Farewell, separate accreditation

By Jeffrey Waitkevich
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Welcome to the beginning of the end of USF St. Petersburg’s separate accreditation. It’s official. On March 10, Gov. Rick Scott signed off on Senate Bill 4, the bill that consolidated accreditation among the three universities in the USF System.

The first step is appointing members to the USF Consolidation Planning Study and Implementation Task Force, which was created to help reassure the St. Petersburg community that they would have a voice. However, USF St. Petersburg is only guaranteed two of the members.

This mouthful of a committee will consist of USF system President Judy Genshaft, Martin Tadlock, interim regional chancellor at USF St. Petersburg, and Karen Holbrook, USF Sarasota-Manatee’s regional chancellor, along with 10 additional members from the three campuses appointed by legislative and university leaders.

Tadlock believes those leaders will begin appointing members within the next two weeks. The 13 members will be tasked with creating the plan for consolidating accreditation.

“Involved to a great extent” throughout the process, but he hasn’t discussed it with Genshaft yet.

The committee has until Feb. 15, 2019, to submit a report to the USF Board of Trustees, which will recommend: degree programs, how to maintain each campus’ unique identity, each campus’ research capacity, how program and resources will be distributed, how to keep budget matters transparent and how programs will be developed and delivered, according to the legislation.

Then, the BOT will have until March 15, 2019, to create and submit a plan to implement the above recommendations, make a timeline so accreditation can be consolidated by June 30, 2020, reduce effects on current students and have USF operating as one accredited university by July 1, 2020.

Gov. Rick Scott has signed Senate Bill 4, which consolidated accreditation across the three universities in the USF System. The next step is appointing members to the committee to plan how to phase out separate accreditation.

Bill expands Bright Futures

By Michael Moore Jr.
michael.moore@mail.usf.edu

Legislation signed by Gov. Rick Scott earlier this month will bring changes to universities throughout the state.

One education bill, in addition to stripping USF St. Petersburg of its separate accreditation, will permanently expand the Bright Futures scholarship program for those high-achieving students who qualify. Another will give students who take too many classes en route to earning a bachelor’s degree the opportunity to avoid financial penalty.

The Florida Excellence in Higher Education Act, or Senate Bill 4, will award the top tier of Bright Futures, “Academic Scholar,” with 100 percent of tuition and fees covered and a $300 stipend for textbooks. The second tier, “Medallion Scholar,” will have 75 percent of their tuition and fees covered.

The scholarship will also now cover summer classes, with the changes coming into effect during the 2018 summer semester.

According to the Tampa Bay Times, this marks a $124 million investment into the program, bolstering its coverage to pre-recession levels.

Over the last several years, the top tier of Bright Futures recipients have received about half of the average annual in-state tuition cost of approximately $6,100, while the next tier received about a third of tuition.

According to the Times, the program was initially slashed during the recession years, with lawmakers reducing the amount of the awards and the pool of students receiving them. This legislation permanently boosts the program back to its original level.

In order to qualify for the top tier award package, high school students must have a weighted GPA of 3.5, 29 or higher on the ACT or a 1,290 on the SAT and 100 service hours.

The second tier requires a 3.0, a 26 on the ACT or 1,170 on the SAT and 75 service hours.

For months, USF system President Judy Genshaft’s administration fought the union effort by opposing it in filings with PERC and repeatedly attacking the union in emails to adjuncts.

Psst! It’s a secret

By Nancy McCann
Contributor

During its determined but unsuccessful effort to thwart a union drive by adjunct faculty, the USF administration brought in a labor lawyer from Boston.

The lawyer, Katherine Lev, had voluntary informational meetings with adjuncts on all three campuses on Feb. 13-15 and taped an eight-minute video that the administration emailed to adjuncts.

How much was Lev paid? The university won’t say. In fact, university spokesman Adam Freeman seemed to suggest that she might not have been paid at all.

On March 3, The Crow’s Nest filed a public records request seeking documents that would reveal Lev’s compensation.

When the university did not provide the information, the newspaper renewed its request on March 15. “Regarding Katie Lev, there are no documents (in) response to your request,” Freeman said in an email reply that day.

“Does this mean what she was paid is not public information?” the paper asked.

“It means there are no public records that show whether or not she was paid or how much, if any,” replied Freeman.

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Adjuncts vote to form union

By Nancy McCann

A
djunct professors in the USF system overwhelmingly voted to form a union to represent them.

