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Confusion and Controversy: spring election divides SG

By Emily Wunderlich ewunderlich@mail.usf.edu and Whitney Elstrom wellstrom@mail.usf.edu

When Mariah McQueen decided early this month to run for student body president, she had no running mate and only 48 hours to collect the 100 signatures she needed to qualify. Paricked, she turned to Student Government's supervisor of elections, Shannon Scanlon.

According to a GroupMe message on Feb. 6, one day before the signatures were due, Scanlon offered to help.

She wrote that she would tell Dwayne Isaacs, the administration’s director of student life and engagement, that she had received McQueen’s candidate packet on time but forgot to turn it in.

“(I) wouldn’t do this for anyone else but you’ve helped me with elections a ton in the past,” Scanlon’s message said. “Try to get it by 5 p.m. tomorrow but if not give me your (university) number and I’ll email Dwayne saying I have your packet but didn’t get a chance to give it to him.”

After asking Samantha Fiore to be her running mate, McQueen began collecting signatures for both herself and Fiore. According to McQueen, she did this to give Fiore time to decide if she wanted to run.

Jonah Goodman, a former SG senator, also collected signatures on behalf of both candidates.

But on Feb. 12, the Elections Rules Commission led by Scanlon ruled that the signatures were obtained in violation of the (candidate) packet rules, which say candidates must obtain their own signatures.

The three-member commission unanimously voted to disqualify McQueen and Fiore from the election, one week before the campaign was scheduled to begin.

>> SEE ELECTION on P2

By Jeffrey Waitkevich jwaitkevich@mail.usf.edu and Jonah Hinebaugh jonahh@mail.usf.edu

It’s not a club. It’s not a varsity sport. The USF coed sailing team is somewhere in the middle, and now there’s a debate on who should pay for it.

For the last two years, the university administration has paid most of the freight, but now administrators want Student Government to take on a big chunk of the cost.

Student body president David Thompson, who contends the coed team is a “really important part” of the campus culture, favors the administration’s proposal.

But Albert Moreno, chair of SG’s appropriations committee, argues that the team is so small and exclusive that it does not deserve such a big appropriation at the expense of other student activities.

That is one of the issues SG is debating now as it arrives at some of the changes planned and which panels to attend.

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PERFECT VISION

One student takes issue with the criticism leveled at USF St. Petersburg’s future by Rep. Jeff Brandes. Read Antonio Perrella’s critique of House Bill 123, and why USF St. Petersburg’s independence is paramount.

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ELECTION, continued from P1

Now, McQueen is appealing the decision. If the elections commission validated its own rules and conducted a "witch hunt" against her, she said, a rule which will be heard by SG’s supreme court this afternoon (Feb. 19), has plunged the spring campaign into confusion and controversy as student leaders debate both the legality of their own rules and how the rules commission conducted the Feb. 12 meeting that led to McQueen’s disqualification.

If the supreme court eventually upholds the election commission’s ruling, it apparently would leave only one presidential candidate – Kaeden Kelso, who is running with Ysatis Jordan – on the ballot when students vote between Feb. 26 and March 1. In that case, the ballot would simply ask voters for their approval or disapproval of said candidate, and Kelso would need one more vote than 50 percent to assume the presidency.

The presidency

The Student Government presidency is a powerful position at USF St. Petersburg. The president, who makes $10,687 under the 2017-2018 budget, represents the student body before the faculty, administration and campus Board of Trustees.

The president appoints an executive cabinet and the members of the supreme court and plays a key role in how SG spends its budget.

Slightly more than half of the budget, which comes from tuition and fees, is designated for USF St. Petersburg students pay in activities and service fees, helps fund the University Student Center. The remainder is allocated to SG’s three and other campus organizations.

Two arguments

In appealing the Elections Rules Commission’s decision to disqualify her, McQueen is not citing Scanlon’s written offer to look the other way if she didn’t meet the deadline for submitting signatures. McQueen said she considered Scanlon’s offer, but then ruled it out.

“I knew when it comes to my own morals that I didn’t want to put her (Scanlon) in that position and I also didn’t want to be in that situation,” McQueen said. “I thought that would be more of an issue than the signatures because I didn’t expect the signatures to ever be a problem.”

