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dramatically, from year to year. The budget fluctuates, often organizations. That means student fees to campus allocates the revenue from budget each year when it industry itself.

Student Government politics beset by the crosscurrents of newspaper that is already few years. consolidation takes root in a online-only format, once Tampa campus, perhaps in merging with its counterpart on the USF system are some fear, its distinct identity itself, faces an uncertain newspaper, like the campus beginning on Oct. 30, 1969. anniversary of that humble newsletter became an online-only format, once

t all started with a chicken. The campus activities program at the tiny Bay Campus of USF was sponsoring a fried chicken picnic and wanted to get the word out. So a junior named Joan “Suds” Tschiderer did a crude drawing of a chicken, typed up a page of campus news briefs and ran off several dozen copies on an old Ditto duplicating machine. She called her flyer the “Bay Campus Bulletin,” not knowing that she had created Volume 1, Number 1 of a campus newspaper that evolved into today’s The Crow’s Nest.

“I was used to being an editor (at St. Petersburg Junior College), so it was quite natural for me to volunteer for this,” said Tschiderer. “It was quite a humbling scenario to come from professional publications to a modest bulletin, but the goal was to communicate and grow our campus by interconnecting with each other.”

This week marks the 50th anniversary of that humble beginning on Oct. 30, 1969. It comes at a time when the newspaper, like the campus itself, faces an uncertain future.

The campus will lose its separate accreditation – and, some fear, its distinct identity – when the three campuses of the USF system are consolidated on July 1. There is also talk of merging The Crow’s Nest with its counterpart on the Tampa campus, perhaps in an online-only format, once consolidation takes root in a few years.

That adds another layer of uncertainty beneath a student newspaper that is already beset by the crosscurrents of Student Government politics and rapid changes in the news industry itself.

SG sets The Crow’s Nest budget each year when it allocates the revenue from student fees to campus organizations. That means the budget fluctuates, often dramatically, from year to year. It is not clear what will happen when the student governments on three campuses are consolidated.

There has sometimes been talk of having The Crow’s Nest financed by the USF administration, but that would put the newspaper under the same university officials who are sometimes rankled by the paper’s coverage.

A new name When the first issue of the paper rolled out of the Ditto machine in 1969, the St. Petersburg campus was only 4 years old. It had opened in 1965 only because the University of South Florida in Tampa admitted more freshmen than it could house. Nearly 260 freshmen were sent to St. Petersburg to begin their college careers on an 11.8-acre finger of land along Bayboro Harbor.

They attended class in buildings that had housed the U.S. Maritime Service Training Station between 1939 and 1950 and the provisional campus of Florida Presbyterian College (now Eckerd College) from 1959 to 1963. That finger of land is today the site of the College of Marine Science and the state Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

For the next few years, USF experimented with the Bayboro facilities until settling on a plan to offer courses for upperclassmen and graduate students that would complement the program at St. Petersburg Junior College. The Legislature made it official in 1969, dubbing the campus the University of South Florida – St. Petersburg and making it the first branch campus in the state university system.

There were 550 students – many of them part time – taking classes in the fall of 1968, according to the St. Petersburg Times. By the next fall, that number had nearly doubled.

One of them was Tschiderer, who earned a bachelor’s in English in 1971 (and later a master’s in English) and began a career in the university’s student affairs and university relations departments that made her the longest serving full-time staff person in the campus’ history.

The little campus bulletin she started got a new name on Oct. 20, 1970 – The Crow’s Nest.

On sailing ships of old, The Crow’s Nest was a platform high on the mast that was used as a lookout. The name, which seemed perfect on a campus alongside Bayboro Harbor, came out of a contest won by English professor Bill Garrett.

That first issue of the newly named paper proudly declared that it would be “your lookout on our waterfront campus.”

Despite its fancy new name, the paper remained a small publication with modest ambitions for many years. There was no journalism department on campus to nurture students looking for a chance to sharpen their skills. So the paper relied on enthusiastic students like Tschiderer to churn out short stories on campus events and people.

After she graduated in 1971, Tschiderer joined the campus activities office but remained mother hen of The Crow’s Nest, recruiting and rallying staff, typing the stories, and then getting the paper reproduced and distributed.

The old Ditto machine, which used “purple ink that got all over me,” gave way to a more “advanced” mimeograph machine, then a Xerox machine and finally a Risograph duplicating machine that “allowed us to use various colors of ink,” said Tschiderer.

For a time, the paper featured a gossip columnist with the pseudonym of Loretta Lovely who liked to mix high school-ish questions with tart observations. (A sample: “To P.A., Loretta wants to tell you that she is very glad your skirts are shorter but they are still NOT SHORT ENOUGH.”)

