Equality and affirmative action: pieces of the same puzzle?
Retention Pond Offers Bird Watcher’s Dream
By Lynn Stratton
Special to the Crow’s Nest

USF-St. Petersburg has something bird watchers around the country would love to see, but many students and faculty members mistake it for being nothing but a stagnant pond.

The small, shallow pool behind the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, at the edge of busy Third Street, is a nature lover’s paradise, although it might appear to be merely an accident or an oversight.

According to Jon Randle, senior superintendent for Physical Plant, the pond is actually required by Southwest Florida Water Management District regulations.

"When the new library was built, parking was added, and any covered building or parking lot requires water remediation," he said.

In other words, a retention pond.

Randle said the pond is permanent and will not be drained. That’s good news for the birds. One frequent visitor is the white ibis, with its long, down-curved bill. The young birds are brown and white, but adults are completely white with black wing tips. The adults reveal only in flight. In spring, during breeding season, the males’ bills turn bright red.

Other birds often seen at the pond are herons and egrets. The great blue heron is the very tall, gray-blue bird with long black plumes hanging down the back of its neck.

The much smaller and darker slate-gray bird is a little blue heron; juvenile birds are white, and might be confused with the snowy egret.

But the snowy egret is distinct. Look for the medium-sized white bird with long white plumes and jet-black bill and legs. When the bird comes out of the water, its feet are revealed, bright yellow and as incongruous on this elegant animal as clown shoes.

The larger white bird, almost as big as the great blue heron, is the great egret. Once hunted almost to extinction for its plumage, it is a well-known symbol of Florida.

The prize find at USF-St. Petersburg’s pond, however, is the bird that was recently seen hunting for minnows. The reddish egret is smaller than the great egret; it has a dark gray body, a reddish-brown head and neck, and a pinkish bill with a darker tip.

What is so special about it? According to Rich Paul, manager of the Tampa Bay chapter of the National Audubon Society, the reddish egret is the rarest of the herons and egrets in the United States.

"There are currently only 60 to 80 nesting pairs locally," said Paul, "and the birds were absent entirely until 1974, when the first pair officially returned to Florida after a long absence."

The reddish egret is one species missing from the life lists of many birders, even local ones.

But it is not only birds that visit. Deb Henry, a librarian at the Poynter Library, observes the pond regularly from her office window. She has seen black racers, a gopher tortoise and a number of frogs. One frog even walked up her window.

"It was wonderful to watch," she said. "It crawled right up and left tracks on the glass."

In fact, on any given day, a patient observer might see white peacock butterflies hovering over the grass, iridescent green and blue dragonflies darting after smaller insects and water skimmers, also called Jesus bugs, walking on the water.

Or the reddish egret standing motionless, its eyes on whatever might be lunch below the surface.

So, you’ve noticed a few changes

Apparently groveling works because a few of you able-bodied readers have come forward with your ideas for the millennium name change.

We weren’t going to push the issue too much, but now that we have taken on a new look — completing our makeover has moved to the forefront of our concerns, which means we need you.

Here is a list of just a few of your suggestions — if you feel inspired, send your ideas to the Nest at <thenest99@hotmail.com> or stop by the office at the Campus Activities Center. Don’t forget to include your name and phone number with your suggestions:

* Bayboro Daybook
* Bull Session
* Memo & Pad
* Pen & Pad
* The Boiling Bull
* The Bayboro Buzz
* The Harbor Confederate
* The Wellspring
* Tidelines
* Harborage Herald
* Bayboro Globe

Now that you have made the leap and looked inside, sit back, put your feet up and enjoy our take on campus life.

—Your ever-faithful Nest staffers

Cover art by Jesse Norton
www.fates.com
St. Petersburg and the Cabinet bid Castor farewell

By Rachael Lee Coleman

Well-wishers offered former USF president Betty Castor heart-felt farewells while state and university officials spoke hopefully of the St. Petersburg campus expansion delays to a crowd of more than 70 attendees. The event, scheduled on her last working day, marked her final hurrah with the university.

Despite the Board of Regents (BOR) initial postponement of the USF-St. Petersburg campus, Castor made another bold statement when she prematurely celebrated the unofficial authorization at a reception on the St. Petersburg campus Sept. 22.

"Someone with the initials B.K. at an unnamed newspaper said I was testy," said Castor, referring to St. Petersburg Times staff writer Barry Klein. "I don't know if testy was the right expression. I wanted it done before I leave at the end of the month, but I learned it wasn't quite a done deal."