“I think this court case is more so deciding what I did (in gathering signatures)...I probably wouldn’t have said of the things I said (at first)...but that doesn’t mean that they weren’t true.”

In her appeal, McQueen is raising two arguments first, that the rule on obtaining signatures is not binding and, second, that the elections commission violated its own rules in the meeting where McQueen and Fiore were disqualified.

Ironically, McQueen played a role in the requirement that presidential and vice presidential candidates each must obtain 100 signatures according to the packet rules in order to get on the ballot.

She said that requirement to Scanlon after learning about it at a student government conference in Washington. The requirement took effect in USF St. Petersburg’s fall 2017 election. But now McQueen contends the requirement is a burden, and SG’s student attorney general, Marion Nuruaj, agrees with her.

For a rule to become binding, it must be approved by the SG Senate. But that never happened, he says. The Feb. 12 meeting

The elections commission has three members: Scanlon, deputy supervisor of elections Ashley Haber and Ashley Swain, the supervisor of elections.

When the commission met Feb. 12, both McQueen and Fiore were unable to attend because of scheduling conflicts. After the meeting, the commission rescheduled the meeting to give him time to look at the issue, he denied.

When asked why the commission did not reschedule so that to McQueen could attend, Scanlon said that student body president David Thompson and vice president Maria Almonte directed her to do so.

“We looked at the requirement to the ERC was supposed to be due, so I made that recommendation,” said Thompson.

Both Scanlon and Thompson agreed that the commission has never seen a case dealing with pre-campaign issues, so they weren’t sure how to handle the situation.

“Personally I’ve never experienced something this large within the ERC in my time so I wasn’t too sure how to go about it,” Scanlon said.

Response

In an email addressed to Scanlon, McQueen accused the commission of violating “their own rules” and stated that she filed a public records request for all documents related to her case from senate president Emilie Morris.

“It is obvious from the ruleless rule breaking of the commission, that we will not get any justice in the ERC,” McQueen’s email said.

“The way it was done was very, very careful for the both of us,” Fiore said in a phone interview with the Crow’s Nest. “They didn’t try to make sure we knew, they didn’t want to hear our side before they made any decisions. It was very quickly done, pretty much behind our backs, and then we found out through email, which was a reply-all email, that we were disqualified.”

In the email addressed to Scanlon following the commission's verdict, McQueen revealed that Jordan, the student president, would bring her case against the Elections Rules Commission to the SG supreme court on Feb. 19.

Former USF president dies

Dr. Cecil Mackey, an economist and lawyer who served as the second full-time president of the University of South Florida, died Feb. 8. He was 89.

Mackey, who earned a doctorate in economics from the University of Illinois and a law degree from the University of Alabama, led USF from 1971 to 1976.

In an interview in 2004, Mackey said several factors played in his decision to come to Tampa. Among them was the fact that USF was the first university to be created in the 20th century.

“There was an opportunity to do something in leading and development of an institution – that type of work had always appealed to me,” Mackey said.

“The way to come here with a new institution and try to make it the best possible ... was a very attractive opportunity.”

He left USF to become president at Texas Tech and then president at Michigan State. At the time of his death, he was a full-time economics professor at Michigan State and at the University of Illinois – that type of work had always appealed to Me, Mackey said.

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Have a club or organization? SG has the funds

By Luke Cross
lukecross@mail.usf.edu

S


tudent Government’s special funding committee started this semester with $18,000 and is looking to put that money in the hands of students and clubs.

According to Kaeden Kelso, special funding committee chair, clubs and organizations that aren’t subject to SG’s annual budget or don’t collect membership dues can approach the committee to request funding for on-campus events or travel expenses.

The current amount of funding sits between $14,000 and $17,000, which includes current requests due to a recent surge in club activity.

Despite the recent rise in club activity, the numbers aren’t reflected in the amount of funding applications.

“We aren’t receiving as many requests from clubs and organizations as we should be, given this student involvement,” said Kelso. “So we’ve spent a lot of this money that was allocated to the committee, and it’s just sitting there.”

A student organization looking to place a funding request should fill out the relevant form found on their club’s OrgSync page.

“After that, they’ll come into [the special funding committee], which is [held] Tuesdays at 3:00 p.m. and give a short presentation explaining why they want funding for t-shirts, travel or events,” said Ysatis Jordan, president pro tempore.

Individual students can also apply for funding, although this is restricted to academic endeavors.