What may have been the

>> INSIDE, page 3:

• Student Government senate elections begin today, with two new candidates added to the ballot
• As consolidation approaches, USF Provost Ralph Wilcox promises equity for St. Petersburg faculty

>> SEE LOOKOUT on P2
October 28, 2019

THE CROW’S NEST

LOOKOUT, continued from P1

In 2016, the paper disclosed why the campus’ top academic administrator had been abruptly dismissed in February 2015 in a move shrouded in secrecy. Records obtained—and published—by the paper showed that she had propositioned a female professor and made sexually offensive remarks at an off-campus event.

The Crow’s Nest also reported why the vice president-elect of Student Government suddenly resigned in the spring of 2017: He had been named in an allegation of sexual assault filed by a female student.

In recent years, the paper chronicled the uneasy relationship between St. Petersburg and Judy Genshaft, who changed the leadership of the campus six times during her 19 years as USF system president.

The last leader Genshaft replaced was Sophia Wisniewska, who was ousted in September 2017 for botched preparations for Hurricane Irma. The abrupt departure stunned the campus, and in interviews with The Crow’s Nest some veteran professors criticized the way Genshaft handled it.

Genshaft’s last conflict with St. Petersburg was epic. Throughout the months of planning for consolidation, she declined to support making St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee full branch campuses with hiring and budgetary responsibility, as recommended by a task force mandated by the Legislature. (The consolidation plan offered earlier this month by Genshaft, St. Petersburg, overall, would make the branch campus designation official.)

The Crow’s Nest coverage of consolidation— and Genshaft’s maneuvering— won plaudits in St. Petersburg and elsewhere in the editorial board of the Tampa Bay Times.

The Society of Professional Journalists also applauded the paper’s coverage.

Newsprint paper.

In 1993, the paper chronicles the uneasy relationship between St. Petersburg and Judy Genshaft, who changed the leadership of the campus six times during her 19 years as USF system president.

THE CROW’S NEST

COURTESY OF NELSON POYNTER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The Crow’s Nest archive, USF Digital USF St. Petersburg.

To view more editions in The Crow’s Nest archive, go to digital.usfsp.edu/crows_nest/.
Two candidates added to SG senate elections begin

By Emily Wunderlich ewunderlich@mail.usf.edu

Eleven students will seek your vote for Student Government senate today and tomorrow.

In addition to the nine candidates reported in the Oct. 21 issue of The Crow’s Nest, two more were added to the ballot, even though applications were due Oct. 11.

The editor-in-chief of elections, did not respond to questions asking why applications weren’t accepted after the deadline.

But Bob Herron, who as Student Life and Engagement program coordinator advises Student Government, said Starr made the decision “to provide more choice to the student body.”

“The editor of elections decided to accept two late applications after two students made the request,” Herron said. “With the nine applications, the election would not have been contested with 10 at-large seats available.”

Herron said Starr consulted with SG’s chief legal officer to ensure the decision complied with SG statutes and election code.

To qualify, the candidates were required to be enrolled in at least six credit hours, have a 2.5 GPA and undergo a conduct check by the department of Student Life and Engagement.

The new candidates are Connor Baird, a political science major, and Amy Campbell-Oates, a sustainability studies major.

Baird comes from a family of USF St. Petersburg alumni; both of his parents graduated from the campus, and his mother was part of the first graduating class. His sister will graduate this year.

“She’s seen the progress of the region and the USF St. Petersburg campus have made over the last few years, and I want to continue that progress,” Baird wrote in his application.

“Our readers only see the final product, but our editors pitch and assign stories, along with who will shoot them. Throughout the week, editors will reach out to the contributors in their section to make sure their stories are going well. Sometimes, sources will be hesitant in getting back to us. Other times, events will be rescheduled or canceled altogether.

When this happens, we either assign a new story or use one that hasn’t been published yet. (In journalism-speak, we call these our “evergreen stories,” since they’re not time-sensitive.)

Thursdays are when we meet with our advisor, Rob Hooker, who critiques the previous week’s edition and offers insight about the upcoming one. This is when we establish which stories will be best suited for the front and color pages.

Over the weekend, editors begin the first read-throughs of their contributors’ stories, checking for accuracy, clarity and readability. If a story is missing quotes, photos or captions, they follow up to get those issues addressed before Sunday.

Sundays are the busiest—and most important—days for the paper. This is when stories and page layouts are finalized for publication.

Over the years, we’ve narrowed it down to a science.

1. The editor-in-chief collaborates with the creative director to design each of the paper’s eight pages, paying special attention to story length, newsworthiness and visual appeal.

2. Meetings and weekly critiques allow editors to discuss each story in their sections—reviewing them for accuracy, clarity and compliance with Associated Press style.

3. Contributors review the editors’ suggestions and make the necessary adjustments.

4. The managing editor reads each story before the editor-in-chief, who decides when each story is ready for print.

5. The visuals editor adjusts photos for clarity—adhering to the National Press Photographers Association’s code of ethics—and converts them for print publication. Other editors often assist in matching photos to captions and, sometimes, writing captions on the fly.

6. Once all stories and photos have been placed, the creative director prints out page proofs to be carefully reviewed by everyone on staff. This is where we fine-tune the design and look for typos or other factual errors that might have missed.

