

THE MINARET

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FALLING INTO FOCUS

FROM NEW LAWS TO LOCAL LIFE,
CHANGE IS IN THE AIR THIS FALL.

A Look at Some of Florida's Newly Enacted Laws

By Faith Montalvo

TAMPA, Fla. — 28 new laws took effect in Florida on Oct. 1. Many of these create harsher penalties meant to crack down on crimes involving sexual offenses and predatory behavior, restraining and abandoning animals during a hurricane, and driving offenses.

The Six Sexual Offenses and Predator Laws

Under House Bill (HB) 1451, sexual cyberharassment is now a third-degree felony if done for financial gain, and deepfake pornography has been criminalized under HB 757. According to the bills, victims will be able to sue offenders for both offenses. The bill also makes owning and selling child sexual abuse materials a third-degree felony, including possessing images depicting "lewd or lascivious" acts or exposure of children.

Another law created a capital sex trafficking felony. Under this law, sex trafficking children under 12 or mentally incapacitated persons is punishable by life in prison or the death penalty. Missouri is the only other state that has a similar law, which states that trafficking a child in the first degree can be punishable by the death penalty.

There are also three laws that specifically target predators.

One sets harsher minimum sentencing if an offender is convicted of a crime for a second time. Another law creates harsher penalties

for luring children into a building, and makes it illegal to lure a child out of a building, home, or vehicle. It also raises the age of the child to 14, and mistaking a child's age cannot be used as a defense for the crime. The third law requires sexual offenders to report where they work and their phone number, and confirm their address with law enforcement four times a year.

Chaining Animals During Natural Disasters

Named after a bull terrier that was rescued near Interstate-75 as Hurricane Milton flooded the area, "Trooper's Law" makes it a third-degree felony to restrain and abandon animals during natural disasters. This is punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000, up to five years in prison, or both.

When Governor Ron DeSantis signed this bill into law last May, he also signed "Dexter's Law," which went into effect in July and requires the Department of Law Enforcement to create a public animal abuser registry by Jan. 1, 2026.

"Across Florida, we have seen horrifying instances of animal cruelty that demand a stronger response," said DeSantis in a press release.

The Four Driving Offense Laws

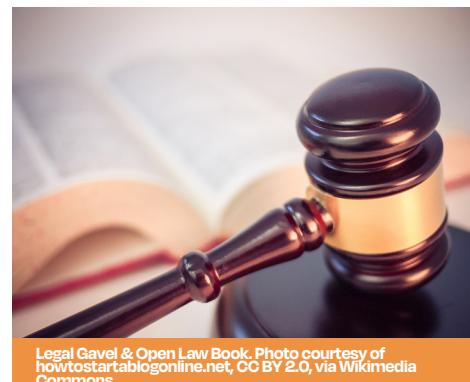
HB 113 increases minimum penalties for fleeing police and creates a sentence multiplier for reoffenders. Fleeing police is now a level five offense and is a level six offense if it causes

property damage or injury. It also eliminates the defense of police vehicles not being clearly marked in pursuit. At the same time, HB 253 prohibits owning, buying, or selling devices that obscure license plates to make them unreadable. The third bill allows courts to order individuals who struck property while fleeing a crash to make restitution to the property owner for damages.

"Trenton's Law" was named after an 18-year-old who was struck and killed by an impaired driver who had previously committed vehicular homicide. It makes some crimes a second-degree felony when people are convicted a second time. Those crimes are driving under the influence (DUI) manslaughter, boating under the influence (BUI) manslaughter, vehicular homicide, and vessel homicide.

It also makes the first refusal of a breath or urine test after a DUI arrest a second-degree misdemeanor.

To see a full list of bills that passed this year, including the laws that took effect on July 1 and Oct. 1, visit the Florida Senate's official website.



Legal Gavel & Open Law Book. Photo courtesy of howtostartablogonline.net, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

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UTampa Alum 'Tampa Terrence' Joins Jake Paul Social Media Marketing Campaign

By Amber Louis

TAMPA, Fla. — Terrence Concannon, a University of Tampa alum and content creator on platforms Instagram and TikTok, also known as "Tampa Terrence," joined Jake Paul, internet personality and boxer, in a country-wide RV tour to promote the bodycare brand "W." The tour began on July 1 in Miami and stopped in various states from New York to California.

The team led a campaign to spread awareness for the new company while creating content. Many TikTok videos on the account @getw, or "W - Everyday body care," feature interviews conducted by Concannon with college students at some popular universities.

In one video on Instagram, "Tampa Terrence" posted a reel featuring the creator's opportunity to use Paul's private jet.

"So Jake," Concannon said. "You're really giving us the jet and you're taking the RV, is that true?"

"Yeah, you guys can have it, not an issue — have fun," Paul said.

The UTampa alum began making content as a hobby when he was still in college,

and it turned into an internship with a YouTube personality who boasts almost 21 million subscribers. Concannon found an internship with W's marketing tour through Instagram and applied for it through a short introductory video.

Concannon said he was "fired up" to work with Paul.

"We wanted to market the best we could [by] driving the RV with the large 'W' logo and Jake on it," said Concannon. "Jake is one of the best marketers in the world, so being able to work with him on social media marketing was a dream, honestly."

Concannon said that authenticity was a crucial part of successful content creation.

"Posting content you think people want to see is the main thing, and posting things that are worth their time," said Concannon. "Social media marketing is the new wave now, and traditional marketing is kind of dying, so I'll probably continue this, and whatever happens in the future, we will see."

In an interview with TMZ Sports, Paul said he started the line because he wanted to create something new in the body care industry.

"This is like all my brain power put into one thing — it's called 'W,' and it's basically taking the term W, 'winning, whether that's the valedictorian, firefighter, high school jock,'" said Paul. "Those are all winners in my mind, and giving them a product in an old and outdated space."

Companies created by celebrities tend to attract a customer flow from fans who have already invested emotion into internet personalities. Paul's kickstart to his company, like other celebrities, relied on his previously built fanbase, known as the "Jake Paulers," of subscribers to his YouTube channel, and fans of his evolving boxing career.

"High-impact hygiene. Long-lasting scents. No junk. Built for boys who are done borrowing their dad's deodorant," is the mission statement of getw.com. W products are currently available for sale at Walmart, as well as on their website. The deodorant line is also aluminum-free.

The RV tour concluded with the last stop at UTampa on Oct. 12.



Photo courtesy of W/getw.com

Bad Bunny Confirmed as 2026 Apple Music Super Bowl LX Halftime Performer

By Carla Morales

TAMPA, Fla. — Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, better known as Bad Bunny from Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, will be the 60th Super Bowl halftime performer. From bagging groceries in 2016 to headlining the Super Bowl, one of Puerto Rico's most popular artists has done it. Fresh out of his 30-day *No Me Quiero Ir de aquí*, this star is more than ready to take the stage on Feb. 8.

On Sunday, Sept. 28, the star posted to his Instagram a short clip of him wearing a pava hat, chanclas, and a Hector Lavoe-inspired suit, while sitting atop a football goalpost at sunset on a beach in Puerto Rico with his song "Callaita" (one of his most-streamed songs) playing in the background. This Instagram post has now gained over 6.1 million likes, 114,000 comments, 612,000 reposts, and 1.7 million shares.

After this big reveal, Bad Bunny participated in an interview with Apple Music's Zane Lowe and Ebro Darden, discussing his excitement over his performance and his goals for the show.

"I'm going to enjoy. I'm going to embrace the moment. I'm going to show what we have, our music, our culture. I'm just going to the stage to enjoy and have fun," he said in the interview.

The artist then took Zane and Ebro moments after he was told he would be the 2026 Super Bowl performer.

According to Deadline, Bad Bunny said, "It's crazy because I was in the middle of a workout. So I remember that after the call, I just did like a hundred pull-ups. I didn't need more pre-workout shit or whatever. It was very special. It was so special."

Ever since this huge announcement, every social media platform has been blowing up, causing fans to predict what songs he will sing during this 12-15 minute set.

This performance will not just be an ordinary performance, as the artist wants to truly connect with his culture and touch people's hearts.

According to Deadline, Bad Bunny said, "I'm really excited for my friends, my family. Puerto Rico, all the Latino people around

the world. I'm excited about my culture. I'm excited about everything, not just for me. You know what I'm saying."

Although this is a huge achievement for an artist from such a small island, not everyone is pleased with the decision to have a Latino performing for one of the largest sporting events in the world.

Many upset fans have been taking to TikTok to express their frustration. One example is the news TikTok account @nowthisimpact, which reposted a clip from Greg Kelly's podcast "Greg Kelly Reports."

"I remember in the 1990s they once had a great big 50th anniversary of Snoopy and Charlie Brown. Now we have the bunny who hates America, hates President Trump, hates ICE, hates the English language. He's just a terrible person," said Greg Kelly..

Along with Greg Kelly, Donald Trump's administration did not seem too eager about this decision either, as Donald Trump's administration has warned that United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents will be present at the game.

Although not everyone agrees with the decision, it is impossible to deny that Bad Bunny is one of the biggest artists in the nation.

According to NBC News, Bad Bunny said, "This is for my people, my culture, and our history. Ve y dile a tu abuela, que seremos el HALFTIME SHOW DEL SUPER BOWL."

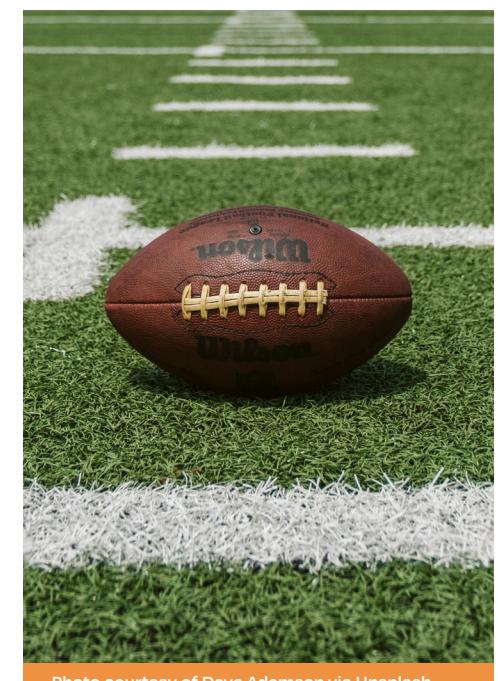


Photo courtesy of Dave Adamson via Unsplash

After Years of Waiting, The Wolverine Slashes Back into Gaming

By Logan Mullins

TAMPA, Fla. — On Sept. 24, Insomniac Games — the developers of Marvel's Spider-Man, Spyro the Dragon, and Ratchet & Clank — unveiled fresh gameplay for their upcoming Wolverine title. The footage shows James "Logan" Howlett battling a multitude of iconic enemies across several recognizable Marvel locations. Omega Red, a Soviet super soldier with Carbonadium tentacles; Mystique, a mutant shapeshifter and longtime X-Men adversary; the Reavers, cybernetically enhanced mercenaries; and a Sentinel, a colossal mutant-hunting robot, all make appearances. Logan brawls through the forests of Canada, the streets of Tokyo, and the island of Madripoor — even visiting the iconic Princess Bar from the classic Marvel comics.

Liam McIntyre will star as Wolverine. McIntyre, another in the long line of Australian actors to portray the Canadian hero, is most famous for his television roles as Spartacus in *Spartacus* (2013) and the

Weather Wizard in *The Flash* (2014). During the game overview trailer, Insomniac Creative Director Marcus Smith said they needed an actor who could "convey a lot with very little being spoken," and McIntyre was their top choice. McIntyre himself described the role as a "responsibility," stressing his focus on

finding "the essence of who Wolverine is" and balancing both the heroic and tragic sides of the character.