In his farewell speech to Castor, state Education Commissioner Tom Gallagher took the opportunity to clarify his position on the expansion and recall his own political history. "I think that's a done deal," he said. "I don't believe any student who wants to attend a four-year institution should have to drive 40 miles to Tampa every day to do it."

Although Sen. Don Sullivan jokingly asked Gallagher if he was preparing his own resume, Gallagher cited his experiences working with Castor as a defense against the new doctorate requirement for USF's future president.

"I have a little bit of a problem with the BOR rules of who qualifies to be a president of a university," said Gallagher, who believes working experience could equal a doctoral degree. "I believe we should leave it broadly open."

While the expansion was still up in the air Sept. 22, Gov. Jeb Bush and the Cabinet gave Castor a parting gift Sept. 28 — a unanimous vote to approve the rule change granting the branch campus four-year programs.

Although the proposal has been approved by the Post-Secondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC), approved again by Bush and the Cabinet, and twice recommended by the BOR, it must sustain yet another vote from the BOR at its November meeting — after Castor begins her new position as head of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

Community college officials expressed concerns that satellite campus expansions would pull from their enrollment, but St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC) spokesman Michael Richardson said the junior college has no qualms with the expansion and the delays were merely a matter of procedure.

"We were the first to support the learning community expansion," he said. "I am aware of how many hoops there are."

Although SPJC was one of four state community colleges to be considered by PEPC, the regents and the state legislature for a four-year expansion in February, the college declined the offer, said Richardson.

"We decided early on we were not interested in becoming a four-year institution."

However, SPJC President Carl Kuttler recently announced SPJC's plan to offer four-year degrees in conjunction with other state universities, as part of the state's 2-plus-2 program.

"He's assured me when he's acting president he'll be kicking and screaming until it's done," said Castor.

Tighe will act as president until the arrival of interim president Richard Peck in mid-December.

USF's Academic Planning Commission plans to begin four-year programs on the St. Petersburg campus by fall of 2000, and the board is budgeting for an increase in the number of campus faculty members, said Stephen Ritch, USF-S-T., Petersburg's student affairs director. The expansion is expected to gradually double the campus' current undergraduate enrollment of more than 2,000 students.

St. Petersburg Mayor David Fischer joined the hopeful community and university officials in celebration and praised Castor for her commitment to the branch campus.

"It was very easy for me to respond to the call of President Castor and Dean Heller," he said. "Betty's been a bulldog on this."

Tedra Kelley-Brownell
Licensed Real Estate Broker
Brother/Associate

Selling the beaches,
Tierre Verde, Pinellas County
We’ve come a long way, maybe

By Pamela Griner Leavy

There were no women in the television news business in the Tampa Bay area when I went to work at Channel 8 in 1970. The only African Americans were two older men named Charlie Brown and John L. They were janitors who washed our cars and went to the bank to cash our checks on payday. When the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission told broadcasters in the early ‘70s that the employment profile of a television station should mirror the demographics of the community it serves, the on-air and behind-the-scenes picture at WFLA began to change.

Jan Morris, who was the first woman in the newsroom, came to television from the Tampa Times, then the Tribune’s afternoon paper. The wives of some of the male reporters called the news director to complain. They didn’t want Morris riding in the news cars with their husbands, and some of the male reporters didn’t want to work with the woman they referred to as “the skin.”

While women were allowed to wear miniskirts in the early ‘70s, pant suits and jeans were against the rules. Deanne Roberts was the first female reporter on the air at WTSP-Channel 13. Roberts and former USF president Betty Castor made the New York Times magazine when they were refused entry to a business luncheon at Tampa’s private University Club. Castor was then a member of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners.

There were always fears, mostly from the white-male power structure, that affirmative action would mean they were forced to hire a woman or minority who wasn’t qualified. I have found this to be seldom the case. There were always employees in my television, marketing and government jobs who didn’t work out. Some of these were minorities and women. Most were the male buddies of the managers — an alcoholic television executive who came to work drunk every day and female employees were told to cover for him; an Army reserve buddy of a government executive who was always in some kind of hot water; and a maintenance man who was allowed to scream at employees and run his shop like a private business.

I had the opportunity last year to attend a seminar presented by the McCormick-Tribune Fellowship program. The Tribune Company and the Newspaper Association of America have teamed up on a project to encourage media organizations to look at affirmative action differently.