7. Once the creative director has corrected the errors on the proofs, the paper is ready to be sent to our press, M&M Printing Co., which delivers 500 copies by noon the following day. David Shedden, special collections librarian, also gets a copy for the archives.

This year, The Crow’s Nest was allocated an annual operating budget of $40,256 to cover the cost of printing, office supplies and employee wages.

THE CROW’S NEST

Provost pledges equity for St. Pete faculty

By Nancy McCann Contributor

When consolidation takes effect next July, the USF system president in St. Petersburg can count on his support for USF's treatment with their counterparts in Tampa.

That pledge came Oct. 24 from Ralph Wilcox, vice president for USF World, also attended part of the meeting.

Wilcox said the responsibility for equitable treatment of faculty across the campuses will fall to multi-campus college deans working in partnership with Regional Chancellors Martin Tadlock in St. Petersburg and Karen Holbrook in Sarasota-Manatee.

They must ensure that “a faculty member in biology on the St. Petersburg campus can be assured that she or he has the same instructional assignments as the biology professor on the other campuses, the same access to research support means, and will be held to the same performance standards,” Wilcox said.

This won’t happen because it’s a “significant shift of culture within the organization,” Wilcox said.

“But I certainly want to be clear that you have my fullest commitment.”

A number of the Tampa-based deans and administrators who will have to uphold Wilcox’s pledge were present to hear him make it.

They included Kathi Servovich, dean of the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences; Charles Adams, dean of the Judy Genshaft Honors College; Jackie Reck, associate dean of the Muma College of Business; Ann Davis, assistant dean of USF Libraries; Nick Trenoweth, vice president of business and finance and chief financial officer of the USF system; and Tony Cappel, associate vice provost of strategic planning, performance and accountability; and Cindy Delia, associate vice president of innovative education.

Rogelio Bradley, vice president for USF World, also attended part of the meeting.

Wilcox’s promise came after remarks by history professor Ray Arsenault, president of the USF Faculty Senate.

Arsenault praised the revised plan for consolidation of the USF system President Steve Currall released on Oct. 17.

The new plan was greeted with a “sort of sigh of relief” in St. Petersburg, Arsenault said.

But Arsenault and USF World senses a lot of faculty concern about “equitable distribution of research funds, course loads and salaries” as consolidation approaches.

Those “more anxiety producing aspects” are not addressed in Currall’s new plan, Arsenault said.

Students can vote online through the Student Government’s PeteSync page. The ballot will also include an optional straw poll conducted by the Center for Civic Engagement, where students can indicate their preferred presidential candidate in the March 17 Florida primary.

Results will be announced Tuesday, Oct. 29. Last year, only 256 students voted in SG midterm elections.

To learn more about the other SG senatorial candidates, read our Oct. 21 coverage online at http://crownestpete.com/2019/10/21/midterm-elections-meet-the-sg-senatorial-candidates/.
Hundreds of Crow’s Nest staff members have left campus determined to make a mark on the world. One of them had already done that when he got here. As a high school student in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1965, Christopher Eckhardt and two others defied the orders of their principals and wore armbands to protest the Vietnam War. When they were suspended, their lawyers took the school district to court. The case, which was styled Tinker v. Des Moines, wound its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled 7-2 in 1969 that the principals were not justified in limiting Tatham’s free expression.

The case is considered a landmark in writing, especially in the rights of students to free speech. More than 20 years later, Eckhardt wound up at USF St. Petersburg, where he was active in both Student Government – he’s the Crow’s Nest. He earned a bachelor’s degree in political science in 1997.

Eckhardt remained an activist – for civil and gay rights, for psychiatric patients – for the rest of his life. He died in Clearwater in December 2012. More than 20 years, his editors have come and gone. Some ended up with careers in journalism. Others, not so much.

One who stayed in the field was Rick Kenney, who earned a master’s in journalism at USF St. Petersburg and a doctorate at the University of Georgia.

Kenney was in a group of grad students in the early 1990s when journalism professor emeritus G. Michael Killenberg fondly recalls as “the best pack” for their irreverent work on the student newspaper.

Over his long career, Kenney worked at a number of newspapers, including the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and St. Petersburg Times (now the Tampa Bay Times), and taught at 10 colleges and universities. He was also the adviser at five student newspapers.

Killenberg was on the staff for three years, and editor-in-chief in 1996-1997. A history buff, he later published several books on St. Petersburg history and wrote a local history column for the Times. He died in 2008.

If not journalism, some ended up marketing or PR. Among them are Keeley Shehan (now Keeley Lecanto), the 2012 editor-in-chief, who is a digital content specialist at Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital.

Working at the Crow’s Nest, she said, helped hone her writing and interviewing skills. It also helped further develop her sense of curiosity.