2021 Announcement Trailer Teaser Image.
Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

In a PlayStation blog post, Senior Community Manager Aaron Espinoza promised Insomniac would "deliver the ultimate Wolverine fantasy" and craft an experience "darker and more brutal" than their previous games. The footage reflects that

vision: Wolverine drives his claws through an enemy's skull, severs limbs, and tears another opponent in half. Developers even implemented a "blood tech" system to ensure each strike has a visceral, realistic effect.

Fans have been waiting for this moment since 2021, when Insomniac revealed the game with an announcement trailer during the PlayStation Showcase. Backdropped by James Carr's "The Dark End of the Street," the short clip showed the aftermath of a brawl at the Princess Bar, with Wolverine sitting victoriously at the counter before popping his claws in response to a battered attendee drawing a knife. Logan's face was never revealed, only his posture and back — a tease that sparked years of speculation, but little official news.

However, in December 2023, Insomniac fell victim to one of the largest leaks in gaming history. According to CyberDaily, the Rhysida Ransomware Gang — an internationally recognized cybercriminal group — hacked into Insomniac's internal systems and released 1.67 terabytes of data spread across 1.3 million files. The leak didn't just expose corporate secrets; it compromised sensitive employee records, private meeting logs, and long-term company strategies. Most damaging for superhero fans, the leak contained files on Marvel's Wolverine. The files contained concept art, casting information, and gameplay. The leaked gameplay appeared unfinished, choppy, and

glitchy, leading to speculation and rumors about the game's development. Many believed the game would be a disaster, and the hype diminished.

The gameplay trailer silenced nearly all the skepticism. Garnering over 7 million views on PlayStation's YouTube channel — and millions more across social media — it became the most talked-about announcement of the State of Play. Fans praised the gritty tone, McIntyre's voice work, the violent combat, and the faithful nods to Wolverine's comic roots.

After years of rumors, leaks, and silence, Insomniac has finally delivered proof that the wait was worth it. With a brutal tone, a star-studded cast of villains, and a combat system ripped straight from the comics, the trailer has reignited hype and muted nearly every critic. If the final game delivers on even a fraction of this promise, Fall 2026 won't just mark the release of another superhero title — it will mark the arrival of The Wolverine.



Liam McIntyre at Supercon 2014.
Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Taylor Swift Lifts the Curtain with Glittering New Album: *The Life of a Showgirl*

By Sophia Romana

TAMPA, Fla. — Taylor Swift has stepped back into the spotlight with her new album *The Life of a Showgirl*, a record full of sequins, humor, and unapologetic pop songs.

On this record, Swift trades heartbreak ballads for a behind-the-curtain look at her life as one of the world's biggest pop stars, offering glimpses into some of her most personal chapters yet.

Swift wrote the album during the European leg of her most recent record-breaking tour, *The Eras Tour*. The songs lean into themes of confidence, romanticism, and comedy.

Longtime collaborators Max Martin and Shellback, who worked with her on the albums *Red*, *1989*, and *Reputation*, returned to produce.

The album announcement came on Aug. 13, 2025, when Swift appeared on the *New Heights* podcast hosted by her fiancé, Kansas

City Chiefs player Travis Kelce. She also later revealed *The Official Release Party of a Showgirl*, a companion film set for a limited theatrical release in more than 100 countries.

Swift carried the "showgirl" aesthetic throughout the album's rollout: across photo shoots, album art, and promotional events. In-person pop-ups — from Spotify in New York City, and TikTok in Los Angeles — invited fans to step directly into the album's glittering world.

Swift also went more public than usual with promotion. In the week of release, she booked appearances on *The Graham Norton Show*, *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, and *Late Night with Seth Meyers*. She has also appeared on many radio shows in the U.S. and the U.K.

Fan reception was mixed, but the excitement was undeniable. *The Life of a Showgirl* broke Spotify's record as the most-streamed album in a single day in 2025, only 11 hours after its release.

Musically, the record is a sharp shift from her previous album, *The Tortured Poets Department*. Where that project was soft and sorrowful, the new album's sound is upbeat, humorous, and bold with its playful innuendos. Many listeners saw it as a reflection of Swift's stability and joy in her relationship with Kelce.

"You can tell a lot that she's really happy with Travis just based on the songs," said Hannah Walls, junior journalism student at the University of Tampa. "I thought it was really sweet and she did it in a way that wasn't too much, like they weren't all love songs."

Casual fan Victoria Mercogliano said she was excited to see Swift return to the pop genre.

"I think when she does pop music it really makes her shine," Mercogliano said. "Her albums always reflect where she's at in life. Right now, she's clearly happy."

At just 12 tracks, it is Swift's fewest number of songs in an album to date. Standout tracks include "Actually Romantic," which the public interpreted as a response to Charli XCX's song "Sympathy Is a Knife," rumored to be about Swift. Another highlight, "Father

Figure," interpolates George Michael's 1987 song of the same name.

In an interview with Jamie Theakston and Emma Bunton on *Heart Breakfast*, Swift named "Wi\$h Li\$t" as her personal favorite.

"It's a really dreamy song, it's a really romantic song," Swift said. "It details all these different things that people aspire to have in their lives, and all the wishes that people are making all over the world of things in their lifestyle or things they wanna buy. Or places they want to go."

The album closes with its title track, a duet with Sabrina Carpenter that nods to mentorship, performance, and life under the spotlight.

Swift told BBC Radio 1's Greg James she had no plans for a tour anytime soon.

"I'm gonna be really honest with you. Like, I am so tired when I think about doing it again because I would want to do it really, really well again," Swift said.

Still, with record-breaking streams and a bold new sound, *The Life of a Showgirl* has already secured its place as one of 2025's defining pop releases.

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons / Ronald Woan



Papayita's Story: A Wake-Up Call Against Fatphobia and Workplace Harassment

By Genesis Aviles

Photo courtesy of Anton via Unsplash



When a “joke” costs a life, it’s no joke at all. Carlos “Papayita” Gurrola, a 47-year-old worker in Torreón, Coahuila, died after co-workers allegedly poisoned his drink with a toxic cleaning chemical. What was dismissed as a prank exposed a lethal combination of cruelty, workplace bullying, and fatphobia — discrimination based on body size — that demands our attention beyond borders.

This tragedy highlights a toxic workplace culture where harmful “jokes” mask prejudices. Fatphobia is one of the most socially accepted forms of discrimination, often known as harmless teasing. But its effects are anything but harmless. Targeting someone for their weight undermines dignity, fosters isolation, and in extreme cases, like Papayita’s, leads to devastating physical consequences.

Austin Chase, a Tampa resident, emphasized how groupthink often allows cruelty in professional settings.

“Peer pressure is a real thing,” Chase said. “A lot of people like to stay in harmony with whatever the group is doing because it makes things go smoothly and it feels good, even

if what the group is doing is really, really screwed up.”

Chase pointed to the primal instinct to conform, even when it leads to harmful behavior.

“There’s a sort of thing that makes you feel good about uniting against someone else, even if they’re not a threat to you,” he said. “It makes you feel like you belong.”

Workplace pranks that single out employees based on appearance create unsafe environments. Labeling cruel acts as “jokes” allows perpetrators to evade responsibility and silences victims who fear retaliation or disbelief.

“I would say 95% of pranks are not acceptable at the workplace,” Chase said. “Especially anything that is a physical prank, like putting something in somebody’s food or drink.”

Chase said that while harmless pranks exist, they often do not belong in a professional environment.

Power dynamics within workplaces exacerbate the problem. Employees like Papayita, who may be more vulnerable due to social stigma, often lack protection or recourse.

“It’s important to include in workplace training that discriminating on the basis of how much body fat somebody has is still discriminating on physical appearance and unacceptable at the workplace,” Chase said.

Chase also addressed a broader cultural mindset that allows weight-based bullying to thrive.

“In comparison to other forms of discrimination, someone isn’t born heavy,” he said. “It’s a mix of personal choices and genetics, and because of that mix, it’s sometimes used to justify hazing.”

While this incident occurred in Mexico, the lessons resonate here in Tampa. Fatphobia and appearance-based bullying are not distant issues; they persist in many U.S. workplaces and schools, often hidden behind “locker room jokes” or “harmless fun.”

Chase believes empathy must be instilled early.

“If you’re taught to accept other people for who they are and not bully them for it, this wouldn’t be a problem in the first place,” he said. “There are subconscious factors into fatphobia that need to be understood and have people educated about it so that we can more strongly fight it.”

The cultural response to Papayita’s death, a corrido honoring his memory, shows the power of remembrance and demands justice. But remembering alone is not enough. We must transform grief into action, ensuring that no one else suffers because of unchecked discrimination or toxic workplace cultures.

Papayita’s death is a tragic reminder that fatphobia kills, not just emotionally, but sometimes physically. The responsibility to change lies with all of us: employers, co-workers, community leaders, and individuals. Only by recognizing the harm and committing to respect and inclusion can we hope to prevent another life lost to “just a joke.”





Photo courtesy of Rene Deanda via Unsplash

Chaos Within the U.S. Government Shutdown

By Juan Davalos

TAMPA, Fla. — At 12:01 a.m. on Oct. 1, 2025, large swaths of the federal government came to a halt when Congress failed to pass a year-long appropriations package or a short-term continuing resolution.

What began as another bitter budget fight quickly evolved into an unusually aggressive and increasingly punitive shutdown. According to the White House, the move goes beyond the old playbook of temporary furloughs and back pay promises, turning to the strategy of targeted funding freezes and mass workforce cuts.

Reuters reported that rather than treating the lapse in appropriations as a temporary emergency to be resolved through negotiation, the White House has used the shutdown as an instrument to reshape federal priorities, publicly threatening to eliminate programs, and, most strikingly, initiating large-scale reductions in the federal workforce.

The Congressional Research Service and state legislative offices have cataloged the long list of services that can be curtailed during a lapse in funding. According to Time magazine correspondents, this includes national parks, museums, small-business loan programs, and timely economic support as areas disrupted, with ripple effects in communities around the country costing jobs, research, tourism dollars, and services for citizens.

In the past week, the Office of Management and Budget disclosed that it was moving forward with what it calls "reductions-in-force" or RIFs, with mass firings of federal

employees announced publicly in a terse social-media post by OMB Director Russell Vought.

"The RIFs have begun," said Vought on X. The statement and agency confirmations that followed made clear the White House is prepared to use the shutdown to enact permanent cuts to the workforce, not merely temporary furloughs.

Reuters, among others, reported that billions of dollars have been frozen in federal funding for large projects, moves that disproportionately affect Democratic-run states and cities, and which critics say amount to an overtly partisan use of emergency fiscal authority.

The White House's public messaging blames Democratic leaders for failing to pass a "clean" spending bill, with Vice President JD Vance saying in a statement criticized by immigration advocates, "Democrats are threatening to shut down the entire government because they want to give hundreds of billions of dollars of health care benefits to illegal aliens."

President Trump has also repeatedly claimed Democrats want to "give full health care benefits" to illegals during the shutdown negotiations, despite the multiple reports refuting the claim numerous times.

As House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries explains, undocumented immigrants are, in fact, ineligible for Medicaid, ACA subsidies, and most federal health care programs, as federal law prohibits it.

Even Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said to the Guardian earlier this week that "Not a single federal dollar goes to providing health insurance for undocumented

immigrants. NOT. ONE. PENNY."

FactCheck similarly reviewed a claim about Medicaid being used by undocumented immigrants and found it false. Specifically, the White House had claimed 1.4 million undocumented immigrants would be "removed from Medicaid," but undocumented immigrants do not receive comprehensive Medicaid in the first place.

Moreover, reimbursements for emergency care of undocumented individuals constitute less than 1% of total Medicaid expenditures.

Representative Jeffries' office also described the situation in a press release as "chaos, crisis, and confusion" brought on by the President and his allies, an example of how partisan rhetoric intensifies as the costs rise.

