Striving for a goal has its rewards

By Chris Curry
Nest staff writer

Many busy college students struggle to keep focused on all their goals over the course of the semester. Work can get in the way of academics, and academic responsibilities can prevent students from being as athletically active as they would like to be. Sometimes a little incentive can be useful to keep students working, and that is what the USF St. Petersburg Great Strides program provides.

On April 4, a group of 25 students and faculty put aside their work for an hour to gather at the campus pool for the annual Great Strides luncheon. There they feasted on submarine sandwiches, potato salad and cake for dessert.

The Great Strides program, now in its ninth year, is a joint venture between the campus fitness center and career and counseling center. Students participating in the program pick three goals they want to accomplish during the semester. For every ten minutes spent working toward these goals, a student advances one mile around Tampa Bay. Score is kept on a map of the bay posted at the fitness center. The first three students to complete a trip around the bay take home the grand prizes.

“We get in touch with businesses and see if they will donate prizes, so our prizes come from the community,” said Sheri Beaudreau, programs coordinator for the campus fitness center.

Tom Hutcherson, a 19-year-old St. Petersburg Junior College freshman studying on the Bayboro campus, took home the top prize, two certificates for a half-day fishing trip from Hubbard’s Marina. Hutcherson, an avid basketball player who shoots hoops at least once a day, said that all of his goals were athletic.

Beaudreau said that most students’ goals are either physical, such as working out to lose weight, or intellectual, such as doing better in classes.

There are some exceptions. Second prize winner Brian Clarke, a senior at St. Petersburg High School who works part-time at the fitness center, had the goal of becoming more social. In rabid pursuit of this goal, Clarke spent more time going out to clubs. His efforts were rewarded with two passes on the Dolphin Adventure Cruise, also out of Hubbard’s Marina.

The third grand prize, a trip for two on the Starlight Cruise ship, went to Raju Ratt, a senior, double majoring in finance and computers.

But the prizes did not stop with the top three finishers. There was also a blind prize drawing and each of the 24 students who stopped by the fitness center to log in minutes working toward their goals took something home. These prizes included a trip for two to Busch Gardens and gift certificates from businesses such as Coconuts Comedy Club, the Albert Whitted Flying Club, the Tavern at Bayboro and the USF bookstore.

“They’ve got some pretty tight prizes,” Hutcherson said.

Senior Jube Knuckles won a $25 gift certificate to Overistelli’s Mexican Restaurant. Knuckles participated in Great Strides last spring and said she joined again because it offers good motivation.

“I’m in the program because it keeps your goals straight,” Knuckles said. “I wanted to graduate this year and I’m walking in May. Another goal was to save money and I actual ly did.”

Beaudreau said that Great Strides is intended to show students that if they remain focused on something, they can achieve it.

“The point of the program,” Beaudreau said, “is that if you stick to your goals for three months, you’ll end up with a lifestyle change.”

Club info

Student Government meets every other Wednesday in the CAC in Room 133 at 4:30 p.m. For more information call 553-1147.

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 more information call 553-1144.

USF Staff Club meets every Friday at 5:30 p.m. in the Bayboro Cafe. Sait free at 3 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. On Fridays, skippers are provided. For more information call 325-5079.

Campus Crusade for Christ — Lasting relationships? Join us as we look at the Bible’s model of a marriage that works. Meet Thursdays in COG 309-A from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Weight Management — An informal group dedicated to teaching healthy eating habits, exercise program and daily meal plans. The group meets every Thursday at 6 p.m. at Straub Park, 5th Ave. NE and Beach Drive. In addition to a juried art show, the festival will feature music and great food. Gates open at 9 a.m. on both days with entertainment kicking off at noon.

Admission is free, and volunteers are needed. Call 727-892-5885 for more information.

Grad student party

A USF inter-departmental graduate student party will be held at the Tampa Bay Brewing Company in Ybor City, 1812 15th St. North, on 15th Street from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Friday, April 14.