COURTESY OF CATLIN ASHORTH

Caitlin Ashworth was managing editor at 2015. After graduation, she worked for a newspaper in Massachusetts, but decided she wanted to travel. So, she moved to Thailand, where she now works for The Nation, and fourth graders enjoys more paid time-off. (She would only get two weeks paid in the U.S.) Working at The Crow’s Nest prepared her for teaching.

“Since English is not the first language for my students,” said Ashworth, “I have to be very, very clear when giving instructions.” It reminded her of assigning stories and outlining information to writers. Ren LaForce, editor-in-chief in 2012-2013, is a digital tools reporter at the Pointner Institute for Media Studies.

Chelsea Tatham, creative director and then managing editor in 2012-2014, is a digital journalist at WTSF-TV. Through the connections she made during her time at the student newspaper and in her classes, Tatham secured a job at the Tampa Bay Times, where she split her time between being an administrative assistant and reporter before moving over into WTSF-TV.

Working on The Crow’s Nest was the closest I got to working in a real newsroom and to working in the industry without having to go to work or intern somewhere,” she said. “Those were my first tastes of being ‘the press’.

It’s a very good learning environment… it’s constructive, and everybody that I worked with on the Crow’s Nest was very nice and helpful because we were all learning together.”

Besides learning how different roles operate within a newsroom – from copy editor to photo editor to student each year. Tatham secured a job at the Time Ledger community newspapers.

Eckhardt said in an email, “I decided it was important to find my people.” “As someone who is not a typewriter enthusiast, I think back on working at a real newsroom and to being the closest I got to working in a real newsroom when it was earth-shattering when it first came out.”

Besides her commitment to people-first journalism, the former grad student, John Gogick, who founded the journalism department, is retired and lives most of the year in Wisconsin. Dardenne, who arrived in 1991, was twice chairman of the journalism department. He died in 2013. To honor his memory and his commitment to people-first journalism, the department gives the Robert D. Wolden Award for Humanistic Journalism to an outstanding student each year.

For several years, the adviser was Deb Wolf, an adjunct instructor and former newsroom researcher and technical trainer at the Times.

Wolf is now a reporter for the Gabber, a weekly newspaper based in Gulfport, and a digital tools and photography teacher.

Rob Hooker, a former reporter and editor at the Times, has been adviser since 2013.
Since The Crow’s Nest was founded 50 years ago, the little harborside campus it covers has grown tremendously. We now have 40 degree programs, more than 4,500 students and, coming soon, a third residence hall. Some things, however, never change. These headlines and the stories that accompany them show how some aspects of campus life have been ubiquitous over the past five decades.

1) “Student Government Election Results” — Nov. 22, 1995

Student Government’s notoriously low election turnouts aren’t a new phenomenon. In 1995, only 224 people voted in the election, which the article noted was “less than 10 percent of the student body.” Similarly, in 1989’s midyear Student Government election, only 256 students voted.

The 1995 article noted that candidates only needed 25 signatures from students to win.

Many years have passed, and many more students have enrolled in the university, yet the number of votes needed — and the number of voters — remains unchanged.

2) “Are We Safe?” — Sept. 4, 1996

We’ve all experienced it: the quickening of our heart rates as we walk by the campus fountain and a giant, metal object appears overhead, seemingly inches away from crushing us. The feeling of unease at studying directly adjacent to the Albert Whitted Airport is not new.

In September 1996, this fear enveloped The Crow’s Nest’s front page.

“Ords are eventually one is going to hit,” student David Rissler said.

It has been 23 years, and no plane has crashed on campus. But the rumbling of anxiety and the roaring of the engines lives on.

3) “Many Darts, Few Laurels” — April 10, 1995

In the spring of 1995, an unnamed student wrote a heated editorial about the lack of involvement on campus.

“When enough students won’t participate in or acknowledge the political and educational activities without a grade looming at the end, this university becomes nothing more than a jack-in-the-box, fast-food, drive-through academic institution,” the editorial said.

While student engagement is probably higher today than in 1995, many campus events only have a few attendees, and many clubs struggle to find active members.

4) “ Aren’t We Forgetting About Something?” — April 18, 1995

Back when the Tampa Bay Rays were called the “Devil Rays,” and Tropicana Field was the ThunderDome, one student questioned whether downtown St. Petersburg really needed a baseball team.

The Devil Rays weren’t set to start playing until 1998, but Kathryn Savage wrote an editorial three years earlier, pointing out some concerns.

Savage pointed to the $4 million dollar cost of renovating the ThunderDome, the increased traffic and lack of downtown parking as reasons why it might not be such a good idea.

“We need to look at the entire picture before deciding that baseball is the panacea that city leaders have been assuming it will be,” Savage said.

Nearly 25 years later, St. Petersburg residents are still questioning the Rays’ home in Tropicana Field downtown. The Rays are contracted to keep playing at “the Troop” until 2027, but the future of the building has been a huge talking point among City Council candidates in the November election.

5) “Discount Tickets On Sale” — March 13, 1987

Student discounts have been around for as long as there have been students. Today, we have the “Bulls in the Bug” program, which gives us discounts around St. Petersburg.

