the proposed changes.

It says that the changes would exclude harassment and assault perpetrated off-campus, allow universities to replace investigations with an “unregulated ‘mediation’ process,” allow schools to “only investigate the most extreme forms of harassment and assault,” and “eliminate protections for students studying abroad.”

Additionally, it says that the proposed cross-examination addition would “rehash trauma caused by harassment and assault. It cites Association of Title IX Administrators President Brett Sokolow, who said that the addition of cross-examination will lead to a “50 percent drop in future reports.”

Payne said that he “followed UF’s model” in drafting the resolution by citing national statistics before moving to USF St. Petersburg statistics on sexual harassment and assault.

These statistics include USF St. Petersburg’s 88.6% rate of students living off-campus and that the University Police Department has reported on “only 8 cases of sexual assault from 2015 to 2017.”

He hopes that USF St. Petersburg will “acknowledge the policy on infrastructure and the environment.”

Valerie Harwood, a professor of biology at USF Tampa

Universities to sponsor team to study health in Gulf

By Dylan Hart
dhart4@mail.usf.edu

While the Justice League and the Avengers assemble at the box office, USF St. Petersburg is aiming to build a superteam of its own.

But it won’t be fighting crime or cosmic threats. Instead, this team — the Joint Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies — wants to solve health issues along our coast.

The Institute, which is headed by former USF St. Petersburg regional chancellor and marine scientist Bill Hogarth, brings together experts from various fields, including biology, medicine, marine science, sociology and engineering, all from states bordering the Gulf of Mexico.

Decades of oil spills, red tide, hurricanes and other environmental issues led experts from all of these fields to study how these disasters have affected human health.

“I think that there’s a real opportunity to build a blueprint for monitoring data systems here,” said public health researcher Sarah Johnson at the March 27 institute panel at Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital.

“We have all mentioned data that exists in our own silo that we could bring to bear on this question. Now it’s just about addressing the gaps in that data,” Hogarth said.

Hogarth said that USF St. Petersburg would be an ideal headquarters for the institute, saying that it’s “a perfect location” because of its proximity to other research facilities in the area, including the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, Johns Hopkins, the USF College of Marine Science and USF Health.

The institute, which has been in the planning phase since July, is awaiting funding from the Florida legislature. The house bill was presented by Rep. Ben Diamond, D-St. Petersburg, and is awaiting consideration in the appropriations committee.

But while the institute wants to fund and drive a lot of research in various connected fields, the researchers have also indicated that they want to use the information gathered by the institute to influence government policy on infrastructure and the environment.

Valerie Harwood, a professor of biology at USF Tampa

“We’re not here people to do research,” Hogarth said. “We’re trying to get more money together and make researchers’ lives easier. We don’t think we need another huge bureaucracy built — we just need some organization. We’re trying to really get ahead of these issues and be a center for the Gulf of Mexico.”
Webb’s City Cellar aims to inform beer enthusiasts

By Whitney Elsfstrom
welfstrom@mailusf.edu

beer-lovers who are looking for their brew to be served up with an extra dash of knowledge can take solace at Webb’s City Cellar, the new tasting room at Green Bench Brewing Co.

For Christopher Johnson, head brewer and co-owner, Webb’s is a space to showcase and properly introduce the public to the beers that Green Bench has always crafted.

Locals, who have been flocking to the brewery since it opened in 2013, know it centers on all things St. Pete, trying new ideas and, most importantly, producing good beer. The menu reads “where we go to escape and explore” and “the place that we slow down, consider and breathe.”

Much like its sister tasting room across the beer garden, which got its name from the historic green benches that used to line Central Avenue, Webb’s got its name from a historic St. Pete landmark.

It was named for Webb’s City, a St. Petersburg staple which billed itself as the “World’s Most Unusual Drug Store” from 1926 until its closure in 1979. The store spanned 10 blocks and housed 77 department stores.