So come on out and party with your classmates. Graduate students from all campuses will be attending. For additional information contact Patrick Cannon, of the office of graduate studies, at (813) 974-2657.

Professor to present program on writer

Dr. Jack Davis of the University of Alabama at Birmingham presents his program “Tightwad Beginnings: The Environmental Evolution of Marjory Stoneman Douglas” April 13 at 8 p.m. in the CAC. Davis examines the life of the woman who became known as the matriarch of the Everglades, which he christened the “river of grass.”

Davis’ presentation is part of the Harry J. Schuleman, Jr. USF honors program colloquium.

Open house at FMRI

You can help celebrate Earth Week at the Florida Marine Research Institute (FMRI) on April 29 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Music, face and fish printing are just a few of the planned activities.

There will also be a touch tank where you can get up close and personal with some of the creatures of the deep. FMRI is located next to the USF St. Petersburg campus at 100 8th Ave. SE. For more information call 727-896-8626.

Attorneys and media talk out their issues

Paul Cicillo, a forensic investigator who is credited with helping free five men from death row, will be the keynote speaker at a media-law workshop, “The Discovery Process: Journalists, Attorneys and Plain Talk” on Sat., April 15 from 9 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

Co-sponsored by the USF, the Bay and the Poynter Institute, the workshop is intended to improve relations between journalists and attorneys. Registration for students is $10, and for others $25 can be paid at the door. The workshop site is the Marine Research Institute, 100 8th Ave. SE.

SAPL book fair to be held in Davis Hall

Attention bookworms! The Society for the Advancement of the Poynter Library (SAPL) is holding its annual book fair Saturday, April 15 at Davis Hall room 130 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Everything from cookbooks to children’s books will be available. Call 727-553-3401 for more information.

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Stacy Adams
Brandy Stark
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Adviser

Dr. G. Mike Killenberg

Endorsements

The Crow’s Nest

140 Seventh Ave. S.
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Phone (727) 553-3113
thenest99@hotmail.com

the Crow’s Nest students

Krista Reiner
Doug White

Assignment Editor

Mike Hennessy

Staff Writer

Chris Curry

Nest Photographer

Bob Lutz

angelfire.com

http://wilsonphotobob.sakama.com

Contributors

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Brandy Stark
Toshi Sakama
Edwina S. Zaiser

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St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Phone (727) 553-3113
thenest99@hotmail.com

2 the Crow’s Nest

Briefs...

Mainsail Arts Festival kicks off

The 25th annual Mainsail Arts Festival runs the weekend of April 15 and 16 at St. Petersburg’s North Straburg Park, 5th Ave. NE and Beach Drive. In addition to a juried art show, the festival will feature music and great food. Gates open at 9 a.m. on both days with entertainment kicking off at noon.

Admission is free, and volunteers are needed. Call 727-892-5885 for more information.

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thenest99@hotmail.com
State Senator Don Sullivan’s controversial bill to spin satellite campuses off into separate four-year institutions has gained a sponsor in the state House of Representatives and is now moving forward with less than a month left in the legislative session.

Under the bill, sponsored in the House by Donna Sanderson of Broward County, the state’s ten universities, each now being run by a separate board of trustees for each university, would become “Suncoast University.” The proposed college would concentrate primarily on undergraduate teaching.

“The bill, sponsored in the House by Representative and is now moving forward with less than a month left in the legislative session.

Education professor Stephen Micklo said the time is not right to consider a move to a separate university.

“I think it’s a bit premature,” Micklo said. “With our first freshman class coming in the fall, I think we should see the results of that before we begin planning a separate four-year institution.”

Micklo added that he doesn’t think there is enough funding available from the state to bring Suncoast up to par with an established school like USF.

“If we still wanted us to be thought of as the minor leagues with the big leagues over in Tampa,” Micklo said.

USF St. Petersburg professor of political science, Darryl Paulson, said that although Sullivan is up for reelection in 2000, Sullivan’s motivation goes beyond politics. “There clearly is a need for additional undergraduate institutions in Florida,” Paulson said. “Only the best and the brightest students get into the top public universities and everybody else finds themselves in community college.”