Back in 1987, there were also student discounts, and the prices are something to laugh — or cry — about.

• AMC Theater tickets — $2.50
• Adventure Island tickets — $2.25
• Busch Gardens tickets — $14.70
• Sunset golf and country club— $3.00

6) “Ghost lore frightens campus” — Oct. 19, 1999

It wouldn’t be Halloween week if we didn’t reminisce on a Crow’s Nest ghost story from the ‘90s. Besides, if the ghosts were haunting campus in 1999, they’re probably still there today. After all, they’re notorious for lingering.

The first apparition Brandy Stark brings up in her article is Nelson Poynter, who said to haunt the Bayboro Hall elevator. Have you ever felt the elevator shake as it carries you between floors? It could be Poynter reminding you to head to the library for some spooky voice* “midterm studying.”

The other place on campus that Stark said is likely haunted is the Williams House. Stark interviewed Joan “Suddy” Tschiderer for her 1995 article about the house.

“Well, there are many rumors about the house,” Tschiderer said. “One of them being that the spirit of a woman in a dancing gown幽灵。She is supposed to be the spirit of the mother of a former owner.”

Enter the Williams house this Halloween if you’re feeling brave, and see what spirits you find lurking there.

What volume is it, anyway?

By Emily Wunderlich ewunderlich@mail.usf.edu

It’s a question we Crow’s Nest editors ask ourselves every semester.

“What volume number are we on?”

Whether you’re a longtime reader or simply a confused student, you’ve probably noticed that our volume this year is No. 53, although this is our 50th anniversary.

Why? It seems we haven’t made up our minds about whether the volume should change by semester or by academic year. Of the first issue of the Bay Campus Bulletin debuted on Oct. 30, 1969, it was Volume 1, Number 1. Joan “Suddy” Tschiderer, who founded the paper and oversaw it during its formative years, still remembers it clearly.

“In the early years, we used the academic year, starting fresh every fall with (volume and issue numbers),” she said. “I prefer the annual designations, especially since we are now a four-year institution, which helps promote stability for student endeavors.

“Our two-year, upper-division institution (in the campus’ early years) turned over student leadership roles really quickly.”

If previous editors had stuck to Tschiderer’s system, our paper would be at Volume 48 today, since there was no publication between the summer of 1989 and fall of 1991.

But when Crow’s Nest editors published their first issue as a tabloid on Aug. 25, 1993, they apparently sought a fresh start by calling it Volume 1, Number 1.

By that logic, today’s paper would be Volume 26.

But if we counted each semester as a volume — which some Crow’s Nest editors did — we’d be somewhere between No. 100 and 150 today, including the summers when we published.

The fall of 2016 was when we got ahead of ourselves — literally.

The first issue of Volume 51, since the newspaper’s logo incorrectly said the paper was established in 1965, not 1969.

Tschiderer pointed out the error to Crow’s Nest editors, who corrected the volume number to 47, reflecting the number of years since its first publication.

And so the paper went back in time — from Volume 51 to 47 — two issues into the semester.

We’ve been upgrading the volume numbers every semester since, which is why you might notice two Volume 51s in our archive; we reached that number by counting up from where we restarted in 2016. But if it still doesn’t add up to you, you’re not alone. David Shedden, the special collections librarian who maintains our paper’s archives, says there’s no simple answer.

In fact, The Oracle, USF Tampa’s semweekly student paper, is on Volume 57, despite it being 53 years since its debut.

Shedden has spent years chronicling the history of Florida’s newspapers, and he said “the use of numbering systems with college newspapers seem to vary.”

“These are the editorial challenges of an evolving publication,” Tschiderer said.

THE CROW’S NEST

The more things seem to change...
Letter to the Editor: Not perfect, but worth preserving

By Joan “Sudsy” Tschiderer

Founder of The Crow’s Nest

When I arrived at the USF Bay Campus in 1969, I expected to remain for one term, and then transfer to the University of Florida. Now, in fall 2019, I am still here at USF St. Petersburg — and grateful! What an amazing journey.

In those early days, our fledgling campus was an austere yet invigorating place. Despite the Spartan exterior of the former military installation, the inside boasted a warm, scholarly environment. Our faculty and staff were determined to make the state’s first branch campus a quality destination of choice for Pinellas students seeking higher education.

Dr. Les Turner, our founding dean, and his small but formidable administrative team were purveyors of student opportunities. They solicited our student voice. They gathered us to discuss our expectations of campus life — and programs that might enhance our collegiate experience.

One of the first items on our agenda was to develop a basic means of communicating general information, program ideas, and events to our classmates. Consequently, The Crow’s Nest was born in October 1969 as the USFSP Bulletin. Like the campus itself, it was humble and homely — but it was ours, our expressions, our journalistic incubator.

While the embryonic Crow’s Nest was a purposeful mix of information and whimsy, our student newspaper has steadily blossomed and matured into a sophisticated publication.