Affirmative action is more than quotas and numbers. Once underutilized minorities, including ethnic groups and women, are hired, they need to be welcomed into boardrooms and included in planning and decision-making. If media organizations don’t do this, they may not survive. In a technology-savvy society where white people may be in the minority in the next five years, television and newspaper outlets have to reach both a new and old generation of customers.

The message hasn’t changed much from the one that was sent out in the early ‘70s. Employment and programming need to reflect the community. This means airing programming and printing content relevant to diverse audiences, not just to the white males who still control much of the media. It means putting women, Latinos, African Americans, gays, lesbians, young people and older people in visible positions of power and influence.

This column is dedicated to Adele Tyre, an African American female reporter I worked with at WTSP-Channel 10. Now dead of breast cancer, Adele worked tirelessly at channels 10 and 8 to further the cause of women and minorities in her short broadcast career. She also held their feet to the fire, always saying that while a person may be able to get their feet in the door, it was up to them to survive on their own merits.

Leavy is vice president of the student chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and a freelance writer.

It’s a green issue

By Elliott Brinson

When considering the issue of affirmative action, I could go on and on. I’ll spare you the drama, but let me say that I am neither for, nor against, affirmative action.

Okay, fine, there are serious imbalances with regard to the distribution of wealth in this country. Yes, very rich white men do hold the real power in this country. Yes, those of us who do not resemble the faces printed on American coins and bills — which we wait all week to pilfer — will perhaps forever be chasing that old American dream.

To create a balance or to make things seem somewhat equal, those who feel disenfranchised or simply out of the immediate financial loop look to programs like affirmative action to get a leg up.

The problem with this program is that it leaves the door open for many unqualified individuals to attain positions or perks that would otherwise be out of their reach. Therefore, it becomes more difficult for a deserving party, regardless of race or sex, to get a break. The recipients of these perks don’t necessarily ride off into the sunset with a pot of gold or a bigger piece of the pie, but it does alleviate some of the economic pressures associated with not having the same networks and resources that white businesses men seem to have. This may not always be the case, but it is certainly the perception.

To suggest that affirmative action solves the imbalance is difficult. If you look at the history of black Americans, the facts are mind-boggling. African Americans were afforded the right to vote only 34 years ago. I know many 34-year-olds. And I can’t forget those freed from bondage 134 years ago, or that prior to that we were enslaved for more than 400 years. When one considers the sociopolitical impact of these atrocities, a program such as affirmative action may very well seem to be a corrective measure. Then again, there are other races and ethnicities in this country with different histories, but surely histories of oppression.

The opponents of affirmative action would like you to think that its continuation will separate us, rather than unite us. They are correct. It will keep rich, white men rich while keeping all others, well, just others. It’s funny how those opposed use the Constitution’s “All men are created equal” adage when arguing their points.

Uh, newsflash, boys — when the Constitution was signed, black people in this country were only three-fifths of a person and white women were not much more. I bring this up to make the point that if we are going to stand by the Constitution, we must indeed believe and practice the credo that we hold so dear. That credo, of course, being that all men (and women) are indeed created equal. If this were the case and at least practiced, there would be no need for affirmative action.

It is my sincere hope that affirmative action will make its impact, realign the economic bends in the road and eventually be done away with. If we are to ever be the strong country that we so proudly demonstrate to the rest of the world, there is simply no other way.

Brinson is a USF graduate and works at the CAC.
A monopoly even Bill Gates would admire

About four weeks ago, a time limit of privilege expired for me. I had but one year to enjoy the benefits and advantages of my freedom, and now they were gone.

Alas, my parking pass had expired! As I am sure you can imagine, I was devastated. After just getting over the trauma of registering for classes, I was now being sent back into the lion's den. I was going to be again subjected to long lines and monetary loss as part of my college experience.

Surely I could find some better way to spend my time and money. The 15 to 20 minutes I would wait in line could be spent day dreaming, watching television or, hell, even studying. The $20 price tag for this parking privilege could go towards school supplies, food for the homeless or, in my case, a decent drinking bender on the weekend.

I was at my wit's end when all of a sudden this crazy idea came to me: What if I didn't buy a parking pass? What if I just said "NO!" to this crazy pay-to-park idea?

Enthralled with the possibilities of my newfound courage, I quickly found a barrel and beverage to think about the realities of this venture. Without a parking pass, I now could park in the main lots and the "decal only" spaces along Second Street. This left me with hundreds of other spaces within a three-block radius of the campus. I figure it takes about 45 seconds to one minute to walk a city block. So even if I am forced to park three blocks away, I only spend an extra three minutes getting to class, which, by the way, is an improvement over my former tardiness record, and I was able to save myself the hassle and expense of purchasing another parking pass.