According to analysts at CBS News, there are two distinct harms: short-term human costs and longer-term institutional damage.

In the short term, hundreds of thousands of federal employees face lost wages or the prospect of permanent job loss; active duty and mission-critical personnel worry about pay disruptions; and citizens who depend on federal services face delays and uncertainty.

Reportedly, military personnel could also miss paychecks if the shutdown persists into mid-October, a prospect that would quickly become a national security liability and recruiting issue.

Institutionally, using a funding lapse to arbitrarily freeze projects or axe staff bypasses congressional authority and the normal checks of democratic governance. This erosion has long-term costs, as contractors may balk at partnering with agencies whose funding can be frozen midproject, researchers may lose years of continuity, and states may

hesitate to plan around uncertain federal support.

The Executive Branch has substantial discretion in implementing laws, but appropriations and rescissions are squarely the province of Congress. When the White House unilaterally freezes funding, announcing, for instance, cuts to urban security grants or to green-energy projects in Democratic states, it risks accelerating lawsuits, sowing administrative confusion, and undermining trust in the impartial administration of federal programs.

Proponents of the republican administration argue it is a form of accountability in an attempt to force spending discipline and to eliminate programs they view as wasteful. But policy changes built through shutdown-era maneuvers are functionally unstable.

To put it simply, it's the perspective of the Democrats that this is governance by emergency edict rather than by deliberative process.

If there is a pragmatic path out of this impasse, it lies in restoring the arithmetic and incentives of negotiation. Historically, short-term continuing resolutions can be and have been used to buy time for policy negotiations; the alternative is protracted shutdowns that exact high social and economic costs.

Essentially, this shutdown will only end when political actors from both sides decide whether the costs outweigh the benefits. As a country that depends on a predictable federal government to protect safety, health, and infrastructure, this is not merely a partisan tactic; it is a gamble with consequences that will be felt far beyond statutory constraints and legislative proposals.

Season Update on Men's Soccer

By Matthew Restrepo

TAMPA, Fla. — About halfway through the season, the University of Tampa Spartans have started the season with a 5-1-3 record. In their conference, they have a 1-2-2 record.

Their first loss was not until game eight when they lost to Rollins. The next game, they tied Lynn, who was the No. 1-ranked team in the country.

Rodrigo Lopes, senior forward, talked about the loss at Rollins.

"The trip back was heavy — everybody was quiet," said Lopes. "We didn't play our level."

Alex Hare, senior goalkeeper, also said that the game was not their best.

Hare said that they did not play their best in the games leading up to the loss. He said they did not play well against Lincoln Memorial, even though they beat them, 3-0.

"The feeling afterwards and especially towards the end of the game was scrappy and trying to get back in the game was the toughest thing we've had to go through this season," said Hare.

Head Coach Adrian Bush said, "Looking back, the effort wasn't there from start to finish, and I think our guys learned a very valuable lesson on what our league is about," said Bush. "It's one thing for us to tell them about the league, but when they actually see it and they get stung by a casual start to a game, that's when I think they realize."

Hare thought a loss was coming because of the way they have been playing. He thought they were winning games because of individual brilliance.

The Spartans started the season with two home wins. Last year, when they played against the Auburn University at Montgomery Warhawks away, they lost 2-0. This year, the Spartans won at home against them 2-1.

They then went on a road trip to Georgia, where they tied the University of North Georgia and beat Clayton State University.

Hare said that they started slow against Clayton State but had a great second half. He said they have changed their style of play, where they've been defending deeper since the end of last season.

This year, Hare thinks the defense is more organized than in the previous year.

Bush talked positively about the leadership of the team.

"Our leadership committee is probably the best that we've had, and you know, not taking anything away from the guys that have been here before," said Bush. "You know we've got 17 seniors, and in that group there's some really strong personalities that I think really made our jobs easy as coaches."

Lopes, when speaking on the topic of leadership, said he thinks the team is more like a family than last year.

The team has added new players, many of whom have started games throughout the season.

Lopes leads the team in goals with six. The second most goals scored are by Oscar Warne and Viggo Svedin, each with two. Hare has a save percentage so far at 0.788, which is up from last season's total of 0.753. They have had 89 shots and scored 14 goals so far.

They have played nine games and have six left during the regular season. They have already had three shutouts, which is the same as last season.

Their next game is Saturday against Florida Tech, with their last game of the regular season against Saint Leo on Saturday, Nov. 1.



Photo courtesy of Tyler Witkowski

The Tampa Bay Sun FC Inspiring the Next Generation for Young Women

By Emily McLaughlin

TAMPA, Fla. — Since last season's Super League title match, the Tampa Bay Sun FC played their well-known rivals Fort Lauderdale United FC on Oct. 4 again with a tied score of 0-0 at Suncoast Credit Union Field. Throughout the game, both on and off the field, the community support, specifically with young fans, shone through and through.

These young fans are not just spectators but dreamers; they watch their heroes up close, realizing that their own soccer ambitions can come to life.

For the players within the Tampa Bay Sun FC, the connection to the next generation is one of the most rewarding parts of playing.

"The opportunity to see these amazing women play, to be in the front row to watch them live. It's what I wanted growing up," Head Coach Denise Schilte-Brown said to The Minaret in a post-conference. "Without that vision, you don't put in the extra work sometimes, because it just doesn't seem tangible. But now that they see them live, and they're like, wow, these women are phenomenal. I think they're just going to practice a little bit earlier. They're staying a little bit longer. They're putting in the work as their dream can be reality, and these women are making that come true."

No. 35, Sydney Nesello, said that being on the team and branching out to the community is the best part of the job.

Nesello said, "There's a kid that says that I'm her twin, and she said to me, 'I didn't want to be a forward, but now I do, because I come here and I love watching you play,' and I just love that and take that to heart."

During the post-game conference, Brooke Hendrix, No. 15, said that when she was younger and watched women's soccer, she would think the world of them. As a player herself, she explains how amazing it is to actually talk to the young girls with the close community they have.

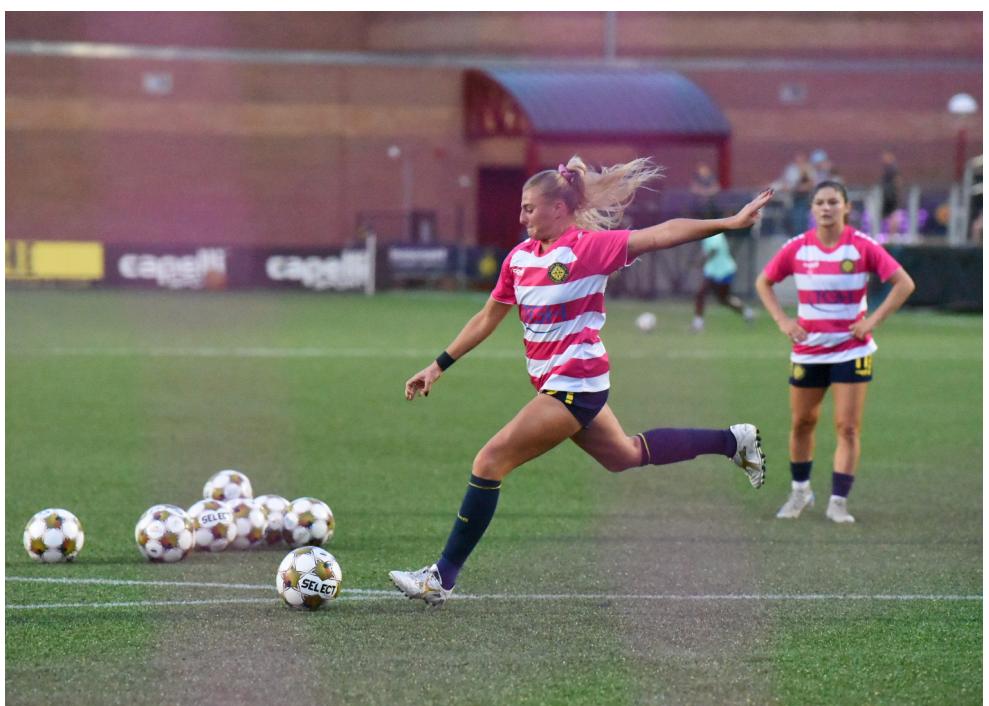
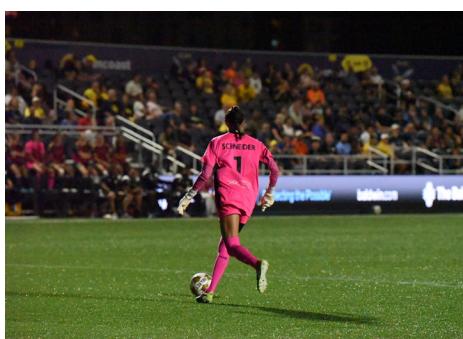
"We are accessible," Hendrix said. "We're able to talk to them about the game and get to know their names. It's really cool to be able to not only meet them and sign their shirts but also be a part of the community and show we're real people too."

The heart of the players and staff extends beyond their playing. The Tampa Bay Sun players are active within the community, hosting free youth soccer clinics, visiting schools, and showing fans that the professional athletes they watch are also approachable and real people.

The fan support for the Tampa Bay Sun is a core part of the team's identity and value.

"Without them, we really are nothing, and the job is not as fun," Nesello said. "We try to give back to the community any way we can, and if that's a five-second interaction after a game, letting them know that we're here and we see them, we're gonna do that every single time."

The Tampa Bay Sun has become more than just a team; it has become a beacon of hope for the young, inspiring athletes. By showing up in the community and proving that professional soccer is growing and developing, the Tampa Bay Sun is here to stay, and for the better.





Tampa Bay Sun Still Searching for First Win | Oct. 4

The defending Gainbridge Super League champions, Tampa Bay Sun FC, remain winless after their 0-0 draw on Saturday, Oct. 4 vs. Fort Lauderdale. Their record is now 0-3-3

Photo courtesy of Hannah Walls



Tampa Bay Rays Wrap Up 2025 Season



By Hannah Walls

TAMPA, Fla. — The Tampa Bay Rays concluded another disappointing season, missing the playoffs for the second year in a row.

This season was nothing short of unpredictable for the Tampa Bay Rays. Last October, Hurricane Ian destroyed Tropicana Field, leaving the team without a home ballpark for the 2025 season.

The Rays had to relocate to George M. Steinbrenner Field, the New York Yankees' spring training facility, which they rented for \$15 million.

Despite playing outdoor baseball in Tampa for the first time, the Rays had a promising first half of the season.

With young stars such as Junior Caminero, Chandler Simpson, and Jake Mangum, along with veterans Yandy Díaz and Brandon Lowe, the Rays appeared to have the pieces for a playoff push.

Despite this, inconsistent pitching and injuries to key players left the Rays in a midseason slump.

The Rays were the best team in MLB in June with a 17-10 record, prompting fans to think they would be buyers at the trade deadline. However, their trade deadline moves ultimately proved insignificant to the rest of the season.

Their most notable moves were acquiring pitcher Griffin Jax from the Minnesota Twins, catcher Nick Fortes from the Miami Marlins, and pitcher Adrian Houser from the Chicago White Sox.

"We're excited about the additions we've made. We've brought in some guys who can help us immediately," said manager Kevin Cash after the deadline.

Ultimately, these additions weren't enough for the Rays. All-Star Jonathon Aranda went down with a wrist injury while Diaz and

Simpson were dealing with injuries as well.

After the deadline, the Rays went 23-29 and ended the season with a record of 77-85.

On Sept. 1, the Rays were only two games out of a wildcard playoff spot, but they won six more games the rest of the season, leading them to fall short.

Though the team had a disappointing season, there are still some bright spots to look forward to in 2026.

One of those bright spots was Stuart Sternberg selling the team to Patrick Zalupski, intending to find the team a new permanent ballpark.