I have had the opportunity to observe the staff and challenge ourselves — and administer — while The Crow’s Nest evolved over the past 50 years.

With enormous pride, as the producer of that first unsanising USFSP Bulletin, I salute and thank the myriad of dedicated student editors, writers, reviewers, poets, contributors, photographers, designers and their stalwart advisors. You have devoted countless hours to producing The Crow’s Nest. Your service is extraordinary and invaluable. Know that you will always be an essential chapter in the annals of USF St. Petersburg history.

The Crow’s Nest continues to flourish as a master communicator: thoughtfully crafted, expertly researched and beautifully formatted. In 1969, we never envisioned that the little Bulletin would one day be published both in handsome print and online.

Continue to cherish your student voice. It is a treasure unlike any other.

By Emily Wunderlich

Senior Journalism & Digital Communication Major
ewunderlich@mail.usf.edu

I t was the summer of ’69. Humankind took its first steps on the moon. The Stonewall Riots kicked off the modern day LGBT rights movement. Woodstock brought together more than half a million people for a weekend of sex, drugs and rock ’n’ roll.

And a little closer to home, the Bay Campus Bulletin published its first issue.

A lot has changed since our humble days as a mimeographed newsletter. Gone are the gossip columns, rhythmically inflammatory advertisements (looking at you guys, Omnicultural Society of 1997) and crossword puzzles of years past.

In a sense, our newspaper has reached its “coming of age.” But a lot of the issues remain the same. For instance, students were just as up-in-arms about parking in the 1980s & ’90s as they are now. And gripes about Student Government’s handling of our Activities and Services fees are nothing new.

Though our newspaper was there to chronicle our campus’ growth, it never came without challenge — whether it be budget cuts, administrative interference or simply a lack of involvement.

Critics often argue that we are responsible for bad news. But sometimes, we are the bad news.

For instance, a Crow’s Nest advertising manager had to resign from the paper in 1998 because his role as Student Government president presented a “conflict of interest.”

And in 2011, we unknowingly published plagiarized work. An article in the Nov. 9 issue titled “Battles rage in St. Petersburg over Keroauc legacy” lifted about eight paragraphs from the then-St. Petersburg Times, The New York Times and a magazine called Fine Books & Collections.

It prompted the editor-in-chief to write a front-page story condemning the article and establish new guidelines for contributors, which can now be found in our club’s constitution through LSO.

My point is, while we’ve come a long way from where we started — and it’s definitely worth celebrating it would be unfair to gloss over our own slip-ups over the years.

Even now, errors — both in fact and context — still make their way into the paper because we are students, and students make mistakes. (Let’s not forget the time we misspelled “controversy” in a front-page headline.)

When we learn of our errors, we correct them on our website right away and indicate what the error was for reader transparency. We also include our corrections in the next print edition. It’s part of the learning process.

That’s one of the great things about journalism. Without self-reflection, where would we be? Probably still allowing slurs in our advertisements.

We wouldn’t be here were it not for you, the passionate students who passed the torch year after year after strenuous year, amid all of the uncertainty and underappreciation that journalism faces as both an industry and a fixture on this campus.

I hope we can keep the torch going for another 50 years. But we can’t do it alone.

Eight of our 10 staffers will graduate next year. After that, we don’t know whose hands the paper will be in.

As consolidation apparently moves control over A&S fees to a consolidated Student Government that is based in Tampa and dominated by Tallahassee senators, it’s more important than ever to advocate for keeping our paper alive.

How can you do that? By participating in our own Student Government elections (which, incidentally, start today). Elect senators who will represent your interests. Attend general assembly meetings. Make your voices heard during budget season. Write letters to the student body president, or letters to the editor of The Crow’s Nest.

Most importantly, come to a contributors meeting. Get your foot in the door, even if you’re not sure about it right away. Tell us what news stories, columns and photos you want to see — or contribute — and we’ll work to make it happen.

We don’t let the past 50 years fade away.
Tabloid edition had the scuttlebutt

By Crow's Nest Staff

The modern era of The Crow’s Nest began with a bad pun and some impertinent questions.

For years, the campus newspaper was small in size and ambition, an 8.5-by-7-inch publication that was reproduced in the campus activities office.

That changed on Aug. 25, 1993, when the paper became a biweekly tabloid. It was printed off campus and directed by an adviser and an editor-in-chief who both had professional newspaper experience.

The lead story on page 1 described how the former home of C. Perry Snell, a prominent early developer of St. Petersburg, had been moved — very carefully — to the site on campus where it sits today.

The headline was a wincer: “See Snell by the seashore.”

Sometimes there was an edgy front-page column titled “Scuttlebutt” that usually began with two words — “Impertinent questions.”

The short questions it posed were not exactly earthshaking. For example: Would someone please spackle over the peep holes in the toilet stall walls of the men’s room on the second floor of the library?

