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University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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"Four out of five women make less than men on the full professor level," Muller said. "The top paid 15 percent of women earn about $81,000, and the top 15 percent of men earn $102,000." Vice provosts, she added, earn $12,000 less per year than males of the same rank.

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Features

Writing conference delivers an abundance of talent

Kriste Reiter
Editor

She spoke as if she was sitting at a cozy kitchen table, sharing thoughts over a cup of coffee. But the table had seats for over 400 and the woman speaking was Joyce Carol Oates, twice nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature, who shared her thoughts on life and writing during the keynote address Feb. 4 at the 27th Florida Suncoast Writers' Conference held on the USF-St. Petersburg campus.

"It's a slow, stubborn and dugged process," Oates said pushing her large glasses closer on her face, and looked out to an audience of all ages and all levels of writing experience. With a powerful voice that contradicts her thin, seemingly frail frame, Oates set the tone for the remaining two days of workshops, panel discussions, poetry readings and autograph signings by some of the nation's most prominent writers.

"You learn by going where you are headed," Oates said, encouraging writer's of all levels to value themselves and their work. "Writing is discovery," the prolific author, playwright, poet, critic and essayist continued. "(We must have) faith in the discovery and the evolution of the process."

Some in attendance were surprised by the atmosphere Oates created as she detailed her personal struggles with written and spoken word.

Poet laureate takes on poetry project

Tom Foster
Next Contributor

United States Poet Laureate, Robert Pinsky is undertaking a vast nationwide poetry project for the end of the millennia. Pinsky detailed the project Friday night at the 27th Florida Suncoast Writers' Conference. "The Favorite Poem Project" will allow Americans to read aloud their favorite poems and record the event for posterity.

Applicants are asked to choose a poem which is especially meaningful to them. Selected applicants will be videotaped reading their favorite poems and the entire project will be submitted to the Library of Congress in April, 2000. The purpose, Pinsky said, will be to create an audio and video archive of Americans "saying aloud their favorite poems."

Pinsky pointed out that poetry, unlike other art forms, can be performed by everyone. "The culmination of art is an artist performing it." Pinsky said, referring to painting or playing a instrument. Those arts are artist specific, he said, but "the culmination of poetry is everyone." Because "poems come alive in the human voice, the medium is the audience's body," Pinsky said. So many people have the love for the art, poetry is for everyone.

Applicants also need to write one or two sentences about why the poem is especially meaningful to them. Pinsky hopes "each person will bring in something they consider a treasure," adding that we are the caretakers of the poetry of the 20th century. "The performance of poetry is an art," Pinsky said. Going on to say that he will see it as that as many different poems as possible will be represented. Any personality type is welcomed to submit favorite poems, Pinsky said, adding "there are great works of art produced this way" and "rules" for this project, "don't exist."

Pinsky teaches in the graduate writing program at Boston University and is the author of several volumes of poetry.

A LIBRARY OF CONGRESS DITCERNENTIAL PROJECT

Library of Congress

"The library will use the project to build collections of poems," Pinsky said. "We have the Boston collection," he continued. "The library has a strong commitment to this project." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems." Pinsky said that the library will use the project to build collections of poems, and that they will be "building a national collection of poems."

The Favorite Poem Project is sponsored by Readers Digest and the National Endowment for the Arts. Applications are available online at http://www.favoritepoem.org.

Women interested in submitting their favorite poem can also fill out the form above and mail it to: Robert Pinsky, The Favorite Poem Project, Creative Writing Program, Boston University, 236 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215. Or visit favoritepoem.org.
Students get special tax break from IRS

Frances Boyle
Nest Contributor

Wondering why USF sent you a tax form a couple of weeks ago? Most students didn’t have a clue. Like them, you may have glanced to see if you owed them money, stuck it away in the file cabinet, or wadded it up and made a 3-point toss.

Why does the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) want to know if you’re at least part-time, a graduate student? The answer is money — up to $1,500 per student.

Not to fill out U.S.F.’s pocket, but to make a bulge in yours. An early spring break granted by the Federal Government in the form of new tax credits for college students. If the 1098-T form you received is history, it doesn’t matter. That form only acknowledged to IRS your student status. What you will need is a completed Education Tax Credit (form 8863) attached to your 1998 return.

The Education Tax Credit is really a combination of two, The Hope and the Lifetime Learning credits. Both utilize tuition and required fees (such as lab fees) that you, your parents, or your spouse paid to the college in 1998. You simply list your name, social security number, and the amount of tuition expenses paid.