Paulson added that while Suncoast might provide more educational opportunities for Pinellas County high school students, the school’s emphasis on undergraduate teaching may drive off some faculty.

“Tschiderer has been connected with the state Board of Regents to add underclassmen to the campus, was also concerned about the timing of Sullivan’s plan for a separate university. ‘If it will happen inevitably in the future,’ said Lenahan, who graduated in December with a B.A. in political science. ‘I’m not sure that now is the right time.’

But Lenahan added that Sullivan’s request for a new university is a precursor to eventual change.

According to Paulson, one thing that makes Sullivan’s timing questionable is Governor Jeb Bush’s efforts to dismantle the state board of Regents in favor of a separate board of trustees for each state university. Sullivan also supports this move.

Paulson said that without the board of Regents to serve as a shield between them, the state’s universities will begin fighting for a limited number of state resources.

“You would have a pecking order among the state’s ten universities,” Paulson said.

According to Paulson, the University of Florida, with its powerful alumni and political clout would be first in this order, followed by Florida State University, USF and the University of Central Florida. At the bottom of this list would be Florida Gulf Coast University, an institution formed in 1993 out of the USF Fort Myers campus. If Sullivan’s bill passes and the Board of Regents is also dismantled, Paulson said Suncoast University would replace Florida Gulf Coast as low man on the totem pole.

“With no alumni you have no prestige,” Paulson said. “It would harm all new schools in Florida.”

Anderson, however, downplayed the potential negative impact of the bill. According to Anderson, the universities are already fighting each other for funding. Anderson said the change would be good for USF St. Petersburg.

“In some cases, it seems we’d provide funding for the St. Petersburg campus and it would be significantly diminished by the time the funding reached St. Petersburg,” Anderson said. “We aren’t going to be duplicating services. We aren’t going to be putting up new buildings from scratch, he said. “All that the St. Petersburg campus is very much a stepchild” of the USF system.

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By Chris Curry

Nest staff writer

"Woody" Brunt used to sit in a lawn chair on the roof of his old house on Park Street and watch the movies from the Garden Drive-in on Tyrone Boulevard.

Woody and his buddies used to go to the 4th Street Drive-in once a week. There was the Sky-vue in South Pasadena, the Mustang on Park Boulevard in Pinellas Park and the Thunderbird on East Bay Drive in Largo. In the late 50s and early 60s there were drive-ins all over.

But times have changed. The Garden has been replaced by a Walmart. An apartment complex stands where the Thunderbird used to be. The Mustang is a flea market. There is only one drive-in left in Pinellas County, St. Petersburg's 28th Street Drive-in. Except for a five-year stint at the Mustang, Woody, 74, has worked at 28th Street since 1965. He keeps the phone number of the man who hired him, friend and former manager James McDannold, written on the inside of his favorite hat, a baseball cap with a Cadillac emblem.

"I started out fixing speakers," said Woody, "picking up the field, stuff like that." He soon moved up to projectionist, a job he still holds.

Woody was in the audience when drive-ins started popping up around the area in the early 50s and he will be there watching when the credits roll after the last film at 28th Street.

The land 28th Street sits on is leased from neighboring Lowe's City Mobile Home Community. That lease expires June 30 and Lowe's is under contract to sell the land to the Pinellas County School Board, which is desperately trying to acquire any available land left in St. Petersburg. Lowe's offered to sell the land to 28th Street owner who runs drive-ins throughout Hillsborough and Pasco counties, has offered both of them jobs at the Fun-Land in east Tampa. Brunt says he will probably accept. He has loved the drive-in since he was a child in Ohio and he is not yet ready to walk away from the job.

But Woody, who has spent nearly half his life working at the drive-in, will leave the business. "The Fun-Land's too far away and my car ain't that good," Woody says. "Looks like I have to start a new career at 74."

But looking around the lot on this breezy spring night, the end still seems far away. Couples are lying on blankets, cuddling to keep warm and smoking their favorite brand of cigarettes. Someone sitting on top of a conversion van is shouting at the characters on screen.

