A spreading. A membrane spray down their worksite and the workers regularly tested for carcinogens, of such as fumes and dust. To prevent occupational hazards, Construction site took measures building was constructed.”

Since spring break, construction has been underway on Harbor Hall. In addition to updating the chilled water units, the building’s roof is being fully replaced — a process that hadn’t happened since the building was the former Dali Museum.

Harbor Hall harbors construction

By Luke Cross
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Across Poynter Park, separated from the rest of campus, Harbor Hall has been occupied with more construction workers than art students.

Construction on Harbor Hall began during spring break, prompted by a ceiling leak in the north side of the building.

“Whenver we had a heavy storm or lots of rain, ceiling tiles would get soaked through and drip into the classrooms. It was the push to start the whole renovation,” said Edward Lewis, the construction project manager.

When surveying the building before beginning work, Facilities Planning and Construction discovered the severity of the issue.

While taking a core sample of the roofing, Lewis discovered that Harbor Hall’s roof was laid on top of three older roofs.

According to Lewis, it was a common practice to layer roofing in the past, but the age of the roof and the number of layers poses a safety hazard. Modern building code only allows two layers of roofing to be built above one another. If it must be stripped, it allows two layers of roofing to be laid before it must be stripped.

Given the roof’s age, the construction site took measures to prevent occupational hazards, such as fumes and dust.

The core sample was taken before construction testing for carcinogens, of which none were found and the workers regularly spray down their worksite to prevent dust from spreading. A membrane within the building’s ceiling also prevents any dust from falling inside Harbor Hall.

Harbor Hall once served as the original Salvador Dali Museum, which was last refurbished in 1982. The construction will also update the building’s chilled water units, which run on a system separate from the rest of campus. Two of the rooftop units were untouched in the building’s 2014 renovation.

“The machines are nearing the end of their lives, so replacing them will cut down the noise and improve energy efficiency for the entire building,” said Lewis.

The construction process involves two shifts of workers: The first typically works from 4 to 9 a.m. stripping the old roofing, and the second patches the gaps later in the day.

“This way students can avoid the brunt of the noise, the workers get a much cooler environment and the project’s time scale is minimized,” said Lewis.

The construction must operate around staff and faculty as well. Facilities Planning and Construction has been working with the affected professors to work around class times.

“We regularly sit down with staff and faculty and run through a program to cut down on the amount of interruption in certain parts of the building,” said Lewis. “This week’s meeting will be talking about exam times and how we can be mindful of that.

A handful of classrooms in the east side of Harbor Hall regularly used by the Verbal & Visual Arts department have been temporarily evacuated for both noise and safety concerns. The classes have been relocated to the Davis building in the meantime.

“It’s a pain in the butt, and having classes across campus reminds me how great it is for the english faculty to normally have classrooms and offices together — we can just pop over and grab a book of something if we forget it,” said Thomas Hufnack, an English professor.

Tampa kept tight rein on people, records

When Regional Chancellor Sophia Wisniewska was ousted last fall, the USF administration in Tampa promptly provided key public records requested by The Crow’s Nest.

The draft of a termination letter from USF system President Judy Genshaft to Wisniewska and the voluntary resignation agreement that followed were provided to The Crow’s Nest in one day.

Other documents, like Wisniewska’s personnel file, were released within 24 days.

The administration’s response was much slower, however, when the newspaper sought records on the controversial legislation that ended the separate accreditations of the St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee campuses and put both under Tampa.

Although The Crown’s Nest filed a request for a variety of records on Jan. 28, the administration did not comply until March 9 – 40 days after the request and one day after a media lawyer representing a Crow’s Nest reporter wrote to the university complaining about the delay.

On Feb. 23, the administration had provided a single letter that had already been released to the public.

The pokey pace of the administration’s response to The Crown’s Nest is consistent with a strategy in which administrators carefully managed their public position on the proposal while many in St. Petersburg reeled in surprise and anger and Genshaft was caught off guard. She pledged to be neutral on the bill and carry out whatever lawmakers enacted.