In an editorial, the editors addressed what would become a Crow’s Nest theme over the years: The noise and potential danger coming from the campus’ garage door neighbor, Albert Whitted Airport.

“Being a student at (the) Bayboro (campus) is like trying to learn in a foxhole, only without the mortars … One day some liqueur-leopard Waldo wanna-be is going to push the stick down when he meant to pull it up, and there’s going to be a huge hole in the side of Coquina Hall.”

The adviser in 1993-94 was graduate student John Gogick. He had earned a bachelor’s from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro and worked for papers in Greensboro and Oklahoma before coming to USF St. Petersburg for a master’s in journalism.

He is now executive editor of The Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle.

The editor-in-chief was another graduate student named Bob Whitby.

Whitby had earned a bachelor’s at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and worked for a startup magazine in Texas before arriving in St. Petersburg.

The “Scuttlebutt” column was directed by an adviser and was printed off campus and reproduced in the campus 7-inch publication that was sometimes a challenge.

“Remember it being a struggle at times,” said Whitby. “The paper had to be filled, and some of the stories were born of desperation for copy.”

Whitby went on to work at alternative weekly papers in Wisconsin, Miami and Orlando, then spent a couple of years at a start-up magazine in Las Vegas. He now writes about science and research at the University of Arkansas.

Hook and lyin’ on USC finances?

By Crow’s Nest Staff

The University Student Center was about to open, and The Crow’s Nest sniffed a scandal.

In a 2007-2008 survey of the student body, 60 percent of the more than 700 respondents had supported using student fees to help build a student union with spaces for student organizations.

But the new building didn’t have the floor for organizations and the clinic as once promised. That was scraped by the administration for financial reasons. In its place: revenue-generating ballrooms and student housing.

For the next 30 years, students would help pay for the building, as reconfigured, with some of the money from their Activities and Services fees.

In one of the boldest front pages in Crow’s Nest history, the staff superimposed an image of the new building in the middle of a giant $100 bill that was dangling from a fishhook and line.

“USC BAIT-AND-SWITCH,” said the headline on the Sept. 4, 2012, front page. “Students are on the hook for a minimum of $57 million over the next 30 years.”

“Students are not ATMs,” read the headline over a page 6 editorial criticizing the way the finances were handled.

The administration in Tampa was perturbed, said Ren LaForme, the paper’s editor-in-chief in 2012-2013. It summoned LaForme, managing editor Christopher Guinn and other editors to a boardroom in Tampa to respond.

“We sat in the middle of what felt like a dozen suits and ties and asked them to point out any mistakes we’d made,” said LaForme, who is now a digital tools reporter at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies.

No mistakes were cited, he said. Instead, the editors got a lecture on “our tone and criticism.”

One administrator called it “inaccurate and slanderous” to say USF system President Judy Genshaft influenced the decisions, The Crow’s Nest reported on Oct. 1.

At first, the administration indicated that Student Government would have budgetary authority over the revenue from A&S fees that would be allocated to pay down the USC bond. (In 2019-2020, the amount is $1.7 million.)

But then-Interim Regional Chancellor Bill Hogarth appeared before SG’s senate executive committee on Oct. 15 to say that the administration had changed its mind about that. He apologized for the confusion.

“First we said you did (have authority), then we said you didn’t, then we said you did,” he said, according to a Crow’s Nest story on Oct. 22.

He urged them to move past the issue.
By James Bennett III
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J ust as The Crow’s Nest started with a chicken, its founder’s story began on a chicken farm. Joan “Sudsy” Tschiderer grew up in DeLand with her grandfather, parents, and four brothers. Her small town childhood provided an abundance of “little amusements,” like chasing her best friend’s Dalmatian around a movie theater during a screening of “101 Dalmatians” and being taught to respect everyone as human beings while segregation and prejudice were prevalent. “It was such a different world,” she said, “and I feel so fortunate that I was able to grow up in a rural environment.” Tschiderer said “We lived literally in the woods. We had clay dirt roads and had all kinds of animals.”

She and her family moved to Weesdon Island after her grandfather died and Hurricane Donna wrecked the farm in 1960. Tschiderer was given her nickname, “Sudsy,” in high school. Her friend thought she resembled a character of the same name from the television show “My Three Sons.”

A young campus

After earning her associate degree from the St. Petersburg Junior College, Tschiderer planned to pursue a bachelor’s at the University of Florida and, eventually, become the film critic or page designer for LIFE Magazine. As a child, she produced a student newspaper, then continued to hone her journalistic skills throughout high school and her early college career.

She discovered USF St. Petersburg by accident. During a shopping trip, Tschiderer’s friend drove her to the campus, which was housed in military barracks on the harbor at the time, to pick up a schedule. Tschiderer decided to pick up a schedule, too, and intended to stay for only one quarter before applying to University of Florida’s journalism program.

“It was a wonderful time to be here because it was small, small and homely, and there was just a wonderful vibe,” Tschiderer said. “People were genuinely fun to be around, and you learned from so many different people – even outside of your major.”