“An individual student, recommended by a department that wants sponsor them, can come in and ask for the funding to go to a conference to present their research,” said Kelso.

Both individuals and organizations looking to place requests should be mindful of the time constraints required for processing.

“If you want to travel, you have to come in at least 21 business days prior because all of our funding functions have to go through Tampa (but) for event funding it’s 15 days,” said Jordan.

While there is no cap on event funds, travel compensation for clubs and individuals must remain below set limits.

According to Jordan, the travel cap for clubs is $1,600 and includes transportation and lodging. For individual funding, the committee can allocate up to $500 for international travel and $350 for domestic travel.

Regardless of where the money is spent, any remaining funds will be absorbed by the reserves budget at the end of this semester.

“Maybe clubs and organization aren’t aware of the money, or maybe they don’t know the process to get it, but a lot of this money is now just sitting here,” said Kelso. “And once the fiscal year turns over, that money gets swept into reserves and we can no longer touch it.”

In an effort to combat this loss of money, the special funding committee is reaching out to students to raise awareness.

“We’re here, we’re ready, we’re eager to give you guys the money,” said Jordan. “It’s been underutilized this term, so please — come out and advertise your club.

For more information, contact special funding committee chair Kaeden Kelso at danielkelso@mail.usf.edu or chief financial officer Asmita Palsole at apsolue@mail.usf.edu.

The St. Petersburg Conference on World Affairs was co-founded in 2013 by Dr. Thomas Smith and former ambassador Douglas L. McElhaney. Last year the conference brought in around 2,000 people over three days.

“The conference is free and open to the public. According to Diane Seligsohn, who is in her first year as president of the organization, former Women, Too, retired, there is a considerable increase in the percentage of women speakers this year.”

Among the speakers at the conference will be the president of the National Organization of Women, Toni Van Pelt, who grew up in Pinellas County and went to Seminole High School.

Van Pelt will be on the panels “Should we foist our concept of human rights on others?” and “Is this a watershed moment for relations between the sexes?”

The conference brought in around 2,000 people over three days.

“Your education extends well beyond the classroom,” she said. “You’re not getting as much out of your college education if you don’t attend these things.”

Alexopoulos, who will be sitting on the “Are China and Russia today’s expansionist powers?” panel, said she didn’t start going to events like this until later in her college career, but thinks that student should get a head start while they can.

“If you go through your college years and you only go to class, you’re wasting your money,” she said.

Students can expect a different experience at this year’s annual conference on international affairs:

More focus on social issues, a student career forum and free lunch.

“There are the future leaders of the United States,” said Alfredo Anthony, a retired lieutenant colonel who served for 21 years as a career military intelligence officer.

“We have to make sure the youth gets a head start.”

“We’re in the middle of it and it’s painful because it feels like it’s taking forever, but it’s painful because it is moving so quickly,” Zogby said. “We’re looking at global problems that can’t be solved by an assembly in Luxembourg, let alone a congress in the United States.”

In addition to the panels, this year’s conference will see a few new features, such as a keynote speech by retired ambassador Thomas Pickering at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, book talks and author walks.

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“This year’s annual conference on international affairs provides opportunities for students.”

By Michael Moore Jr.
michaelmoor@mail.usf.edu

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Delicious Dialogues provide food for thought

By Delaney Brown
delaneybrown@mail.usf.edu

In a world of Facebook rants and Twitter arguments, Delicious Dialogues, moderated luncheon debates, aim to heighten the level of civil discourse. Students and faculty are welcomed to enjoy hot chocolate and cookies while discussing current events and hot-button topics.

The luncheon sessions happen once a month and feature two faculty members respectfully exploring opposing arguments on a given topic.

It’s like watching a more polite version of the presidential debates.

Phil Trocchia, a marketing professor in the Kate Tiedemann College of Business, and Deni Elliott, chair of the Department of Journalism and Digital Communication, argue for professional neutrality; classroom. Trocchia argued discussing viewpoints in the classroom is necessary to remain neutral when participating in debates.

Trocchia and Elliott discussed suggesting a topic of discussion.

“Some of our films are hot-button topics. Whether the viewers were for or against the Tribeca Film Festival and Cannes Film Festival, some go to the Prime, some go to the Cannes Film Festival in Atlanta where students will compete for $10,000 in addition to several other prizes,” said Gibson-Dee.