Following the formulas and moving the deduction to page two of the main tax form, you subtract the nonrefundable tax credits directly from any taxes due. If your credits are more than your taxes, you don’t get to keep the excess. You can, however, get the entire refund of any withholding taxes you had paid in. The form isn’t complicated as long as you know which part and tax credit apply. Since each student can elect for each tax year only one of the credits, your class ranking and whether or not you attend classes part-time or more determines the best selection.

The Hope credit is generally the better deal, but it contains more stipulations. Unlike the Hope credit, the total tuition paid after June 30, 1998 for all students that apply in the family designates the Lifetime Learning Credit base. It’s also limited -- to a nonrefundable credit of 20 percent of the first $5,000 paid.

As with all tax forms, a few “ifs” apply: If you’re claimed as a dependent on someone else’s (your parents’) return, they’re the ones that claim the credit even if you paid the tuition. If any amounts were received from scholarships or educational assistance, they need to be subtracted from your tuition before calculating the credits.

If you take a tax-free withdrawal from an education IRA, you can’t take an education credit. If you earn over $40,000, single, or $80,000, married, (not the money problems of most students) the credits are reduced.

Since you can’t file the credit using an EZ form, you’ll need to pick up either a 1040A or 1040 form, and a Form 8863. Both can be obtained either online at www.irs.ustreas.gov -- by phone 1-800-829-3676 -- or going to the main, or USF’s Poynter Library’s reference desk and making copies of the forms you need. (Copies are acceptable to IRS.)

If you’re contacting IRS or visiting the main library, you might also want to ask for Publication 970. It contains further explanations of the education credits along with other benefits currently available for higher education. Already filed and spent your refund? Don’t wait to claim the credits next year. You can file an amended return (Form 1040X) within the next three years and still get the education breaks of 1998.

On January 29, ground breaking took place on the USF-St. Petersburg campus for the Florida Center for Teachers. Through the combined efforts of the Florida Humanities Council (FHC) and the university, the project will soon become a reality. Upon completion, the center will provide extensive resources for the FHC’s continuing mission to support and encourage teachers and educational ventures.
Voice how your money is spent

Lorri Helfand
Assistant Editor

Did you know that you have a voice in what improvements are made on campus? The fact is that by paying your tuition you are contributing to the Capital Improvement Trust Fund (CITF) that is dedicated especially for the enhancement of student facilities.

According to Dr. Stephen Ritch, director of student affairs, $2.44 per credit hour of each student's tuition is set aside for CITF. Previously those funds were disbursed approximately every three years in amounts equivalent to campus contributions. Recently, however, he says funds are bonded, allowing more money upfront for CITF. Previously those funds were disbursement of each student's tuition is set aside for study areas, a lounge, a TV room, and a game room.

Dr. Ritch would also like to see the campus master plan funded by creating an outdoor campus core or quad. Currently, Ritch chairs a standing campus committee of CITF that is comprised of faculty, staff, and students. This committee is dedicated to researching needed improvements and bringing them to the attention of CITF.

The CITF committee welcomes student feedback and encourages those interested in campus improvements to contact Dr. Ritch or Erin Dunn, the president of the student government.

THE CROW'S NEST

Featuring

February 16 - March 1, 1999

Words on Wellness

Sandy Blood
Health Educator

"Smoking can lead to death sooner than you expected"

Deadlines near for scholarships

It's time to apply for Scholarships and Financial Aid for next Academic year 1999-2000. Here are some scholarships available:

- National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) $500.
- St. Petersburg Women's Rotary Club $1,000.
  Application Deadline: March 1, 1999.
- St. Petersburg Women's Club Scholarship $1,000.
- Florida State Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), $500.
  Application Deadline: June 1, 1999.
- Theodore R. and Vivian M. Johnson Scholarship Program. $500-$5,000.
  For dependent children of USF employees.

A scholarship booklet with approximately 50 scholarships listed is also available. The deadline for the St. Pete campus scholarships is March 1, 1999. In addition, Tampa campus has a scholarship brochure with scholarships available to all USF students. Their deadline is March 15, 1999.

Don't forget to send off your Financial Aid application right away for Fall 1999-Spring 2000. March is USF's deadline to be considered for the small pool of additional Financial Aid that USF has in the USF Grant.

February is The American Heart Association's Healthy Heart Month. February is also the month we celebrate Valentine's Day. A holiday symbolized by cupid, love, hugs, kisses, and that ever present red heart. It seems to be a perfect time to stop and reflect on the health of our own heart and what can be done to keep our heart and cardiovascular system functioning at its optimal capacity.