With a wood chandelier as homage to the St. Pete shuffleboard courts, lamps hanging over the bar that look like hops, a ceiling fluorescing with a blend of wild yeast and bacteria, among other brews.

Niager said, “The brewers are excited to share what they’ve learned with people who are coming in and taking the time to, again, have that conversation and not be pretentious or intimidating.” Webb’s also provides a rubric to help guests navigate the menu and let them know the difference between brewing styles like clean beer (a traditional brewer’s yeast to create an ale or lager) and a wild beer (fermented with a blend of wild yeast and bacteria), among other brews.

Niager said that Webb’s is less about grabbing a pitcher and splitting it with friends over a football game. She said the new tasting room is where guests can stop in to really absorb the process of tasting what’s on tap.

“November is a quiet month for us, so we get a lot of people coming in,” Johnson said. “I’m going to be cool to finally make beer. We’ve been doing this stuff for so long, and finally doing that.”

As the first brewery in St. Pete, Johnson’s goal has been limited in how he can brew his beers, so by building the new space from scratch, it gives him the chance to make all out of their comfort zones.

“Building into (the new space) is going to be fun,” he said.

Webb’s City Cellar has been under construction since summer 2018 and opened during this year’s Tampa Bay Beer Week.

Local beer enthusiasts can take solace at Webb’s City Cellar as a form of empowerment.

Webb encouraged students to practice complimenting themselves and others as a form of empowerment.

By Amy Diaz
amydiaz@mailusf.edu

If you go: Open 5 to 10 p.m. Thursday, 3 p.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to midnight Sunday; 1120 Baum Ave. N, St. Petersburg; (727) 806-9836.

“If you’re looking for a place that you can bring yourself and be loving instead of picking yourself apart, she explained that mass media, especially social media, makes it difficult to escape the negative messages telling men and women that they aren’t good enough.

Attendees also shared their tips for practicing self-love and body positivity.

Some women said they follow empowering Instagram accounts, like haircare pages for women with their hair type or positive daily affirmation pages.

Jessica Berringer, 19, shared that she asks herself who her insecurities are benefiting. When she realizes that it’s usually rich men who own makeup and clothing companies, she says she is able to move past them.

“Being self-conscious is never productive,” Berringer said.

Widmer shared four action steps on how to overcome insecurities.

The first is to give yourself a compliment every day.

“The third is to work on complimenting somebody else,” Widmer said. “None of this jealousy stuff. You have your own beauty, they have their own beauty, and we’ve all got something to offer.”

Lastly, Widmer recommends meditating and what defines our worth.

“Empower those around you and encourage one another,” she said. “There are far more beautiful things about somebody than just outward appearance.”
Student’s obstacle course opens accessibility dialogue

By James Bennett III
jamesbennett@mailusf.edu

Whether you’ve had the pleasure of speaking with him or you’ve simply noticed him around campus, Robert Beasey is a familiar student to most people at USF St. Petersburg.

To some, he is the “tenacious young man” who never misses a class. Others refer to him as “the Grind’s mayor.”

Beasey, 46, is also physically challenged and uses a wheelchair on campus.

Most days, he arrives on campus by 9:30 a.m. and spends 10 to 12 hours there. His favorite place to spend downtime is The Grind at Bayboro, where he regularly orders the Social Chair with a side of fries and a Coke.

Over the course of nearly 10 years, while earning his bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary social sciences, Beasey has watched the campus grow and transform.

The campus’ bookstore moved to make way for The Campus Grind. Ownership of the Grind moved from Beasey to Bayboro switched hands. Some students left the university, and others joined, all while Beasey shared a few laughs and revelled in their camaraderie.

He uses his connections around campus to advocate for people with disabilities.

To show other students with disabilities that they could do the same, Beasey started working at the Student Disability Services office.

“There’s nothing out there that you can’t achieve,” Beasey said.

He even used his senior capstone project to advocate for people with disabilities.

On March 27, he directed an event that put faculty and students in his shoes.