“Being able to discuss complex issues in a civil way is a big part of that.” Whether the viewers were enticed by the discussion topic, the idea of civil discussion, or the cookies, they were sure to have left with some food for thought.

Student rallies protest against consolidation

By Jonah Hinebaugh
jonahh@mail.usf.edu

“I’m not giving up. I’m not going down without a fight,” McQueen said.

Within the next couple weeks before the protest, I think we need to work hard on educating the student body,” she said.

McQueen pitched possible ideas for the rally, including music to gain attention and student testimonials on why they oppose the merge.

“We are expressing students’ concerns which haven’t been addressed as much as others’ voices. We basically have the city of St. Petersburg behind us,” she said.

The rally will take place at noon on Tuesday, Feb. 27, on Harbor Walk just outside of the University Student Center.

“The lunchtime sessions happen once a month and feature two faculty members respectfully exploring opposing arguments on a given topic.”

“I hope to be planting the seeds and modeling the way to a better future,” said Gibson-Dee.

“Within the next couple weeks before the protest, I think we need to work hard on educating the student body,” she said.

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THE CROW'S NEST
February 19, 2018

“Black Panther” claws its way to greatness

By Jeffrey Waitkevich
jwaitkevich@mail.usf.edu

“Black Panther” is ahead of its time.
The movie combines the theme of black power with the message that arming black people with super-weapons is nothing but an answer to racism. This combination is what propels the movie to greatness, while overcoming a predictable plot.

“Black Panther” is the first superhero film to feature a predominantly black cast, alongside a black director and screenwriter. The movie stars Chadwick Boseman as T’challa, the Black Panther and newly-appointed king of Wakanda. Boseman has shown how well he can play a soft-spoken revolutionary in previous roles – building on his work as Jackie Robinson in “42” and Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American Supreme Court Justice, in “Marshall.”

However, Michael B. Jordan as Killmonger, the Oakland-raised opposition to the throne, steals the show. He is everything T’challa isn’t. Anti-Killmonger is loud; he’s brash; and he’s so cool that trying to root against him is near impossible.

His goal is to overthrow T’Challa and use the high-tech vibranium weapons to arm all black people, not just Wakandans, and essentially take over the world. Rounding out the cast is a trio of strong female characters, which gives the film another strong leg to stand on.

Okoye (Danai Gurira) is the general of the Wakandan army and is the loyal badass backing up the King. Nakia (Lupita Nyong’o) acts as the love-interest, but instead of being a damsel in distress, she’s every bit as brave and strong as T’challa. T’challa’s little sister, Shuri (Laititia Wright), completes the trifecta. She is the tech expert archetype who updates the Black Panther suit with the latest technology and provides her brother with weapons that would rival the best of any caped crusader.

The biggest disappointment was the lack of Kendrick Lamar tracks throughout the movie after the hype that surrounded the soundtrack.

The fight scenes were often-times mundane, though there is only so much that can be done with a superhero whose main weapon is claws. Sorry, Wolverine.

There were a few jokes that didn’t quite hit. A corny reference to the “what are those?” meme while pointing to shoes was the most notable swing and miss.

Otherwise, the bulk of the dialogue was calculated and moving, especially any time Killmonger spoke.

The costumes were gorgeous, and the effects were impressive – making the movie a visual gem.

The movie also capitalized on the booming superhero genre with a becoming a comic book version of “The Lion King.” While this movie is monumental for pop culture, its fit within the mostly-white Marvel Cinematic Universe is imperfect due to how transcendent it is.

T’challa will go back to being “the black superhero” in “Avengers: Infinity War,” where the only other black characters are Sam Wilson (Anthony Mackie) aka Falcon, and James Rhodes (Don Cheadle).

Nevertheless, that integration is for directors Anthony and Joe Russo to figure out. Until then, enjoy the greatness of “Black Panther.”

Dali’s new exhibit challenges what art should be

By Anna Bryson
annabryson@mail.usf.edu

S. Petersburg loves to love Salvador Dali, but the art museum features much more than just the works of the Spanish surrealist.

The Dali Museum’s latest exhibit, Dali/Duchamp, juxtaposes two of the 20th century’s most famous artists and highlights how narcissistic and attention-seeking our beloved Dali was in contrast with the elegant and reserved Marcel Duchamp.