Therefore, even though I could park in the lots theoretically, in reality I was still parking on the street. I would say more than half the time I didn't get a space in the "decal only" zones. Whether this was because there was no room or because the street parking was closer, I had no need for my parking pass. I have waged a great deal of money for the Greek organizations also do community service and are involved in student life and leadership. For example, Alpha Delta Pi raises a great deal of money for the Ronald McDonald House each year and each Greek organization raises around some sort of charitable cause. Some Greeks may have stuck-up attitudes, or at least that's what I've read, but the beauty of creating Greek life on the St. Petersburg campus is that students can shape it to be as they would like it to be.

Students can build a bastion of Greek life with fun social activities, strong academics and student leadership, involvement and community service—things that are very important in creating a strong cornerstone for a growing university branch campus.

Some may say, well, this is a commuter-based branch campus so it would be hard to create Greek life here. Well, University of Texas at Arlington is similar but they are involved in student life and leadership. For example, Alpha Delta Pi raises a great deal of money for the Ronald McDonald House each year and each Greek organization raises around some sort of charitable cause. Some Greeks may have stuck-up attitudes, or at least that's what I've read, but the beauty of creating Greek life on the St. Petersburg campus is that students can shape it to be as they would like it to be.

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Some may say, well, this is a commuter-based branch campus so it would be hard to create Greek life here. Well, University of Texas at Arlington is similar but they have a small, strengthening Greek aspect.

Okay, so far no problem. I mean, I park in those spots all the time and I've never had a problem. ... Wait a minute! "I park in those spots all the time!" What am I saying? For the last year, even though I was paid up, I was using inconvenient spaces for my vehicle. Of course, I did not do this by choice but because the lots were always full.

It just sat up there on my rearview mirror, pretending to be useful — an annual reminder of my wasted money.

So then and there I decided against purchasing a new parking tag. It has been almost a month now, and I am still over-joyed with my decision. I have been unaffected by the parking choices I make, save for perhaps a few extra minutes of exercise. I have not been late for one class, which, by the way, is an improvement over my former tardiness record, and I was able to save myself the hassle and expense of purchasing another parking pass.

People think about this. The university is selling off the passes to anyone who wants them. They sell so many that there is no possible way for all of you to take full advantage of your parking privileges. Everyone, at one time or another, is forced to park elsewhere because of the shortage of decal parking. The university, however, will still keep selling the parking passes, and meter maids will continue to write tickets.

Can't you hear the money rolling in?

They not only charge us to get these passes, they also have enlisted themselves with the right to fine us for our own list of "infractions" which could include "improper display" of my tag.

What kind of crap is that? First of all, my tag was not improperly displayed; it was hanging on the rearview as always. I don't care if there was other stuff hanging there as well. The parking attendant could see that I had a tag, and if they had taken the time to remove their hind quarters off their curious golf-cart seats for five seconds they could have done that with great ease. But that would have been too easy. They instead wrote me a ticket, which is more money collected by the school and more inconvenience for me.

I am beginning to see a pattern here. Even Bill Gates does not have this kind of lock on the market. So here I am with two months left in the semester and I'm doing fine with my parking. I have waged the same protest as this parking dilemma and want you all to think about this the next time you have to make your parking-decal purchase.

Gell is an undergraduate majoring in mass communications.

Enhance USF-St. Petersburg with Greek life

Re: "It's all Greek to me" by Rachel Lee Coleman (Aug. 23 - Sept. 6)

Fraternity rush week just ended on the Tampa campus. While some say Greek life is shallow and self-serving, there is an obvious other side to it that becomes exposed once you make a good number of friends who have accepted bids to become members of these organizations. Greek life — fraternities and sororities alike — create a social atmosphere and members of such organizations at the Tampa campus and at other universities, such as Florida State and the University of Florida, create the cornerstone for student life and involvement.

With such a high level of apathy and more freshmen students now being admitted to USF-St. Petersburg, students really should consider creating fraternities and sororities on campus.

It would definitely create a more college-like atmosphere and since Greek organizations always have events there could be something else to do besides get drunk at the tavern.

Photo by Krista Reiner

Child's play: Is USF Parking Services the bully on the playground?

