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Rooms for Rent
A look at the USF housing issue
By Doug White
Activist to speak on ethics of Native American images

Activist and artist Charlene Teters will discuss inappropriate use of American Indian images in sports and media in a talk entitled "Heroes and Savages: Native Images From the Cradle to the Grave" on Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. at the Campus Activities Center.

Teters is a professor at the Santa Fe Institute of Art and senior editor of Native Artists Magazine. Her history of public challenges is the subject of a nationally aired award-winning documentary entitled In Whose Honor by Jay Rosenblatt.

This lecture is free and open to the public.

Community History Fair combines heritage and baseball

The Third Annual Community History Fair on Feb. 12 is designed to celebrate and preserve the heritage of St. Petersburg's African-American communities.

Free food, exhibits and kids activities will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Enoch Davis Center, 1111 18th Ave. S.

The James Oliver Field at Campbell Park (across from Tropicana Field) will be the site of the first Negro League Game since the 1960s. The game, which pits the St. Petersburg Pelicans versus the Tampa Black Smokers, starts at 4 p.m.

Game organizer Tom English said veterans of the two teams will participate.

Library writing center to help students

USF-St. Petersburg students in need of writing help for class assignments can find it in room 248 of the university's Postyer Library.

The writing center, with hours Monday, Wednesday and Friday, offers assistance to students on planning and drafting papers, finding document sources and understanding the rules of grammar and punctuation.

The center is open 1 to 5 p.m. on Mondays, 2 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays and 12:30 to 3 p.m. Fridays.

Michelle Bauer, a graduate teaching assistant with seven years experience in college writing, said the center welcomes walk-ins but students with appointments will be seen first.

To schedule an appointment, e-mail Bauer at mcbauer@mindspring.com

By Mike Hennessy
Nest assignment editor

There will be drama on the bay this spring and USF students are invited aboard.

USF-St. Petersburg is offering students a unique chance to learn about theater and gain college credit by taking a course taught by members of the Caravan Stage Company who live aboard the sailing ship, Amara Zee. The boat is currently docked on campus at the Florida Marine Institute.

Degree or non-degree seeking students can participate in the three-week performance and theatrical skills course. The class, held in the evenings, starts Feb. 16 and runs through March 4.

The workshop has the support of USF Theater Department Chairman Dr. Dennis Colandra, who boasts the Caravan's performances are "very good and very professional."

Since 1997 the Canadian-based troupe has been sailing the East Coast of the U.S. and into Canada offering what it calls "environmental theater."

Artistic director Paul Kirby said the term has a double meaning. The troupe uses the ship as its main stage with lighting and sound, but uses whatever space is available.

"It would be like going into a regular theater, tearing out all the seats, putting the audience on stage and staging the performance all around them," Kirby said.

The other meaning deals with the content of their plays. The company only performs original plays or adaptations that deal with environmental issues.

To register for the workshop, call 553-1142.

Floating classroom sets sail

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The Crow's Nest

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The Crow’s Nest
"If I was a student, nothing would tick me off more than knowing I struggled and worked on a paper while the guy next to me is laughing and saying 'Yeah, I bought this last night with my dad's MasterCard.'"

—Dr. Tom Mieczkowski

The age-old practice of cheating has gone hi-tech, and in some cases, high priced, with slacker students now able to buy term papers over the Internet.

"The Web is a world of troubles and a history paper that I'm sure would tick me off more than knowing I struggled and worked on a paper while the guy next to me is laughing and saying 'Yeah, I bought this last night with my dad's MasterCard.'" said Lersch. "I almost don't want to give a writing assignment just to avoid plagiarized papers."

Luckily for Lersch the Internet also offers teachers a way to catch students who buy papers.

"What gives people confidence in the system is a reasonable measure of integrity. We don't want to ruin a person's future, but we tend to take it a bit more seriously," Lersch said. "We have students who want to go to law school or work as police officers and probation officers. In those cases your paper is everything."

Because many of their students are training for a career in the law, criminology faculty members take plagiarism more seriously than other departments in arts and sciences. It is department policy to give a guilty student an "F" for the entire course and not just the assignment.

"A number of our graduates are going to work in the justice system," Mieczkowski said. "What gives people confidence in the system is a reasonable measure of integrity."