From 5 p.m. to 2 p.m., Beasey was set up at The Grind with a laptop and three wheelchairs.

Thirteen volunteers were directed to walk from The Grind to Lowell E. Davis Memorial Hall, Room 284, then to the Science and Technology building’s wheelchair-accessible bathroom across the sidewalk, then back to The Grind.

“I wanted to incorporate buildings that students frequent the most,” Beasey said.

“Buildings that I frequent.”

After they walked the course, volunteers were instructed to do it again in a wheelchair and pick up a few items that proved they stopped at every location.

As they returned to The Grind, Beasey greeted them with his trademark smile and asked the volunteers to answer a few questions.

1. What was it like to walk the obstacle course?
2. What was it like to do the obstacle course in a wheelchair?
3. Did you cheat? If so, why?

Every volunteer agreed that the course was more difficult in a wheelchair; inclines were a challenge, and maintaining control of the chair while going downhill was difficult.

The elevator that took students to the second floor of Davis Hall was hard to locate, and the ramp that leads to the STG front door is narrow.

Beasey is able to complete the course in about 18 minutes.

Nobody admitted that they left their wheelchair, but some confessed to using their feet to maneuver, using walls for support and locating the Davis building elevator during the walking portion.

To Beasey’s amusement, one student confessed that they used the railing to get up the STG ramp.

The project was born out of a frustrating visit to see a doctor.

Beasey’s appointment was on the third floor, which was inaccessible to wheelchairs.

When Beasey told Frank Biafora, a sociology professor, about his frustration, Biafora suggested that Beasey used his capstone project as an opportunity to research accessibility at USF St. Petersburg.

With the help of Barry McDowell, the assistant director of Student Disability Services, Beasey planned his obstacle course to shed light on how inaccessible USF St. Petersburg can be.

As it turned out, the project coincided with disability awareness month.

Having spent so much time on campus, Beasey knows the ins and outs of accessible locations.

There is a wider ramp at the back entrance of STG, and there are multiple entrances to every building.

However, the button that is supposed to automatically open The Grind’s door doesn’t work.

“Right now, they don’t ask. They just build,” Beasey said.

Beasey’s capstone project will create a dialogue about USF St. Petersburg’s accessibility and inclusiveness.

He would also like to see the school reach out and ask what they can do to make buildings more accessible.

“I mean, it was seven days after a school shooting; I didn’t expect myself to be up there composed, asking responsible questions.

“But that’s a great example of somebody going up there, not to come to some sort of understanding, but just to make someone look bad.”

Since then, Kasky has changed his advocacy tactics to be less confrontational and more understanding of opposing viewpoints.

“With people, you can’t inherently believe that just because somebody disagrees with you, they’re a bad person,” he said. “Because once you start to think like that, you can become a repressive individual, rather than become somebody who refuses to open himself up to new ideas.”

He still loves and supports the March for Our Lives group, he said, but he believes that opening up conversations and working with people of different viewpoints is a more productive route.

He hasn’t changed his political views or his stance on gun regulations.

“I could go around and tell people that they’re a bad person for not supporting gun control; I can do that very easily, probably get a lot of exciting Twitter stuff going on,” he said. “But maybe I could reach out to those people and at least talk to them about the issue. So we can agree to disagree.”
March Madness is back again

The fun of March Madness is the uncertainty of each and every single matchup, and the craziness that ensues from bracket-busting upsets. Going into March each year, college basketball fans fill out our brackets and discuss with each other about who each of us had in our Final Four. (I had Duke, Texas Tech, UNC and Tennessee, so you can see how well that is working out for me.) After the first weekend, it felt like we were getting robbed of the unpredictability. The opening weekend gave us no major upsets of a 1-, 2- or 3-seed, and for the most part, these teams were not even in danger of losing. The quality of these games did change, however, once we hit the Sweet 16. Over the past weekend, we have seen three different upsets, two of which were No. 1 seeds going down. Even the games that we prayed would end in an upset — like Duke vs. Virginia Tech — were exciting and kept the viewers on the edge of their seats until the final buzzer. These aren’t your usual upset heroes but rather teams who were able to make adjustments on both offense and defense, proving that it’s not always the higher seeds who get to cut down the nets.

