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MEET THE CANDIDATES
NEWS, page 4 and 5

As Student Government senate elections approach, it’s important to know who’s in your corner. Check out our profiles on each of the candidates and decide which five will earn your vote on Oct. 28.

FILMS FOR FRIGHT
OPINION, page 6

Pop some corn and get your candy ready! Contributor Bryce Lawson walks you through five horror movies to haunt your Halloween season.

NEW CONSOLIDATION PLAN WINS PRAISE IN ST. PETERSBURG
By Nancy McCann
Contributor

St. Petersburg campus leaders would have significant responsibility for academics, budgets and student life under a revised plan for consolidating the three campuses of USF next July.

The plan, which was released Thursday, promises to preserve the “distinctive identities” of all three campuses and to give “clear responsibility and accountability” for academic and budgetary decisions to the regional chancellors of the two smaller campuses.

Although many details are still in the works, the new plan was quickly welcomed by three key players in the ongoing consolidation debate.

One was state Rep. Chris Sprowls, R-Palm Harbor, the chief legislative architect of consolidation and key defender of the St. Petersburg campus.

Sprowls joined USF system President Steve Currall in presenting the new plan to the editorial board of the Tampa Bay Times on Thursday morning.

The second was the Times, which praised the new plan as a “substantial improvement” over Currall’s first plan five weeks ago.

And the third was history professor Ray Arsenault, who as president of the USF St. Petersburg Faculty Senate has been an outspoken critic of the consolidation process and Currall’s first plan.

“Short of retaining our separate accreditation, it’s about as good as we could hope for,” said Arsenault.

“Compared to the original plan, it’s like night and day. It shows that President Currall listened to our criticisms and all the voices that were raised in objection to the original plan.”

At issue in the long months of consolidation planning was the status of the St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee campuses, which will lose their independent accreditation when the three campuses become what Currall calls “One USF, Geographically Distributed.”

A 17-member consolidation task force recommended that the two smaller campuses become full branch campuses, as defined by the regional agency that accredits USF. That means St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee should have strong leaders with substantial authority over academics and budgets.

Sprowls and other key Pinellas legislators agreed.

When then-USF system President Judy Genshaft pointedly declined to endorse that status for the smaller campuses, the Legislature amended the Florida statutes in June to mandate it.

Currall, who succeeded Genshaft on July 1, says the plan he released Thursday complies with both state law and the requirements of the accrediting agency.

In a memo to the USF Center of Excellence in Environmental Sciences.

A reassignment of some academic programs from the Muma College of Business in Tampa to St. Petersburg, such as bachelor’s and master’s degrees in finance.

An interdisciplinary USF Center of Excellence in Oceanographic and Environmental Sciences.

An interdisciplinary USF Center of Excellence in STEM Education.

Distinctive programs in Journalism and Digital Communications and an interdisciplinary research center in Florida Studies, a program that Arsenalco co-founded 16 years ago.

>> SEE PRaise on P2

New consolidation plan wins praise in St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg muralist Justin Wagher paints one of the 10-foot wooden panels in the lobby of Station House on Oct. 18. The event, which occupied four of the venue’s five floors, centered around nurturing local artists and celebrating Station House’s expansion into the Hyde Park neighborhood.

See story, Page 8.

Softball to Stethoscopes
FEATURES, page 7

Whether it’s balls to gloves or those in need of resources that can help, Meghan King has always had a passion for connecting people.

Learn about King’s journey from the softball field to USF St. Petersburg’s nursing program.

Murals, museums and more

New SG constitution passes
By Dylan Hart

All three USF Student Governments passed a new constitution last week, which — should it pass a student referendum — would determine how SG will function in a consolidated university and gives the authority to administer Activities and Services fees to a senate based in Tampa and populated primarily by Tampa senators.

Senators at USF St. Petersburg passed the bill with 11 votes and one abstention on Oct. 14. USF Tampa’s legislative branch passed the bill unanimously on Oct. 15.

The next day, senators at USF Sarasota-Manatee passed it as well.

The constitution would change the structure of SG to follow a federalized model, where senators from all campuses would be part of an overarching branch in Tampa.

Each campus would also have an independent “campus council,” to oversee local legislation, as well as a campus court and a campus governor.