It quickly became clear, however, that the champion of the bill was Rep. Chris Sprowls, R-Palm Harbor – not Rodrigues – and that Genshaft had been alerted in October that the proposal was under consideration.

USA Today
Students lead in drinking water investigation

By Emily Wunderlich ewunderlich@mail.usf.edu

How safe is our drinking water?

A Journalism professor Bernardo Motta posed that question to his students in Neighborhood News Bureau after the Flint water crisis hit the headlines in 2016.

“For the students in NNB, this was a massive research project,” Motta said. “They learned a lot of investigative tools. We had groups just looking at the history of housing developments in St. Petersburg to see if houses would be the best targets for our experiment.”

“NNB covers the historic African-American neighborhoods of St. Petersburg’s midtown area. One of its major projects includes Midtown K-12 news — a program seeking to improve journalism and media education in schools in south St. Petersburg,” the project of testing water was launched.

The Academy Prep Center of St. Petersburg is one of the beneficiaries.

After obtaining a research grant from the University of Missouri, Motta enlisted the help of social studies teacher Laura Manke, who works closely with him to coordinate Academy Prep’s media club.

As the school’s science fair was approaching, Manke originally wanted the students to participate in the event; however, Motta had other ideas.

“NNB had this idea for the project of testing water for lead in the neighborhood, and I thought that could be the perfect link. ‘How could we get access to people’s houses?’ Well, students have access to their own houses,” Motta said.

Students who were interested in participating in the experiment could sign up for it through an after-school enrichment program called “Community Cares.”

But before they could begin collecting water samples, students were required to research the harmful effects of lead in drinking water.

“The way to experience science firsthand,” Manke said. “I had students also train other students on how to collect the samples, so they got leadership skills to pass on that information, which you can’t always do in your classroom every day, so that was really great.”

In addition to collecting water samples, students also wrote about their findings. Three of Manke’s sixth graders were published in STEAM City K-12 online magazine for student journalists promoting science, technology, engineering, art and math.

“The most meaningful part was that my students got to have autonomy over doing something,” Manke said. “They were really given very adult responsibilities for fifth and sixth graders.”

Academy Prep students also got to visit USF St. Petersburg’s College of Marine Science, where research associate Kelly Quinn analyzed the water samples.

“The whole experience was good,” Quinn said. “I run samples all the time, so that wasn’t special or overly interesting for me, but the fact that students were involved — and not just college-level students — kids that collected the samples and came and saw my lab — it’s always great to have kids come and see the lab and hopefully be excited about science.”

Quinn found that lead was present in the water but at levels well below the EPA limit, which is set at 15 parts per billion. The average lead content for all samples on the first draw was one part per billion.

That was when graduate student Andrea Perez realized the lack of awareness surrounding health hazards in the community. She took the reins on the project, shifting her focus from reporting to community education and proposing solutions.

“It’s really not about the breaking news, it’s just about thinking, ‘What information will make everyone make better decisions?’ Especially in the community that they live and especially if it’s about their health,” Perez said.

In addition to the drinking water investigation, a collaboration is underway between NNB, WUSF Health News Florida and the American Heart Association. Students are working to produce 90-second videos on various topics on health in education. The project will be complete by the end of the semester.

NNB also hopes to launch a comprehensive database of local black history in September.

“We have been developing a digital tool that’s both a map and timeline together,” Motta said. “So we have a series of historical maps and photos where people can go and look through storylines of things that happened in south St. Petersburg.”

Although Perez finished the water investigation story, she hopes that NNB will continue to follow up with it later on as it’s published.

“I always believe that when you’re a reporter, it doesn’t end when you finish the story,” she said. “You kind of always want to have a notebook where you’re writing down things that were kept unanswered. Just go back to that.”

“There is always a lot of stuff that is never answered and has to be discussed. I just hope that NNB has that figurative, fat notebook,” Perez said.

Military photographer defies norms

By Amy Diaz

Only two women have won the National Press Photographer’s Military Photographer of the Year award, but one has a twinkle in her eye.

That woman is Stacy Pearsall.