When the first half of the double feature ends, a slew of animated treats appear on the screen to sing a jingle about the snack bar, the same snack bar that has been serving soda and popcorn since the drive-in opened in 1950. Eventually that snack bar will sell its last drink and the drive-in will host its last make-out session.

Most of the audience leaves during the intermission, driving to the exit through a cloud of dust and cigarette smoke. And the last thing they see before going home is Woody, standing at the fence waving good-bye and wishing them a safe ride home.

The 28th Street Drive-in is located at 4949 28th St. N, in St. Petersburg. Admission is $3 for adults and free for children under 10. Thursday is carload night and $3 buys everyone in a car admission to the double feature.
Celestial arts find local home

By Brandy Stark
Nest contributor

As I passed through the door my senses were astounded with strange new sensations. Images of the celestial nature, stars against a deep purple background in which angels dance and gods play, things both foreign and familiar, known and unknown swayed before my eyes. My nostrils breathed in the deep earthy fragrance of incense, offered under the watchful eyes of the gods and goddesses present to behold me. The gentle laughter of water, augmented and broken only by soft sounds of music, stroked my ears, drawing me further into the interior of this mystical place of heavenly things.

Heavenly Things, a store in the heart of downtown St. Petersburg, offers a slice of the divine.

“I get that reaction from a lot of people,” laughs Lynne Alexander, owner and curator of the store, “I never know if it’s a normal reaction for a store or not!” Adding that Heavenly Things is preparing to celebrate its fourth birthday on April 17, and has recently expanded to double its size to add an art gallery to its stash of unusual artifacts.

Her store and gallery, which she describes as attracting the Dali crowd, sells artwork made from local area self-taught artists. This artwork includes metal, clay, and wood statues, beautiful raku pottery, as well as hand carved and decorated wooden bowls. Alexander also carries handcrafted instruments, unique jewelry from around the world, and limited edition art pieces.

Alexander, whose own interests in religious philosophical subject and art helped her create her store, describes Heavenly Things as her own form of art. The store is like a canvas. It changes as new items come in to be displayed. She also utilizes the methods of Feng Shui to make the store reflect each change as part of a new whole.

“The gallery is one whole entity. It’s not ‘this is one thing, this is another.’ It’s all tied together.”

Future endeavors for Heavenly Things and its creator include bringing in more artists, especially those who focus on religious themes and mythology. Alexander is also looking for a volunteer to lead drum ceremony events at her gallery. This service would be free to the public and those interested in attending.

Heavenly Things also participates in the monthly Second Saturday gallery walk. On the second Saturday of every month, the art galleries from Beach Drive through Central Avenue open from 5:30-9 p.m. for the public to walk through and visit. Heavenly Things, located in Janus Landing and across from the Florida International Museum on First Avenue North. The art walks help to reflect Alexander’s idea of being a part of a greater community.

“People come into my store and tell me their stories. I meet the most interesting people, and I find satisfaction that my store offers something that the people like. I like that — that downtown people can be a community.”

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Higher education plans will not work

By Mike Hennessy
Nest assignment editor

The rumbling you've been feeling under your feet for the past few weeks may be a warning about another round of the works for Florida's higher education system.

It started when Sen. Don Sullivan (R) Seminole filed a bill in the legislature that would spin off the University of South Florida's satellite campuses in St. Petersburg and Sarasota into freestanding four-year universities. Under that bill, the St. Petersburg campus would become "Florida Suncoast University."

Sullivan's avowed purpose was to create more opportunities for Florida high school graduates to get college degrees. However, some cynical observers saw it as Sullivan's attempt to create an opportunity to become a college president after being cut off at the pass when he tried to put himself into play for the USF presidency after Betty Cantor resigned. It's a charge Sullivan denies, but certainly the timing is interesting.

The thought of trying to create a four-year university here at the Bayboro campus doesn't seem to be an idea that has captured widespread support. Given the change to individual governing boards for each university that seems bound to happen, starting a new university with a relative handful of students, no endowment, no research programs and no political clout hardly seems like a good idea. We have not even touched on the difficulties of setting up an independent infrastructure, retaining key faculty members, and luring new faculty members.

