



FROM THE ROOFTOP

FROMM HALL INAUGURAL YEAR 2006 - 2007

THE FROMM INSTITUTE
FOR LIFELONG LEARNING
at the University of San Francisco

Volume 92, Issue 3 • October 23, 2006

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

Forget Marshall McLuhan and think Plato. It was the ancient Greek himself who wisely observed that, “Opinion is the medium between knowledge and ignorance and it’s that medium, opinion, that the *“Rooftop”* wishes to stress as our classes head into the last three weeks of the Fall Session. It’s a reasoned judgment that we actively seek from all of our members between now and November 9. The vital importance of your appraisal, your evaluation of the Fall Session, is our message *From The Rooftop* this week, and it is one that can’t be stressed enough.

For thirty years the Fromm Institute has always solicited the assessments of its students. Without fail, each session you have been given the chance to tell us how effective your courses and professors have been, and faithfully you have offered your feelings. The result of it all has been that, just as Plato noted, your collective thoughts have guided the faculty and the administration and given us a true awareness of where we have succeeded and how we can still improve. Your opinions have been the bridge from ignorance to understanding and the value of that assembled knowledge is revealed each and every time we gather to learn.

Now, as we grow toward the end of our studies, as we enter the last weeks of another session of classes, we ask that you participate in this cognitive exercise once again. In that regard, we encourage you to complete a Course Evaluation for the courses in which you have participated. Your opinion is elemental to our success and only serves to better our academic program. If you need more convincing, just look at the courses that will be offered in our next term, our Winter Session. The full list follows this appeal. It is because you are, and have been, such an active partner in curriculum development that we are happy to share them with you, and in doing so remind you of your obligation to evaluate this session’s classes before you leave.

Course Evaluations are available on the information tables in each classroom for the next three weeks. Evaluate your classes this session as much as you anticipate those you’ll request for the next. Let us know your opinion of your current term as you plan your schedule for the next. Opinion *is* the medium and that medium is our message now, and next session, and far into the future as well. Thank you for being so involved and thank you for completing Course Evaluations as the session ends. Here’s a list of the courses that will await you when the Winter Session begins the week of January 8th.

WINTER 2007

Monday Morning

- Prof. Stephen Vincent “A Poetry Writing Seminar”
- Prof. Lois Spatz “Plato’s Republic”
- Prof. Charles Fracchia “One Thousand Years of Iberia”

Monday Afternoon

- Prof. Thanasis Maskaleris “Myths of the World”
- Prof. Robert Tracy “Tolstoy’s War & Peace”
- Prof. Michael Thaler “Understanding Integrative Medicine”

Tuesday Morning

Prof. Douglas Kenning “Sicily at 250 Years Per Hour”

Prof. Manfred Wolf “Amsterdam and the Dilemmas of Present-Day Western Europe”

Prof. Sheldon Rothblatt “Romantic Eras”

Tuesday Afternoon

Prof. Sheldon Rothblatt “Romantic Eras: Seminar”

Prof. Robert Brandfon “American Farmer, American Freedom”

Prof. William Garrett “Asian Philosophical Views & Their Relevance in America”

Prof. Handeland “Builders: Public Works in the 20th Century”

Wednesday Morning

The Wonders of Science Series

Wednesday Afternoon

Prof. Dody Donnelly “The Right to Age: Journey Into Freedom”

Prof. Adela Roatcap “Encore! From St. Petersburg Imperial Theatre to the Paris Opera”

Prof. Carlos Camargo “The History of Food & Nutrition”

Professor Sonny Buxton “Great Jazz Singers”

Thursday Morning

Dr. David Bisno “The Brits in Africa & the Middle East: Lectures & Discussion”

Prof. Joseph Bodovitz “California in 2007: Still the Golden State?”