Retired combat photographer, and now portrait photographer, Pearsall delivered her talk, “The Best of Me: A Woman’s Journey in a Man’s World,” to an audience of over 50 people on campus March 29.

She was accompanied by her prize-winning photographs.

Since entering the service at 17 years old, she has traveled to over 41 countries and has worked displayed in the Pentagon and the Smithsonian, developed a respected center for providing photography and has since been working on the Veterans Portrait Project.

The Veterans Portrait Project helps cope with her post-traumatic stress. In doing so, she was able to educate others about “what the face of a veteran looks like” and start an important dialogue.

She has photographed 6,500 veterans of all genders and ages.

Pearsall acknowledged the usual shock that accompanies the news of her entering the service so young.

“Frankly, it was a family affair,” Pearsall said, likening herself to Lieutenant Dan from “Forrest Gump,” with family members in the service dating back to the Revolutionary War.

However, she and her sister were the first two females in the family to join the service.

Pearsall recalls her 5-year-old self with “chubby cheeks and short red hair” wanting to become a pilot.

She was inspired by her Uncle Scott, who told her “there’s not little girls pilots right now … but I think you’ll be the first.”

She never became a pilot, but she did join the service and found a way to channel her artistic side by becoming an aerial combat photographer.

Pearsall immediately learned that while the position was challenging for anyone to get into, it was especially difficult as a woman.

“I learned early on that you were two things in the military,” Pearsall said, describing the sexism she faced. “You were either a bitch or a slut.”

After being objectified by men she worked with, she decided she was going to prove to everyone that she earned her spot based on her talents and abilities and “not what is on the exterior.”

And that’s exactly what she did.

In 2002, she was awarded the aerial combat photographer position, and later that year, she ended up finishing in the top 10 for Military Photographer of the Year.

Pearsall found that she had “a unique point of view” as a woman. At first, her gender was alienating, but she was eventually able to embrace it.

“I was okay with being the sister, the mother, the feminine and being the badass photographer holding my own among the men,” she said.

“I believe that it allowed the folks that I was photographing to be vulnerable.”

Pearsall also discussed the emotional trauma she endured building relationships with the soldiers she photographed. While she says it was a “privilege to capture their heroism in battle,” she carried a lot of guilt in surviving while many of them died.

“I’m not a hero. I photograph heroes,” Pearsall said.
The Legislature passed the measure March 5, and Gov. Rick Scott signed it into law six days later.
Dr. Motta’s long road to citizenship

By Juliet Di Preta dipretap@usf.edu

For the past 12 years, Bernardo Motta, a journalism professor at USF St. Petersburg, has been seeking his U.S. Citizenship. Motta came to the U.S. from his home country of Brazil in 2005 with a student visa looking to earn his doctorate from the University of Tennessee. “I always thought of the United States as kind of the center of the world in a way. Meaning, everything that is happening in the world is happening here, and I thought that was a good place to be,” Motta said.

However, the U.S. was not the only country on his radar in his search for schools. Also on his list of potential university homes was Canada and Australia. He was accepted to a university in Australia and was preparing to head that way when he received another acceptance letter in the mail.

“We were basically already packing our bags when I got the letter from the University of Tennessee saying not only that I had been accepted, but that I got a scholarship,” Motta said.

The school was one of his first choices.

His wife attended high school in Tennessee, and with the scholarship on top of that, the decision became clear. “I can pay $20,000 just to get to Australia or get paid to go to America. I don’t think there’s much choice there,” Motta said.

Education wasn’t the only force driving Motta toward the U.S. Another major consideration was financial stability.

According to studies by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, Brazil has one of the highest rates of police violence in the world. Journalists, environmental activists and social justice activists of all types are regularly assassinated, Motta said. “In Brazil, if you are a journalist and if you are working as a lawyer or working for the environment you don’t get paid, and you get shot a lot,” Motta said. “It’s not a safe place to be, especially when you’re not making any money that actually pays the bills.”

After earning his doctorate, Motta then had to apply for an H1-B work visa in 2009. This type of work visa specifies that a person is required to work in a specialty occupation. Applicants must have unique skills that set them apart and make them invaluable to an employer.