Purdue vs. Virginia was proof of that. On March 30, these teams were going back and forth, and even though Virginia won and saved themselves from being upset, the ending was electric. So far, Texas Tech and Virginia have punched their ticket to Minneapolis and the Final Four, and all we can do is hope for insanity with the few games we have left.

Get prepared for next weekend, when we find out who gets to cut down the nets.

By Alec Arroyo
Senior Journalism and Digital Communication
alecarroyo@mail.usf.edu

The Jayhawks played in the 2016 tournament. So far, Texas Tech and Virginia are on their way to Minneapolis and the Final Four.
Plates, Spaces and Art brings a week of theater to campus

By Decker Lavelly
Contributor

A special treat for theater lovers is coming to USF St. Petersburg next week: the first-ever Short & Sweet Theatre Week, April 8-11.

The week features seven theatrical experiences performed by professionals in the Tampa Bay theater community, as well as students and faculty from the USF School of Theatre and Dance.

Short & Sweet Theatre Week is presented by USF St. Petersburg Places, Spaces and Art, and is partnered with Studio@620, freeFall Theatre and American Stage.

The goal of Theatre Week is to bring more art and theater opportunities to the campus for students to participate in.

“It is a demonstration project to give students a chance to experience theater,” said Ann Wykell, the public art coordinator of Places, Spaces and Art.

The week will include cabaret, interactive impromptu dance, collages of short pieces and more. Every performance is under an hour and presented between 4 and 7 p.m.

“There are a lot of different kinds of approaches to theater; there are many ways to do theater besides 2- and 3-act plays,” Wykell said. “(Theatre Week) is to show what we can do without having a theater on campus, and turns out we can do quite a bit.”

One of the seven performances is “Air-Earth-Fire-Water,” written by playwright and USF graduate Sheila Cowley. It is scored by A.J. Vaughn and choreographed by Helen Hansen French and Paula Kramer. “Air-Earth-Fire-Water” is a 15-minute performance that connects everyday life to science through dance, music and acting.

“It’s short, it’s fun, it’s humorous and it’s beautiful… It is 15 minutes that will probably make you laugh and give you a few pleasant chills,” Cowley said.

“Air-Earth-Fire-Water” has been performed at other local art venues, including the Tampa Museum of Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, and Studio@620. Cowley has also written other pieces that bring art and science together.

“Science is important, but the arts are equally important,” Cowley said. “The spirit of discovery in creating an artistic piece is tied to the spirit of scientific discovery.”

All of the performances will cover a wide range of topics and themes. Each piece will be performed on various sites on campus, including The Campus Grind, Lynn Pippenger Hall, Harbortwalk and The Edge.

Short & Sweet Theatre Week was designed to not only bring theater to campus for one week, but to continue more arts and theater experiences at USF St. Petersburg.

“I’m hoping students, faculty, staff, their friends and families will come and enjoy a short performance,” Wykell said. “And if we see there is interest, maybe we can do another one next year.”

All of the Theatre Week productions are free to the public.

Every student who attends with their student ID will receive a $5 voucher for the American Stage in the Park production of “Mamma Mia!” The show runs April 10-May 12 at Demens Landing, Bayshore Drive & Second Avenue S.

This voucher is redeemable for lawn seating at any Wednesday or Thursday show.

What to do this week: April 1-7

By Bryce Lawson
Contributor

TUESDAY
Intermezzo Coffee & Cocktails, 1111 Central Ave., will give tours to highlight some of the more important pieces in the museum’s collection. The tours will be from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Admission is $20.

Theater: The James Museum of Western and Wildlife Art, 150 Central Ave., will give tours to highlight some of the more important pieces in the museum’s collection. The tours will be from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Admission is $20.