In a tally released March 13 by the Service Employees International Union, the vote was 326 yes and 91 no. The state Public Employees Relations Commission, which conducted the election, said there were 893 eligible voters.

“A after a long fight, we couldn’t be more excited about the victory,” said adjunct professor Dana Corrigan in a news release from the union. “We’ve been standing up for what’s right, and it feels so good to finally have official recognition of our union.”

“We are disappointed by this result, as well as the low voter response,” said university spokesman Adam Freeman in an email statement. “It is troubling that only a limited number of voices were heard, and that the desires of a few will affect the future for so many.”

The USF adjuncts who fought to unionize — some of whom earn poverty-level wages and unpredictable employment joined nationwide movement of part-time teachers seeking better pay, benefits, job security, and inclusion in campus life.

Previously isolated from any campus power structure, the nearly 900 adjuncts from USF Tampa, USF St. Petersburg and USF Sarasota-Manatee gained the right to be represented by the SEIU.

The USF system joins schools like Duke, Georgetown, Tufts and the University of Chicago, where adjuncts have won union elections.

The USF election is the third victory in Florida for adjuncts organized by the union under the name Faculty Forward.

Bradford College voted to form a collective bargaining unit for adjuncts in December. Hillsborough Community College, the first public school in the South to form a union for adjuncts — held its election in 2016.

USF system President Judy Genshaft and the university administration tried to crush adjuncts’ efforts to unionize from the start of the USF Faculty Forward campaign in January 2017.

Messages to adjuncts from top administrators at the three USF system campuses and information sessions delivered by a consultant painted a sticky portrait of union representation.

In emails sent to adjuncts in March, Olufunke A. Fontenot, the interim university chancellor for academic affairs on the St. Petersburg campus, attacked SEIU’s reputation. She warned that some adjuncts might end up with lower salaries, and that students’ education could suffer, because of unionization.

But the university administration’s consistent opposition did not stop the overwhelming majority of adjuncts from voting yes in 2016. The result, which ran from Feb.16 through March 13.

Adjuncts make up around 26 percent of the faculty at the three campuses in the USF system. About half of the faculty at USF St. Petersburg are adjuncts; 23 percent at the Tampa campus and 40 percent at USF Sarasota-Manatee.

Across the country, more than half of faculty appointments are part-time, and the “common characteristic is that their institutions make little or no long-term commitment to them,” according to the American Association of University Professors.

Many faculty in so-called ‘part-time’ positions actually teach the equivalent of a full-time course load,” the AAUP says.

USF system adjuncts will have to wait up to 15 working days from March 13 to learn if any post-election objections are filed with the Public Employees Relations Commission. If objections are filed, the other party has seven days to respond.

Some adjuncts participating with Faculty Forward have said they are aware that contract negotiations can be long and grueling after forming a collective bargaining unit, but they view a union as their only hope for improvement.

“Sixty percent of first contracts (negotiated by the union) won a raise of 20 percent for the lowest paid” and “11 percent of first contracts included professional development funds, valued at $897,500,” according to information SEIU provided to The Crow’s Nest.

In his statement, Freeman repeated the administration’s assertion that unionization does not best serve the “needs of students, adjuncts or the university as a whole.”

But now that the election is over, he said, “it is critically important that we all work together now to provide our students with the best education possible. While we may disagree, we value the many contributions our adjuncts make to the university, and we are committed to bargaining (with the union) in good faith.”
Coordinator of multicultural affairs will not continue at USFSP

By Jeffrey Waitkevich

USF St. Petersburg is no longer continuing with one of its most recognizable faces. Javier Gonzalez, coordinator of multicultural affairs, was notified of his dismissal in a March 5 letter from Dwayne Isaacs, director of student life and engagement.

The letter said that the decision was “based on the conclusion it is no longer in the university’s best interest” to continue with him on staff.

“Thus, this notice of non-reappointment does not constitute a dismissal for cause or disciplinary action,” the letter continues. “But rather the exercise of the university’s prerogative to discontinue its employment relationship with you with proper notice given.”

Gonzalez’s employment with USF St. Petersburg will end on April 6. Until then, his assignment has been “converted to an off-campus professional development leave.”

He has served as coordinator of multicultural affairs and as a Zumba instructor with USF St. Petersburg’s Campus Recreation since November 2016. He will remain with Campus Recreation as an instructor.