It's important to recognize that there are both modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors for heart disease. Non-modifiable risk factors are those things that we have no control over such as our age, sex, race, and family history. Modifiable risk factors are those things that can be changed or controlled. These include high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Certain types of these medical conditions can be controlled with diet and exercise; however, some may need medications to control. At any rate, you need to be aware of what your personal levels are and then take the appropriate action required to correct the condition. Other modifiable risk factors are physical inactivity, how you handle stress, alcohol consumption, and direct or indirect exposure to cigarette/tobacco smoke.

Tobacco smoking is extremely risky behavior. Scientists believe smoking promotes heart disease in several ways. They believe it speeds up the development of atherosclerosis, reduces the level of HDL (good cholesterol), and may also encourage platelets to clump together which can lodge in an artery. The good news is that your risk of heart disease begins as soon as you quit smoking.

Quitting smoking isn't as easy as it sounds, this I realize. Just about a year ago my uncle who is 72 was rushed to the hospital with severe chest pains. He works as a foreman for a cattle ranch and has been for many years. He is very active and does not drink any alcohol. He does, however, smoke and has smoked since he was a boy. He started smoking before we even knew about the negative health consequences. He ended up having triple bypass surgery and spent weeks in the hospital recovering. He was very sick and aware that he would never smoke again. He bought a treadmill, and I chuckle when I visualize my cowboy uncle trading in his boots for sneakers and walking for his azerne exercise. I spent Thanksgiving with him and his family and was shocked when I saw him smoking. He said he picked up a cigarette one day and that was the end of that. He's trying to keep it to a minimum but he's having a hard time controlling this horrible habit. I'm hoping he'll try again and this time be successful.

The American Heart Association is a nationwide health organization that provides information and educational resources about heart disease and stroke. The association also supports research to find new treatments and cures for these diseases.

Smoking can cause blood vessels carrying blood to leg and arm muscles to narrow.

- Smoking increases the risk of heart disease.
- Smokers' risk of heart attack is twice that of nonsmokers.
Urban legends surface again

John Ellis
Nest Contributor

It made the rounds: faxes, teletypes, word of mouth.

It was debunked around the nation and labeled an urban legend.

Then it hit the big time: Hollywood. Validated by big screen representation, an urban tale has resurfaced. But is it still a legend?

It goes like this: wanna-be gang members drive down the road in a car with its lights off and anyone who flashes their lights at them becomes the victim of a random act of violence.

Now, the legend is back in the Tampa Bay area. Memos describing the supposed "gang initiation" were distributed at USF-Bayboro last term.

The memo warned readers, "not to flash your lights at anyone to indicate their presence. It is not safe to express fears involved in encountering groups of gang members hidden under the surface." Dr. Elizabeth Bird, an anthropologist who teaches folklore at Eckerd College, said that the legend is akin to a modern "Little Red Riding Hood," but our wolves are gang members cruising the highways.

"This is a typical one, in that it's based on an idea that people who are acting kindly, get horrendously attacked and killed," Bird said. Fueling such legends is the appalling fact that there have been cases of gangs using random violence during initiation rituals.

"Urban legends often demonize groups that people suspect or fear, in this case it's gang members," Bird said. Homosexuals, minorities and celebrities are often the subjects of urban legends, according to Bird.

Members of the USF-Bayboro police force were reluctant to comment on the memo. One officer said that he would not advise anyone that it is a hoax in case life imitates legends.

Sergeant James Curtis of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Department, who wrote the memo, said he had heard about the movie "Urban Legend," and that he had been told that gangs were imitating the scene from the movie.

A plausible threat helps an urban legend survive. Now, cops have to worry about copy-cats changing a legend into reality.

"Our biggest concern is if some wanna-be gang-banger sees it and thinks, 'hey that's cool,' and imitates it. We're not worried about the phone calls, but we're worried about it really starting to happen," Howard said.

Gulfport gallery

Brandy Stark
Nest Contributor

The next time you drive down 22nd Avenue South through Gulfport, take a look at the houses along the street. When you spot a white cottage bedecked by a small white picket fence, marked notably by a neon green mailbox, you've reached a most unique house indeed. The Eugenia Sanders Gallery.

Once inside your eyes will be greeted by a wide collection of fine American art and crafts including jewelry, metal statues, glass sculptures and handmade candles. The prices are remarkably reasonable, an objective that owner Eugenia Sanders had in mind when she opened the gallery doors.