Motta’s doctorate research on the Emergency Planning Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA) made his research unique and allowed him to get his H-1B work visa.

“Not many people studied that,” Motta said. After two years of having his work visa, he was able to apply for a green card. The interview for the green card can only be described as “very extensive,” according to Motta.

“I had to remember places that I lived when I was three years old,” Motta said.

Motta emphasized how complicated immigration law and the process of seeking citizenship can be. He said that even with his law degrees, neither him nor his lawyer could understand the complicated process.

“Many lawyers in the U.S., they say that they’re an expert in immigration because they get a lot of money out of it, but most of them are not,” he said.

Because of this, Motta fired his lawyer and began doing the work himself. As a professor, he had a lot more free time than most to fill out the forms and go through the process, which can be extremely time consuming.

“I basically spent spring breaks and whatever summer breaks I had just doing that kind of stuff,” he said.

Not only is the process lengthy and labor-intensive, it can also be financially stressful. Motta said he stopped counting the cost at around $35,000, and that amount only includes expenses accrued since arriving to America, such as applying for visas and forms.

Travel is also required. Many of the applications require the applicant spend time outside of the U.S. Motta had to leave to go through the embassy process.

The travel between countries can also be scary, he said. He stated that it depends on the mood of the person who looks at your passport. If that person is in a bad mood, they can decide that you can’t come in.

When traveling by himself, Motta rarely has any issues with the process. But he has been randomly selected for security checks a few times. This usually happens, he notes, when the TSA agents hear him speaking Portuguese with his wife, he said.

“One of the best experiences I had was the first time I was coming back here with my green card and someone said, “Welcome back home.”

It was the first time he heard someone refer to the U.S. as his home and described it as “sheer luck” that it happened to be the first time he was traveling with his green card.

“You kind of get traumatized by the whole process that every time you look at one of those people with a pen who can just say ‘O.K., you’re not going to get in,’ thinking that I can lose everything that I have just worked for in the last 12 years. It’s a little bit scary,” Motta said.

There is a light at the end of this stressful, 12-year tunnel, though.

Motta received a letter from the Department of Homeland Security March 26 stating that they received his final form requesting naturalization.

It should only be a matter of time before they accept his petition, which would allow him to take his English and U.S. civics test, attend the naturalization oath ceremony and officially become a U.S. citizen.

The exterior of the east side of Harbor Hall has also been cordoned off as an area to catch and collect any debris that may fall from the stripping process. Every other entrance will follow its normal schedule until construction moves to the building’s west side, which will then be blocked off.

Residents around campus have also been made aware of the construction and are being notified of time frame.

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Slacking off: One man’s quest for balance

By Whitney Elfstrom
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B
alance: most strive for it, but few achieve it. People find it within their journal, meditation or yoga practice. Or, they walk across a thin line from one point to another and hope to God they don’t fall off.

For David Whalen, a freshman mass communications major at USF St. Petersburg, it’s the latter.

Maybe you’ve seen him hanging out by the USF St. Petersburg waterfront suspended eight feet above the ground as he carefully treads across 90 feet of flat, red nylon webbing. This adventurous feat is called slacklining, which is the act of balancing along a rope tied to two anchors, typically trees.

Whalen started slacklining at 15 years old with his older brother Jarod and was “absolute garbage at it.” He didn’t take it seriously until he was 17. Whalen said he is first and foremost a rock climber and slacklining is part of the climbing culture.

“I’ve always been mediocre at a bunch of things and now I’m finally good at something,” Whalen said about his slacklining and rock climbing.

Whalen subscribes to all of the “hippie outdoor shit.” He regularly goes barefoot, eats a vegetarian diet and kicks around a hacky sack. He’s learning how to surf and spin fire. He regularly uses a longboard — not a car — to get from place to place.

Once a week he sets up his slackline when he’s not working at Vertical Ventures St. Pete, a rock climbing gym on 18 Street S. He said it gives him something to do when he’s bored or if the weather permits it.

Whether he’s gazing out over the USF St. Petersburg waterfront or Riverside in the Yosemite Valley, Whalen loves to chase the rush that comes with slacklining and rock climbing.