Another bright spot was Caminero, 21, who finished his sophomore season with 45 home runs, making him the youngest player to ever hit 40 home runs in a single season.

"If I don't do it this year, this is just my first full season, so it'll come. I know I'm capable of hitting 50, 60. If it's not this year, God willing,

I have more years to come, and one of those years it's going to happen," said Caminero.

Other teammates have seen this potential in Caminero as well.

"He's a great kid," veteran Díaz said. "He works hard, and he's got a lot of talent. He's going to be a big part of this team for a long time."

Caminero's teammates say he will have a big impact on the future of the Tampa Bay Rays, a fact evident when watching him play.

Photo courtesy of Hannah Walls



Fan Hopes High as Tampa Bay Lightning Host Season Opener Against Ottawa Senators

By Thomas Mangieri



Photo courtesy of Thomas Mangieri

TAMPA, Fla. — Thunder Alley was rocking before puck drop at Benchmark International Arena. Fans packed in front of Benchmark to experience the festivities of opening day with tents and activities, as well as live music performed by a local band, the Saints of Saturn.

People from all over Tampa came for the festivities and the game. Eli Boettner, who moved from Oregon to Tampa about five years ago, has been a passionate fan since and believes that the team has a strong future in one of their young stars.

"I think Geekie is probably my pick to break out this year. I think he looks good, and I think he'll be the guy," said Boettner.

The Lightning have a lot of promise this year in one of their young prospects, Conor Geekie, but with a lot of returning talent, the fans are happy to see staples of the franchise tear it up this year.

John Lum, who has watched this team from the start, living here in Tampa for the

past 35 years, witnessing the first game at the "Ice Palace" (now "Benchmark International") when it opened in 1996, said he's excited about Guentzel and Kucherov, as they've been playing at a high level.

The Lightning also brought in crowds from overseas this past Thursday evening. Paul Millwaters, a South Tampa resident who moved here from England four years ago, introduced the game of hockey to his friend Gary Bonniei, who is visiting from England.

"Four-two lightning, what's yours, Paul?" said Bonniei when asked for his final score prediction.

"Six-nil," said Millwaters.

Fan energy was high going into the game, as the puck was set to drop at 7 p.m. The Lightning had some close calls in the first period, with a goal for the Ottawa Senators being overturned. However, the Lightning did not let that faze them, striking first on a power play just over six minutes into the game, with the first goal coming from Oliver Bjorkstrand.

The Lightning kept up the intensity, scoring again just over a minute later, this time coming from Brayden Point, who assisted the previous goal.

The Senators fired back with a goal of their own, coming from Dylan Cozens with over nine minutes to go in the first. The Lightning struck again as Kucherov scored not even four minutes later, adding to the lead and making it 3-1 Lightning at the end of the first period.

The second period was all Senators, scoring two goals, with one coming from Artem Zub and another coming from Shane Pinto to tie things up 3-3 at the end of the second period.

The third period was hard-fought, with both teams scoring in the final minutes. Claude Giroux scored for the Senators, and Kucherov scored again for the Lightning. The final score was 5-4 with the Lightning coming up just short of sending it into OT.

"To be honest, it was game one. I don't know if our execution was there as that game

went on. When you don't execute, it makes you look kinda slow. I think that's what kinda crept into our game — we just couldn't connect two or three passes, and when you do that, you're late in plays and it came back to bite us in the end," said Lightning Head Coach Jon Cooper in a post-game conference.

The Lightning hope to straighten things out at home this Saturday against the New Jersey Devils.

UTampa Spartans vs. Rollins Tars | Oct. 1, 2025

Photo courtesy of Hannah Walls



The University of Tampa's women's soccer team won 2-0 on Wednesday, Oct. 1. Their record has now improved to 3-3-1. Their next game is on Saturday at Lynn University as they look to keep their momentum going.

Yik Yak Sparks Tensions at The University of Tampa

By Isabel Alexander

TAMPA, Fla. — Social media app Yik Yak allows UTampa students to share their thoughts, news, opinions, and humor with anonymity. While some students and staff are satisfied with the app, it is important to note that it has been found to foster division, cyberbullying, and rumors to be spread due to a lack of accountability. This directly affects students' mental health and well-being.

Released in Nov. 2013, the app took off about seven months after its initial release date.

Yik Yak allowed people within a five-mile radius to anonymously communicate in the form of 200-character threads called "yaks." Yaks can be upvoted and downvoted — the most popular yaks move to the top of the feed.

Just four years after the initial release, the app was shut down due to widespread reports of cyberbullying, false claims, and hate speech.

In 2015, a Western Washington University student, Tysen Campbell, was suspended as a suspect for threatening to lynch their Black student body president through the app.

Hunter Park, a student at the University of Missouri, was arrested for being suspected of having shared a "yak," threatening to shoot all Black students on campus.



These posts have become more common, and the ability to successfully trace students to their "yaks" is uncommon. Campbell and Park were only held accountable because others personally witnessed and reported them making the posts. The anonymity of Yik Yak has made accountability nearly impossible by allowing students to share negative things, knowing the likelihood of consequences is very low.

Recently, at UTampa, a "yak" was shared, exposing two students through a window, engaging in a sexual act in a dorm room. The "yak" was removed approximately three hours after it was posted, leaving enough time for the video to be circulated through the campus.

"If that was me, I would feel pretty violated and embarrassed, and the fact that it could happen to anyone is crazy," said Reagan Weaver, a freshman at UTampa. "Like everyone makes jokes about it and laughs until it's about themselves. Which begs the question of why [Yik Yak] even exists."

Weaver worries that the rise of the app on UTampa's campus is causing students to lose empathy and be exposed to violating and offensive content.

Assistant Vice President of the Office of Student Affairs, Gina Firth, supervises all areas of student well-being on the UTampa campus. Firth said to a Minaret reporter that the UTampa staff is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment and that apps like Yik Yak challenge those commitments.

"Meaningful dialogue and healthy debate require accountability. When we know who is speaking, even when opinions differ, there is room for constructive conversation and personal responsibility," she said.

"When students are exposed to anonymous negativity or personal attacks on Yik Yak, it can heighten stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation, which directly affects their wellness and sense of safety and belonging," she added.

Other students on campus love the app. They use it to stay up to date about what's happening on campus, read humorous posts, and communicate with others.

UTampa freshman Eva Toskovic enjoys using the app. She recalls her experience as

"funny and also a way for students to communicate or learn about things on campus."

"There is a sense of community on the app, but there will always be people who will abuse an anonymous platform for spreading hate," she added.

Toskovic thinks that Yik Yak is a great addition to the UTampa campus.

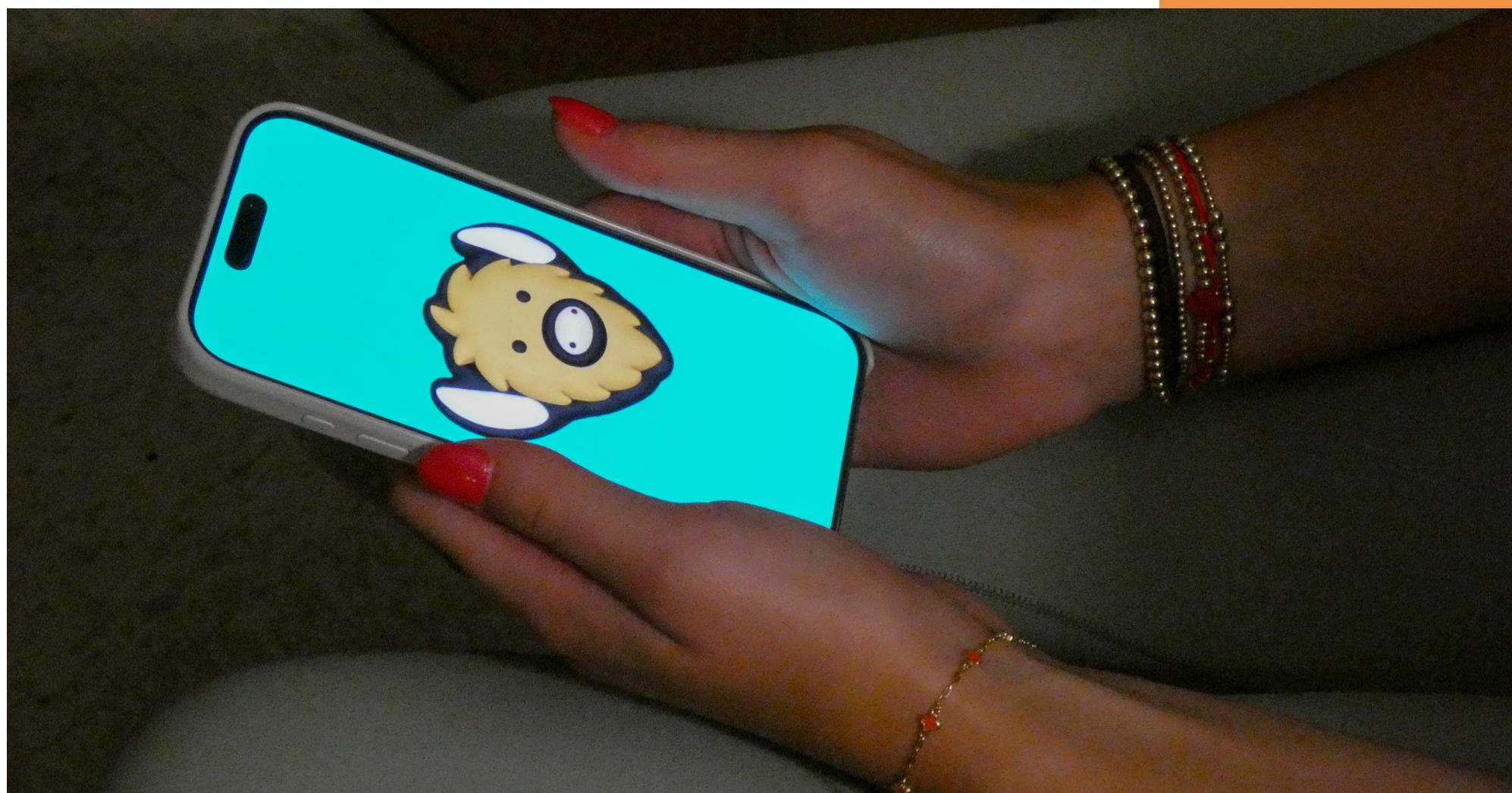
The Yik Yak team wrote on their website that people "need risk-free, lens-free spaces to be vulnerable, to be curious, and to learn more about the people around us."

According to their website, the anonymity of the app allows people to be equal. Each voice has the same value. This can be appealing to those who may feel unheard, forgotten, or unimportant.

"The most popular celebrity on earth appears exactly the same as an average person," said the Yik Yak team.

"Students who use Yik Yak and other social media platforms to use their voices with empathy and integrity, and to remember that true community is built on respect, accountability, and care for one another," Firth said.

Photo courtesy of Isabel Alexander



UTampa's New and Improved Wellness Services

By Gloria Falach

TAMPA, Fla. — Wellness Services is now located in the Vaughn Center, room 230. The Wellness Services office has new and improved resources for all students at The University of Tampa (UTampa) to enjoy.

Moving the Wellness Services office to Vaughn was intentional as a way to make them visible and accessible to students. They wanted the office to be a place where students naturally go to hang out, eat, and study, said Abigail Pertkiewicz, wellness coordinator.

"Having our office in Vaughn makes it easier for students to stop by casually, ask questions, or check out resources without needing to go out of their way," said Pertkiewicz. "We want wellness to be part of students' daily lives, not something separate."

Wellness Services offer a wide range of resources that UTampa students can take advantage of when needed. These resources include one-on-one consultations with our peer wellness coaches to the peer nutrition

coaching program, resilience rest workshops, educational programs, and take-home kits.