The general student population will have a chance to vote on the constitution later this month in a referendum. If students reject the constitution, it will be turned over to university administration for a final decision.

For more information about the constitution, read our Oct. 13 coverage at crowsneststpete.com.
The new plan, released Thursday by USF system President Steve Currall (left), is “about as good as we could hope for,” says faculty leader Ray Arsenault.
The groups were asked what they thought of the new plan. Jose Perez, a political science professor, said, “It is a real tribute to Martin Toddock’s work both on the campus and outside the campus that we have at least what we have.”

The most important thing is that there has been a significant change from the first iteration of the consolidation proposal. There’s still a lot of things that have to be worked out, but I’m much more confident today than I was when the provost came to campus and tried to argue for the other plan, although he did say things could change, and obviously they have for the better.

So to that extent, our voice now has at last been heard. But this will be an ongoing issue and battle that our campus has to be wary of so we have to make sure that these things are actually fully implemented. The Tampa Bay Times editorial board:

The revisions revealed Thursday are a substantial improvement, benefit the entire university and treat the St. Petersburg campus much more fairly. While there are details left to be resolved, this 2.0 consolidation blueprint better reflects state law and offers a reasonable path forward to maintain and enhance their unique identities within the major research university.

Overall, USF consolidation 2.0 is a big step in the right direction for the entire university, which will have one accreditation, one set of admissions standards and one diploma.

But you should benefit all students regardless of whether they are primarily based in Tampa, St. Petersburg or Sarasota. And it reflects well on (state Rep. Chris) Sprowls, who remained engaged and cooperative during the revisions, and on Carrall, who has proven to be a quick study and a good listener in less than four months on the job.

Ultimately, though, the USF consolidation plan provides only the road map for “one university” if the USF System is to be unified. The success of a unified USF really will depend on the good intentions of the university administrators and faculty across three campuses for work to continue for the common good.
Meet the candidates for Student Government senate

By Katlynn Mullins and Carrie Pinkard

Katlynnm@mail.usf.edu and clerieo@mail.usf.edu

NAME: Mia Bonilla
Major: Forensic studies and justice
Year: Freshman
Hometown: Valrico
Email: bonilla3@mail.usf.edu

Isabella Bonilla is originally from Bronx, New York, but moved to Valrico for high school. Her platform for Student Government focuses on kindness and inclusion. She said USF St. Petersburg feels like home to her, and she wants to make it a home for all students.

“I think it’s important to foster an environment where every student feels like they have a place to belong here, and I would love to be a part of that,” Bonilla said. “I have always been passionate about making my peers feel happy and included, and Student Government is definitely a direct way to do that.”

Bonilla said she thinks SG operates like a “one-way mirror,” and that students don’t always see the impact it has on campus. If elected, she wants to be an SG member that students feel comfortable approaching with their problems.

One unique change she wants to bring to campus is more printers. She wants to add printers on every floor of the residence halls so students don’t have to feel unsafe walking to the library at night to print their homework.

Bonilla said she has a passion for politics and wants to bring this to her position in SG.

“I have a very good understanding of politics and current events in our country, and if elected, I will make sure to fully understand the politics and current events of USFSP so I can effectively take part and make a change in the best ways I can,” Bonilla said.

“fresh, innovative ideas” along with him.

He would like the university to partner with South Central St. Petersburg, a part of town he feels has “been kind of forgotten.” It’s poverty stricken, he said, and “seems like it could be renovated and helped. It just needs someone to help it.”

He would like the same to be done with the university’s harborside.

“Castle would like more transparency with the budget as well. He’s heard a lot of students “don’t know what Student Government does with their money.”

He feels that the people he speaks with set him apart. He’s talked with students that float through college with ease and others who have had to “fight and claw to get into college.”

“I feel like I’m in touch with all of these groups,” he said. “And that’s something I like to think makes me unique.”

Name: Chase Cooley
Major: History
Year: Sophomore
Hometown: Oldsmar
Email: chase25@mail.usf.edu

Chase Cooley is running for reelection.

He said he loves being able to represent students and have a community to be part of.