In high school, he would tie one end of the webbing to the roof of his two-story house, tie the other to a tree and walk across.

“It’s more fun for me when it’s higher,” Whalen said. “It makes it a little more sketchy and a little more fun.”

When he sets up, he usually catches the eye of fellow waterfront visitors. People stop and ask him what he’s doing and if they can try — he always says yes.

He’s often joined by his girlfriend Katie Pierce and his longtime best friend Tristan Dougherty. Both are new to the the circus act, but that didn’t stop them from jumping on.

Pierce and Whalen met as a result of slacklining. She saw him practicing on campus and asked if she could try it out. He was happy to let her.

“I’ve only done it a few times,” said Pierce, a freshman health science major. “I still haven’t made it all the way across.”

Whalen said he prefers balance tricks over dynamic ones. While he doesn’t seek out new tricks to practice, he’ll throw in new moves every now and then, pulling from an Instagram video or anything that pops into his head.

Keeping in line with the need to find balance, Whalen practices yoga, both on the mat and on the line. He uses yoga, rock climbing and long boarding to help strengthen his core, which makes him a stronger slackliner.

“It’s kind of like riding a bike, you just have to figure it out for yourself,” Whalen said.

There’s an art behind each movement. According to Whalen, you keep one foot in front of the other, fixate your eyes on a single point ahead and keep your right wrist limp while the left remains stiff.

“You wave your arms like an idiot … you do that and counterbalance everything life, if he fails or does badly at something, he doesn’t let it affect him.

“Life’s a game, just (mess) around,” Whalen said. “Take things seriously that you like, but there’s a lot of stupid shit like slacklining that doesn’t have any real value, so you might as well just (mess) around with it.”
I would like to see women's breasts as just another part of the human anatomy. "Nipples: the hard truth" is an article written by Edwinderieh. The article makes the point that women's breasts are often objectified and viewed as sexualized, whereas men's are not. However, the article is not only about women's breasts, but also about the double standard that exists in society regarding their visibility.

The sequel is more of the same. Jack and Amara have more important roles as scientists working on new Jaeger technology. While their lines sometimes come off as fast techno-babble, they still manage to evoke warm feelings as they train. Both Jack and Amara have a dynamic chemistry, and the arc they are on will likely lead to a harrowing climax.

From an artistic perspective, the film is derivative to those who are bored to death of watching the same kind of hokey action, though. But there are two things that make "Pacific Rim: Uprising" enjoyable. It is an explosive, chaotic good time. Despite its derivative plot, the film is entertaining enough for those who enjoy robot battles and action scenes.

"Pacific Rim: Uprising" is enjoyable and the finale is 4/5 stars. The special effects of Jaegers fighting kaiju, especially the ones inspired by the original, are top-notch. The action scenes that break out throughout the run time are chaotic and exciting, though they do come off as stock backdrops.

The exceptions are returning cast members Charlie Day and Burn Gorman, who reprise their roles as scientists working on new Jaeger technology and training the Jaegers in the process. These two are great, and while their lines sometimes come off as fast techno-babble, they still manage to convey what's needed for the ride. Frankly, that is the main appeal of the film: the Jaegers fighting kaiju, the chaotic action scenes that break out throughout the run time, and the special effects of the original that were top-notch, and that level of production, thankfully, carried over to the sequel. Jaegers fighting kaiju, Jaegers fighting Jaegers and all the cinematic destruction happening as a result are thoroughly enjoyable and the finale is exhilarating and over-the-top.

Some may not give into this kind of hokey action, though. In this paradigm where Avengers are taking over for the dead horse Transformers, the action might come off as a cheap novelty. The effects of the original were top-notch, and that level of production, thankfully, carried over to the sequel. Jaegers fighting kaiju, Jaegers fighting Jaegers and all the cinematic destruction happening as a result are thoroughly enjoyable and the finale is exhilarating and over-the-top.

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Dance team wins first competition

By Jeffrey Waitkevich
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UF St. Petersburg’s dance team won its first collegiate competition of the year.