The purpose of the peer wellness coaches is to help with students' overall well-being, including anything from mental, emotional, physical, and even financial well-being. Before you book a session with a peer wellness coach, students fill out a survey about their needs and well-being, so the coaches can better facilitate the students' needs, said Divya Parret, one of the five peer wellness coaches.

"We did a 40-hour training during the summer with Real Balance Wellness Coaching, which gave us a very in-depth training on how to properly navigate and facilitate clients," said Parret. "We got a bunch of resources and methods to help clients."

The most popular resource among most students is the wellness room. The wellness room has two massage chairs, meditation mats, aromatherapy, coloring books, and self-help books. Students can book a 30-minute

appointment to use the room to rest and relax after a long day.

In addition to the wellness room, the resilience reset workshops are another resource that will help students understand their mental health.

"The resilience reset workshop is a 19-minute workshop that is designed to teach students about addressing common concerns, such as anxious feelings, stress, and loneliness," Parret added. "It helps students build their confidence and ability to deal with challenging situations."

The resilience reset kits are grab-and-go resources for students, filled with tools such as grounding exercises, stress balls, and reflection prompts that help students quickly reset when needed.

"I think all the new resources are a good thing for freshmen who don't want to talk to an adult about certain things and would rather talk to someone their own age that they

feel like will better understand them," said Allyson Snyder, a sophomore pre-nursing major, who has not taken advantage of these resources yet.

"And the nutrition coaches would help because freshman year, you have to learn how to eat on your own and make good choices for your body," she added.

Wellness Services' goal is to provide students with tools and strategies to help them feel more confident about managing their health and well-being as they navigate college, Pertkiewicz added.

To book an appointment with a peer wellness coach and get more information on the many resources offered in the Wellness Services office, students are encouraged to visit the Wellness Services website or visit Vaughn room 230.



Photo courtesy of Gloria Falach.



Casino Night

Photo courtesy of Lexi Smith

Last Friday, to kick off Family Weekend, Student Productions hosted a Casino Night for students and their families. At check-in, everyone received a ticket that could be exchanged for \$5,000 in chips to play at any of the game tables. From Blackjack and Texas Hold'em to Craps, the event featured all the classic casino games. At the end of the night, players traded in their remaining tokens for raffle tickets, giving them a chance to win fun prize baskets.



Gallagher's Pumpkins and Christmas Trees invites fall to South Florida

By Olivia Gehm

It's a bright Sunday afternoon- a menagerie of pumpkins, squashes and gourds sit comfortably under a canopy of tents, escaping the harsh sun. Children and adults of all ages carefully inspect them; some are orange and smooth, others are rough, with warts and the coloring of a deep bruise. Many will go on to be parts of elaborate porch displays, or in front of fireplaces, perhaps covered in burlap or painted polka dots. Others will hang out at the patch for a few more weeks until they're swiped by an excited fifth grader, ready to carve away. Outside the entrance to the tents, whose poles are adorned with cornstalks, sits a vintage, turquoise pickup truck, used as a photo-op for kids and families. While the setup of fall exclusives sounds like something out of the Midwest or Northeast United States, this pumpkin patch finds its home off of 4th Street in Pinellas County, a mere half hour from sandy Gulf beaches.

Gallagher's Pumpkins and Christmas Trees has been family owned and operated for the last 30 years, and is home to more than just pumpkins. Complete with a petting zoo, organic goods booth, coffee and bakery truck, and inflatable race course, the current iteration of the patch has come a long way from its humble beginnings. While 2024 hurricanes Helene and Milton made business

as usual very difficult for the Gallaghers, they have hit the ground running in 2025 and continue to be a community staple.

David and Ciera Gallagher, the current owners of the patch, took over 11 years ago, and have expanded the offerings since it opened 38 years ago.

"He originally had family up in New York that sold Christmas trees," said Ciera. "They had extra one year, and they called my father-in-law, Dave, and asked him if he'd be interested in bringing some trees down from New York here to Florida, and he said, 'Why not?' and so they just gave it a go."

Ciera also said that while the patch began solely selling Christmas trees, pumpkins were eventually added. As for business, she said that the patch has flourished since the beginning, in part thanks to the fact that the family was always very involved in the community, with links to the police and fire departments.

"It's kind of cool, because we see a lot of the same customers that have been coming here the whole time," said Ciera. "And they know [David's] parents, you know, and they watched him grow up, and now they're watching our daughter grow up."

Ciera said that it's nice to feel like she and her family bring joy to the community, and hearing people express their love for their business on social media has been incredibly fulfilling.

"You're reading these things, and you're going 'Wow,' like, we actually make an impact on these people's lives in a different way, like that's rewarding," said Ciera. "I give, just like, all the glory to God, because it's just been good."

While 2025 has so far been a positive experience for the Gallaghers, last year's back-to-back hurricanes hit St. Petersburg exceptionally hard, and the Gallagher's patch was no exception.

"I had water up to my chest standing in this patch," said Ciera. "Yeah, so, I mean, there was literally- thousands of pumpkins floating down 4th street. So we lost everything."

The Gallaghers attempted to salvage what Hurricane Helene took from them in the 15 days before Hurricane Milton made landfall, which eventually destroyed what little they had left. Ciera said that, since her family finances the patch themselves, reviving the patch was a challenge, but one they overcame.

Upon opening for 2025, Ciera said, "I looked at everything, and I just started crying because I was like, 'We did it,' like, 'We're here again,' like, 'We prevailed.'"

Community support has been integral for the Gallaghers, as Ciera said that the people who help set up and run the patch have been very understanding of the financial hardship that follows storms like Helene and Milton. But the support isn't one-sided; when St. Pete shows its love, the Gallagher's embrace back.

"My husband and I have looked at each other, and he kind of said to me, 'We're not raising our prices,'" said Ciera. "He's like, 'people have to be able to afford to come.'"

While the St. Petersburg community is still feeling the effects of the storms a year later, it seems that it's business as usual for the patch, and residents certainly appreciate it.

Florida resident and mother, Becca Lorenzo, said that this will be her third time taking her two-year-old son to Gallagher's, and that her favorite part is seeing how excited the experience makes him.

"Last year, he just started walking, when we went to the pumpkin patch," Lorenzo said. "So that was really special, letting him pick a baby pumpkin and walk around with it."

While some, like Lorenzo, have yet to make it to the patch this season, the end of September was filled with visitors, eager to jump into fall.

When asked what makes Gallagher's so special in a place like Florida, St. Petersburg resident, Natalie Hess, said, "We don't really get a fall. It's just so hot out."

Hess, who is originally from Tampa, also said she appreciates the many fall colors of the patch, and the "random ugly pumpkins."

Despite all that the community has been through, the Gallaghers continue to be a community staple, drawing in visitors year-after-year, both local to the area, and from out of town.

"I'll tell you, this is probably my favorite line that people say to us: 'We know that the holidays are here when the Gallaghers start settin' up on 4th street,'" said Ciera.

Gallagher's Pumpkins and Christmas Trees is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week, and is located at 7401 4th St. North, in St. Petersburg, Florida.



Photo courtesy of Olivia Gehm





Photo courtesy of Olivia Gehm



The Tampa Theatre: What Ghouls Roam the Historic Halls?

By Amey DiSisto

Tampa, FL — There's nothing quite like the smell of buttered popcorn inside an (almost) 100-year-old theatre. With winding stairwells creating secret passageways, flickering warm lights igniting dancing shadows, and a gargoyle or two greeting you with knowing eyes, the Tampa Theatre creates an environment of mystery and curiosity. But it is not just families, theatre buffs, and architecture enthusiasts that find themselves in the hallowed hall — it's the dead, too.

The Tampa Theatre was built in October 1926 by architect John Eberson. It was the height of luxury, offering the highest levels of service to its community for decades. However, after World War II and the changes surrounding the community of cinema as a whole, there were talks that the theatre would have to shut its doors and be demolished to make way for other endeavors. With community pushback and countless groups banding together, the Tampa Theatre got to keep its reels spinning and is still standing today.

Though the number of living original attendees is low, some say that the theatre holds a few... deathly loyal visitors. Witnesses have claimed to hear jingling keys with no person to attribute it to, getting taps on the shoulder when they're alone, or seeing full-body apparitions appear in an empty room right before their eyes. The sightings are not just coming from the paranormal-enthused — skeptics have also had run-ins with those from the other side.

One would think that to have many ghosts roaming the theatre, there would need to be an abundance of deaths happening at the Tampa Theatre — fear not! There has only been one reported death at the Tampa Theatre, back in the late 50s.

On Friday, May 15, 1959, ticket-taker Robert Lanier came to work as he always did. Lanier was in his golden years, happily spending his retirement as an usher, making friends with all who entered the theatre. With his buttoned uniform and zest for life, Lanier was well-known in the area and had become a celebrity within the theatre. Upon set-up, when the employees were getting themselves ready for another night of showings, Lanier was left alone at the entrance. A coworker in a different area had heard a loud crash, thinking a sign of some sort had fallen. Upon investigation, Lanier's coworkers were met with a grisly scene. The beloved usher was on the floor unconscious, his head bleeding heavily, with no one else to be seen.

While some theories say that the usher was simply getting older and could have possibly tripped on his own feet, some believe a more

troubling end came to Lanier. Fridays were paydays for Tampa Theatre, and though Lanier would have gotten paid, the paycheck was never found. Some think that Lanier had been mugged by someone outside the theatre who fled the scene.

Though we may never know what happened to Robert Lanier in his final moments, some say he still waits at the front of the theatre, making sure all tickets are accounted for, even in his late retirement.

This next otherworldly guest was a mystery in her own right. A mother and daughter were taking a public tour on their first visit to the theatre. During the tour, they became distracted by the beautiful woman in white standing on the staircase. Peering down the mezzanine, the young girl stayed locked in place. When the tour guide, Jill, went to meet the 12-year-old girl and her mother, they said they were looking at the actress who was getting ready to scare them around the next corner. Jill felt her heart drop. She explained that they didn't have actors, and more terrifyingly, there was no one else even in the theatre at the time.

This 'Woman in White' who was seen periodically on the mezzanine was a mystery for a while. She had no backstory, unlike Robert Lanier, and there weren't enough facts to truly give her a story. A psychic had been to the theatre and explained that a spirit there had been in an accident, "like she had been hit by a truck".

The psychic had a feeling that the woman knew who she was, but couldn't quite grasp where she was. It wasn't until 2020 that research went into trying to find this enigmatic woman. Months into research, there was a hit

in the form of a postage-stamp-sized article from 1924 about a woman named Marie Cossler. It wasn't a truck that had taken the life of Cossler, but a streetcar that had struck her on Franklin Street in February 1924, just before the construction of the Tampa Theatre had commenced. The woman didn't know where she was as she died before the theatre had stood there, hence her aimless roaming around the hallways and stairs.

The most famous of the theatre ghosts is none other than Foster "Fink" Finley. Finley was a projector operator six days a week from 1930 to 1965, sunup to sundown. He was known to be a perfectionist and was rarely seen without coffee, a cigarette, and a 3-piece suit. Finley was a staple in the Tampa Theatre community, and though he spent most of his time in solitude up in the projection room, he was always cleanly shaven, even if that meant he was shaving on the job.

Finley, like many projectionists at the time, suffered from respiratory ailments. When lung cancer killed him, many felt the loss of Fink Finley. He worked for as long as he could, and his passion for cinema still looms throughout the theatre today.

With the most sightings, Finley makes his presence known. The smell of coffee, cigarettes, or his lilac aftershave wafts throughout the rows of seats in the balcony, just steps away from his prized projection room. Later projectionists who don't work to his liking have gotten locked out of the lockless room, and newbies at the craft who weren't fast enough have been tapped on the shoulder to keep up.