By Jason Gell
Initiatives reveal a focus is to campaign for a constitutional change. That is the procedure. Once that change is in place, it becomes a legislative issue to put in place alternatives. What this boils down to, said Harmon, is group preferential treatment for all. FREE, he said, is not about color; Harmon says FCRI is primarily against the idea of group classification. "We understand that there is a need, but we don’t prescribe to the philosophy that because one is black they are therefore disadvantaged and because one is white one is therefore advantaged. We think that is wrong," he said.

He also said it became apparent to him during the forum that opponents of the initiative were not interested in alternatives. "Our focus is to campaign for a constitutional change. That is the procedure. Once that change is in place, it becomes a legislative issue to put in place alternatives."

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Market1ng major Nicole Brownlow believes her opportunities would be severely limited without affirmative action programs.

Ruth Whitney gets frustrated when she looks around USF-St. Petersburg. The adjunct professor of women's studies wonders how anyone can believe affirmative action programs are no longer needed.

"You can look at our campus and see the number of African American faculty members are not in proportion to the numbers of African Americans in the population," said Whitney. "It's the same with the number of students. It's the same case on the Tampa campus. We have a problem."

Whitney would like to ask those who oppose affirmative action what they would put in its place, as what she calls, an alternative correction program. "It's important to have programs and a faculty in place that celebrate and honor diversity," says Whitney, whose courses include introduction to Women's Studies and Feminist Spirituality.

While admitting corrections still need to be made, Dean William Heller calls attention to the progress made since he first came to the campus in 1992. "We have added Hispanic and black faculty members," said Heller. "We are working on that on a regular basis, making every effort to recruit minorities."

The expansion of the St. Petersburg campus into a four-year institution should aid in minority student recruitment efforts, Heller believes. He observes that most students decide early to go to a four-year college and calls attention to "the excellent black institutions" in the state, Florida A&M University and Bethune-Cookman College.

"We plan to recruit heavily," said Heller, "right out of high school."

Heller agrees with Whitney that the campus should honor diversity. "If there is a place where you are going to be different, it's got to be on a college campus," he said. "USF is a public institution. If we don't develop and protect diversity, we might as well close ourselves down."

March 1999
Connelly's American Civil Rights Initiative reaches Florida. UC says top four percent of California high school grads are eligible for admission.

1998
Washington's anti-affirmative action initiative, I-200, passes.

Information compiled from NewsWatch, Summer 1999.

versus individual preferences. "We want the focus to shift on the individual." Russell, whose coalition directly opposes the initiatives proposed by FCRI, disagrees.

Russell says color and gender are the issues, and what's more, he believes this campaign is also about deceit. "FCRI is in the same position now as it was in California or Washington because of the deceptive language used in their campaign. They get 75 - 80% of their support right off the bat because people don't realize what is being said. We see it as a challenge to educate the voters. We have got to get beyond the myths and lies and clean up what [Harmon] does mean when he uses words like "preference."" Russell is not alone in his theory. Fellow panelist Toni Van Pelt agrees. "I believe the campaign is one of deceit and dishonesty because of the facts, to have Mr. Harmon sit there during the panel discussion and say, 'my generation did not discriminate.' Well, that is just a flat out lie."

And then there is the issue of Gloria Brown. The Seattle Times reported that Brown, a white signature-gatherer who was paid 75 cents for each St. Petersburg resident who signed the FCRI petition, told reporters Tom Brunke and Lynne K.Verner that if petition signers are black, "we say it is to stop the government from discriminating against people because their race and that it's a civil-rights initiative. But if they are white," Brown continued, "we tell them it will ban affirmative action."

Still, in the light of such controversial matters, audience members became polarized about the effectiveness of affirmative action.

Kent Naderhoff, an area businesswoman, said he came to experience the debate, but left feeling saddened. "I guess I just didn't realize there was so much hatred out there. People are so angry about this, I can't believe it."

Naderhoff said he is in favor of abolishing affirmative action because he thinks quotas just get people mad. "It becomes about race. You start to wonder if that person got that job because they are black, or because they are a woman, and you don't look at their ability."

"For me, I wouldn't want to be hired because I am black, but because I have a degree and I am intelligent," said Nicole Brownlow, a marketing major at USF-Tampa. "Unfortunately, it's true," she says about needing to use affirmative action to get a job.

The success of the FCRI petition remains uncertain, though it has the required signatures to appeal to the state Supreme Court. Then the Court decides which, if any, of the initiatives will meet the constitutional mandate.

Ultimately it may be the voter's who decide whether affirmative action remains a part of this state's constitution, or if it goes.