This term, he wants to implement something similar to the Support-A-Bull Market food pantry or the “communal clothing rack,” but with school supplies. Students would be able to borrow supplies, like a stapler before class, take what they need or donate what they don’t at the end of the year.

Cooley also said that SG meetings feel closed off. He suggested streaming meetings to keep students informed on the changes brought about by consolidation.

“I think SG gets sort of a bad reputation,” Cooley said. “Being a bit more open and honest would help (counter that).”

Cooley believes his major separates him from the rest of the candidates. He said it’s fine that a lot of SG members are political science majors, but “if you only play politics, it can be a tough environment. It’s hard to get things done.”

Name: Katherine Fishman
Major: Political science
Year: Senior
Hometown: Safety Harbor
Email: bfishman@mail.usf.edu

This is Katherine Fishman’s third election. After almost two full terms in senate, she wants to continue her service to the student body and is striving for a more “open and transparent Student Government.”

If elected, Fishman hopes to implement a committee to help students connect with the city. There was a similar committee in the past, but Fishman said it never “made good on its promises.”

Whether through volunteer opportunities or events in the community, she said she wants to make “students aware of what resources there are.”

One change Fishman plans to push for is making budgeting more transparent to students.

“That is the most important thing we do,” Fishman said. She wants to make sure students “know exactly what is going on and that everyone is getting a fair chance, because they didn’t last year.”

Name: Jonathan Hatzistefanou
Major: Political science
Year: Sophomore
Hometown: Stewart
Email: jonathanhatz@mail.usf.edu

Sophomore Jonathan Hatzistefanou, “like anybody,” thinks Student Government is a good place to start as a junior politician.

Recently, he’s heard a lot about “INFighting and the dysfunction of Student Government,” referring to the “impeachment crisis” of spring semester.

He said it’s important that USF St. Petersburg has a “functional Student Government.”

He sees himself as a source of stability and believes members of SG seem to have their “own little personal agenda and way that they want it to specifically run,” but working that way doesn’t get things done.

Making sure everybody gets along and having the funding needed for student activities and clubs are what’s important to him.

“I’m willing to do what others won’t,” Hatzistefanou said. “I’m willing to go to the extra meetings… Sit down and talk with everyone and see what they actually want. And not just pass bills just because that’s what we need to do. I actually need to make sure what we’re doing is right for everyone.”

Name: Isaiah Castle
Major: Political science
Year: Sophomore
Hometown: St. Petersburg
Email: isaiahcastle@mail.usf.edu

Isaiah Castle says he’s always enjoyed helping people and wants to do it for the rest of his life. He feels the first step toward this goal would be getting involved in Student Government.

Though he’s a sophomore, he started at USF St. Petersburg in August and is bringing forth a “fresh, innovative ideas” along with him.

He would like the university to partner with South Central St. Petersburg, a part of town he feels has “been kind of forgotten.” It’s poverty stricken, he said, and “seems like it could be renovated and helped. It just needs someone to help it.”

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Name: Veronica Jimenez
Major: Political science
Year: Sophomore
Hometown: Miami
Email: vjimenez4@mail.usf.edu

Veronica Jimenez, who’s running for reelection, grew up in Miami, where she became interested in politics during her Advanced Placement Government class as a senior in high school. Jimenez is passionate about political science as a major and as a way of life. She serves as senate president pro tempore and is a member of the League of Women Voters.

She said she’s learned a lot through her position and wants to continue growing in the role.

“This position gives me a chance to connect with the student body and organizations on campus, as well as represent USFSP,” she said. “It has also given me so much experience in the legislative field, as I would love to pursue something in the legislative and government field.”

Jimenez said her patient personality helps her succeed in Student Government.

“I focus on being level-headed when it comes to attending meetings and inputting my view points, and patience when constituents or any senator asks for help or advice.”

Name: Madeline Rhodes
Major: Interdisciplinary social sciences—International relations and sociology
Year: Junior
Hometown: Salt Lake City
Email: rhodes10@mail.usf.edu

Junior Madeline Rhodes is a transfer student who lives on campus.

“I was actually a military brat,” she said. Originally from Salt Lake City, she moved with her parents to Clearwater in December. Rhodes wants to get involved on campus and feels this is where her skill set applies most. Though she lives on campus, she was a commuter before she transferred, and, while also being an out-of-state student, understands a lot of situations.