Finley's greatest performance came in the form of his own movie. A group called Motion Picture Video called up Tampa Theatre to make a documentary about their ghosts. During their stay, the ghosthunters

and their guests set up a way to communicate with the ghosts. The closer the spirit got to the technology, known as a REMPOD, it would beep faster and faster. As the group continued to get Finley to "respond" or make the beeps longer, the more they tried to push the envelope. It was already incredible that Finley, a known tech fanatic, was interacting with the REMPOD this much, and on video.

Janet, one of the guests, in a panicked enthusiasm, yelled, "Okay, Fink, if that's you, can you make the lights turn on?!" While Janet meant the lights on the REMPOD, Finley had his own interpretation. The lights of the balcony flashed on in a way so dramatic that it left everyone knowing it could only be Finley.

These are not the only patrons of the supernatural that roam the Tampa Theatre, and the ghost tour is not your only chance to catch a glimpse of these characters. There are spooky movie screenings the entire month of October, along with the University of Tampa sponsoring a screening of *The Phantom of the Opera* on Friday, Oct. 24. Depending on where you sit, you may just be accompanied by the mystery ghoul of seat 308.

The Tampa Theatre boasts 99 years of cinema, shows, spirits, and passion. The souls that choose the theatre as their final resting place are honored in every inch of the building. The eternal respect of history and the push to fully capture real stories guarantee both living and passed-on individuals get the appreciation they deserve.

Whether you're a believer or not, there is no denying the stories that pass through 711 North Franklin offer a peek into the supernatural and some pretty entertaining ghost stories.

Jill said it best, "What is the paranormal if not simply the things we cannot explain?"

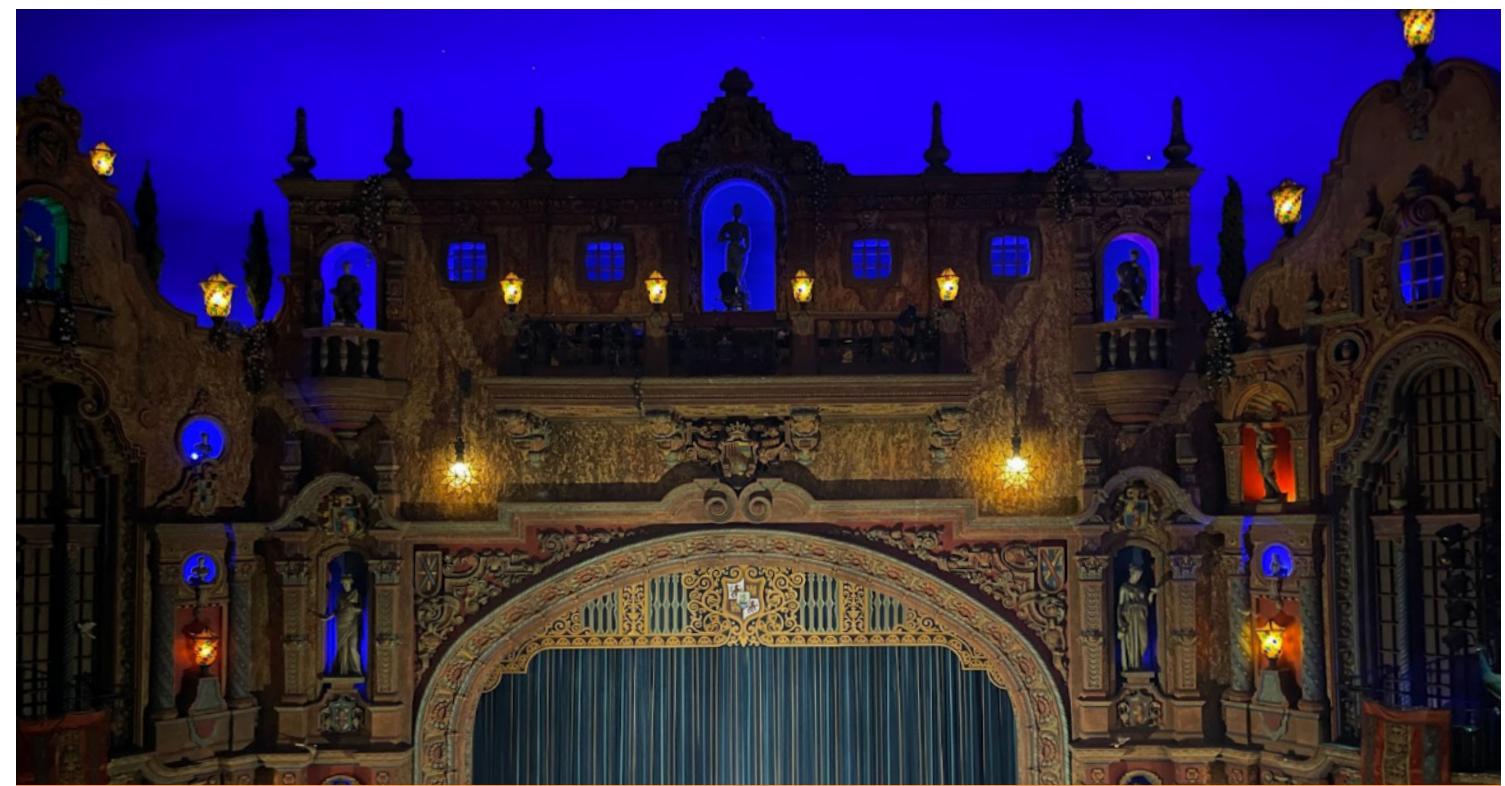


Photo courtesy of Amey DiSisto

Not Today. Not Tomorrow. But Eventually, AI Will Leave You Jobless

By Logan Mullins

TAMPA, Fla. -- The World Economic Forum found that AI has the most significant impact on data-rich jobs, including software development, finance, and customer support. UPS laid off 20,000 workers in 2025 due to the introduction of new AI software. Recruit Holdings, the owner of Indeed and Glassdoor, has laid off 1,300 workers in response to the rise of AI. Google announced two rounds of layoffs due to AI.

However, many believe that AI will create more jobs than it eliminates and also boost worker productivity. The World Economic Forum predicts a net increase of 78 million jobs worldwide due to the adoption of AI. Vanguard Global Chief Economist Joe Davis believes that "4 out of 5 [jobs] will result in a mixture of innovation and automation." Goldman Sachs later found that AI will boost worker productivity by upwards of 15%.

Employers are optimistic; workers are uneasy. But to understand the fears of today, one must look to when automation first entered the workforce.

On June 13, 1961, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office issued U.S. Patent 2,988,237A. The patent, named for a "Programmed Article Transfer," describes, "The automatic operation of machinery, particularly to automatically operable materials handling apparatus, and to automatic control apparatus suitable for such machinery." Designed by George Devol and backed by Joseph Engelberger, this machine would be known as the Unimate Robot.

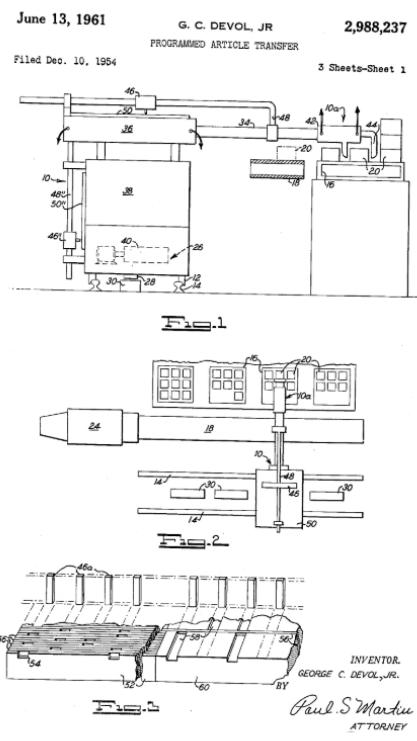


Photo courtesy of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

General Motors unveiled the Unimate Robot that same year in the Inland Fisher Guide Plant in Ewing Township, New Jersey. The Unimate Robot unloaded finished castings from a die-cast, a particularly hazardous job in the car manufacturing plant. The robot would soon enter mass production as the Unimate 1900 Series, which would spur a global wave of automation, particularly in the car industry.

In 1966, General Motors opened the Lordstown Assembly Plant, which was one of the most efficient manufacturing plants of its time. However, in response to overseas competition, General Motors decided to redesign the factory into one that was far more automated. General Motors would

spend \$75 million retooling the plant. Touted as the most automated automotive plant in the world, General Motors reopened the plant in 1970. Before the overhaul, Lordstown Assembly Plant produced 440 cars per day; after the overhaul, it could produce 900.

With the implementation of the Unimate Robot, manufacturers were motivated by the increased productivity. Increased productivity means more output for the same cost. Firms adored the greater efficiency in their factories, but workers felt differently. Firms were excited; workers were terrified.

In 1964, a group of journalists and scientists wrote to President Lyndon B. Johnson about the Triple Revolution: warfare, civil rights, and automation. Workers believed

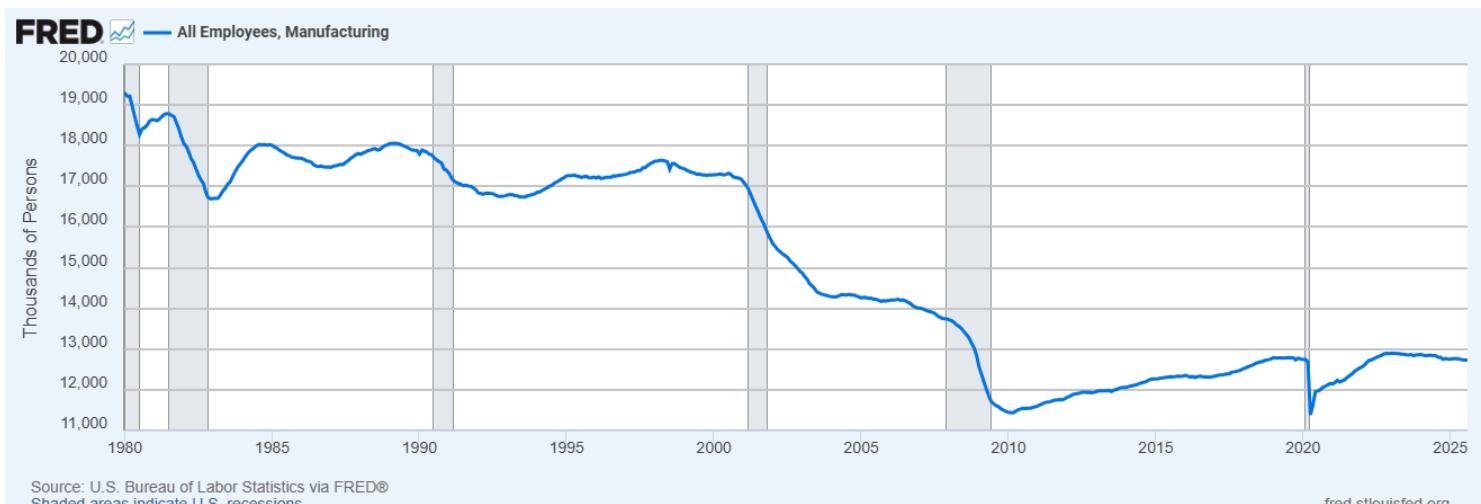
that an increase in automation would lead to their jobs being taken over by machines. The slogan "You won't get tomorrow's jobs with yesterday's skills" emerged. Automation anxiety became one of the nation's top fears. Strikes became more frequent with automation being a primary cause.

However, at the time, these fears were unfounded. Automation was great for workers. From the introduction of the first Unimate Robot in 1961 to 1979, the manufacturing sector experienced consistent job growth, with over 4.4 million new manufacturing jobs created during this period in the United States. Factory workers and automated robots were utilized together to maximize the productivity of the manufacturing plants.



The writing was on the wall. During the 1960s, the number of manufacturing jobs grew by 28%, while manufacturing output increased by over 90%. The machines were becoming more efficient than the workers.

