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It's Volunteer Week: Do you know where your Boy Scouts are?

Starting fires, tying knots and performing the occasional first-aid maneuver can be a typical day at the office.

But when the five o’clock whistle blows for two university employees, they give up their desk chairs and hard hats for a different kind of work outfit. (Here’s a hint: Their after-hours clothing often involves patches.)

April 17 brings National Volunteer Week. For the last eight years, Karen Oberne in Interdisciplinary Studies, and her husband Robert in Utilities, have done their fair share of volunteering by spending one night a week with the Boy Scouts of America.

The couple has an active role leading their two sons’ troops through the wolves, webelos and Boy Scout stages. Now they spend each Tuesday night volunteering their time training young men to prepare them for life outside of an office. The two currently lead a troop of 18 Boy Scouts, ranging from 11 to 18 years old.

“It’s more than just camping and knot-tying,” said Karen. “Seeing the boys develop and make the connections as to why certain things work the way they do is the real reason we are involved.”

In the Oberne’s troop, they are preparing two boys for Eagle Scout presentations, the highest honor given to Boy Scouts. They expect to add two more Eagle Scouts to their troop within a year.

Oberne also said scouting gave her family strength.

“This is something we started as a family,” she said. “We also get the parents of our boys involved because scouting is really a family activity.”

Volunteering, Oberne said, is something all faculty and staff should look into as a source of release and rewards.

“What better way to be a positive influence?” Oberne asked. “I know we are always looking for volunteers.”

For more information on Oberne’s scouting troop, contact her at ext. 4-2519. Faculty and staff are active volunteers in their communities. USF faculty, staff and students volunteer 600,000 hours each year in the community. The United Way estimates the number of volunteer time spent by university members would amount to $13.24 an hour for each volunteer, or roughly $7.9 million a year.

In the past year, university members participated in volunteer efforts such as:

• Men’s Basketball Coach Seth Greenberg and her NCAA coaches from across the country spent a day in March speaking to community school children about the skills needed for success in both athletics and life. The event was coordinated by USF volunteers; and

• The Good Community Fair, an annual event celebrating the good things happening in the community, is sponsored by USF. The fair, held March 15 at Al Lopez Park, included a USF display which highlighted ways for parents to help transition their children through school;

• Residents of The Leadership House, housed in the Theta Hall, spend their free time volunteering in the Tampa Bay community. This year, the residents have volunteered with the WUSF pledge drives as well as the Hoop City event with the NCAA Final Four tournament in St. Petersburg.

For those university members looking for a place to donate their time and efforts, the Office of Volunteer Services is an information resource for students as well as employees. For more information, call ext. 4-5600.

by Heather L. Hicks

Urban Scholars program hopes for more helpers

The Urban Scholars Outreach Program is a series of volunteer-run tutoring sessions and test preparation classes which give students in the university area’s urban neighborhoods the opportunity to receive help from college professionals.

The program offers lessons in math and reading comprehension for grades 1-12, as well as prep classes for the PSAT, SAT and ACT II tests.

Evelyn Williams, secretary with the Mathematics department, said the new program is already making a difference.

“The program will have existed for a year in April, she said, “and so far, all the parents I have talked to say their children’s grades have improved.”

Currently, the program has an average of 100 students each Saturday with skills ranging from remedial to gifted levels. The program has roughly 20 USF volunteer teachers.

The program is thriving, Williams said, but plans for expansion are on hold until there is a rise in the number of volunteers.

“We need someone with skills in teaching reading comprehension,” Williams said. “We are always in desperate need for volunteers in all areas. If we can get more volunteers lined up for any amount of time they wish, we can offer more classes.

Williams said the most important element in this equation is the feedback from the students who benefit from the extra help.

“We do have a lot of fun,” Williams said. “And it’s a lot more rewarding than any paycheck.”

The Urban Scholars meet every Saturday on the third floor of Cooper Hall. Grades 1-12 meet from 10 a.m. to noon and SAT preparatory classes meet from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Interested faculty and staff can contact the program by calling Williams at ext. 4-2643.

by Heather L. Hicks

Strategic plan seeks comments on university’s future

An effort to update USF’s Strategic Planning Process is almost completed. But the university community is still encouraged to offer their input while the plan is fine-tuned this summer.

The year-long process to update USF’s plans for the future consisted of faculty, staff and students coming together to decide how the university should continue in its role as a premier academic and research institution.

“We knew it was time to take another viewpoint of our priorities and set some direction for the future,” said Vice Provost Catherine Batshe. The strategic plan was last updated in 1992.

The last plan was made before USF was named a state Research University, and doesn’t even mention the university’s Internet presence: “There’s not one reference to the Web in the former plan because it was just being developed then,” Batshe said. The emphasis on technology is one of the biggest changes in the updated strategic plan.

Covering 16 areas of academic emphasis and institutional strategies, the process addresses how USF should continue its academic involvement in the community, enhance student life and expand research initiatives.

The plan also covers areas such as liberal arts education; culture and the arts; health and allied health; environmental science and applications; community and urban initiatives; honors programs, services and environment.

In theory, St. Petersburg Times columnist Bill Everson real USF’s graduate program in rhetoric and composition as one of “Florida’s best kept secrets,” calling it one of the country’s best for placing graduates in professorships.

Going public: WUSF and WEDU public television stations are working on a joint effort to provide an overview of the plan. The plan will be presented during a public forum next week at the university’s Sun Dome.

The plan can be viewed on-line at http://acad.usf.edu/evision/stratplan.html. For more information or to make suggestions, contact the Provost’s office at ext. 4-5643. The Web site also offers a place to make comments.

by Danita Arbuckle
It’s the type of neighborhood that makes you lock your car doors and avoid eye contact.