“I don’t know what the demographic of the senate looks like now, but I think it’s mostly first-year students,” she said. “I know there are a lot of problems that transfer students deal with, and I want to act as an advocate for those students, on top of dealing with other issues.”

With the campus’ large commuter culture, Rhodes would also like students to get more involved. One goal of hers is for students to feel like they can email her with “any problems” they may have.

Rhodes also wants to advocate for higher wages for employees in The Reef. She’s spoken with some of them and thinks they “add a lot of value to the campus, but they’re definitely underpaid.”

Name: Caitlyn Roland
Major: Biology with a concentration in biomedical science
Year: Sophomore
Hometown: Gainesville
Email: caitlyngrace@mail.usf.edu

Caitlyn Roland said she was intimidated about coming to USF St. Petersburg at first, but now she feels at home and loves the school and the city.

Roland said that being more involved on campus helped with her transition to college, and she wants to use her position in SG to help students find a club they belong in.

“I want to run for senate because I feel like student involvement is a very integral aspect of the college experience,” Roland said. “I want to be able to equip clubs and students with what they need to thrive and succeed.”

She said one thing she would want to change about SG is how it relays information to students.

“I feel that most students don’t listen to minutes and attend general assembly meetings, so a social media entity that recaps meetings and informs students about important events would be a great addition,” Roland said.

Also running for senate is sophomore Eran Fruehauf, who did not respond to The Crow’s Nest request for an interview.
Five horror films to watch this Halloween

By Bryce Lawson
Junior journalism and digital communication major
Bryce11@mail.usf.edu

For the month of October, I decided to watch a horror movie each day.

For some, that might be an overload of monster mayhem. But if you’re waiting until Halloween night to have your own mini fright fest, here are the five films you should choose.

1. The Creature From The Black Lagoon (1954)

Showcasing my favorite of the Universal Monsters and shot in 3D, this film takes place in the Amazon, where a team of geologists finds the skeletal remains of a webbed creature.

This leads to further investigation by the team, which eventually runs into the creature.

The creature, in a way, comes off as a sympathetic character to me, despite being portrayed as the monster. He’s just an animal living in his habitat and defending himself against intruders. The design of the creature is impressive and holds up to this day, going on to influence future “Best Picture” winner, “The Shape of Water.”

2. Cronos (1993)

In honor of Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, I wanted to include the debut feature of Mexican director Guillermo del Toro. In this Mexican vampire film, del Toro tells a story of an antiquities dealer who discovers the “Cronos device” — a scarifying looklet that soon turns the head, played by veteran Argentinian actor Federico Luppi, into an immortal with a taste for blood.

Unlike other vampire films, this film’s point of view is from the vampire’s grudge and the theme of children put into a powerful_AREA. del Toro. In this Mexican vampire film, del Toro tells a story of an antiquities dealer who discovers the “Cronos device” — a scarifying looklet that soon turns the head, played by veteran Argentinian actor Federico Luppi, into an immortal with a taste for blood.


This Italian horror masterpiece from the giallo genre features some of the best kills ever put to film. Giallo is a genre of Italian literature and film usually dealing with horror and mystery detective elements. Director Mario Bava is considered a pioneer of the giallo.

The movie details a string of mysterious murders that occur around a scenic bay. You can definitely see how this film had an impact on the slasher film boom in the 80s. The kills in this film are so influential that “Friday the 13th Part III” pretty much copied behavior of them. You can see the track shot influenced by the opening of Orson Welles’ 1958 classic, “Touch of Evil.”


Fans of “Rocky Horror Picture Show” should definitely give this one shot. Taking elements from “The Phantom of the Opera,” Brian De Palma’s film is a disjointed write-up, directed by William Finley, who writes music for his lover to perform. A record producer, played by Paul Williams, who also scored the picture, exploits the composer to open up his new rock palette, resulting in the composed ticking Over-Psychic revenge as a phantom.

I would definitely consider this the first rock opera due to the numerous musical numbers. All of De Palma’s cinematic tropes are on display, including a tracking shot influenced by the opening of Orson Welles’ 1958 classic, “Touch of Evil.”