Gonzalez graduated with a bachelor’s degree in 2012 and his master’s degree in education in 2014 – both from USF – according to his Facebook profile.

In a Facebook message to The Crow’s Nest, Gonzalez said, “I am currently taking time to focus on personal matters and am grateful for the experiences and opportunities both USFSP and its students have provided during my time there.”

He declined to further comment on his dismissal. Isaacs and interim Regional Chancellor Martin Tadlock also declined to comment.

SECRET, continued from P1

When pressed for further explanation the next day, university spokeswoman Lara Wade again asserted that “there are no records in response to your request.”

Wade then repeated its request to include all types of public records for any of Lev’s services that were arranged by and provided to USF related to the adjuncts’ union efforts.

Again, the answer from Wade was, “There are no records for any of these items.”

About four hours later, however, Wade apotheosized for “providing incorrect information” and updated her response, saying the “only records relative to the paper’s most recent request are “exempt from production.”

She cited the statute of the Florida public records law that provides an exemption for a narrow list of attorney work products, including litigation strategy and legal theory of the attorney or agency.

“That exemption will expand to include the union, including any appeals, of the matter of SEIU, FPSU, CTW v. University of South Florida Board of Trustees before the State of Florida Public Employee Relations Commission,” wrote Wade.

The case she mentioned is the monthlong volley of motions and responses submitted to PERC by the union and the administration.

But a veteran media lawyer took issue with the university’s position.

“There is just no way that a public agency’s arrangements with a lawyer fit within this exemption,” said Alison Steele, a 30-year media lawyer whose clients include the Tampa Bay Times.

“What the agency has paid the attorney or will pay the attorney doesn’t either.

“In my experience, public agencies don’t hire attorneys over the telephone,” said Steele. “And attorneys don’t bill their clients over the telephone. There have to be records, and they are not exempt.”

Lev’s visit to the university system’s three campuses came as adjuncts began voting on whether they wished to have a union. The Service Employees International Union represent them in their quest for better pay and benefits.

For months, the administration of USF system President Judy Genshaft has asked the union effort at every turn. It opposed the union in filings with PERC and repeatedly attacked the union in emails to adjuncts.

The administration also turned to Lev, a lawyer and adjunct faculty member at Boston College who also sits on a three-member board that handles labor disputes involving public employees in Massachusetts.

The administration and Lev herself stressed that she was neutral about the union drive and had been hired to provide information about labor law and unionization.

But some of the adjuncts who attended Lev’s informational sessions accused her of trying to demonize unions and scare adjuncts into voting no.

The efforts of the administration ultimately went for naught. Adjuncts decided to join the union on a 326 to 91 vote.

Lev’s compensation – whatever it was – could be a touchy issue for the university administration.

One of adjuncts’ principal complaints is that they are underpaid, noting that many adjuncts on the St. Petersburg campus get only $2,750 per course per semester. Genshaft’s annual compensation package is about $925,000.

By The Crow’s Nest Staff

Susan Hamilton Churuti, a longtime government official who helps manage retail space on St. Petersburg’s tony Beach Drive, has been appointed to the five-member Campus Board.

She replaces her husband, Bob Churuti, who has joined her over the year in numerous civic and philanthropic endeavors.

According to a news release from USF St. Petersburg, Susan Churuti is a partner in the Hamilton Partnership, which owns and manages the retail space at 400 Beach Drive and Parkshore Plaza, two mixed-use, high-rise developments.

For more than 20 years, she was Pinellas County attorney. That ended in 2007, when the County Commission fired her after a grand jury criticized her for her role in the county’s purchase of land owned by the Pinellas property appraiser.

The other members of the Campus Board – who must be residents of Pinellas County – are Judy Mitchell, John Connolly, Lawrence Hamilton and Stephanie Goloforth, who also serves on the university system’s 13-member Board of Trustees.

The Campus Board oversees USF St. Petersburg’s annual budget and operations.

Information from the Tampa Bay Times and Tampa Tribune was used in this report.

Prominent attorney selected for Campus Board

By The Crow's Nest Staff

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Another piece of legislation, House Bill 565, requires state universities to refund up to 12 hours of assessed excess credit hour surcharge fees to first-time-in-college students who graduate during my time there.”

The bill also prevents campuses from creating designated “free speech zones” by creating the “Campus Free Expression Act.”