Prof. Albert Jonsen “The Catholic Church: A Socio-Political History”

Thursday Afternoon

Dr. David Bisno “The Brits in Africa & the Middle East: Films & Documentaries”

Prof. Gerald Haslam “The World of Short Fiction”

Prof. John Rothmann “The Middle East”

**IMPORTANT ENROLLMENT
CHANGES - TAKE NOTE!**

Since Winter catalogs will be mailed on Friday, November 17, the **Pre-**

Enrollment Period is on a special schedule next month. The first day will be **Saturday, November 18**. Sunday will not be considered a designated pre-enrollment day, so **Monday, Nov. 20** and **Tuesday, Nov. 21** will conclude the three day, Pre-Enrollment Period. **Enrollment** begins on **Wednesday, Nov. 22**. Starting with this upcoming Winter Session, the office will no longer be accepting enrollments via fax. If you wish to enroll, you must either call the Enrollment Line at 415-422-6806 and listen to the closed classes message, or you may contact us through e-mail with your name, phone number and course selections after checking the closed classes page at the Fromm Institute web site (www.usfca.edu/fromm/closedclasses.html). Remember, the receipt of an enrollment application during the pre-enrollment period does not guarantee access to all classes requested and enrollments received during pre-enrollment are randomly processed on the first day of the enrollment period.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO “DOG SIT” AT MAGNOLIA’S

After a disappointing launch where the honor system was unfortunately dishonored by all too many Fromm Institute students, Magnolia’s is under new management, or as we say in the take-a-cup-from-the-pup world, “on a shorter leash.” Eamon Sylvester has done a fine job of controlling costs and improving inventory, but he can’t do it alone. He’s looking for student hosts to sit outside the ‘doghouse’ during shop hours. While grateful to those who are already helping, only a few have stepped forward to date, so the “*Rooftop*” challenges those of you who always arrive early and the many of you who are around a lot during class days, to do your part. The shifts can be as long or short a time as you can give, and the rewards . . . “Well,” Eamon says “there’s the undying gratitude from the guy who always knows when there’s just a seat or two left in a popular class!” To volunteer today for a few minutes a week, just stop by and see Eamon. It will make a big difference and will be greatly appreciated.



THE MEDICAL LECTURE SERIES

Here's The Final Three As Fall 2006 Finishes

How about some good news in the last three presentations of the Medical Lecture Series? That's just what we've got in store for you as their themes focus on preventing tooth decay, keeping the body and brain fit and advances in the treatment of heart disease.

On **Wednesday, October 25**, UCSF's **John Featherstone, M.Sc., Ph.D.**, Professor of Preventive and Restorative Dental Sciences and Director of the Program in Biomaterials Biophysical Sciences and Engineering will lecture on "**Star Wars Approaches to Preventing Dental Decay.**" His presentation will summarize new developments for tooth decay prevention and reversal. These include lasers for early detection of the disease, the use of antibacterial agents, new fluoride delivery systems, special lasers designed to alter the tooth mineral and make it less soluble, and chair side bacterial detection systems. May the floss be with you!

Next, **Dr. Nancy Byl** will discuss an exciting discovery that we've suspected for 31 years. Join us on **Wednesday, November 1** for her lecture "**Physical Therapy — Rehabilitation: Body and Brain Fitness**" as she examines how we can slow down the processes of aging by engaging our bodies and our minds in behavioral activities that require learning. Aging, she maintains, is the time of our life to give up habitual behaviors and discover more about the world and ourselves and meaningful interactions with people. In this lecture, Dr. Byl will provide some insight into what we can do physically and mentally to maintain the quality of our life. Can we all say in unison, Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning!

As the eighth lecture in our series this session, our series coordinator, **Melvin Cheitlin, M.D.**, will ask the exciting and important question "**Are Heart Attacks a Thing of the Past?**" and answer it by sharing his eminent knowledge speaking about "Advances in the Treatment of Heart Disease." Dr. Cheitlin, who will lecture on **Wednesday, November 8**, is, as many of you know, Professor Emeritus of Cardiology at UCSF and an expert in this field.

Remember all lectures in the Medical Lecture Series take place in Xavier Chapel at 10 a.m. on Wednesday mornings throughout the Fall Session and all Fromm Institute students are welcomed to attend.