The Gulfport gallery, in Sanders' fourth, and, she says, last, Previously, she owned a gallery in St. Petersburg and has spent a lifetime working with art. Sanders is a master painter and received a master's degree in pottery from the Massachusetts State College of Art. Many of Sanders own creations line the walls of the gallery.

Sanders said she selects the art for her gallery based on one criterion: the palette. She chooses artwork in terms of public preferences. Throughout the gallery, she displays a variety of pieces suitable to all tastes and interests.

An interesting side note about the gallery is the design of the interior. Sanders arranged the gallery according to the Chinese art of decorating called Feng Shui. Sanders followed the Feng Shui philosophy that the placement of objects influences the "feel" of a room positively or negatively. Using this technique, Sanders feels confident that each artist's work is displayed in the best complementary manner possible. Her gallery gives off an air of lightness and openness inviting art patrons to delve deep into every corner of the store to discover every treasure.

The gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. If you are interested in touring the gallery at other times, you can call the store for an appointment. Sanders will be more than happy to alter her hours for your convenience.

You can find the Eugenia Sanders Gallery at 3222 Gulfport Blvd. South (also called, 22nd Avenue South). For more information call 527-5078. Be sure to ask about upcoming events and art shows for the spring.

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Learning is resoundingly positive, focusing on my ongoing relationship with dumped him to rekindle my relationship the ways I change my life to accommodate Krista Reiner my smoking habit.

more like a physical condition over which killing myself. my kind before. I'm one of those people there's enough time remaining for not one, than I am. And in my heart of hearts I wasn't worth the struggle to quit. I don't think I'm proud of my addiction. They ask, as if I don't know I'm fixing it. I was clean for two weeks, with the aid of the patch. The guy offered, but two cigarettes. Then I feel relaxed.

Confessions of a diehard smoker

Krista Reiner Editor

Hello, my name is Krista and I'm a nicotine addict. You may have met one of my kind before. I'm one of those people lurking in doorways, hiding my habit from the condensing looks of passersby. "Do you know what you're doing to your lungs?" they ask, as if I don't know I'm killing myself. I am not one of those social smokers either. There are times when I find comfort in my on-going relationship with cigarettes. They always deliver what they promise and never expect me to be more than I am. And in my heart of hearts I know I miss them when they're gone.

Once I tried to quit for the sole reason of impressing a guy. I was clean for two weeks, with the aid of the patch. The guy wasn't worth the struggle to quit. I dumped him to rekindle my relationship with Philip Morris.

Is my addiction a disease? Sort of, but more like a physical condition over which I hide. My dis-ease is found in the ways I change my life to accommodate my smoking habit. For example, I only have a half hour to eat lunch. I inhale my food so that there's enough time remaining for not one, but two cigarettes. Then I feel relaxed.

"Is this change an improvement or a detriment to quality education?"

Like the student, the university also experiences a mixed bag of results. Sometimes the university will benefit financially. In certain cases, distance learning classes house the largest enrollment numbers of all classes offered. These huge tuition blocks offer splendid profits for classes that only support one professor's income and the cost of the university owned television studio. The avoided expenses of classroom usage, lighting and air conditioning, and a wear and tear on desks and classroom fixtures, result in higher profits and low expenses. In some distance learning classes, the same videotapes are used on an ongoing basis, even further enhancing the profit picture. But there are downsides for the university as well. Lectures can easily have a canned presentation. It is simply impossible to duplicate the experience of a live lecture. It is also impossible to ignore the student that would benefit from being able to understand difficult concepts by immediately asking their professor for clarification. While viewing a pre-recorded lecture, a student may not be able to locate their professor at that time to resolve questions that arise. Students wishing to obtain assistance from their professor need only offer, for this convenience can backfire, leaving the student in a difficult structured to avoid confusion as the semester progresses. The production studios at USF are well equipped and very narrow window of opportunity to do so.

So while the economics of distance learning are resoundingly positive, troubling questions remain regarding the quality of the education offered. Can the university find new and innovative ways to enhance the quality of the educational experience for the student? Yes it can, and USF gives clear indications that it strives to do just that.

Distance learning classes have a unique lecture structure that attempts to compensate for the lack of a live professor. The class syllabus tends to be very structured to avoid confusion as the semester progresses. The production studios at USF are well equipped and very narrow window of opportunity to do so.

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Currents

ON CAMPUS

Feb. 16 Workshop: "Preparing for Exams", Noon-1 p.m., DAV 112 Call 553-1129.