In it, there is language that states that universities may create and enforce restrictions that are “reasonable and content-neutral” but that such restrictions must “be clear and published” and “provide for alternative means of expression.”

However, it also states that a public institution may not designate any area of campus as a free-speech zone, “except policies restricting expressive activities to a particular outdoor area of campus.”

Several free-speech advocacy groups have been critical of said zones in the past, citing a violation of the First Amendment.

BILLS, continued from P1

Another piece of legislation, House Bill 565, requires state universities to refund up to 12 hours of assessed excess credit hour surcharge fees to first-time-in-college students who graduate.

In addition to the changes made to the Bright Future program and consolidated accreditation, SB 4 brings other changes.

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Several free-speech advocacy groups have been critical of said zones in the past, citing a violation of the First Amendment.
Spring break deep inside a mountain

By Whitney Elfstrom
weifstrom@mail.usf.edu

Floridians, it’s safe to assume that we were unprepared and under packed for the weather. Luckily last minute, they were taken advantage of. I’m talking the little brother from “A Christmas Story” level.

As two longtime Floridians, it’s safe to assume that we were unprepared and under packed for the weather. Luckily last minute, they were taken advantage of. I’m talking the little brother from “A Christmas Story” level.

Pastor Snoop Dogg doesn’t have enough bite

By Jeffrey Waitevich
jwtwaitkevich@mail.usf.edu

Snoop Dogg – the 46-year-old rapper who gave us “smoking that bomb like THUG” – is now dropping gospel tracks like they’re hot. Last year, Snoop returned to rap and released “Neva Gold” – the first in a series of four albums, with the second to be released in the fall. The album, “Neva Gold: Life,” is a mix of traditional soulful southern gospel songs, rap music and just about everything in between, including some pop and R&B.

The tour came to an end with a demonstration of absolute darkness, something that can only be seen in the back of a cave or the abyss of the ocean. The lights went out. I looked to my left and to my right – nothing. I held my head inches from my face and then again, nothing.

Amy said that after six months of complete darkness a person would go completely blind, but by then it wouldn’t have matter because the person would have already been insane for three months, and I could see why. Luckily after a minute or two we were brought back into the light and freed from impending insanity.

As the tour came to an end Amy shared another Linville legend, apparently the mineral rich water that had been dripping from the ceiling and onto our heads was a “kiss of amphibians light” – it was encouraged. This was an effort to keep the sliver of space from closing in; however, those with claustrophobia were advised to stay back.

There we stood above a bottomless pool of water and legend has it that someone once hung a 250 foot rope into it, and it still didn’t reach the bottom. We all held onto our willess phones closely because what was dropped would never be found again.

The album starts slow and then stops in upbeat random music in the middle transitions into a mishmash of future growth. The similar songs so far bogs the album down, which makes the similar songs so far between that makes trudging through the album to find the good tracks becomes a chore.

The album starts slow and then stops in upbeat random music in the middle and then stops in upbeat town before ending on a slow medley of tracks showing off Snoop’s Christian rap abilities. If any ’90’s rapper was going to drop a jumbled, two-hour album about religion, it had to be the one who starred on a cooking show with Martha Stewart.

Far south as possible, Cancun is overflowing with body shops and foot-long margaritas but that’s not really been my scene. Living in central Florida, I have all summer to hit the beach, and let’s be real most of fall and winter too. The move for me has always been to go north or out west, and this year was no different.

My roommate Jordan and I drove to visit my aunt and uncle in Banner Elk, North Carolina where we were met with a foot of snow and an 19 degree weather. As two longtime Floridians, it’s safe to assume that we were unprepared and under packed for the weather. Luckily last minute, they were taken advantage of. I’m talking the little brother from “A Christmas Story” level.

Snoop Dogg doesn’t have enough bite

By Whitney Elfstrom
weifstrom@mail.usf.edu

Pastor Snoop Dogg doesn’t have enough bite
Mexico’s beauty can leave you breathless, but can also knock the wind out of you

By Tim Fanning
Contributor

Last week, my girlfriend and I watched a man tether his puppy to a metal post in his backyard.

Last week we watched him beat its snout with a closed fist until the dog stopped whimpering. We saw it all from the street above in Tepoztlan, Mexico. He stomped into the house and out of sight. The puppy tried to retreat to the rusted shed 10 feet away, but was choked by the short rope that held him in place.