Bierian Rooster, 475 Central Ave. N, will host its weekly Market Underground & Open Mic featuring local performers and vendors from 8:30 to 11 p.m. Attendees in the service industry can receive 50 percent off all night. The event is free, with food and drinks available to purchase.

THURSDAY
M&M Video Games, 3110 44th Ave. N, will have its Grand Opening from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Arcade will be open for free with unlimited plays. If you are one of the first five people to enter, you will get a free one-year membership to the arcade.

Foodies will love The Glorious Table: Food and Drink in European Baroque Paintings, hosted at The Museum of Fine Arts, 255 Beach Drive NE. From 7 to 8 p.m., attendees will learn about the symbolism employed by Baroque painters. The talk is free with a $15 admission ticket for college students to the museum.

FRIDAY
Tropicana Field will perform at Cage Brewe. 2001 First Ave S. Bringing rock tunes with a light show, the band will perform from 8 to 11 p.m. Don’t miss out on the Blue Raven Market that will be open from 7 to 11 p.m. as well. The event has no cover charge.

The Movement Sanctuary, 910 Fifth Ave. N Unit A, will present a Deadly Sins Showcase from 7 to 10 p.m. Showcasing circus acrobats, jugglers, and fire dancers, the event will help provide new equipment for the facility. Admission for the event is $15.

SATURDAY
The Good Vibes Art & Music Festival will be at Williams Park, 350 Second Ave. N, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The festival is a joint venture between USF St. Petersburg and St. Petersburg College to celebrate students of art and music. This is a free event.

Garden Club will perform at The Ale and The Witch, 111 Second Ave. N.E., from 8:30 to 11:30 p.m. The experimental neo-soul quartet will play a mix of covers and original music. This is a free event.

SUNDAY
The Orchid Festival will be at Sunken Gardens, 1825 Fourth Ave. N., from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Multiple premier orchid vendors will be on display. A talk on orchid care will also be given. Admission is $10.

Short & Sweet Theatre Week Schedule:

“It’s a Living.” Comedy improv night with Hawk and Wayne. Monday, April 8 at 5:15 and 5:30 p.m. at The Edge.


“Theatre Week Returns.” Short and sweet performances by students from USF Tampa School of Theatre and Dance. Tuesday, April 9 at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. at Lynn Pippenger Hall Collaboration Lounge.

“Tales Thrice Told.” Three original plays written and performed by Fanni Green, Bob Devin Jones and Maureen McDole. Co-presented with Studio@620. Tuesday, April 9 at 5:15 and 6:30 p.m. at Lynn Pippenger Hall Auditorium.

“She Speaks.” Staged readings performed by Eugene Bondurant, Stephanie Roberts, Mimi Rice and Vanessa Rendon. Directed by Vicki Daigualnt. Wednesday, April 10 at 5:15 p.m. at The Edge.

“Hello.” Immersive performance by Chris Crawford and Anthony R. Smith. Wednesday, April 10 and Thursday, April 11 at 6:15 p.m. at The Grind.

“Cabaret.” Performed by students from USF Tampa School of Theatre and Dance. Thursday, April 11 at 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. at The Edge.

For more information about the events contact Ann Wykell at awykell@mail.usf.edu.

THE CROW’S NEST
Where's the meat? Not at The Cider Press Café.

Story and Photos
By Cory Cole
Contributor

As St. Petersburg changes, so does The Cider Press Café, one of its local vegan restaurants that originally specialized in all raw food. But if you’ve never visited, or haven’t been back in some time, then you may not know it started serving cooked dishes. Cider Press, 601 Central Ave., has become known for its vegan cuisine. Roland Strobel knew only serving raw food was a niche-within-a-niche. Yet he and his partner, Johan Everstijn, still moved forward and opened the restaurant.

The first Cider Press opened in 2013, in Naples, Florida. Strobel and Everstijn later closed that location in 2016 and dedicated all their time to the St. Petersburg location, which opened in August 2015.