I say, 'They tend to wait to the last minute and then they get themselves behind the eight ball and start to panic a bit.'

Cohen said that course requirements intended to produce well rounded students may have backfired and led unscrupulous students to downloading papers off the Internet.

"If Mieczkowski is suspicious of a student he makes the student turn in the portfolio. Lersch requires all of her students to turn in their folders. She keeps a cardboard box of them next to her desk."

"It's pretty pathetic," Lersch said, waving one of the folders over her head, "but that's the level we're at now."

"It's our obligation to be vigilant," Mieczkowski said. "I see my role as protecting the integrity of the honest student."
USF housing not in ‘foreseeable future’

Administrators looking into off-campus alternatives for incoming underclassmen

By Doug White  
Nest co-editor

The identity of USF-St. Petersburg and the surrounding area will begin to change this fall when doors open to underclassmen for the first time in campus history. University officials hope to enroll 100 to 150 new lower level students this August. By Fall 2003 the goal is to have 500 freshmen and sophomores on campus. The pressing question is: Without residence halls, where will they live? This is just one of many issues that administrators need to address as USF-St. Petersburg begins to make the transition to a four-year university.

When the school received approval to become a lower level institution last semester, acting USF president Thomas Tighe sent a memo to Dean Bill Heller summarizing the agreement made by former president Betty Castor as part of USF's efforts to create a four-year university. St. Petersburg will not develop residence halls on campus in the short term, acting Regents.

"As part of the agreement, we have no immediate plans to build housing on campus so what we are trying to do now is find housing proximate to the campus," Heller said. "The problem is that some are not as affordable as students need. We are trying to help as much as possible."

While the university cannot act as an approving or referral agency, Heller said contact information for student-friendly landlords is made available to students. According to Heller, campus officials have found about a dozen apartment complexes within walking distance to campus that would be appropriate for students.

"There are apartment owners who agreed to be sympathetic and welcome students," Heller said.

Student affairs director Steve Ritch has met with city officials and local landlords to explore possible off-campus housing options. Ritch said USF is looking into creating partnerships with some private apartment complexes. In addition, Ritch also said plans are in the works to develop a more active housing office on campus. He hopes to talk with student government about funding a housing office that would stay in close contact with landlords. He would like the office to eventually be able to issue referrals and approvals.

"It's a big step, but we're not ready," Ritch said. "Right now we tell students to rent at your own caution and we give them a list of some student-friendly places."

Marie Stirling, who owns and manages several area buildings, considers herself pro-student. Stirling said she will rent to students, but will also continue to closely screen younger tenants by conducting thorough background checks.

Stirling has some concerns about renting to underclassmen but thinks having more youth in the city would be good for St. Petersburg. "I don't think kids are bad," she said. "It would be a positive thing to get fresh blood in here. I don't care if they have a ring in their eyebrow or tattoos on their left arm. We need an infusion of newness, a breath of fresh air. I welcome the activity."

But like Heller and Ritch, Stirling suspects some owners will increase rates because they know students have limited options.

"Students are stuck," Stirling said. "Some owners will charge whatever the going market will bear. USF should be careful about who they funnel their students to."

Mike Shimshoni, owner of Affordable Realty and Property Management, agrees. "Students are limited with money for housing, so we work with them and offer a plan they'll be comfortable with," said Shimshoni, who manages several properties on 22nd Avenue South. While monetary matters are a concern, security issues are of primary importance to younger students and their parents. USF police sergeant Alan Heddon said the department is willing to conduct security checks for students moving into a new house or apartment.

"We would procedurally bring them up to speed," he said.

Heddon said campus police would check area crime statistics and suggest what type of locks would best serve the student. The police also distribute an Apartment Guide to Safety publication.

And while USF-St. Petersburg will not have resident assistants to help students adjust to college life, Perry Kaly, a campus psychologist, said the counseling center will provide support services to students having difficulty making the transition from high school to college.

Ritch conducted interviews with students in the Learning Community, a special program comprised of 50 underclassmen. He reports that at least 50 percent of the students he spoke with were in favor of on-campus housing.

"It's apparent that students are very interested in housing on or close to campus," Ritch said. "There clearly is a pressure to have housing. Right now we're a little constrained by the agreement we made."

Some students hope the "foreseeable future" comes soon.