5. Kwaidan (1965)

One of my favorite anthology horror films, directed by Masaki Kobayashi, is based on Japanese folk tales from the samurai era. This unique film is packed with atmosphere, some of which may be purchased for 10 cents each by contacting the newspaper’s editor-in-chief or managing editor. Newspaper theft is a crime. Those who violate the single copy rule may be subject to civil and criminal prosecution and/or university discipline.

THE CROW’S NEST

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By James Bennett III
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Y ou have to see it. Every year, as our (supposedly) tropical paradise begins to cool down and all the jack-o’-lantern candy baskets emerge, a small hoard of brainlets come out of the woodwork to bash on pumpkin spice.

They never even offer a well-thought-out reason for their hatred of pumpkin spice, either. They simply assert that “pumpkin spice is for basic bitches,” and scurry off to find some other 바본 to hop on.

The simple fact that most pumpkin spice-hating misanthropes forget is that pumpkin spice is a perfectly valid addition to a plethora of dishes.

By Bryce Lawson
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Former FSU softball star joins USFSP nursing program

By Katlynn Mullins
katlynnm@mail.usf.edu

Meghan King enjoys connecting people. Whether it’s athletes to oncology patients or herself with children, she finds the two wires that were meant to connect and puts them together.

As a child, and throughout college, she played softball. Though she enjoyed it, there was something else on her mind — nursing.

At a young age, King lost a close friend to cancer. It made her realize she wanted to pursue a career in pediatric oncology.

“I feel like my purpose is to help those families in one of the toughest times… to bring light to a dark situation,” King said.

In February, the Florida State University softball team adopted Hayden Stone, then 11, through the Friends of Jaclyn Foundation, which is a nonprofit that pairs young patients with local athletes in an effort to raise awareness, according to the nonprofit’s website.

King was the team’s pitcher at the time. She said she and Hayden have talked at least once a week since she left Tallahassee. They’ve both traveled to see each other, and King is visiting Tallahassee in the coming weeks for Hayden’s first haircut since completing chemotherapy — a milestone among patients.

Nursing would give King the opportunity to connect with children in situations similar to Hayden’s.

When King attended FSU, she volunteered at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital with child life specialist Olivia Vincent. Vincent’s job is to work with patients to “make sure the child is as comfortable as possible during their hospital experience,” King said.

This could mean immersing the patient in virtual reality while getting an IV started or explaining complicated procedures in a way they understand.

From cather starts to spinal taps, King worked with Vincent, but also watched the nurses.

The experience taught her what she could do in place of a specialist if the hospital didn’t have one and how to deal with grief.

Professionals “respond to every single pediatric death,” King said.

She learned coping mechanisms alongside Vincent, but they also created a new program.

King organized and facilitated patient visits with other FSU athletes so they can “get some experience under their belt,” King said.

The sport led her to Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Peru and Japan with the Puerto Rican national team.

In 2018, the FSU softball team won the national championship. King feels her time playing the sport helped prepare her for a nursing career.

Communication, teamwork and every person sharing a common goal are all traits she acquired by playing softball.

“The outlet to connect with people” can be used with patients and other people she will meet.

This semester, she’s at USF St. Petersburg, enrolled in the College of Nursing’s inaugural advanced second degree cohort on the St. Petersburg campus.

She graduated from FSU with a bachelor’s in family and child sciences with a minor in psychology.

King chose the St. Petersburg campus because she’s familiar with the area, and her “dream hospital” is Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital, which is within walking distance from the school.

She’s been on two tours at the hospital already and has fallen “in love with everything.” She’s met hospital staff and facilitated patient visits with athletes.

King spoke at a softball tournament hosted by ESPN earlier this year. She recruited a few members from each team and set up patient visits with the hospital.

In class, she’s going to be learning about injections within the coming weeks, and when clinicals come around, she’ll focus on mastering IV starts.

“I’ve seen that it’s one of the hardest things in the pediatric field, and especially with child oncology patients; they’re used to getting poked so much,” King said.

She wants to make it easier on them.

She’s excited for the opportunity to complete her clinicals at All Children’s and feels “it’s a great opportunity to learn from some really incredible nurses.”

“Being able to go to school here… and being able to do my pediatric clinicals there,” King said. “It’s always been a dream of mine.”