Rachael Coleman and Krista Reiner contributed to this report.
**Secrets of a secondhand sister**

By Krista Reiner

When I was a little girl, my mother told me she bought me at a thrift shop. Knowing the sort of treasures she unearthed in her thrifty travels, I was proud to be worthy of such a distinction. As I got older I developed my own fondness for secondhand shops, ultimately landing my first job at age 14 at a consignment shop. I worked there periodically throughout college, but the only drawback was that I got my paycheck on a hanger!

If the idea of wearing a stranger’s clothing makes your skin crawl, stay home. Leave the unbelievable bargains and quality, gently worn treasures for the rest of us. That said, on to where, when and what to expect when bargain-clothes shopping.

There is a big difference between consignment and thrift shops. Consignment shops carry “like-new” items — some with the original price tags still on them. Items are carefully inspected before being put on the racks so there’s little chance of finding snaggly hems, stains or broken zippers. Some less-than-perfect pieces do slip through at times, but alerting a salesperson may get you price reductions if you’re being reasonable.

If you’re being reasonable.

... and an impressive selection of formal attire for those upcoming holiday parties and New Year’s Eve celebrations.

A nice shop with similar merchandise is Mary-Go-Round (6600 Central Ave.; (727) 345-3228). This 38-year-old business has claim to the first consignment shop in St. Petersburg. Unique to Mary-Go-Round is “Shaker Saturday.” On the first Saturday of each month, a price slasher sits at the back of the store and instant discounts are given on all items.

A few blocks west on Central you’ll find Jacqueline’s Consignment Boutique (7008 Central Ave.; (727) 345-2100). It’s smaller than the previously mentioned stores, but the bright atmosphere makes this shop a browsing pleasure. Right now Jacqueline’s is having a 50-percent-off sale on all summer clothing.

With racks and racks (and racks) of both men’s and women’s attire, the Sunshine Thrift Store (2333 34th St. S.) is a mecca for anyone in the market for cheap, fun clothes. With a special “oldies” section devoted to the pre-disco days gone by, shopping for a funky Halloween costume or for that date at a club has never been more fun. Once a month, Sunshine has a half-price sale with extended shopping hours. The next sale is Oct. 7.

For a smaller and eclectic assortment of thrift items (and new goods), stop by Star Booty (681 Central Ave.; (727) 895-STAR). This fun shop carries more than funky corsetry pants, crazy print shirts and outrageously retro dresses. You’ll find folk art pieces, original silk-screened concert posters and funky jewelry.

You can even get your hair cut by owners Susan Riggs and Mimi Peterson — anything but a perm so the inventory does not smell like chemicals. In the words of its owners, Star Booty is best described as “the square peg of square pegs.”

So save a Saturday, or any afternoon, to wander around town. You may find stuff you didn’t even know you wanted.
American Beauty

By Jacob Hensberry

Have you ever had one of those movie experiences where you just sit in the theater and nothing in the world annoys or bothers you, or makes you think about how much homework you have waiting for you at home? You find yourself completely trapped in the movie and you like it that way. American Beauty is one of those movies.

From the very first moment of this incredible new film from first-time director Sam Mendes, you know you’re in for something more than a run-of-the-mill Hollywood drama. There’s no epic music against sweeping camera moves focusing on an embracing couple top of a mountain. There are no clichés or smoky close-ups of aging movie stars crying their eyes out for that Oscar nod.

American Beauty is a prime example of modern cinema’s finest actors doing some of the best work of their careers.

Kevin Spacey plays Lester Burnham, a middle-age magazine writer coming to terms with the horrible redundancy of his ordinary life. The routine job, the falling marriage and the saggy teen daughter are all moving in on him. “I don’t remember ever feeling quite so sedated,” Lester says in the film’s wonderfully constructed opening narration. “I lost the feeling I had when I was younger, but what I realized today was that it’s never too late to get it back.”

And get it back he does. The process Burnham goes to get himself back together is like rooting for your favorite football team on Super Bowl Sunday. He develops a slight obsession with his daughter’s friend Angela (Mena Suvari), a tub of roses. In his fantasy, a revitalized Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey) woos his daughter’s friend Angela (Mena Suvari) in a tub of roses.

The dining room was dark — the shade of one of the-mill Hollywood stars. The only brilliant lighting upon the table was a great variety of sauces, especially the tomato sauce. The tomato sauce was very strong, but for $2.50, the cup didn’t matter. The lasagna included ricotta cheese, topped with mozzarella, pecorino Romano cheese and meat sauce for $8.75. It was served on a large platter. I could twirl the cheese around my fork and stretch it from the plate to my mouth. The tomato sauce was good but lukewarm.