The South Florida All Stars dance team took home first place in the 4-year college dance division of the COA Cheer and Dance ULTIMATE Nationals competition, which features cheerleaders and dancers of all ages from around the Southwest region of the U.S.

“We really stood out since there were only a very few dance teams there,” Kate Walker, the club’s president, said. “Cheer parents, little kids and even security guards would come up and ask when we were performing because they wanted to make sure they wouldn’t miss it.”

Walker, 19, is a sophomore mass communications major from Fernandina Beach.

She led the four-dancer competition team, who danced to “Dog Days Are Over” by Florence and the Machine.

It was the first group dance Walker had ever choreographed. Through dance, the team expressed the stress of everyday life with sharp movements before shifting into a positive mood with “lowly” movements, depicting a dream where the stress is thrown out.

However, the dance team does more than just compete. They perform at a multitude of events throughout the year, including homecoming, the Ebony Ball and their annual “Dancing with the All Stars” event.

In this past week alone, they had two performances. The first was at the Stars in Motion spring showcase April 3, at the USFSP’s Got Talent show April 4. This uptick has been part of Walker’s initiative to grow the team in every facet since she took over the team that Justice Thornton, her peer coach, started.

She wanted to rebrand the team and be taken more seriously: they got a new logo. She wanted to see the team compete more; they competed.

She wanted to see the team improve: they won a competition.

Walker said the team is collectively one of the most supportive groups on campus, saying that all 11 members “want to see each other get better” and push each other to do so.

They regularly do team bonding activities as well.

Since becoming club president in May 2017, Walker has placed an emphasis on stretching and conditioning. The team performs a range of dances from tap to hip-hop to ballet, but the team generally focuses on lyrical and contemporary dancing.

They hold open practices in studio A in the fitness center on Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. They also hold additional practices for the competition team, which holds auditions every October.

Walker began dancing at a young age when her mother put her in a class to become more social and stop being “such a little nerd,” as Walker described it.

She quickly sprouted a passion for musical theater, but took a hiatus in middle school to give basketball a try.

But dance found its way back into her heart in high school, where she began taking dance more seriously.

She even considered majoring in dance at USF Tampa, but opted to attend USF St. Petersburg because she felt it was a better fit.

She worried that her decision would be the end of her dance career, but then she met Thornton and made another comeback.

Now, she wants to provide that same opportunity to everyone else with a passion for dance.

“I want to see more people trying it. My biggest thing is sharing our energy and our love for dance with other people,” she said.

“Even if it is just one time, I want them to see the energy of the team.”

The team features a wide variety of experience levels and welcomes beginners with open arms.

What to do this week: April 9 - April 15

By Ashley Campbell
Contributor

MONDAY

The Art Show for students, by students, will take place from 7 to 9 p.m. in the SLC. Snacks will be provided. Students can vote until Friday and see the two new murals coming to the SLC this semester.

TUESDAY

There will be a K-9 Unit Demonstration at 4 p.m. on Harbor Lawn presented by the St. Petersburg Police Department. This event is hosted by the CSU Student Association. The officers usually let students pet the dogs at the end.

COURTESY OF KATE WALKER

Kate Walker, president of the South Florida All Stars, led her dance team through a national’s competition and performance at multiple USF St. Petersburg events.

COURTESY OF KATE WALKER

USF St. Petersburg dance team, the South Florida All Stars wore flowing garbs during their first place performance at the the COA Cheer and Dance ULTIMATE Nationals competition.
The great campus piano struggle of 2018

By Anna Bryson
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The sleek co-working environment of Station House St. Pete was transformed into a mystical dream world crawling with unicorns, circus performers and local artists Friday night. The pop-up gallery show Perennial Bloom was a perfect encapsulation of St. Petersburg’s eccentric personality.

The showcase of visual artists, performance artists and musicians was hosted by Bloom Collective, an independent group of artists. The event was planned and organized by James Oleson and Jerry Cahill, who are both local artists.

Perennial Bloom gave the opportunity for St. Petersburg to actively experience an array of its own local eclectic art. Every inch of the venue at 260 1st Ave S. was filled with completely immersive artwork.