The works of Dali and Duchamp, a very unusual couple in art history, are organized as a dialogue that attempts to highlight their shared vision.

Dali/Duchamp features over 50 works, including Dali’s paintings and sculptures, the duo’s collaborations, and Duchamp’s “readymades,” which are ordinary objects that he modified in some way, creating what he called art. Duchamp’s “readymades” flip the notion of art world on its head, introducing the idea that art is anything an artist says it is.

One of Duchamp’s “readymades” displayed is “Bicycle Wheel,” a bicycle wheel on top of a stool. Both of the objects have practical uses, but when put together, cannot function. And that is art, according to Duchamp.

Both artists challenge views of art and pose the boundless question: What should art be? Coal sacks hang from the ceiling above visitors when they first enter the gallery. The first work to catch their eye is a giant photograph of mannequins created by Dali and Duchamp. The scene is a partial recreation of the artists’ 1938 collaborative exhibition at the Internazionale Surrealism in Paris.

In the 1938 exhibition, the only light used was emitted from charcoal braziers on the floor. Visitors used flashlights to view the art, which testified to the viewer’s active role in art. Despite the artists’ friendship displayed through photos of them in Catalonia, Dali’s homeland, the interfacing of Dali and Duchamp’s work still seems a bit forced.

Many of the posed comparisons seem to lack a real correlation. Portraits of the artists’ fathers were hung up side by side with biographical information comparing the relationships.

The paintings differed stylistically, with the only similarity being they are depicting the artists’ fathers.

The artists also worked in very different mediums:

Dali primarily painted pictures while Duchamp focused on objects. Some of Duchamp’s most famous pieces, including “Fountain” and “Bicycle Wheel,” other than the first readymades brought into the art world, are displayed alongside objects made by both Duchamp and Dali, including Dali’s “Lobster Telephone.”

“Fountain” is an upturned porcelain urinal inscribed with “R. Mutt 1917.” Duchamp entered “Fountain” in an exhibit in New York that said it accepted all entries, but Duchamp’s was removed. He wrote a protest in The Blindman magazine.

This work begs questions of taste and of what art should be, a persistent theme asked throughout the Dali/Duchamp exhibit.

Though some of the posed comparisons seem far-fetched, there is no denying that both artists continuously question the very definition of their craft, and often do so while carrying overtly sexual imagery.

Organized by the collaboration of The Dali Museum and the Royal Academy of Arts in London, Dali/Duchamp is the first major exhibit to display the two drastically different artists together.

First shown at the Royal Academy of Arts in London last fall, the St. Petersburg display will be the only showing in the U.S.

The exhibit is available daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through May 27 with extended hours until 8 p.m. on Thursdays. Admission is free for USF St. Petersburg students with a student ID.

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“Fountain,” one of Duchamp’s most well-known pieces, is displayed in the Dali Museum’s latest exhibit, Dali/Duchamp.
**USF football schedule released**

By Michael Fergusson

The University of South Florida announced its 2018 football schedule this week. The 10-game schedule includes two of the top teams in college football.

**2018 Football Schedule**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat, Sept 1</td>
<td>Elon</td>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat, Sept 8</td>
<td>Georgia Tech</td>
<td>11 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sat, Sept 15</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Sat, Sept 22</td>
<td>East Carolina</td>
<td>11 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sat, Oct 6</td>
<td>UMass</td>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Fri, Oct 12</td>
<td>Tulsa</td>
<td>11 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sat, Oct 20</td>
<td>UConn</td>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Sat, Oct 27</td>
<td>Houston</td>
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<td>Tulane</td>
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<td>Sat, Nov 10</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
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<td>Sat, Nov 17</td>
<td>Temple</td>
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Realtistically, USF won’t play teams like Alabama and Clemson because the Bulls can’t compete just yet. The slim risk of losing and looking bad isn’t worth top-tier teams’ time.

Nevertheless, the Bulls can only control how they perform in the 2018 season, so they shouldn’t get sidetracked by which teams.
Letter to the Editor: Why we diverge

By Antonio Permuy
Junior Political Science Major

I was appalled when I read Jeff Brandes’ recent statements about our university having “no vision.”