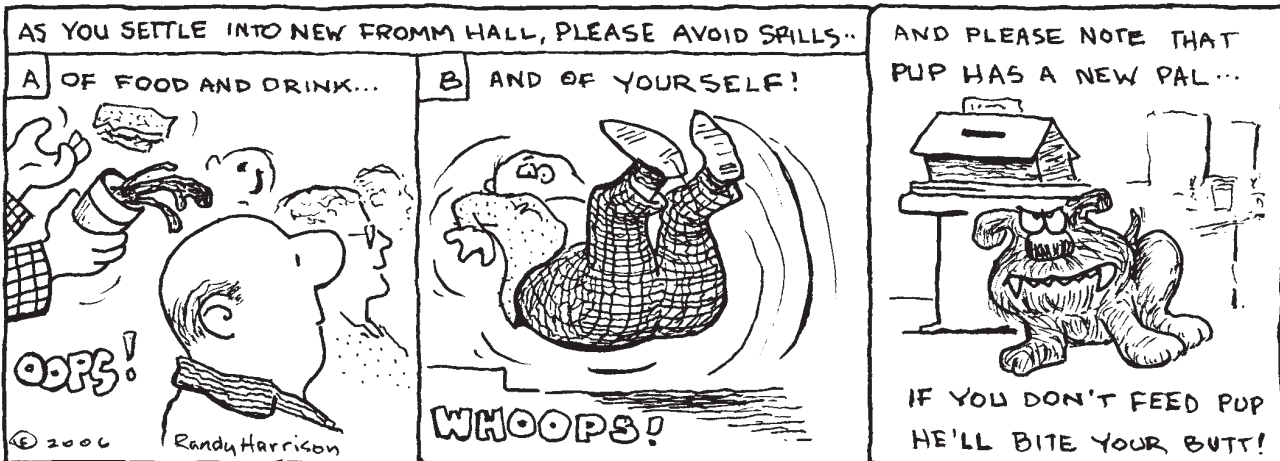
THE GOOD NEWS

Thanks to so many who now look on and under their seats, and take cups, newspapers, water bottles, etc. with them to the trash cans at all exits. To the few who still litter – please clean up your area because you are giving the rest of us a bad reputation.



BY RANDY HARRISON

FROMMTOONS



COMMAND PERFORMANCES

For those of you who missed the "San Francisco Performances Brown Bag" last week, be sure to pick up a brochure from the Activities Hallway by Magnolia's and see what this great group has to offer. In the brochure you will find that they offer discount tickets for students. Though it says there that you must be 25 or younger, I inquired and they have agreed to include all Fromm Institute students in this discount, so be sure to take advantage of both series and rush tickets.

For opera lovers, if you are looking for an alternative to the SF Opera, there is the wonderfully intimate *SF Lyric Opera* which performs at the Gould Theatre at the Legion of Honor. I saw a wonderful "Il Trovatore" there last month and they are presenting Mozart's "The Magic Flute" in December. The postcards for that show are in the display racks along with the 2007 season brochures. As Fromm Institute students you get 1/2-price and I can highly recommend this group after three years of going to their performances.

Your campus radio station KUSF is also a great station for opera with the Met Broadcasts on Saturday mornings and "World of Opera" on Sunday evenings. They also have many other programs such as classical, guitar, and jazz. KUSF Guides are in the Activities Hallway as well. This little station is well worth a listen!

Many of you have already asked about *SF Ballet*. I have now received the season brochures. However, they do not contain the student discounts. I have been advised that there will be a separate brochure that will not be available until January when you return for the Winter Session. I will have those for you at that time.

Over 200 Fromm Students took advantage of the *SF Symphony* Student Discount Series and bought over 2,200 tickets for this year...a record for sure and one which the *Symphony* greatly appreciates. They extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to all of you who participated. We will again have the student discounts for next year beginning in April.

I'll remind all of you that we never get enough brochures for everyone, and if you take any brochure and decide you don't need it, please bring it back to the so we can reuse it. We have had an unprecedented rush on these materials and are running short on some, so please help us recycle whenever possible.