When the man reappeared, he was holding something heavy and metallic. We couldn’t tell what it was, but the dog knew. It yelped, it screamed and tried to run. But the man was on the dog in a second. I froze. I didn’t know what to do. Do I yell something in Spanish? ¡Basta ya! ¡Ayuda!

Impulse told us both to run, so we ran. I could hear the dog’s panicked pleas for respite. But that was drowned out by the roar of a truck. By the time the truck passed, there was only silence from that backyard.

These are the gritty things our friends and family don’t want to hear about when we come home. These are the things I never want to write about. These are the things I push to the back of my mind at the end of the day, until now.

There were all the holocaust thin children, begging on the street with grandma, dad or mom. There were the gaunt faced 10-year-old girls and boys, who sneaked into the bar to sell us candy, and who stayed, long after we tried to ignore them. Their eyes were scaring.

There were the legless men and women who dragged themselves on the floor of the subway car, selling USB flash drives or bill folds.

There were the families playing cards in the social welfare lines that snaked for blocks.

There were other things I don’t want to put to ink, so I’ll end this sentence with a period. These scenes made me wonder aloud: Where are the other tourists?

In Mexico, it’s easy to only see the polished and the shiny. It’s easy to research neighborhoods with low crime, fresh paint and lush green trees. These are like pockets of middle and upper class living surrounded by the realities of the daily struggles in a city of 8.8 million.

With free time and a preference for strolling, my girlfriend and I weaved in and out of these places and themes on our way to check off things on our to do list.

Travelers, especially novice ones, often brag about how much better life is “over there.” Those who don’t travel abroad often remind me, as if it’s not the millionth time I’ve heard it, of how “good we have it here.”

And what will I say when I return home? I’ve learned that to travel is to experience what life might be like elsewhere. It’s about being forced into situations that often make you cringe and squirm. It’s about crossing paths with a billion or so other lives that are different from your own.

This trip over spring break made me realize that these things are what makes travel so interesting, intriguing and inviting. It gives us something new, not only outwardly, but also inwardly. Traveling sometimes knocks the wind out of you, but it also leaves you breathless.
Stephen Hawking’s brilliant mind inspired generations

By Michael Moore Jr
michaelmoor@mail.usf.edu

The study of astrology is not, in itself, special. It is the study of astrologers. To the extent that one’s horoscope is written by an astrologer, it is a statement by that astrologer about your life. It is not a scientific statement. It is a religious statement.

Astrology is the study of the way the planets and stars affect the universe. As a Cancer, I can vouch for the Gemini/ Cancer match gone wrong. I’ve been looking up at the stars and the planets ever since.

I’ve been looking up at the stars ever since.

Now listen, I know that those who don’t believe in “this whole astrology thing” may be rolling their eyes at this point, but we learn in grade school that the solar system is in constant motion. For those that believe everything in the universe is connected why it would be so crazy that the sun and the moon have an effect on our lives?

There’s more to life than just black and white, and astrology falls into that little grey area that is so often overlooked. I’ve met enough people that match the exact description of their sign. I know plenty of perceptive Pisces and several gregarious Gemini’s—the two signs’ most well-known traits.

So yes, when you sign on Facebook and someone else shared a post about “signs as types of bread” of course people are going to roll their eyes and turn up their noses at the slightest mention of astrology. But, it’s an age-old practice that helps people find a deeper understanding of themselves and life.
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CMF premiers student films
By Dylan Hart Contributor
J ust a day after the Academy Awards, the University of St. Petersburg held a film ceremony of its own with the Campus Movie Fest premiers. They then proceeded to the Campus Movie Fest, which touts itself as the largest student film festival in the world, with equipment for a week in February to produce their own 5-minute film. The festival serves over 30 schools and has now concluded its third annual run at USF St. Petersburg. Joseph Conte, a USF St. Petersburg alum, attended the film “Blow Me Away” in addition to submitting his own film this year.

“This is my second year doing CMF,” said Conte. “It was set up nicely and it was a great presentation. I also thought it was great how diverse it was with the sort of films they accepted.”

The festival rolled out the red carpet into the USC ballroom, providing food and giving out a number of prizes for attendance and audience participation, ranging from massage packages to high-end cameras.

Student filmmakers shuttered the school record for participation this year by over 20, submitting 58 films for the festival. While all 58 films are available online, only the top 16 films, which were chosen by anonymous judges, were shown at the school premiere. Out of those 16, the top four films were then selected to represent USF St. Petersburg at TERMINUS, the national-level competition in Atlanta.