Tschiderer said she came to the campus during its “embryonic stage.” There weren’t many resources available to students, and many people were learning how to develop the newspaper as they went.

However, the university’s infancy also meant students and faculty had more creative freedom while Tampa “wasn’t breathing over our shoulders.” To promote communication between staff and students while they figured out how the campus should develop, Tschiderer started the Bay Campus Bulletin without an office and having to borrow equipment from campus leadership.

“Having done this before, I was kind of the natural (person) that it should fall to. And I was volunteered to be the communicator for gathering students together,” she said. She added that, despite its humble appearance, the bulletin grew rapidly.

She took its handful of hours to gather information, produce, edit and print the paper, often by herself in the paper’s formative years. But as time went on, more staff joined, and the Bay Campus Bulletin grew to become The Crow’s Nest.

College life

After earning her bachelor’s degree, Tschiderer was offered a position with student affairs. She took the job in September 1971 and, as a university employee, was invited to take courses for her master’s degree for free. Tschiderer’s retirement, after 40 years, was Halloween 2011. She is the longest serving full-time student member at USF St. Petersburg and still works part-time, putting in about 10 hours a week, as a university historian in the Snell House.

Ray Arnesault once dubbed her the “Campus Earth Mother,” a title she is honoured to carry. Tschiderer still audits classes, too. This semester, she’s taking a class on Arabic history, culture and film.

“I know it sounds kind of comy, but when you stop learning, you die. And there’s so many people that you can learn from,” Tschiderer said.

Her plans for the future are simple enough. Smile, stay healthy, and enjoy the ride! “Smell the roses.” Read the full story online at crowsnest.usf.edu.

The Crow’s Nest founder looks back

Same old story:
Student government vs. student press

By Crow’s Nest Staff

When journalism graduate student John Gogick became adviser to The Crow’s Nest in the 1990s, he had a plan and publish the newspaper’s first tabloid edition on newprint. He also helped referee what may have been the first of many disputes between Student Government and student editors.

SG leaders had agreed to allocate some of the revenue from student fees to cover Gogick’s salary and the cost of paper and printing for the new biweekly tabloid. But they didn’t like some of the news coverage and editorial commentary that followed.

More specifically, the good that is done,” said Student Government President Both Mitchell in an angry letter to the editor on Nov. 17. “... instead, highlight the bad, nitpick the inconsequential and theorize about what we do not understand without bothering to find out the whole story.”

“They wanted happy and fluffy” stories about Student Government, not the skeptical, irreverent stories and commentary they were sometimes reading, said Gogick, who is now executive editor of the Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle. “They wanted to pull the plug.”

SG eventually backed off, but the pattern was set. “Every year, we had to go through getting our funding,” said professor emeritus G. Michael Killenberg, who founded the journalism department and helped advise the paper in the years that followed. “Student Government wanted it to be their newspaper ... We had to literally beg for money.”

Now, on the eve of consolidation, funding of The Crow’s Nest becomes an even more pressing issue. The annual uncertainty seems likely to increase if the student governments on all three campuses are merged into one, as envisioned by the administration of USF System President Steve Currall.

Under a proposed constitution that has been ratified by the student governments on all three campuses, the job of allocating student fee revenue might fall to a student senate that is based in Tampa and dominated by Tampa-based senators.

Moreover, the administration has floated the idea of merging The Crow’s Nest. But The Oracle, the student paper in Tampa, in an online-only format once consolidation takes root in a few years.

What kind of student newspaper would remain? What kind of coverage would the St. Petersburg campus receive?

From time to time over the years, there has been talk of having The Crow’s Nest financed by the administration or overseen by the faculty of the journalism department, or both.

But that would put the newspaper under the same student administrators who are sometimes riled by the paper’s coverage.

Recent editors have sharply criticized Student Government for cutting the paper’s budget, and they have opposed the suggestion that The Crow’s Nest and The Oracle be merged.

“More than ever, this is a time when the St. Petersburg campus needs a newspaper that covers the issues that are important here,” said editor-in-chief Emily Wunderlich. “It doesn’t need some mashed-together paper that is full of irrelevant Tampa news, and it should not have to worry every year that Student Government might gut the budget again.”

For now, the yearly worries will continue.

Twice in the last three years, SG has made big cuts in the newspaper’s budget, which is $40,256 this year – a 23 percent drop from $52,516 in 2018-2019.

In 2010-2011, the cut was far deeper. The paper reported that Student Government allocated $22,885 for The Crow’s Nest – half of what it had received the year before. That prompted this observation from editor-in-chief Ren LaForce in February 2013. “Whether it was coincidence that this came after the 2009-2010 editor published a photo of the SG president’s police mug shot is not for me to say,” he wrote. “though my gut certainly has an answer.”

COURTESY OF JOAN TSCHIDERER

Joan “Sudsy” Tschiderer is the longest serving full-time staff person at USF St. Petersburg. This picture is from 1971.