Feb. 16 St. Pete City Council Forum hosted by the League of Women Voters, 5:30 p.m., CAC.

Feb. 17 Workshop: "Reading for Retention", Noon-1 p.m., DAV 112 Call 553-1129.

Feb. 17 Workshop: "Effective Note Taking", 5-6 p.m., DAV 112, Call 553-1129.

Feb. 17 Campus Crusade for Christ, 5-6 p.m., DAV 112, Call 553-1129.


Feb. 18 Workshop: "Career Decision Making Part II", 5-6 p.m., DAV 112, Call 553-1129.

Feb. 19 Workshop: "Career "Outlook Taking", 5-6 p.m., DAV 112, Call 553-1129.

Feb. 22 Lecture: Old Tombs & New Mysteries: Recent Archeological Discoveries in N. Peru; speaker John Verano, forensic anthropologist from Tulane University; 6:30 p.m., CAC, Call 553-3438.

Feb. 23 Harboride Productions Meeting, 3:00 p.m., CAC 133.

Feb. 23 Workshop: "Effective Communication", 5-6 p.m., DAV 112, Call 553-1129.

Feb. 24 Lecture: Religion & Modernity in America: The Debate over Secularization; speaker James C. Cavenaugh, professor of sociology at USF; 6:30 p.m., DAV 130, RSVP at 727-553-3171, Free and open to the public.

Feb. 26-27 Resume Critique Week DAV 112, Call 553-1129 for more info.

Feb. 26 Lecture: "10 Years - 30,000 miles & a trip around the World," Dot & Chuck Sollinger present the tales of their 10 year journey. The presentation begins at 6:02 p.m. in the Baysboro Cafe.

Mar. 2 Anthropology Club Meeting, 5:15 p.m., CAC 200.

OFF CAMPUS

Feb. 27 Swing Sounds of Ray Anthony & Count Basie, 8 p.m., dance lessons at 6:30 p.m., $11 advance, $12 at the door. Held at the historic Coliseum located at 553 4th Ave. N. Call 727-892-8202 for tickets and info.

Mar. 1 & 2 Auditions for "The Museum of Fine Arts 255 Beach Dr. NE. Call 727-896-2667 for info.

Feb. 22 Lecture: "Magic Carpet to Ancient Adventures": 9:30 a.m. at The Museum of Fine Arts 255 Beach Dr. NE. Doors open at 7 p.m., concert at 8 p.m. Call 821-7466 for info.

Feb. 26 Joan Baez at Jannus Landing. Located at 16 2nd St. N. St. Petersburg, Sun. doors open at 7 p.m., concert at 8 p.m. Call 821-7466 for info.

Feb. 27 WMNF 88.5 Community Radio presents 25th anniversary concert at 8 p.m. Tampa Theatre, located at 711 N. Franklin Street, Tampa.

First Friday of each month, Oct.-May. Get Down Town Music Series, Local bands. 5-9 p.m. In the QuARTer, 5-9 p.m. Call 813-866-2059 for info.

Feb. 28 The Museum of Fine Arts 255 Beach Dr. NE. Call 727-896-2667 for info.

Feb. 17 Film: Against the Odds: The Artists of the Harlem Renaissance, 3 p.m., at The Museum of Fine Arts, 255 Beach Dr. NE. Call 727-896-2667 for info.

Feb. 18 People, Politics, Power Advocacy Workshop, presented by the League of Women Voters, hosted by former state Sen. Joan Malboeuf, 7-10:30 a.m., held at Bayfront St. Anthony's Health Education Center, 100 Second Ave N., $20. Call 727-821-4069 for reservations.


Feb. 22 Lecture: "In Search of Ancient Adventures", 9:30 a.m. at The Museum of Fine Arts 255 Beach Dr. NE. Doors open at 7 p.m., concert at 8 p.m. Call 821-7466 for info.

Feb. 22 Lecture: "Carpet to Ancient Adventures": 9:30 a.m. at The Museum of Fine Arts 255 Beach Dr. NE. Doors open at 7 p.m., concert at 8 p.m. Call 821-7466 for info.

Mar. 2 Anthrology Club Meeting, 5:15 p.m., CAC 200.

Feb. 18-70 audition for "The Museum of Fine Arts 255 Beach Dr. NE. Call 727-896-2667 for info.

Feb. 17 Film: Against the Odds: The Artists of the Harlem Renaissance, 3 p.m., at The Museum of Fine Arts, 255 Beach Dr. NE. Call 727-896-2667 for info.