This year’s four films that were presented with the Jury Award and an invitation to TERMINUS were “Christi,” a USFS student by day and emerging drag queen by night; “ Alone,” a somber dramatic reflection on suicide by Felix Ali, Alexandra Guerrier, Vvayela Jenda and Darnell Henderson; “ Haunted Hallways,” a crime comedy/horror/hunting shows by Matthew Bryant, Natalie Guerra, Amber Piazza, Brandom Baez and Paige Sharp; and “The Laundromat,” a surreal, genre-bending movie about a woman visiting a laundromat in her dreams by Courtney Odomohue, Jesse Knauf, Drew Forret and Grayson Horsby.

Student Bella Beyer also won an award for Best Performance for her acting in the film “Laundromat.”

The films that premiered varied widely in genre, scope and vision. Several films, including “The Coloring Book” and “Where is Home” discussed student diversity on campus in an interview format, while documentaries such as “Booher Creek Investigation” and “Ex Machina” explored environmental issues.

The festival also showcased comedies such as “How to Make a Student Film,” suspenseful thrillers like the aforementioned “Alone” and even the occasional music video, such as “My Pool Float Broke.”

By Ashley Campbell Contributor

MONDAY
Peace House Garden Day is a reoccurring event at St. Pete Peace House Co-op starting at 9 a.m. Support urban gardening and take home some herbs as long as you bring your own bag. Stick around afterwards for some philosophy and discussion.

TUESDAY
Come audition for USFSF’s Got Talent from 6 to 9 p.m. in SLC 2100. Make sure to fill out the form on PeteSync before auditioning.

HAB general body meeting will be held from 5 to 6 p.m. in the HAB office. USFSF week is coming, so head on over to hear what is happening. Food and drink will be provided and 100 Pete Points will be awarded. The theme is green and gold, so come decked out in school spirit.

WEEDS
Maybach SUV Track it Food Rally will be from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Williams Park. A variety of choices will be available from participating food trucks presented by The Gulf to Bay Food Truck Association.

THURSDAY
The Literacy Shop for Charity will be at the Harborwalk from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. All proceeds will go to She’s the First, a nonprofit that supports women’s education in low-income countries. All clothes and books will be affordable, and anything not sold will be donated. Pick up cash or Venmo.

Find screen on the Green is back. Get prepared to watch Coco, the 2017 Disney movie about a 12-year-old boy named Miguel and his grandpa — if he’s an old, bearded guy wearing tie-dye who swears he used to know Jerry Garcia. There are a bunch of these dudes hanging out at Ringside to watch their friends’ jam bands. It’s a fun place to boogie and old guys will offer to pay for all your drinks...and young ladies, too.

Five Bucks: If you want to be asked for 16 forms of ID, have them all questioned, and then sit around doing absolutely nothing, this is the place for you.

The Emerald: “Hole in the wall” is too kind. If you were trying to find the dirtiest bar downtown, congratulations, you’re here! The smell of stale cigarettes will stick to you all night, but the drinks are cheap and they’re not lying when they say it’s a strong pour. But really, you’re better than this.

Goose: You’re here because you’re trying to act fancy, huh? Don’t feel yourself. Everybody here is pretending to be more sophisticated than they really are, and after a few more drinks, you’re going to walk across the street to The Bends even though you promised yourself you wouldn’t. Your demons are calling.

The Bends: You stumble in the door at 2 a.m. wondering how you got here. The Bends is never a first destination, but always ends up being the last one when it’s one of those nights. How the hell did you walk six blocks to get here? You only go to The Bends if you want to make bad decisions.

You’ll find a bunch of men drinking PBR and smoking American Spirits talking about how they “just don’t conform to mainstream society.” You’re better off going to the bathroom in the gutter because the line to the bathroom will always be too long. There’s a lot of sniffing sounds coming from in there. They’re probably crying because they’re at The Bends.

What to do this week: March 19-March 25

The ultimate guide to downtown St. Pete nightlife
By Anna Bryson annabryson@mail.usf.edu

Want to get crying-on-the-sidewalk-drunk in downtown St. Petersburg, but didn’t want to bottom out of the perfect place for you to make bad decisions? Here is a guide to help you stumble to a bar of your blacklist dreams. Trust me, I’m such as all of those bars have done CMF — get ready to learn a thing or two.