"Without having dorms I think the school is less of a draw," said Matt Caron, a 19-year-old student moving from Seminole to Carlton Towers, a campus neighbor. "Kids coming from out of the area need roommates and most apartments are too expensive," he said. "I think student government should approach apartment complexes about getting student rates. For being that close to campus some of the places aren't doing much to help out."

Heller said the need for on-campus housing will increase even more as the downtown area continues to grow. He believes projects like the $30 million BayWalk entertainment complex will attract droves of younger people.

"Downtown is changing," Heller said. "BayWalk should be complete by Fall 2001. It will be a major attraction for students."

"We are a small, beautifully located campus near a vibrant downtown, which is very much of interest to students," he said. "Right now the understanding is that we have no plans for housing, but as the campus grows and things develop that may change."
Chance meeting reunites old pals

By Bonnie Clark
Nest Contributor

I saw her first. A thin, red-haired young woman with the largest eyes in the room. She looked familiar.

She sat three seats away from me, along a conference table at USF St. Petersburg, as we waited for the start of a recent journalism seminar.

Before class began, the instructor had the red-head distribute forms for a student directory. At the bottom of the sheet it said: “Please return to Lorri Helfand.”

Then I knew. How many Lorri Helfands could there be?

I had known Lorri 30 years ago. We lived next door to her family. Lorri, her brother, another neighborhood girl and I played together nearly every day, at a time when our street was our entire world.

But I knew she hadn’t recognized me, so I filled out the sheet and attached a note: “I’m that Bonnie Clark. The one from across the street on Chesterfield Road in Rockville, Md.”

Lorri looked over the returned forms and when she got to mine, her head snapped up and those eyes studied my face.

“Really?” she mouthed to me. I nodded.

“Bonnie Clark?” she asked. I nodded. Then it was Lorri’s turn. “Well, I don’t know what to say because I’m just freaked out because she’s just told me she’s Bonnie Clark and we used to play together nearly every day, at a time when our street was our entire world.”

“Bonnie Clark?!” she asked. I nodded.

Then it was Lorri’s turn. “Well, I don’t know what to say because I’m just freaked out because she’s just told me she’s Bonnie Clark and we used to play together nearly every day, at a time when our street was our entire world.”

We exchanged memories, I recalled learning to ride my bike, with both of my parents running alongside me. I remember kids gathering on our large front porch. Lorri recalled “playing in the snow, sledging down the hill in the backyard.”

We raked leaves and did things outdoors because there weren’t any video games to keep us inside. One day our dishwasher flooded the house and the fire department came with a cool Dalmatian. I won’t forget that moment.

As we exchanged memories, I recalled seeing Lorri run down the hill in the snow, sledging down the hill in the backyard.”

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Lorri chimed in. “Going back to that neighborhood is actually a flood of memories. I remember my little friends. I remember you.”

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Lorri chimed in. “Going back to that neighborhood is actually a flood of memories. I remember my little friends. I remember you.”

And I remember you, my new-found old friend.

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What we think about love

The Ill-fated...
It was our first date. "Sam" planned the whole evening, telling me only to "wear something nice." After pocketing a $50 bill from his mom, we headed out to an upscale Japanese joint for dinner.

It was a busy night, being the holiday of lovers and all, so we ordered a couple of pricey exotic drinks complete with pink paper umbrellas.

After a couple of hours of fine dining — appetizers, sushi, high-priced entrees, dessert and a few more exotic drinks — the bill arrived. A look of horror slowly spread from Sam’s suddenly widening eyes to his dropping jaw. Perispiration droplets diligently formed on his upper lip.

Before my very eyes my Valentine’s face flashed to match those pink umbrellas perfectly. He didn’t have enough money. My wallet held three measly dollars. Even with my contribution, we were $5 short, NOT including tip.

Desperate, Sam sent me out to his Chevette to scrounge up any and all loose change. I think I found 30 cents.

Back inside, we debated. Should we tell them we’re short and offer to wash our own dishes? Should we ditch? Could I mold that pink umbrella into a make-do critter, slip it in one of our drinks, then scream indignantly for the manager and demand he comp the meal?

Just then Sam spotted someone he knew in the waiting area. He asked her for a ten spot. I couldn’t look her in the face.