Mar. 2 Anthropology Club Meeting, 5:15 p.m., CAC 200.

Feb. 26 Lecture: "10 Years - 30,000 miles & a trip around the World," Dot & Chuck Sollinger present the tales of their 10 year journey. The presentation begins at 6:02 p.m. in the Baysboro Cafe.

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Feb. 28 The Museum of Fine Arts 255 Beach Dr. NE. Call 727-896-2667 for info.

Feb. 25 March 23 Children's Class: "In Search of Ancient Peru"; an archeological dig. Classes begin at 3:30 p.m... Held at The Museum of Fine Arts, 255 Beach Dr. NE., Call 727-896-2667 for info.

Feb. 25 March 7 Play: "Amorous Ambassador", held at St. Petersburg Little Theatre. The theatre is located at 4025 31st Street S., Call 813-866-1973 for tickets.

Feb. 20 May St. Petersburg Museum of History exhibit of the collections of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Mon. Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. $5 for adults, $4 for seniors, $2 for children. 335 2nd Ave., NE. Call 727-894-1052 for info.

Circle K Presents: "The Great Book Challenge". This is a book collection for distribution in homeless shelters and children’s homes statewide. Call 544-9482.

Every weekend for six weekends from Early March through Mid April: Renaissance Festival Central Park at E. Bay Dr., Largo. Call 727-586-5423.

Feb. 17-28 Florida State Checker Tournament, 8 a.m.-8 p.m., DAV 130.

Feb. 24-28 APCA National Conference.

Feb. 27-28 Religious Studies Workshop: "Religious Beliefs and Economic Behavior", 8:30 a.m.-4:45 p.m. held by U.S.F. department of Religious Studies, with support of Betty Castor and in commemoration of Black History Month.

Feb. 23-24 Children's Class: "In Search of Ancient Peru"; an archeological dig. Classes begin at 3:30 p.m... Held at The Museum of Fine Arts, 255 Beach Dr. NE., Call 727-896-2667 for info.

Feb. 25 March 7 Play: "Amorous Ambassador", held at St. Petersburg Little Theatre. The theatre is located at 4025 31st Street S., Call 813-866-1973 for tickets.

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PAGE 7
Falun gong exercises both body and soul

Akira Hibino
Nest Contributor

Attorney David Lee has no health insurance, not because he can't afford it. Rather, he believes he is protected from illness thanks to Falun Gong, a Chinese system of mental and physical exercises.

"Cultivation means to improve your body and mind," Lee said. The form of the exercise "is similar to Tai Chi and Yoga."

Falun (law wheel) Gong (cultivation energy), founded by Li Hongzhi, consists of five sets of exercises. Three of them are physical exercises including slow and smooth movements. The other two are mental exercises involving standing and sitting meditation, remaining still for extended period of time.

"In the mental exercises, you have to behave according to true characteristics of the universe," Lee said. Three words express the natures of the universe. Zhen (truthfulness), Shan (compassion), and Ren (forbearance). If you assimilate yourself to the natures, "your moral quality grows," Lee said. "If the quality grows, you are going to gain the cultivation energy. The higher the moral level is, the higher the energy is," he added.

Lee instructs a free Falun Gong class every Wednesday from 6 to 7 p.m. in CAC 109. No experience is required to start, and people of all ages are invited.

Compared to martial arts, which primarily concentrates on the physical body, Falun Gong also improves on a person's moral quality. "You can still do this even after you get old," he said.

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One student noticed the difference of Falun Gong from martial arts. Patrick Plaskett, a graduate of USF, said martial arts directs energy to outside of body. "This (Falun Gong) is balancing all energy inside your body," said Plaskett.

Bi Peng, instructor, said while martial arts require special training and might cause injury, Falun Gong isn't dangerous.

Before starting to learn Falun Gong, instructor Peng had allergies that required her to take pills every morning. But, exercising Falun Gong helped to heal the allergy. "It shocked me," she said. "Then I started to practice regularly." The exercise affects her daily work. "If one day I don't practice, I get tired while working. I feel stressful," said Peng, a coordinator of special education at USF.

"But if I exercise, I can be calmer because I can relax. I feel more energy. So I don't feel tired after work."

The students also receive benefits from the cultivation. Jeff McConnell, a massage therapist, who have learned Tae Kwon Doe and Kung Fu, said, Falun Gong "strengthens the energy in body. That makes you healthy and strong. My energy gets stronger."

For more information stop by the Campus Activities Center and/or try and attend one of the free classes.