MacDinDons: Are you looking to be serendipitously surrounded by duderos who are singing “Sweet Carolina” off-key at karaoke every. single. time? MacDinDons is packed nose-to-nose with bros who will spill their drinks on you, but it’s a great place to get a free drink.

With dollar beers on Thursdays, you can blackout for under $20. How can you say no to that? When they turn the bright fluorescent lights that show even the smallest of mistakes at 3 a.m. and yell at you to leave, that guy Chad who bought you a few beers will be mad at you don’t want to go home with him and tell you that “this is why he doesn’t trust women.”

Parq: Remember all the terrible people from high school you prayed you would never see after graduation? Well, all of them are at Park and Rec waiting to talk to you again and tell you about how much they love Kappa Frappa Zappa.

You’ll find a plethora of stunting 21st birthday girls and 22nd birthday friends who either wear Sperry Top-Siders or Tory Burch sandals. With oversized beer pongs on the front deck, this is every frat boy’s dream.

Ringside: You won’t run into any old classmate here, but you might run into your grandpa — if he’s an old, bearded guy wearing tie-dye who swears he used to know Jerry Garcia. There are a bunch of these dudes hanging out at Ringside to watch their friends’ jam bands. It’s a fun place to boogie and old guys will offer to pay for all your drinks...and young ladies, too.

Five Bucks: If you want to be asked for 16 forms of ID, have them all questioned, and then sit around doing absolutely nothing, this is the place for you.

The Emerald: “Hole in the wall” is too kind. If you were trying to find the dirtiest bar downtown, congratulations, you’re here! The smell of stale cigarettes will stick to you all night, but the drinks are cheap and they’re not lying when they say it’s a strong pour. But really, you’re better than this.

Goose: You’re here because you’re trying to act fancy, huh? Don’t feel yourself. Everybody here is pretending to be more sophisticated than they really are, and after a few more drinks, you’re going to walk across the street to The Bends even though you promised yourself you wouldn’t. Your demons are calling.

The Bends: You stumble in the door at 2 a.m. wondering how you got here. The Bends is never a first destination, but always ends up being the last one when it’s one of those nights. How the hell did you walk six blocks to get here? You only go to The Bends if you want to make bad decisions.

You’ll find a bunch of men drinking PBR and smoking American Spirits talking about how they “just don’t conform to mainstream society.” You’re better off going to the bathroom in the gutter because the line to the bathroom will always be too long. There’s a lot of sniffing sounds coming from in there. They’re probably crying because they’re at The Bends.
“Marvel’s Jessica Jones” returns without a bang

By Jeffrey Waitkevich

A fter bursting onto the scene in its first season, “Marvel’s Jessica Jones” fell flat on its second go-round. The second installment of the Netflix original series takes a deep dive into Jessica’s (Krysten Ritter) past while she struggles with the everyday life of being a “superhero.”

Jessica’s complex origin story allows for a solid premise, but it falls flat. She was the lone survivor among her family in a car accident when she wakes up she has super strength. She finds out she wasn’t the only science experiment and uses her skills as a private investigator to find out what really happened after the car crash that killed her family. The plot is full of twists but moves slowly and feels drawn out over the 13 episodes.

It also moves away from the powerful themes of rape and consent from the first season that were created by Killgrave, a supervillain with mind control.

This “superhero show” also lacks everything that is associated with the genre. There isn’t a supervillain, which is a major disappointment after Killgrave nearly stole the show in the first season. Instead, the antagonists are unoriginal jerks and misunderstood personalities.

Worst of all, “Jessica Jones” somehow finds a way to make super strength boring. There are only so many heavy objects to lift and so many tall buildings to jump onto before it becomes a non-factor. This season could have introduced Jessica’s flying ability that occasionally squanders her expanded powers. However, Jeri Hogarth, a down-to-business lawyer, squanders her expanded spotlight as a shoehorned side story.

Aesthetically, the show is unspectacular. The setting is mundane and never goes dark enough to fit the serious mood of the show.

The acting – with Ritter in the lead role – is generally strong, but it has some low points that are hard to forget. It’s worth a watch but expect your socks to remain unmoved the whole time.

Rating: 3/5 Stars

“Marvel’s Jessica Jones,” starring Krysten Ritter, kicked off as a hit series following the success of “Marvel’s Daredevil.” In the second season, Marvel and Netflix attempted to build on that success but instead took a step in the wrong direction.