She helped us out and we left an insulting two-dollar tip. And that, my friends, was the night Valentine’s Day lost its luster for me.

— Krista Reiner, Nest co-editor

The Single Guy...
I’ve never been a huge fan of Valentine’s Day, but this year I’m really not looking forward to the quasi-national holiday. For the first time in six years I do not have a Valentine. A friend told me that instead of aimlessly marching through Ybor City on the weekends, perhaps I should find a date through the infamous personal ad. Initially, I figured I’d write the ad in a typically sarcastic manner. However, my co-editor, a female, who hail’s from Venus, suggested that my odds of actually getting a date via personal ad would “increase exponentially” if I (being a Martian) took a more “sensitive and honest” approach. Who knew? Anyway, here we go.

VALENTINE’S DATE NEEDED — Sweet, single, shaved-headed 24-year-old student deemed “kinds attractive” and “somewhat smart” by respectable amount of women seeks good-hearted, open-minded cute female for dinner, dancing, and intellectual conversation on Feb. 14. Flowers, entertainment, meal and transportation will be provided.

If remotely interested in fun night-on-the-town with mildly charming gentleman, contact Doug at thenest99@hotmail.com or stop by Nest office by Valentine’s Day. If attempting to contact after Feb. 14, broken-hearted single guy can be located wandering Ybor’s 7th Avenue.

— Doug White, Nest co-editor

The Weekly Romantic...
My wife, Penny, and I don’t put much stock in one-day displays of affection. So we don’t make a big deal about being each others “Valentine.” With some degree of success, we’ve tried to be loving most days of the year. We’ve made it 29 years with that philosophy. But I have discovered a simple way to make her know that I care about her, and it’s kept me in good stead when I’ve done something to upset her. Each week I do the grocery shopping, and, thanks to Publix, I come home with a bouquet of flowers. It may not be the most romantic thing to do, but she always appreciates it. And believe me, it’s a lot better than a saying “I love you” with a Hallmark card and a Whitman’s Sampler on Feb. 14.

— G. Mike Killenberg, Professor of mass communications

The Sap...
Love . . . the international language; the key to a hopeless romantic’s heart and soul. I should know these things because I am the queen of hopeless romantics.

Sappy commercials make me cry and mushy love songs tug on my heart string.

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— Doug White, Nest co-editor

The Secret Admirer...
This Valentine’s season might be a good time for a public confession. I’ve carried a torch for a high profile media personality for years now. I was working the streets as a reporter for a new-defunct radio station when a lovely young woman came on the scene from Channel 13. Of course, I wasn’t the only man who went head over heels when Kelly Ring hit the airwaves. Anybody who had a pulse went ga-ga.

I’d like to think that covering many of the same stories alongside Kelly gave me an appreciation for her that’s deeper than just a beautiful appearance. She’s also smart and hard-working.

Long before she was married, I worked up the courage to send her a Valentine’s card, which she acknowledged with typical grace and class the next time our paths crossed.

If you’re going to have a crush on someone, why not go first class?

Kelly, you’re not a secret Valentine anymore.

— Mike Hennessy, Nest assignment editor

The Hopeless Romantic...
Valentine’s Day has a lot of fond memories for me. I can remember during my school years the Valentine’s Day box, which we decorated as a class with hearts, cupids and bows and arrows. Of course, you saved that one nice card that said “I love you” for that special person in class. Sometimes, if you really liked the teacher, and most of us did, he or she also got a big “I love you!”

For the past 46 years I’ve had a very special valentine to send a card to — my wife, Jeanne. I’ve always sent a card, some even personally designed, like “My 4 U!” (“My heart pants for you”) and a little gift or a nice dinner out. I’ve never forgotten what Valentine’s Day meant to me and the concept of giving special words of love and caring to others. Wouldn’t it be nice if this was an everyday experience for all of us!

— Bill Heider, Dean of USF-St. Petersburg

The Cynic...
While I have a lot to learn about love, there are also a lot of things I’ve come to love in my 26 years on earth. Here are a few:

I love the track. There is no feeling quite so exhilarating yet desperate as seeing your horse in the lead down the backstretch and knowing in the back of your head that the nag will probably finish last, if at all.