1980 saw a transition. The Computer Numerical Control (CNC) became widespread; this device allowed a programmer to instruct a machine to do a task on repeat, with no further human operation needed. And just like that, manufacturing laborers became less efficient than machines. Their fears, once unfounded, became true. Manufacturing job growth slowed, making it the beginning of a long-lasting shift in industrial labor.



From 1980 to 1990, automation displaced over 300,000 factory workers in the automotive sector alone. Nearly every single year, the total number of manufacturing jobs fell. At the start of the decline in the 1980s, over 19 million laborers were employed in manufacturing. By the turn of the century, the number of factory laborers had fallen to 17 million. By today, the number is barely 13 million.

On June 12, 2017, eight researchers at Goo-

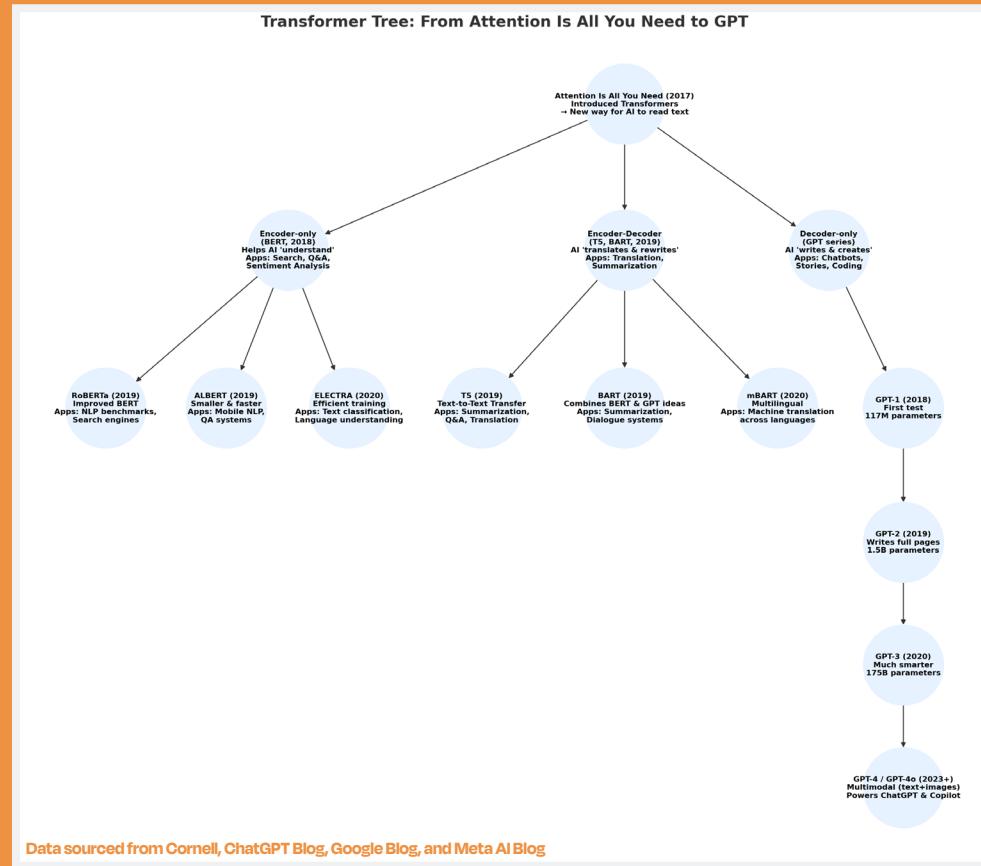
gle published a landmark paper on machine learning, "Attention is All You Need." The paper introduces the concept of transformer architecture, a groundbreaking approach to processing sequences. Recurrent Neural Networks, RNNs, were the standard in processing sequences: they process data one step at a time, with each step passing information to the next step. These were great at predicting

patterns and creating order, but they struggled with long sequences.

Transformers utilize a concept called "attention weights" to directly link concepts, regardless of their distance from each other. For example, in the sentence "The cat that chased the dog was black," a transformer can connect "cat" and "was black," whereas an RNN cannot. This simple concept of attention weight-

ing became the foundation for large language models, the basis of modern artificial intelligence.

"Attention is All You Need" is one of the most cited papers of the 21st century, with over 170,000 citations. The core concept of Transformers has been applied in every major innovation seen today, including BERT, T5, and, most famously, ChatGPT (GPT stands for Generative Pre-trained Transformer).



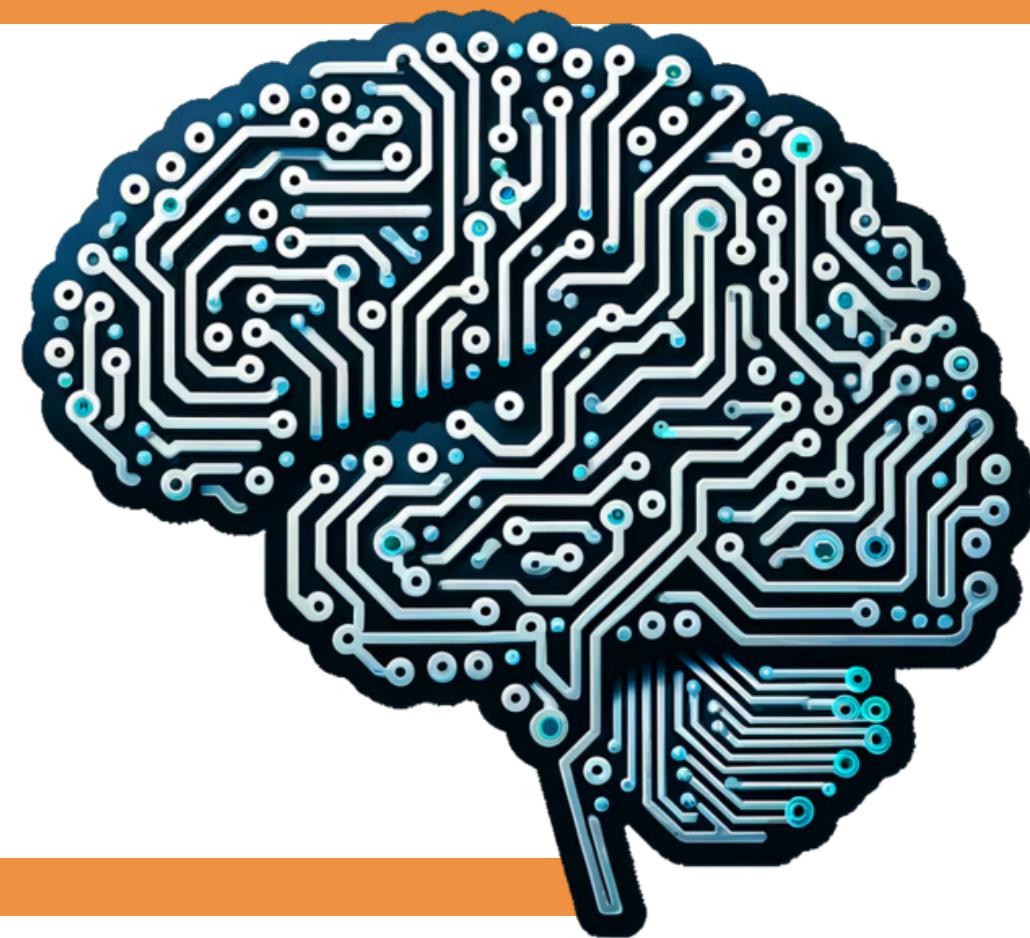
In 2022, OpenAI released its GPT-3.5 model, ChatGPT, trained on 175 billion parameters (roughly 117 times more than its GPT-2 model's 1.5 billion parameters), to the public. Within five days, ChatGPT had one million users. By the start of the following year, ChatGPT had over 100 million users. Employers were quick to catch on to the power of AI tools. By the end of 2024, 78% of organizations reported using AI in some capacity. Google estimates a 10% increase in engineering productivity; JP Morgan found that coding productivity increased 20% due to AI.

We are in the early stages of AI development, but the technology evolves rapidly. Just like with automation in the 1960s, workers are afraid of AI impacting their job security. The American Psychological Association found that 38% of workers are concerned about AI replacing their jobs.

But currently, AI is benefiting workers. Gallup found adoption widespread — from finance to tech — with working AI users reporting productivity gains of up to 40%, and 77% of C-suite leaders finding productivity gains due to AI. However, the writing is on the wall.

Already in 2025, ChatGPT passed the Turing Test, an evaluation for artificial intelligence to determine human-like capabilities. As automation has done for blue-collar manufacturers since the 1980s, AI will outpace and outperform white-collar workers.

Job losses will be widespread — it is inevitable. There is simply a cold, hard truth that Americans have tried to ignore for decades. Machines can evolve fast — but it's the people who are obsolete.



This article was first published by the Tampa Bay Times on Oct. 1

Amazon delivery drones have arrived in Tampa

By Hayden Randolph

Amazon Prime Air is bringing delivery drones to Tampa Bay by the end of the year, which means even faster delivery times for residents.

By clicking the "drone delivery" option when ordering at Amazon, customers will receive their order within one hour. Josh Brundage, senior manager of commercial operations for Prime Air, said that the drones will begin operating from Amazon's fulfillment center in Ruskin, the first in Florida.

"It's about an eight-mile radius from that location," Brundage said during a drone demonstration event in Tampa Monday. "Everyone that falls within that circle will be eligible for delivery."

Amazon officials did not give an official launch date for the service just yet.

Prime Air is currently in full operation in Tucson, Ariz. There, Amazon Prime members pay a \$4.99 fee for delivery within the hour, Brundage said. Amazon has received positive feedback on their drone delivery system in Tucson and hope to hear the same response in Tampa.

Brundage said that besides faster delivery times, the system will not have a substantial impact on customers' experiences. Flying above 150 feet and below 400 feet, Brundage said that the drones will be mostly unnoticeable unless you are looking for them.

"We don't want to add extra traffic," he said. "We don't want to do anything to the community other than get them the orders they need as safely and as quickly as possible."

Retailers have been testing the waters of delivery drones for years now. In 2023, Walmart piloted a drone delivery option from a store on Bruce B. Downs Boulevard in Tampa, as part of nine stores in Florida testing the service.

"Amazon already has close to 3,000-plus part-time and full-time employees, and they're gonna be adding several dozen more through this new delivery system," said Michael Allen, senior vice president of the Tampa Bay Economic Development Council, who attended Monday's event. "With the more wealth we create, the more wealth comes into the community overall."

Amazon is using the Prime Air MK30 drone for these local deliveries. Monday's event at the Museum of Science and Industry in Tampa was the first time the MK30 device was shown in the area.

John Smith, CEO and president of the museum said the drone will be on display Nov. 9-11. Anyone visiting the museum will be able to see the new technology up close.

"What we're trying to do here at MOSI

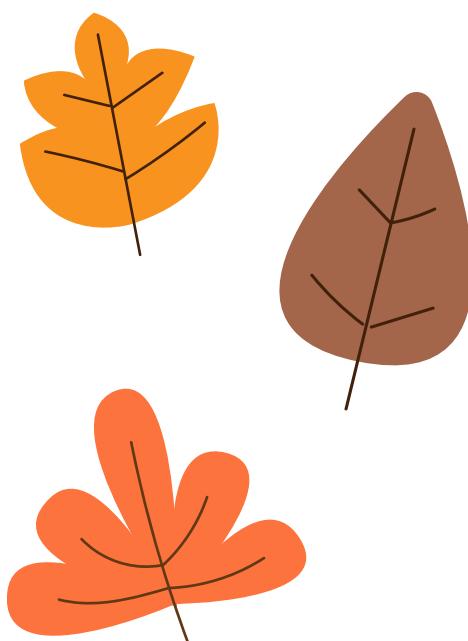
is obviously connect kids and adults with career pathways in science fields," he said. "You can take our drone camps and get your certification and there's a career at the end of all of that locally here with Amazon, so it really closes the loop."