Brandes’ previous silence on the issue, while most of his local colleagues came out against it, spoke volumes, only now to be broken by these disappointing, hurtful and stunningly irrelevant claims to justify his support for House Bill 423, which provides the legal vehicle for the proposed system-wide consolidation. It’s disgraceful to hear this kind of blatant disregard coming from a “leader.”

Of course, there’s one magic word you are sure to hear from any proponent of the plan: “pre-eminence!”

It is repeated with such fervor and frequency that they seem to believe it disarms any other point of consideration.

While it is certainly beneficial to have our flagship campus carry the esteemed reputation of being pre-eminent state funds with us and universities of UF and FSU, it is also a beautiful, massive complex containing USF’s own and USF Sarasota-Manatee to attend their respective conferences are held at in theoretical territory.

It is worth asking what they are valid reasons why USF St. Petersburg is a state-of-the-art business building, the Carnegie Community Engagement Center, and even the Salvador Dalí Museum all since achieving separate accreditation. This would make USF St. Petersburg the only university in the Tampa region to have the expanded campus as a “guillotine.”

They were bound by a love for this university and the vision of what it could be.

It’s a vision that so far manifested into two dorms, a University Student Center, and the Charles A. Dana Business building, the Carnegie Community Engagement Center, and even the Salvador Dalí Museum all since achieving separate accreditation. This would make USF St. Petersburg the only university in the Tampa region to have the expanded campus as a “guillotine.”

These are the stakes and why the St. Petersburg campus is truly in our very best interest.

We will not lose our identity, we will not be silent, and we will not forget especially on Election Day. The situation with this bill, our “vision” is good enough to see more than a few changes coming this year.

By Ashley Campbell
Contributor

What to do this week: Feb. 19-Feb. 25

MONDAY

The Food Recovery Club is meeting today at 11:30 a.m. in the Butterfly Garden. The Food Recovery Club collects leftover food from the Reef for donation to local shelters. This club only started a year ago and has already collected over 2,000 pounds of food. If anyone is looking to join but cannot attend the meeting, the Food Recovery Club also meets in The Reef on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8:45 p.m. for food collection. This process will only take 30 minutes of your time. Join us to support some of the St. Petersburg community.

Contact Claire Graham at ebrahim6@mail.usf.edu for more information.

TUESDAY

Today is the first day of the St. Petersburg Conference on World Affairs held at USF St. Petersburg. The conference will run from Feb. 20 until the 23rd. These events are free to attend, and each one is an hour long. They will be held in the USC Ballrooms and the Kate Tiedmann College of Business auditorium. The schedule of events can be found on the conference website: https://stpeteconferenceonworldaffairs.com/conference.

WEDNESDAY

From noon until 5 p.m. in The Reef is the beginning of Campus Movie Fest. This event is free to all USF St. Petersburg students and encourages them to create their own five-minute movie in a week. Campus Movie Fest will be providing free equipment to all students to help their creative process including Panasonic Lumix cameras, Apple MacBook Pros loaded with Adobe Creative Cloud, Sennheiser audio equipment, and $1,000 royalty-free songs and 247 training and technical support. In Coquina 101 from noon until 1 p.m. is a Lunch and Learn. This lunch and learn will be about Graphic Design. The presenter, John Schneider will be there to share her experience and work from the field.

THURSDAY

Are you a fan of the hit TV show The Walking Dead? Test your knowledge of the show during The Walking Dead trivia in the Nelson Poynter Library at 5 p.m. Also today is the St. Pete Run. Starting at Yard of Ale, participants are free to walk or run the course for free as long as they sign a waiver before hand. After the 5k, enjoy beers with the fell runners for only $3. All levels of runners are welcome.

FRIDAY

Celebrate Black History Month at the Enoch Davis Recreation Center from 6 until 8 p.m. The event will provide information about black history and feature trinkets together to create a stronger community. Admission is free and all ages are welcome. The event will include fun games and activities for the whole family, including live poetry readings, live performances and acting. There will also be free food, entertainment and prizes.

SATURDAY

The 5th annual St. Petersburg Fine Arts Festival will run through Sunday in South Straub Park. Approximately 120 of Florida’s and America’s top fine artists will be there showcasing their work. This free event is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the artwork will be for sale.