I love terrible movies like The Karate Kid III, Batman and Robin, Deep Impact and, especially, Anaconda. If something as heinous as these films can be distributed to the masses, just imagine the unlimited possibilities for success presented by mediocrity.

I love the smell of my mother’s pasta sauce. It tells me that my family and I will soon be sharing a good meal and a socially relevant conversation. My favorite meal is stuffed shells and a discussion on whether Steve Andretta, our neighbor 20 years ago in Queens, N.Y., actually climbed a ladder to put up his Christmas decorations or just threw a string of lights at his roof.

And finally, I love my brother George. Growing up was the classic older brother. He influenced my musical tastes by introducing me to bands like Pink Floyd, Jethro Tull and Yes. And he always caused enough trouble to make my other sibs look like harmless pranksters from Sister Carla’s third grade math class. Thank you, George. Happy Valentine’s Day.

— Chris Curry, Nest staff writer
The lesson of a small fire

By Krista Reiner
Nest Editor

A screaming fire truck followed me down Second St. to campus last Wednesday and it stopped in front of the Oasis dropout prevention program just behind the campus police department. The Oasis students are bright kids chosen for the program because they have high test scores but are lost in mainstream schools and face the bigger challenges of high school.

As I got closer to the building I smelled smoke and looked up to see it drifting out of open windows and doors. I picked up my pace.

Around from the teachers looked worried, saying things to each other like “we don’t know where she is” and “Has anybody found her yet?”

The Oasis kids often eat lunch and play ball outside my office door so I know that like most young teens, as a group, they’re chatty, rowdy and on the move. That day, they were not them­se­lves. They were hushed and somber.

Most people on campus don’t know much about the Oasis program, but I’ve been following them for more than a year now. The kids are in this alternative program because they need a close-knit environment and one-on-one attention so they can deal with their frustrations instead of dropping out of school. These 15 students are taught how to deal with their feelings in ways that are new to them. Respect and honesty top the list of tools used for dealing with an often puzzling world.

The fire turned out to be minor. Confined to the small area outside the classroom where the students keep their stuff in stacked, gray plastic milk crates. The fire did little damage before the teacher grabbed an extinguisher and put it out — a slightly blackened wall, some melted plastic notebooks, charred papers and ruined clothing. A fine, chemical-smelling white powder covered everything.

Thankfully, no one got hurt. Unless you count the hurt feelings of the kids realizing that one of their own could take her anger so far.

Their classmate, the one the teachers were looking for, started the fire because she had finally had it with one boy’s teasing. Afterwards, she ran away from the scene.

Charges could amount to first-degree arson, but there’s a chance she’ll be sent to another type of juvenile program to get help the Oasis program was not meant to provide.

The firefighters didn’t stay long, and soon the kids were able to see the remains of their things. One boy picked up his burnt knapsack and chucked it hard on the cement sidewalk. A white puff of powder billowed from the pack when it hit.

This was the boy who had pushed the girl to her limit. She had chosen to punish him by setting fire to a special pair of pants he was waiting to wear that night. This was the boy who had pushed the girl to her limit. She had chosen to punish him by setting fire to a special pair of pants he was waiting to wear that night.

They were special and he had not wanted to mess them up by wearing them to school, so he left them in his crate. His pants, and the possessions of the other kids, were destroyed.

This girl’s decision cost the boy and his other classmates more than a pair of pants and a few notebooks. They all paid with a wounded sense of community in their small school.

This reality must have hit the Oasis kids hard. It’s violating to have your property taken from you in a place you thought was safe. But they might also realize teasing someone not only hurts the other person; it can come back and hurt them, too.

It’s what the Oasis program calls accept­ing responsibility for causing someone’s pain. This girl felt like a victim herself, before she became the victimizer.

Two days later, the Oasis director told me the kids were still coming to her office to talk and to cry. They didn’t understand.

And they may never understand what went through the mind of this girl, just as we will never really understand what drives other youths to carry knives or guns and sometimes use them. But it happens, and we try our best to learn something, anything, that may prevent it from hap­pening again. After that, we have faith with an understanding that no matter what we think or how hard we try, people can be hurtful in ways we cannot antici­
Students get more than kicks out of Tae Kwon Do class

By Akira Hibino
Nest Contributor

Frank Marsalisi lost 20 pounds in two months while gaining flexibility and self-confidence. And he attributes it all to Tae Kwon Do.