Moving on to the only thing that truly matters in this world — our stomachs — I ordered a lasagna that included a side salad and bread. The first bread basket was toasted and crunchy. To my dismay, though, the bottom was slightly burned.

Finally we decided to drink our dessert. I ordered a Cafe Latte. It contained a thick, foamy layer of milk and the texture was strong, but for $2.50, the cup seemed small. My companion ordered a White Russian, which was made with more vodka and less cream to his advantage.

Most dinner options range from $7 to $9, which include Italian foods such as salsas, baked pastas, linguini and pizza. JoJo’s offers a great variety of sauces, especially coffees and Italian sodas. All lunches range from $5 to $7. The service was entertaining and efficient. Students could benefit from their reasonable menu, as well as escape the monogamy of the campus salad bar.

You could find better food, but the atmosphere is a secret downtown treasure. Grab a sub for lunch, come back for a drink later.

Dining Guide

JoJo’s in Citta

Cafeteria food can be as boring as that $60 textbook you just bought, and there are just so many times the vending machine will serve up a yummy perk. Instead, try JoJo’s in Citta, located at 200 Central Ave. in downtown St. Petersburg.

My companion and I hit JoJo’s at about 8 p.m. From the tacky neon sign, we realized we had found the place to go to be a dive. Boy, were we wrong!

The manager on duty immediately greeted us with a smile and service. He wanted to please and quickly led us from what appeared to be the lunch area to the back dining rooms. We were escorted through two decorative pillars and an open gate detailed with faux bunches of grapes. The dining room was dark — the shade of one dark one would desire on a third date — but the impeccably clean tables glowed in what appeared to be the lunch area to the back dining room. We were escorted up quickly and quietly, then crept off to the side while he waited for one of his three tables to finish their meals. He walked up quickly and quietly, then crept away without a word or a smile. Our waitress, on the other hand, was perky, nervous and fast.

Boy, were we wrong!

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Judges discuss affirmative action at Brown University forum

By Adam Saks
Brown Daily Herald

Selya overturned his decision, ruling in the plaintiff's favor. Thompson brought up the fact that the opinion of the courts has changed over our history, and it is important to look at current cases in that light.

"What the law is depends on who is superimposing diversity," she said. "We have a history of different ideology. To say that in 1999 there are not vestiges of it [discrimination] remaining in society is absolutely ridiculous."

Thompson made reference to her own experience with educational discrimination. While at Brown University's law school, she said, one of her professors came to a meeting and said that there was not one qualified black student at the university. She said she wondered what the whole notion of "qualified" meant after that comment.

The debate turned to the importance of affirmative action in the education system.

"I think that the educational issue is really the franchise issue," Tauro said. "People have to get to know each other." He noted that the school setting was the best area to sit next to someone and find out about a different life experience.

Selya said he supported diversity but "the Supreme Court has said the only justification of race-based classification is a sufficiently compelling governmental interest." He pointed out that the Supreme Court supported action only when a history of discrimination could be proved and that discrimination was still occurring today.

"The whole purpose of an educational institution is to prepare [students] to live in the real world," Thompson responded. She suggested that the first place for exposure to different backgrounds is in education and that the educational system should try to "get people together."

"The only caution that I have," Selya countered, "is that it is contradictory to attempt to accomplish noble ends by means that contravene the Constitution."

He said that there were better ways to reach diversity, suggesting a system that was based on social class instead of race.

Tauro agreed with Selya, saying he believed that a concentration of diversity in the context of life experience is more important than race. He said he would prefer that Brown accept a white student from a poor area than an African-American student whose father is rich.

Thompson brought up the fact that historically, racial policy has had far-reaching implications. She said that after World War II, black people were confused about buying property in the inner city, while whites could buy in the suburbs. Today, this means that whites are property rich, while blacks are property poor. She said that because of this history, "the playing field is not equal."

Selya responded that there would be anarchy if judges did not obey the Supreme Court on grounds that the Court had not given significant weight to historical issues. She suggested that people get involved in the political process to change the outcome of Supreme Court decisions.

The panel then fielded questions from the audience. One question addressed the issue of higher education discrimination based on ability, such as recruiting athletes or musicians due to their skills. Selya said the Constitution does not prescribe discrimination against skill. "It proscribes discrimination based on race, gender, national origin. That's all.

Thompson concluded by saying, "The one beauty of living in this country is that we at least have this goal of equality and justice for all, and we are at least willing to be open and talk about it."