SUNDAY

Visit the St. Petersburg Jazz Festival at The Palladium Theater. The festival features 12 sets of jazz compositions by the Tal Cohen Trio, Jeff Ruppert Quintet with Veronica Swift, B3 Fury with the Dig,and The Helios Jazz Orchestra with singers Whitney James & Chuck Wansey and Latin Jazz with the Gabriel Hernandez Trio. This intimate jazz experience will leave listeners with a great appreciation of the artists performing.
MGMT's “Little Dark Age” is trapped in history

By James Bennett III
Contributor

February 19, 2018

MGMT’s new album “Little Dark Age” sounds distinct from its previous records.

Although it could still be classified as synth-heavy indie pop, it has strayed from influences such as space-rock band Spiritualized to produce an album which sounds entirely 1980s. MGMT has always relied on synths and drum tracks with gated reverb to shape its unique sound, but the band has never released work that sounds so nostalgic.

“Little Dark Age” may not be for everyone. It certainly takes time to appreciate and feels overly repetitive at times. This is an album where you need to be in the mood to listen to it.

Most of the album feels melancholic and dissociated—similar to the vibe Vaporwave gives off.

Tracks like “She Works Out Too Much” and “TSILAMP” feel like sugar-coated pop songs with simple earworm choruses.

I’m disappointed with how wannabe-vintage these two tracks feel. The album’s most cliche songs lecture the audience about how detrimental smartphones can be with an abrasive, detrimental smartphones the audience about how most cliche songs lecture about wannabe-vintage these “TSLAMP” feel like sugar-out Too Much” and gives off.

On a more positive note, some of the album’s songs are produced incredibly well. The mastering is neat and offers some much-needed embellishment.

The opening track “She Works Out Too Much” introduces listeners to the album with an almost-catchy tune, imitative of pop stars like Cyndi Lauper. The song would feel natural on any dance or aerobic VHs tape, with lines like “get ready to have some fun” and “remember to drink a glass of water before and after you work out.”

The opening track is able to keep interest are rewarded with a decent saxophone solo, which is buried under the rest of the instruments. Rather than contributing to the song in a musical sense, the solo comes off as “Hey guys, look how ‘80s we can be!”

On the title song “Little Dark Age,” audience members will discover that MGMT had no intention to stick with one particular genre of ‘80s music. Its glossy and melancholic aesthetic is reminiscent of U.K. goth bands such as The Cure and Depeche Mode.

Fans may be pleased to hear a keyboard solo about halfway through the track, which sounds about as close to Baroque music as MGMT can get. Unlike the saxophone solo on the first song, this solo adds to the track constructively by lending an antique tone. Otherwise, this track is forgettable. If they hadn’t named the album after it, the song would probably blend in with the rest.

My favorite track off the album, “When You Die,” takes a break from the album’s synthy supremacy.

Although it wouldn’t be an MGMT song without a keyboard, this track sounds more like a regular rock band and gives off a degree of letting the strings die down.

The track is even more melancholic than “Little Dark Age,” but adds a degree of letting the strings die down. The band shows a little more effort on this song through vocal harmonies and a very Baroque aesthetic.

Overall, I think that “Little Dark Age” is mediocre at best.

MGMT wasted the album trying to sound like other bands when they could have created something new and thoughtful. It felt short and missed too many opportunities.

Still, as with any MGMT album, “Little Dark Age” is interesting enough for at least one play through.

Rating: 2.5 / 5

MGMT’s “Little Dark Age” suffers from forced nostalgia, leaving the tracks mired in attempts to sound like other bands.

“Little Dark Age” is a story of when MGMT had the opportunity to sound like other bands with gated reverb and baroque arrangements, but instead choose to remain indie pop. As a result, MGMT’s new album sounds more like a run-of-the-mill indie pop album than it does a synth-pop album.

However, there are brief points, such as a snare hit to the climax of the song, and would have been perfect if MGMT had just left it at that instead of letting the strings die down.

They could have taken a note from The Beatles’ “A Day In The Life” by using their strings to build tension and allowing them to effectively stand on their own.

Overall, I think that “Little Dark Age” is mediocre at best.

Staffers in Congress are required to act on a surge of letters from constituents.

“As a university, we’re meant to educate people. For a lot of Dreamers, that’s their dream; the college education,” she said.

Vega sees college students as natural allies in cases like this.

“Regardless of where they are, we all have the right to an education,” she explained.

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