Marsalisi is one of 12 students participating in a Tae Kwon Do class at the Campus Activity Center.

A doctor at Bayfront Medical Center, Marsalisi recommends the Korean martial art to his patients.

Instructor Sam Ramnarine touts the physical benefits of learning Tae Kwon Do. "It is very good in terms of cardiovascular health," says Ramnarine, a third degree black belt.

Other students agree.

"I'm in the best shape in my life," said Brent Atkinson.

Richard McGraw added, "I can do things I couldn't do before. I would fail because my coordination wasn't good enough to do the back kick."

Ramnarine, who has taught Tae Kwon Do for six years, also emphasizes the mental benefits of the sport.

"Tae Kwon Do itself is very challenging," the teacher said. "It helps you challenge yourself. It also releases stress and helps your memory because you have to learn some different forms and remember them. It really improves your memory."

"Tae Kwon Do is what everybody works on at his or her own pace to achieve," said Atkinson, a first degree black belt. "You are not competing against anybody else. You compete against yourself. Not only do you learn self-defense, you have to learn certain forms and techniques."

But learning Tae Kwon Do presents challenges to every student.

For Atkinson, flexibility is the hardest aspect. "It is a big thing you need to work on," he said.

McGraw, an attorney, said, "The most difficult part is stretching. Because the older you get, it gets more difficult to stretch."

Ramnarine earns his student's respect because he understands the difficulty.

"Master Sam has been an excellent teacher," Marsalisi said. "He's got a lot of patience."

"Tae Kwon Do is also an ideal way to spend quality time with my family. So I brought my son to work out with me. I'm spending really good time with son."

The class is held Mondays and Wednesdays from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. The 10-session class costs $25 to USF students and $35 to non-students.

For more information, call the CAC at 533-1859.

In Celebration of Black History Month

THE MANDINKA EPIC

A theatrical adventure of music and dance depicts the history of the West African Mandinka tribe at Mahaffey Theater co-sponsored by USF.

HARBORSHIRE PRODUCTIONS is holding a drawing for 15 FREE tickets(value $16.65 each) for the March 1 performance at 8 p.m.

Registration forms and the drawing box will be in Davis Lobby Feb. 2-15.

Winners will be notified by Feb. 21 via phone.

Martial art way of life for USF's Nelson

By Akira Hibino
Nest Contributor


Nelson has used martial arts to tutor children on discipline since 1991, about the same time he started to master the martial art. At that time, he was teaching at the University of Missouri and also coached basketball and softball to teenagers who grew up in the streets.

"They know how to hurt people," Nelson said, adding that he was looking for a means to instill a sense of control in the kids. Six years later, his eagerness to teach children Tae Kwon Do resulted in a trip to Korea, the cradle of Tae Kwon Do, with seven African-Americans ranging from 7 to 21 years old.

The Rev. Gil Bo Lee, who now lives in Atlanta, was the driving force behind the 12-day tour. The trip established friendly relations between African-Americans and Koreans in the wake of conflicts between the groups in American inner cities. Lee and Nelson got acquainted with each other through the grand master Yung Ho Jun of Tampa at a lunch meeting, where they discussed the trip.

Nelson and the children gave demonstrations of Tae Kwon Do to the Korean army, elementary school students and politicians. The trip also included a tour of a demilitarized zone on the border between North Korea and South Korea, visits to churches, and the Korean Congress, and an invitation to breakfast with South Korean President Kim Young Sam.

The stay was "quite an adventure and quite a treat for the children," Nelson said.

The group of three girls and four boys, students of the grand master Yung, enjoyed the "adventure," but there was one problem.

"They didn't like the food," Nelson said. "They preferred McDonalds and Burger King. I liked the food, but they wanted hamburgers."

His coaching continued in St. Petersburg. From 1997 to May 1999, the kids in Mount Zion Christian Academy of St. Petersburg practiced Tae Kwon Do under Nelson's guidance. He began to teach the children because he wanted to give them discipline and bring them into the church, he said.

"As a Tae Kwon Do instructor, in the spring of 1998, Nelson also contributed to the School for Applied Individualized Learning, a public alternative school, coaching about 15 teen-agers.

"My goal is to help them acquire discipline and gain knowledge and the grace of God," he said.