"I'm pro-affirmative action, but more in terms of classes" than races, Amy Kirkley '03 said after the panel.

"I view it [affirmative action] as more forward-looking," Fran Bigman '02 suggested. "We have to counteract things that are happening now."

President Gordon Gee said he agreed with the panel on educational diversity and was pleased with Brown's aggressive attitude toward attaining diversity. "Diversity and affirmative action are very important to the structure of education."

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Features

(U-WIRE) PROVIDENCE, R.I. - "Affirmative action has become a fault line for race relations in the United States," said Professor of Political Science Nancy Rosenblum at a panel entitled "Justice for All: Affirmative Action and the American Ideal."

The panel, held Monday, Sept. 27 at Brown University, included United States Circuit Judge Bruce M. Selya, United States District Judge Joseph L. Tauro '53, and Rhode Island Superior Court Judge O. Rogeriee Thompson '73.

Both Tauro and Selya have ruled on the controversial Boston Latin case, in which a white student claimed the admissions policy of Boston Latin School was unconstitutional because she was denied admission based on her race.

"I'm an advocate of diversity," Tauro said, commenting on the case. "My opinion wasn't about affirmative action; it was about diversity. What we have to achieve in education is life experience diversity." He described this as acquiring an appreciation of other people's experiences.

Selya responded by saying, "There is no question diversity is a good thing. Whether the attainment of diversity by a race-based classification is constitutionally permissible is an entirely different issue." He questioned whether diversity was more important than accepting students based on merit.

Tauro ruled against the plaintiff, while
'round town on campus

October 8
The Swing Thing continues with Swingerhead, America’s zaniest swing band at the Coliseum Ballroom, 535 4th Ave. N., St. Petersburg. Free lessons begin at 7 p.m.; the event begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are $10 advanced or $12 at the door.

October 9
The Florida Orchestra Concert in the Park with Thomas Wilkins, conductor at Strazh Park in downtown St. Petersburg (Beach Drive and 5th Avenue N.E.) The sixth annual free concert will offer food, fun and fireworks. The event begins at 7 p.m. Please bring canned goods for donation to Tampa Bay Harvest.

October 16
Southwest Running Festival Team Challenge — The event, which loops around downtown St. Petersburg, will offer four racing categories: 10 miles, 5K (3.1 miles), 5K “Ya Ya’s fitness jog and walk” and mini kids’ races. There will be a post-race party with food, games and entertainment. Everyone welcome. Proceeds benefit the St. Petersburg YMCA, $30 registration fee per team. For information call (727) 363-7866.

Through October 17
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October 18-19
Picnic at the Plaza — A campus fundraiser to benefit student scholarships, featuring music by Dr. Rockit, haunted houses, fortune tellers, dessert and a fright flick, costs $15 per person in advance. For more information, call 553-3450.

October 19
Jannus Landing, 7 p.m.
The 25th Hour Bayborro Spectacular Street Party — A campus fundraiser to benefit student scholarships, featuring music by Dr. Rockit, haunted houses, fortune tellers, dessert and a fright flick, costs $15 per person in advance. For more information, call 553-1129.

October 20
Better Than Ezra, Jannus Landing, 7 p.m.

October 21
Pet Shop Boys, TBPA.

November 3
Stress Management Workshop — Explore strategies for resisting stress. Topics will include how and when to set limits, relaxation techniques, developing social support and maintaining healthful life choices. The workshop will be held at 5 p.m. For reservations visit DAV 112 or call (727) 553-1129.

November 4
Management Information Systems Society, a student organization dedicated to advancing ideas and methods of information systems management in today's business environment, and bridging the gap between the educational environment and the business world. Students with all majors welcome to attend. Meetings are Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m. in DAV 108. For membership info. and schedule visit www.coba.usf.edu/student/miss-stpt.

Student government meets every other Tuesday in CAC 133 at 4:15 p.m., beginning Sept. 8. Representative positions are still available for all colleges. All students are welcome to attend. For information, call (727) 553-1144.

Council of Clubs (COC) meets the first Tuesday of each month in CAC 133 at 4 p.m. All clubs and organizations must send at least one member. For information, call (727) 553-1144.

October 22
Singing in the Sunshine, USF, St. Petersburg.

October 23
TBPAC

October 24
Sundown at Campbell Park, 121 7th Ave. S., St. Petersburg.

October 25
Sundown at Campbell Park, 121 7th Ave. S., St. Petersburg.

To be included in Currents, send the name, date and brief description of the event; the organization and the contact name and number to:
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