As it stands now, USF St. Petersburg is starting to become an important player in the education picture. Becoming a four-year campus under USF's umbrella will give high school seniors who live in Pinellas County an appealing option when it comes to choosing a college. Converting USF St. Petersburg to an independent four-year university is an idea whose time has not come, and given the political realities that rule higher education in Florida, may never come.

However, that's not the worst part of the proposal. Education funding in Florida has become something of a zero-sum game, where each university is fighting over a set amount of money. Under the current system the Regents are at least supposed to look out for the greatest good of the entire system. That may not always happen, but at least that's the plan.

The chancellor also plays an important role in setting policy and trying to create a coherent overall plan. Chancellor Adam Herbert's plan for dividing the state's universities into three tiers makes a lot of sense. Designating each university as level one, level two or level three with level one schools getting the lion's share of backing as research institutions may injure egos at level two and three schools, but it makes eminent sense.

With only so many research dollars to go around, it isn't practical to have 10 universities aspiring to national research reputations and scrambling for the same dollars for what could be overlapping research programs. Yet this is potentially what could happen if each university becomes independent.

Unhealthy as jockeying for position research institution status could be, it could pale beside the potential for athletic boondoggles. Does anyone remember what a mess the University of Central Florida football program faced not too many years ago? It was bleeding red ink and becoming a major embarrassment as well as a financial albatross around the neck of the university. Yet, there would be nothing to stop any other school from plunging in headfirst and creating a hugely expensive money pit. At least USF's leaders had the good sense to make sure their program had millions of dollars in the bank before they ever had a team take the field.

There are faults to Florida's current education system. However, the current system at least has some checks and balances and the ability to occasionally throw cold water on foolishness. If the Board of Regents is replaced with a "mega board" that is responsible for overseeing every aspect of education from K-12, community college and four-year universities, while individual boards control each university, there is nothing but trouble ahead.

Benjamin Franklin warned his fellow revolutionaries to hang together, lest they all hang separately. It's warning that resonates today. While individual heavy weight schools such as the University of Florida and Florida State might get more money and prestige in the short run, the long-term result can only be a weakening of Florida's higher education system.
Come out whenever you're ready

By Stacey Adams
Nest contributor

A friend and USF classmate came to me the other day with a stressed look on her face. (For purposes of anonymity we'll call her "Emily," my favorite female name.) I asked her what was wrong.

She started off by saying it was frustrating enough to not be "out" and openly gay to her family, but that it had become unbearable now that her girlfriend was pushing her to take that step. Emily then began to cry, and her words became lost in her tears. Imagine a 5-year-old girl trying to explain the horrors of a nightmare to her own parents.

"The monster... (sniffle) It... (sniffle) then I run... (sniffle) but... (sniffle-snot) his voice was so awful... Oh Mommy!"

After Emily finally calmed down, we discussed her fears and frustrations, and her hopes of being accepted by her friends and family. We eventually came to a resolution, and so far it has worked for her. But I am increasingly aware that what may be the right course of action for one is not always the right course for another.

Coming "out" — to anyone — should be a purely personal decision. People should determine for themselves when, where, and how to break out of the closet and scream to the world, "I'm gay!" (OK, you don't have to scream, but it sure does feel good after being silent for so many years!) Don't let anyone tell you differently.

Not all of us have loving, open-minded parents who accept us for who we are and don't judge us merely by whom we sleep with. I've been blessed with such parents, and for anyone who would like to borrow them, they're always willing to be on loan. Seriously.

(For the record, my mom was cool with it off the bat, but my dad took a while longer to come around. He's religious and a military officer — need I say more? But come around he did.)