Continuing to serve raw vegan cuisine in the growing food and art culture within St. Petersburg has helped drive business. But two years ago, on a cold day in January 2017, Everstijn decided to make his vegan gumbo, Cider Press’s first cooked dish.

“He made a gumbo and it sold like hotcakes,” Strobel said about his partner. From that point on, more cooked options started being introduced into the menu, such as the “Buffalo Blue Cheez Chik’n Sandwich,” “The Burg Cheez Steak,” and the “Kale-Chick’n Sandwich,” “The Burg.”

As the “Buffalo Blue Cheez Chik’n Sandwich” was introduced into the menu, such options — options which Strobel said will remain on the menu because they still have popularity and hold value to the restaurant. Strobel describes the rest of the menu as “vegan comfort food.”

Strobel and Everstijn, partners in business and life, did not grow up on a vegan diet. Just like many of their first-time customers, they had never thought of eating raw vegan. It was their four-legged canine friend who helped the idea come to fruition.

“It was the dog food scare of 2005; animals are dying, all of a sudden our little dog is lying in a corner, yet nothing’s changed in his environment,” Strobel said.

This got Everstijn to try cooking fresh meals in hopes that it would bring life back into their furry friend. Within 20 minutes, Strobel and Everstijn could see a positive change within their dog. He regained energy, and within a few weeks, he was back to normal.

“Dogs don’t know the placebo effect,” Strobel said.

Afterward, Strobel and Everstijn noticed how food affected their dog in negative and positive ways. So, they decided to change their diets. Everstijn discovered the raw vegan detox diet and they tried it out.

“The fountain of youth is not some elusive spring somewhere,” Strobel said. “It’s eating raw vegan food.”

Though preparing raw vegan food is not easy, Everstijn and Strobel felt amazing after the detox stage of their diet. During their time as raw vegans, Everstijn began to develop his raw culinary skills.

He was trained in Chicago by a raw vegan chef and began making lunches for his neighbors. Everstijn challenged himself to never create the same dish twice. As he mastered his craft, he received a job as an instructor for Matthew Kenney, a celebrity chef, entrepreneur, author, and educator who specializes in plant-based cuisine.

During Thanksgiving 2011, Strobel and Everstijn booked a vacation to visit Everstijn’s mother, who lived in Naples. Shortly after they arrived, Everstijn’s mother died of cancer, which she had been battling for years. Since they had already booked the vacation, Everstijn and Strobel extended their stay.

They knew Naples was an older and wealthy community, with many of the residents focused on health and the longevity of life. They decided that Naples was the right place to introduce and open their raw vegan restaurant.

What they did not know was that Naples is strongly influenced by seasonal visitors. Nate Bohn, general manager and executive chef, and Christina Barbara, sous chef, are two of the influencers who helped create the Cider Press’s comfort food menu.

Everstijn no longer spends all his time in the kitchen day to day. He has instead become more of an influencer, helping set specials and keep the restaurant up to date with food trends. He does much of this with Bohn.

“The burgers are good, the lettuce, tomato, it’s all so fresh,” said customer Charlie Izzo. He typically orders the classic burger when visiting. Since he’s a vegetarian, this option just makes dining easy for him.

But how do non-vegans react to the restaurant? According to Bohn and other employees, they cannot recall a time when someone had a bad experience with their food. But, Bohn did remember a time when an older couple came in, and after they finished eating, the wife turned and told her husband he just ate a vegan burger.

Though for those who are vegans, or not, the Cider Press Café might just be a place to stop by or revisit.

The restaurant is open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday for lunch and dinner, with brunch and dinner available from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturdays and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sundays. For more information, visit the Cider Press Café’s website at http://ciderpresscafe.com/

The Cider Press Café puts a homemade vegan spin on traditional cream of tomato soup

Cider Press offers several organic, vegan cocktails, beers and wines. They also sell kombucha, smoothies, coffee and other vegan drinks.

Two Classic burgers with slaw ready to run to a table at Cider Press.