“I see individualism. 1st Ave S. was filled with its own local eclectic art. To actively experience an array of opportunity for St. Petersburg,” said Gumienny. “(It’s) wonderful to see how St. Pete has evolved. There’s always been a part of this, it’s how St. Pete has evolved. The people putting on the show started this movement. It’s not new — it’s how this all started.”

Circus performers, sponsored by The Movement Sanctuary, performed on the terrace. Aerialists Taylor Roberts, Haley Phillips and Rachel “Kitty” Howard performed on a 20-foot-tall aerial silk rig hanging from the rooftop.

“It’s incredibly unique,” said David O’Herrry, a St. Petersburg resident. “It’s a very interesting community and it’s so seldom to see it in this kind of focus.”

A large part of what made the experience so wildly immersive were the costumes: people slinking around dressed as clouds, unicorns, flowers, fairies, and a praying mantis. The installation of props, costumes and live body painting was put together by Lissa Hatcher, a surreal artist and member of the Bloom Collective.

“I like to explore nature, sexuality and the sacred in my work. I use lots of movement and wild dashes of color to contrast the structured with the fluid,” said Gumienny. “I would like to see so many hardworking artists in our community get the recognition they deserve at an event that wasn’t held at a bar,” said Gumienny. “Of course bars are fun and accessible exhibition spaces, but it’s refreshing to experience an event so collaborative on such a massive scale in a new environment.”

The event celebrated St. Petersburg’s local artists and the artistic vibe that turned the city into the arts mecca that it is.

“People here are supporting their neighbors,” said Beal. “It used to be like, ‘Are we Clearwater, are we Tampa?’ Now we’re St. Pete. The next Bloom Collective pop-up event will be hosted by local mural artist Derek Donnelly at his studio gallery COVE, at 5705 Park Blvd, Pinellas Park. The date is still to be determined.

Perennial Bloom. Living works of art greeted attendees to immediately immerse them into the interactive fantasy land.

By Dylan Hart
Contributor

Several pianos are on campus — ostensibly for student use — but a number of issues prevent students from playing them.

An upright Yamaha piano sits in the large Davis 130 meeting room. However, Davis 130 is usually locked and can only be opened with specific reservations by a student or staff member ahead of time, restricting the general student body from using the piano.

A huge Davis classroom hosts another upright Yamaha piano, but the location is problematic; with it being so close to adjacent classrooms, any noise produced by the piano is a potential disturbance.

The baby grand piano in the central lobby in the back of Harbor Hall has a similar problem, as its notes vibrate throughout the entire building, distracting students.

Brendon Porter, president of the Musicians Club at USF St. Petersburg, a student organization which has been seeking a music space on campus since last spring, takes issue with the limited availability of campus pianos.

“The main issue is that [the pianos] are few and far between,” said Porter. “Their accessibility is extremely limited. If a piano is placed in a more common area, you’d have a lot more students interacting. It could really expose students of the campus to the same sort of music that should be present on any university campus — having that sort of culture is key.”

Furthermore, Harbor Hall is separated from much of the campus and is currently undergoing construction, which makes it less accessible.

Some students have raised concerns about non-students being drawn to the building purely to play the piano, despite having no connection to the school.

The fourth and final piano owned by USF St. Petersburg is in the Office of Multicultural Affairs, but it can only be used by students after business hours end at 5:00 p.m.

Another issue is awareness. Out of 77 students surveyed, only 46 knew that there were any pianos on campus at all. Even fewer knew the number of pianos or where they are located.

The rules surrounding these pianos are left unexplained to much of the student body. There is no clear direction about which rooms can be accessed for personal use or when they are open.

Valerie Perkins, a USF St. Petersburg alumna who graduated in spring 2017, expressed similar frustrations and said that she was occasionally told to leave Davis 259 while playing the piano.

“I always wish we had a couple of piano practice rooms that were soundproof,” said Perkins. “Playing piano really relieved my stress between classes.”

Despite there being multiple pianos on campus, students have limited access to them throughout the majority of the day. For students like Brendon Porter, president of the Musicians Club, this is a big problem.