MONDAY
With the 2019 SHINE Murals Festival in full swing, Ruddorf & Bronson Coffee Roasters, 1975 Third Ave. S., will donate a wall as a part of the festival. Audrey Jennifer has been hired to paint the mural throughout the week, but she will be there on Monday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. People are invited to see her work and enjoy free coffee, music and giveaways. This is a free event.

Get your mind right for the week ahead at Monday Night Yoga at Grassroots Kava House, 45 26th Ave. The class runs from 7 to 8:15 p.m. This is a free event with kava and kava drinks available for purchase. Bring your own mat.

TUESDAY
SubCentral at The Iberian Rooster, 475 Central Ave. N, will host a stand-up comedy open mic night from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. The funniest comic will win a $50 cash prize. Attendees are required to purchase at least two items while there.

WEDNESDAY
Learn some more about international issues at the International Club meeting in the University Student Center Coral Room from 4 to 5 p.m.

Get in shape before binging on Halloween candy at Spook-N-Run at 3 Daughters Brewing, 222 22nd St. S. The 3-mile run will include a free post-run drink. The event is from 6 to 9 p.m.

THURSDAY
Campus Recreation will host a SHINE Festival bike tour from 5 to 7 p.m. The free tour will start at the Campus Recreation building, 140 7th Ave. S. Students who need to rent a bike must register online beforehand.

The Museum of Fine Arts, 255 Beach Drive NE, will host its second annual MFA Zombie Thriller Dance from 7 to 9 p.m. The dance will take place on the front steps of the museum. This is a free event.

FRIDAY
The Bends, 919 First Ave. N, will host a rock show featuring San Diego band Spooned with plates starting at 9 p.m. This is a no cover event.

Show off your Halloween costume from 6 to 9 p.m. at Black Crow Coffee Old Northeast’s Groove-O-Ween Costume Spooktacular, 722 Second St. N. Local electronic music producer Terrapin will perform. This is a free event.

SATURDAY
There will be a SHINE Festival Grand Finale event at The Factory St. Pete, 2788 Fairfield Ave. S., from 2 to 7 p.m. The festivities will include art installations, mural reveals, live music, panel discussions, a pop-up market and more. The event is free to attend.

After the grand finale, head over to Green Bench Brewing Co., 1133 Baum Ave. N., for Spooktacular Screamin’ 2019 — a Halloween-inspired horror film festival and costume party featuring dozens of local Florida filmmakers — from 7 to 11 p.m. Films will be shown in the beer garden, which is open to people of all ages, and Webb’s City Cellar. The event is free, but don’t be a prune — buy a drink if you’re of age.

SUNDAY
The Stadium of Screams and Fall Festival will be at Al Lang Stadium, 230 First St. S., from 1 to 5 p.m. Family-friendly attractions will include a pumpkin patch, face-painting, soccer drills and more. Get your tickets online for $8. All proceeds will go to the St. Petersburg Free Clinic and Tampa Bay Rowdies Soccer Fund.

St. Pete Pride will host a HallowQueens - Spooktacular Drag Competition and Festival from 7 to 10 p.m. at Out of the Closet thrift store, 3400 26th Ave. S. The free event will feature six drag queens who’ll compete as attendees participate in a costume contest and enjoy local art, a photo booth and refreshments.
Station House celebrates new business and new artists

Story and photos by
Patrick Tobin
Contribution

The scent of spray paint filled the air on Oct. 18 to celebrate Station House’s recent expansion into the Hyde Park neighborhood of Tampa as Hyde House.

Taking up four of the building’s five floors, the event was a joint effort by Station House, SHINE St. Petersburg Mural Festival and Ichicoro An. While the panel came to a close, two floors down, crowds steadily streamed into the main event. Several live music acts, organized by Swamp Sister Booking, provided the backdrop for a celebration of art, music and culture.

Eventgoers sipped on cocktails and watched closely as a cluster of muralists filled their wooden panels with various scenes, shapes and colors. People rifled through racks of clothing set up along the walls from the many pop-up shops around the venue. An old, rickety elevator carried groups of people up and down the building, in which each floor had its own distinct feel.