Now, I'm not saying there hasn't been friction about some of my choices; like the 5-year-old having the nightmare. "It's your fault!" (a sniffle)

I never dated the one I was to marry — you know, my own race, religion, economic status, etc. Dad never saw eye-to-eye with Carlos, but the first woman I dated was a blue-eyed sandy-blonde with a great tan and, more importantly, a good job. Mother used to say, "I can't wait for you to tell your father! All the right coloring, just the wrong sex." Since they were divorced, my mom always liked to find a way to put a wrinkle in Dad's shorts.

As much as I thought Dad would never accept me, he did. Though I came out to the rest of my family, I had kept my homosexuality a secret from him for years. My siblings say he knew, but he never approached me about it, and I was not about to bring it up.

Then one day, I finally took the first step. Others had been urging me to come out to him for years, but this now felt like the right time. Here's how it happened.

My lover of two years and I had broken up. So, I called him and hysterically (a diversion that worked) began to tell him how much his little girl's heart was hurt and that she just wanted her daddy to accept you, your significant other. How sweet of him, but it's nothing like my relationship with my parents.

I'm fortunate for what I have and for how it all came to be. I believe everything happens when it's supposed to happen. So don't let anyone else determine these things for you. When you're ready, come out. If your parents aren't there to accept you, your "family" of the gay community will be.

And, to Emily: Hang in there. It's going to be all right, honey. It's their loss, not yours!"

So there we were, father and daughter, on the phone. (By the way, I was at work on my 45-minute dinner break.) After I finished blushing out the fact that I was gay — which I wish to this day could've come out more dignified — he said to me, "Well, it's her loss then. You're a great girl and anyone would be lucky to have you as their girlfriend."

I totally freaked! My dad actually used female pronouns when referring to my significant other. How sweet was that? In addition, he didn't flip out on me, disown me or do any of the things I thought he'd do. Amidst my grief, I also felt an incredible sense of relief.

I cherish that memory, and I also know there are many who don't have that kind of experience. One of my best friends wasn't nearly as lucky; her parents literally stopped talking to her, acting as if she didn't exist for over a year.

She's one of the most fabulous and successful people I know, and to think that her own parents couldn't see that her heart was breaking. They now speak to each other, but it's nothing like my relationship with my parents.

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And, to Emily: Hang in there. It's going to be all right, honey.

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Diary of a sea-swept adventure

USF student Toshi Sakama shares his experiences of participating in the 2000 49er World Championship, a 10-day event held in Sonora Bay, Mexico.

Do you think of sailing as a relaxed pastime? Cruising along with a fishing rod, listening to Jiminy Buffet, sipping on a fruity elixir with a mini-umbrella in it?

It's not always so relaxing.

On the first day David Fagen and I launched our skiff from powder white sand beaches, surrounded by majestic cliffs, into the aquamarine waters of the Pacific Ocean. One hundred yards from the beach, just past the soaring 150-foot cliffs, while trying to raise the spinnaker, we encountered a gust of wind. I thought, "Oh no," and as I scrambled off the trapeze wire trying to save us from capsizing and jumped onto the centerboard in order to keep the 2,500 mast from breaking on the shallow bottom. My skipper was unable to get off the wire, and he fell into the water. He swam towards me and said, "I ripped the mainsail badly when I fell on it." We sailed back to the beach where the spectators mockingly congratulated us—"Good one!" We had sailed only for 30 seconds.

As the final Olympic qualifier, this World Championship was a battle to determine whether each country would be one of the 18 teams to participate in the 49er class at the 2000 Olympic games in Sydney. Six spots would be decided in Sonora. (Not all teams were necessarily vying for Olympic spots; some like us, were)

The 49er weighs 208 pounds, and is balanced like a canoe with six-foot wide fibreglass and carbon fiber wings attached to the sides; meaning, there is no balance at all. A 49er skipper sails the skiff like you ride a bike: if you stop, you fall over. Amazingly, this light and small boat has a whopping 639 square feet of sail area, which means that when sailed with a spinnaker, the 49er is faster than wind velocity. Imagine this: You plant a 25-foot pole in the middle of your dining room table, to the top of which you attach a wire that you then hook onto a harness on your waist. You place your feet on the edges of the table and straighten out, so you st und suspended almost parallel to the horizon. Then your table moves at 20-30 miles per hour depending on the breeze. That's what sailing a 49er feels like.