The atmosphere is bleak, with plants attempting to dress up patios and residents stirring quietly around the area.

One worker says the older adults are always in their apartments by 5 p.m., locked away from potential mishap and the crime element that’s always willing to test the door locks.

It’s where two USF professors thrive.

Joan Bezon and Katherine Echevarria were recently named the Health Care Professors of the Year by Aging with Dignity, a non-profit Florida corporation based in Tallahassee.

The women, both professors with degrees from USF, work at The Center for Elders Health Primary Care Clinic, in the J.L. Young Garden Apartments, an income housing complex.

The clinic receives no regular funding and depends on grants to stay afloat.

At times, it’s run without any money coming in at all.

Of the 600 people who live at the complex, roughly 300 are residents in the clinic, said Bezon.

“Sometimes you get there and there’s a line of people waiting for you,” Echevarria said.

The clinic’s popularity depended on word-of-mouth when it opened in 1991.

Slowly, residents began visiting the clinic.

The clinic gained the trust of the complex, and now appointments are often necessary to get in.

Still, it’s difficult to run a successful clinic in an area where instant gratification is the norm, and long-term health and financial care not often the goals, Bezon said.

“We often have to bribe the residents to stay healthy,” Bezon said. “We’re shameless.”

Joan Bezon, USF nursing professor and health care professional at J.L. Young Garden Apartments

Sisters Jennifer and Emily Speirs look over apartment information offered during a recent Bull Market that focused on helping students find on- and off-campus housing on March 31.

Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. and USF are teaming up to create a $410,000 Bear Stearns Information Technology Research Center in the College of Business at USF.

The center will house faculty and department projects, including computer skills assessment, community database and data warehousing development.

Research and data communications, computer facial expression imaging, business multimedia applications and community public health.

Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. is leading worldwide investment banking and securities trading and brokerage firm, is the major subsidiary of The Bear Stearns Companies Inc.
FRIDAY
16
Be flexible: The Office of Diversity Initiatives offers “Pathways to Flexibility and Learning in the Diverse Workplace” from 9 to 11:30 a.m. in the Student Services building, room 2080. The workshop examines the nature of inflexibility, its causes and consequences for personal, interpersonal, team and organizational learning. To register, call ext. 4-9195.

Politics, revealed: The History Department Seminar Series offers “The Politics of Identity: Tamales and the American Dream Revisited,” with anthropologist Ella Schmidt, in the Sociology building, room 255, at 2 p.m. For more information, call ext. 4-3547.

SATURDAY
17
Fly away, be free: The USF Botanical Garden is seeking volunteers to construct a Butterfly Garden, beginning at 9 a.m., at its location on the southwest corner of the Tampa campus. A butterfly house will also be constructed. Free pizza will be served at noon; for more information, call ext. 4-5655.

SUNDAY
18
Under the sea: WUSF-TV Ch. 16 airs “Beyond Science” at 7 p.m. This show takes a look at a group of international marine researchers from the United States and Puerto Rico, whom explore the waters of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.

MUSIC TO YOUR EARS: The Florida West Coast Symphony, conducted by Leif Bjaland, performs selections by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff and Bartok at 9 p.m. on WUSF-FM 89.7 as part of the “Gulf Coast Showcase” series.

FRIDAY
23
Diversity: The Equal Opportunity workshop “Understanding Unlawful Discrimination” takes place from 9 a.m. to noon at 1111 N. Westshore Blvd., Suite 101B, Tampa. For more information, call (813) 554-2341.

SLIDE: USF Baseball challenges Cincinnati at 7 p.m. at Raymond McEwen Field. The games will continue April 24 and 25, both at 1 p.m. Tickets cost $4.

TUESDAY
27
Wet, woodsy: WUSF-TV Ch. 16 offers hours of education on the Everglades, including “Quest in the Flooded Forest” at 8 p.m.; “Tales of the Everglades” at 9 p.m.; and “Yesterday’s Everglades” at 10 p.m.

TUESDAY
28
Pure evil: The film “Evil Returns” will be viewed and discussed at noon in USF St. Petersburg’s Davis Hall, room 130. Philosophy Chairman Peter French will discuss various forms of evil as represented by people such as Adolf Hitler and Charles Manson. For more information, call ext. 3-3548.

Pass the Rolaid: Justin Wilson’s “Easy Cookin’” airs at 8 p.m. on WUSF-TV Ch. 16. This episode’s tasty treats include house of the gulf Coast.”

THURSDAY
29
Valuable info: The Office of Diversity Initiative offers “Valuing Relationships in the Diverse Workplace” from 9 to 11:30 a.m. in the Student Services building, room 2070. The workshop examines the nature of relationships and the values that are essential for creating authentic relationships: trust, respect, honesty, truth, fairness, openness and forgiveness. To register, call ext. 4-9193.

Build it up: The School of Architecture and Community Design offers an open house from 5 to 8 p.m. at the University Technology Center, 3702 Spectrum Blvd., Suite 180. View student work and meet with students and faculty. For more information, call ext. 4-4031.

MONDAY
26
Elder care: The Employee Assistance Program series “Eldercare for Baby Boomers” takes place Mondays through May 17 from noon to 1:30 p.m. The free, four-workshop session will teach caregivers how to take charge of eldercare, including finding the right service at the lowest price and maintaining positive relations.

THURSDAY
29
Story of the concertos: The continuing discussion of some of the orchestra’s early beginning to our time airs at 9 p.m. on WUSF-FM 89.7 as part of Karl Haas’ “Adventures in Good Music” series.