“Tucked in a corner on the second floor, down a short hallway, bright lights shone from a side room in the otherwise dimly lit venue. Here, in a small room with walls of mirror and glass, Bryson’s Emerge Art Exhibition took form on the walls, windows and floor.”

Bryson, who is finishing up a bachelor’s degree in art history with a minor in entrepreneurship, has curated exhibits before, but she says this was her first time curating one where she didn’t personally know many of the artists.

“I worked on Instagram and I reached out to universities around the United States and around the globe,” she said. “I basically just reached out to them and I stalked them on the internet.”

The pieces in the exhibit range in style from the “fragmented shapes” of Rhonda Massel Donovan’s “Window Fences” – an oil and acrylic on unstretched canvas – to Matthew Campbell’s “Pantsy,” which looks like an oddly shaped pillow resting on the floor.

As a cover of Bon Iver’s “Skinny Love” played back in the dimly lit room, and more people wandered into the exhibit, Bryson described her purpose for the exhibit.

“I hope people walk away with kind of a new, fresh perspective on what emerging artists are creating,” she said. “I just really wanted to give people a shot that I felt like deserved it.”

Boyd Hill preserves more than nature

Story and photo by
Annabella Keim
Contribution

There’s a living museum that not many people know about just outside of downtown St. Petersburg. The Pinellas Pioneer Settlement, 2900 31st St. S, has open houses the first Saturday of every month so people have the opportunity to experience American history firsthand.

Set during the turn of the century, this museum — hidden within the Boyd Hill Nature Preserve — is filled with all kinds of historical buildings: a sawmill; a blacksmith; a sunflower garden; the Brantley building; an old-fashioned gas station; a print shop; a sugar mill and the Endicott house, an authentic home that was built in 1898.

Michael Bowen, a passionate volunteer who’s worked at the settlement since 1989, shared his experiences while he gave a personal tour of the sawmill, Endicott house and gas station. He’s seen the park grow from just the Brantley building and the Endicott house to what it is today.

The exterior of the Brantley building and the print shop.

“Everybody knows, just come down here and ask for Mike,” Bowen said. He describes the park as a “hidden gem.”

Bowen and his late wife, Connie, dedicated their weekends to the settlement for decades. She loved the Endicott house and spent much of her time perfecting the summer kitchen with her decorations. When the settlement hosted shows, she would use the old wood-burning oven in the summer kitchen to make pancakes and bacon for the folks who came through.

“My wife really enjoyed telling these stories. She would do the research so she wasn’t just telling you a fairytale,” Bowen said.

Although his wife passed away in 2015, Bowen continues to volunteer his time in the park. As long as someone is standing around to watch their demonstrations, they will continue to saw.

There used to be people who are responsible for helping design the gas station onsite. Modeled after an old Sinclair gas station, the city built the structure as a place for restrooms in the park. To Bowen, it stands out like “knucklebusters of the Past,” with at least 30 different vintage tools fastened to it. Most of the stuff in the garage came from Bowen’s personal collection.

“I could make 10 of those boards and still have more left,” he said. All of his “old junk” came in handy at the park.

The sawmill, built in 1925 and still running to this day, was Bowen’s favorite spot in the park. As long as someone is standing around to watch their demonstrations, they will continue to saw.

The entire settlement depends on volunteers, but there are often not enough people who know about it or are interested enough to help during events and shows.

There used to be people stationed at each of the buildings to give in-depth tours. However, the number of volunteers has declined over the years — and so have the number of shows, events and open buildings.

“It’s a shame. You get something like this, it’s really nice,” Bowen said. “I enjoy it or I wouldn’t be down here.”

Over at the Brantley building, there is a general store you can actually shop at, with trinkets, candy and toys from the time period. The cashier, Nancy Millard, spends her time running the store and sharing information about the park to guests. The sunflower garden is one of her favorite spots in the park.

Beside the Brantley building and the Endicott house, the other structures are replicas built in the 1980s and 1990s. The Pinellas Pioneer Settlement is maintained by the nonprofit Pioneer Settlement and the St. Petersburg Parks and Recreation department.

Interested in volunteering? Visit the Facebook page, “Pinellas Pioneer Settlement,” give them a call at (727) 893-7326 or take a trip out to the Boyd Hill Nature Preserve.