Whether customers are hosting a group of guests or may be unwell and can't leave the house, this service is intended for customers who need products quickly, Brundage said.

"It's really a win-win for everybody."



Photo courtesy of Hayden Randolph



HOROSCOPE

By Sydney Leary, a junior musical theatre major at UTampa.

FIRE SIGNS

ARIES

Mar 21 - Apr 19



This week, allow your leadership to shine at your work. Your initiative will be something that you can rely on. Trust your judgment, it's stronger than ever.

LEO

Jul 23 - Aug 22



Your talent and ambition is soon to be recognized. Be sure to keep an open mind and hold your head up high. Rejection is redirection.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22 - Dec 21



Follow wherever your career leads you. Learning new things through experience and travel will be your greatest strength in success.

EARTH SIGNS

TAURUS

Apr 20 - May 20



You have the gift of patience. This week, it will be vital for you to remind yourself that good things take time. Never forget that the work you put in equals the success you get out.

VIRGO

Aug 23 - Sep 22



Pay close attention to your gift of precision this week. That the details matter more than ever, luckily, one of your biggest strengths is remembering even the little things.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22 - Jan 19



Allow yourself to celebrate wins this week. Your ambition and discipline is paying off more than ever and you deserve to be proud of your success.

AIR SIGNS

GEMINI

May 21 - Jun 20



Communication will be your biggest strength this week. Be sure to continue to network yourself and your career, and success will be right around the corner.

LIBRA

Sep 23 - Oct 22



Balance is the key. Be sure to not overwork yourself and forget certain areas of your being. Share your time with those you love and things that bring you peace.

AQUARIUS

Jan 20 - Feb 18



Innovation is the fuel to your career. Your creativity is one of your biggest strengths. Trust that you have the ability to make anything happen.

WATER SIGNS

CANCER

Jun 21 - Jul 22



You thrive in nurturing teamwork and collaboration. Trust your instinct this week. Never forget to look at the best in people.

SCORPIO

Oct 23 - Nov 21



Transformation is coming your way. Your determination is the reason you are where you are today. Don't shy away from big changes, embrace them.

PISCES

Feb 19 - Mar 20

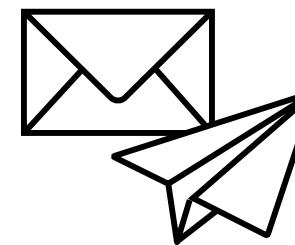


Your intuition is guiding you to a meaningful career. You're smarter than you think. Give your brain the credit it deserves.



In Episode 2 of Between the Columns, host Steve Ifantis sits down with Eve M. Fitzpatrick, Wyatt B. LaFountaine, and Giovanna M. Kocins for an inspiring conversation about passion, creativity, and purpose. Each guest opens up about what drives their love for their craft — from the moments that sparked their interest to the challenges and triumphs that keep them motivated. Together, they explore how creativity connects people, influences their work, and inspires those around them.

WRITE TO THE EDITORS!



We value your thoughts and ideas. Your voice helps shape meaningful conversations in our pages.

We want to hear from you!

Share your letter with us at
401 W Kennedy Blvd #P
Tampa, FL 33606-1450
or alyssa.cortes@spartans.ut.edu

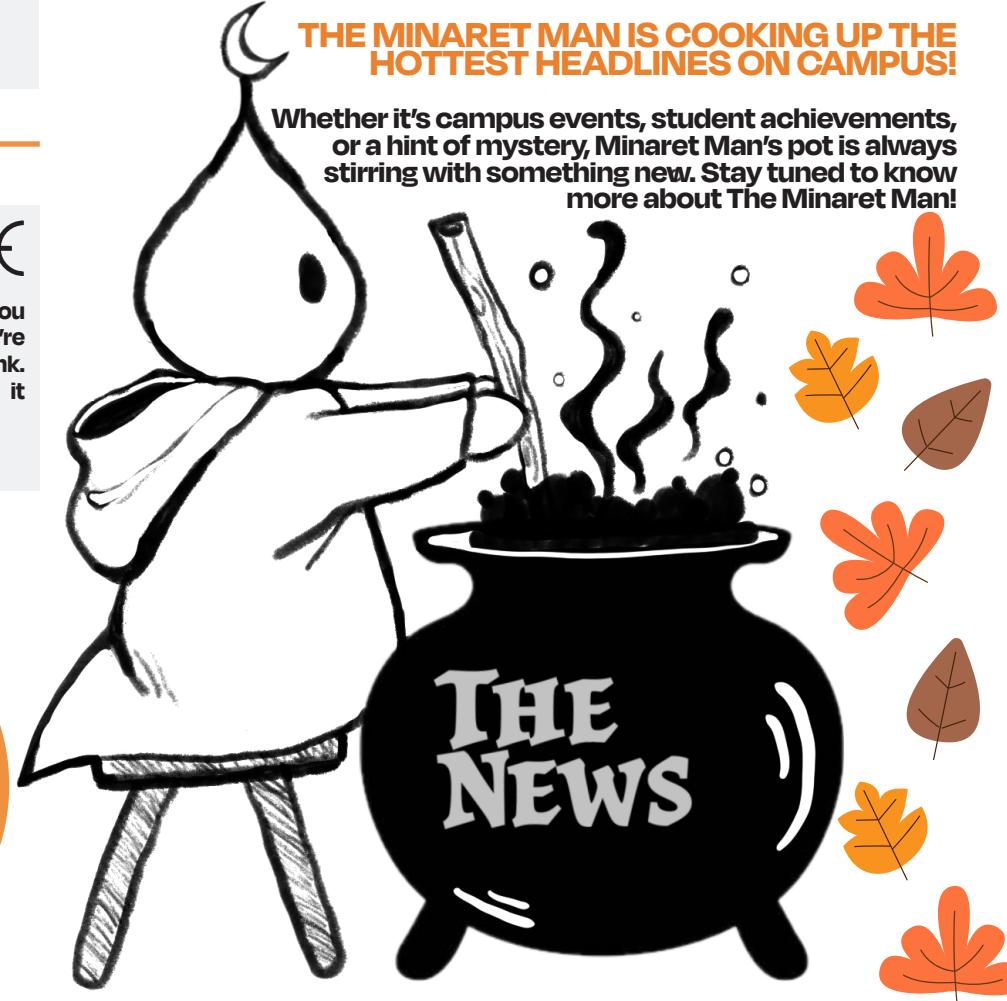
YOUR AD COULD BE HERE!

SHARE YOUR MESSAGE WHERE IT MATTERS MOST.

Open to all: students, school clubs, organizations, and businesses can advertise with us!

reach out to alyssa.cortes@spartans.ut.edu or ana.ortiz@spartans.ut.edu

THE MINARET MAN IS COOKING UP THE HOTTEST HEADLINES ON CAMPUS!



BULLETIN BOARD

The Minaret

Join The Minaret on Wednesday, Oct. 29, from 6-8 p.m. for a Disney karaoke night full of music, snacks, drinks, and Halloween spirit. Whether you're channeling your inner Elsa or just there for the vibes, come hang out with our newsroom! Costumes are encouraged, and magic is guaranteed.

College of Social Sciences, Mathematics, and Education

We're back! After a brief hiatus, UTampa students can once again minor in Psychology. Interested in how humans think, learn, and behave? A minor in PSY is a great complement to lots of majors, including marketing, communication, nursing, and more. Talk to your advisor about declaring the PSY minor!

Office of Graduate and Continuing Studies

Stay at UTampa for Grad School! With UTampa2UTampa, current students and alumni can seamlessly continue to earn a master's degree right here at UTampa. Learn more at our Graduate Open House: Thursday, Nov. 6, 5:30 p.m., Jenkins Skyview Room. No RSVP required!

Office of First Year Studies

The Office of First Year Studies at UTampa supports new students by providing guidance from professors and peer mentors, stress-relief resources and opportunities for high-impact experiences to boost success in meeting their educational goals. For more information, please visit the FYS page of the University of Tampa Website.

Macdonald-Kelce Library

Celebrate the Freedom to Read. The Macdonald-Kelce Library invites you to explore stories that inspire curiosity and conversation! This week, we honor the importance of access to diverse books and the joy of reading freely in Florida.

Q: Journal of Undergraduate Research & Inquiry

Looking to publish your academic research? Submit your manuscript to be considered for publication in Q: Journal of Undergraduate Research & Inquiry! Q is an undergraduate research journal that allows students from a variety of disciplines to be recognized for exceptional scholarly work. Email marissabell.johnson@spartans.ut.edu for more information.

Neon

Neon Literary and Arts Magazine has opened submissions for the 2025-2026 academic year. We are accepting poetry, prose, and visual arts from all members of the Tampa Bay community. Submit your work by Nov. 16, 2025, for a chance to be published in Neon's 48th volume. And remember, stay bright!

UTTV

UTTV: Spartan Television is a hands-on class and club where students learn to create news packages, edit using Adobe Premiere Pro, and develop essential journalistic skills in a real-world media environment. For more information, contact the general manager at ava.iannucci@spartans.ut.edu.

WUTT

Tune in to WUTT Spartan Radio! The Voice of the Spartans – By Students, For Students. Looking for the perfect soundtrack to your day or a platform to share your voice? WUTT Radio brings you student-run shows, music mixes, and campus conversations that highlight the creativity and culture of UTampa.

Beta Beta Beta (TriBeta)

Are you a Biology major? Join us at Beta Beta Beta (TriBeta), UTampa's Biology Honors Society! We host biweekly meetings on Tuesdays at 8 p.m., focused on furthering research and dissemination of Biology. Become a member to learn how YOU could get into research here at UTampa! Sign up on Involve!

Photography Club

Join the Photography Club for their Halloween photography event on Fri, Oct. 24, from 6-9 p.m. in Bailey Arts 116. It's a beginner-friendly workshop perfect for those who want to get creative. Participants will learn how to edit their photos to create a spooky ghost photo shoot.

Roots and Shoots

Come join us at Roots and Shoots! We host environmentally focused meetings biweekly on Mondays at 8 p.m. We will be hosting an environmental PowerPoint night on Oct. 27! Sign up on Involve! Instagram: [@utrootsnshoots](https://www.instagram.com/@utrootsnshoots)

STAFF SHOUTOUTS!

We're excited to announce the official launch of our newly redesigned website: <https://theminaretonline.org/>! A huge thank you goes out to Ciara Grad, our Web & Graphic Designer, for leading the redesign and bringing a fresh, modern look to our online presence. I'd also like to recognize Francesca Murrugarra, our Managing Editor, for her consistent support and for keeping the site active with new uploads every week. Special thanks to Steve Ifantis for stepping in during the final stretch to squash last-minute bugs and ensure everything ran smoothly for launch.

I also want to give a big congratulations to one of our graphic designers, Isabella Alicea, for creating our brand-new mascot, The Minaret Man. Bella first introduced this idea during her interview months ago, and it's been amazing to see it come to life. We're thrilled to finally share him with you. Get used to his face! And thank you again to Ciara for helping bring The Minaret Man to life through her help with the design work.

Most importantly, I want to recognize our entire team. There are so many of us working behind the scenes, each contributing in different ways to keep this publication running. With so many moving parts, your patience as we navigate this new version of The Minaret and your continued willingness to show up do not go unnoticed. I'm so grateful for all of you, and incredibly excited for everything we have in store this year!

-Alyssa Cortes, Editor-in-chief

WANT TO BE FEATURED?

The bulletin board page will be a recurring feature in every print moving forward, which is released biweekly. Reach out to alyssa.cortes@spartans.ut.edu with any other announcements, shout-outs, or updates you'd like to share! Message needs to be 50 words or less.