Now imagine actually racing this craft. The 49er is a very physical boat. Sailors must be strong, and cardiovascularly fit. Since the boat is so fast, boat handling and speed are emphasized. Sailors are more concerned with going around the course as quickly and cleanly as possible, like stock car racing. Strategy and tactics take a back seat to boat handling in this light and quick boat. Because of the high speeds and potential for injury, an ambulance waited on the beach.

Standing on the beach, the winds whipped up a sandstorm so the grains painfully buffeted against bare skin. In one masoch display, one American team screamed at the overwhelming breeze "Is that all you got?" Two minutes later the wind gods silenced their bravado by snapping their mast. At one point, ten boats were overturned on the course; it looked like a graveyard.

During one race, the Brazilian team fouled us by colliding with us while we were sailing upwind and they were coming downwind. We capsized and became entangled in their rigging; Luckily, we got out of this collision with no damage. At one point, we noticed that blood was Planting 12-foot bottles in the boat was a particular favorite. That's a real, good team since '97, but

The view of Sonora Bay, Mexico where USF student and world-class sailor, Toshi Sakama, participated in the 2000 49er World Championships.

The sunrises were spectacular. When I opened the curtains of my room's balcony, I was greeted by the indescribable orange hue of the sunrise over the beach. Doesn't sound too bad, does it? Most would trade places with me until they had to hang precariously from a wire and then plunge suddenly into 60-degree water at 25 miles per hour. Then they spend five minutes polling with all their might trying to right a capsized boat so that their arms become so sore that they can barely lift a 12-ounce bottle of beer.

USF crew stuns Naval Academy

By Doug White

Steve Laug, USF sailing coach, thinks his team's performance at the Intercollegiate Sailing World Championship was a godsend to the university sailing program.

"He's probably right."

The underdog Bulls won their first international trophy by upsetting the Naval Academy, a perennial powerhouse, in April 2 in Annapolis.

"I really was amazed," Lang said. "I believe we sailed to our absolute optimum potential. We could not have made better choices or sailed any better.

USF's 10-person crew advanced to the major offshore boating championship by defeating Massachusetts Maritime, the Coast Guard Academy, and St. Mary's College before meeting the mighty Naval Academy.

"You can think of it as an upset," Lang said. "They (the Naval Academy) have a varsity offshore program, they were sailing on their home waters and knew the currents, and they have a world-famous coach." (Naval Academy coach Brad Dillenham was a tenacious for the America's Cup team.)

"The college sailing world is somewhat in shock. I think we were invited on an afterthought," said Lang, who has been with the program since 1994. "It backfired a little.

Chris Rond has been on the team for three years. He said that the impressive win is especially important to him because he's graduating in May. "It was very, very exciting," Rond said. "It's the first trophy we've ever won. It was cool that we did so well. We talked about it for hours afterwards because we were so excited.

With the victory, USF can expect to move up in the national rankings. Sailing World magazine ranked the co-ed team 20th in the nation, but Lang expects the victory to give the Bulls an appreciable boost.

But more importantly, he said the win gives the team confidence.

"It's a moral boost," Lang said. "USF has had a real good team since '97, but we've had an inferior confidence. This is a wake-up call that USF could be a contender among the great teams.

Members of USF’s trophy-winning squad are Roland, Jamey Rabbott, Genoa Grifin, Naida Saaman, Mike Hesse, Nate Vallado, Angie Santamore, Doug Neiman, Randy Moss and Jim Cook.

Since we were sailing at Club Med, the onshore entertainment was quite amusing. Limbo parties, volleyball, and salsa dancing continued on into the night. Ping-Pong was a particular favorite. There was even a costume party. I went as a drunken sailor. The communal buffet meals were a golden to tired and hungry sailors.

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So, do you still think sailing is a relaxing, stress-free sport?

(Edwin S. Zaiser contributed to this article.)