More to come in two weeks! *Bob Morgan*

TOUR AND TRAVEL NEWS

THE SONG OF SICILY AND THE WORDS OF WILL...

"Sicily, the Crossroads of Civilization," awaits during spring break. The nine-day journey begins March 14 with a flight from San Francisco to Catania on the southern side of this sunny island. Unpack one time at the hotel in Giardina Naxos overlooking the Ionian Sea. Then travel via air-conditioned motorcoach with a private guide on day trips to some of the remarkable historic and archeological treasure sites of Sicily.

Greek and Roman temples and theatres, medieval castles, mosaic and popular folk art are all on view. We'll also travel up Mt. Etna, Europe's largest active volcano, and visit a winery where the grapes are grown in the rich volcanic soil. Taormina, Siracusa, Piazza Armerina are among the tantalizing sites.

Our space is guaranteed only through Oct. 30 and after that it's on a first-come basis. So send in your reservation right away to be sure you get a place on this wonderful and very well-priced trip. Land and air and all taxes are \$2348 per person sharing double, only \$2698 single.

If you wish to put a deposit on your credit card, please indicate the information with your signature on the bottom of the reservation form.

The "Ashland Shakespeare Festival 2007" tour is now confirmed for June 19-22 with four outstanding plays, all in prime seating. We'll see "The Tempest," August Wilson's "Gem Of the Ocean," Chekhov's "Cherry Orchard" in a new translation and Tom Stoppard's "On the Razzle." You'll find flyers for this and our other upcoming travels in the Activities Hallway. Ashland is always a sell-out so once again early registration secures your place.

All tours are open to students, their families and friends, so share the good news. **For further information contact me at (707) 257-1804 or spk@napanet.net.** This week I am out of town in New Orleans on a home re-building project, but I will be back next week. Happy Travels! *Susan Kennelty.*



happy holidays

A PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE ?

While there won't be any maids a milking or lords a leaping, the Fromm Institute's Holiday Session will feature six sensational sessions of lifelong learning on a trio of days during December. At a time of year when tradition mandates that friends gather together, we do the same. In this spirit of joy and fellowship we look forward to the pleasure of your company during the 2006 Holiday Session and urge you to join us for any or all of the events we have planned. On **Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, December 12, 13, 14**, you can be a part of all or any of the intellectual treats that we've wrapped up just for you. This year Holiday Session's six events are yours — all for just \$50 — and that includes lunch each day, too!

Tuesday, December 12 there is a morning and afternoon lecture from **Prof. John Rothman** and **Rabbi David Dalin** respectively, focusing on the topic of two modern Popes and the Jews. Professor Rothman will speak about **Pope John the XXIII** and Rabbi David Dalin, who lectured last Holiday Session on Pius XII, will speak on **Pope John Paul II**.

Wednesday, December 13 in the morning **Professor Larry Eilenberg** lectures on “**Documentary Theater: Death Row to Guantanamo Live on Stage.**” Later that day, our afternoon lecture features **Professor James Keolker** sampling musical selections from “Le Prophete,” “The Snow Maiden,” “La Juive,” “La Boheme,” “Amahl,” and more in his special ninety-minute presentation of “**Holiday Fun at the Opera.**”

On **Thursday, December 14**, the morning finds **Professor Adela Roatcap** lecturing on the theme “**Palaces: The Art of Versailles**” illustrating its splendor as she narrates its history. After lunch we'll screen “**The Russian Ark**” a landmark film by Alexander Sokurov that explores the Russian State Hermitage Museum incorporating 200 actors in period costumes, 300 years of Russian history, 33 magnificent rooms, and 3 live orchestras all in one 96 minute, continuous, cinematic shot.

On each of the three days of Holiday Session we'll provide some warm comfort food to take the chill off the mid-December air. A hot luncheon buffet will be served each day with seating for all in the Berman & Maraschi Rooms.

Holiday Session is a popular time at the Fromm Institute so a **Holiday Session Pass** is required to attend. These may be purchased from the Fromm Office for \$50 each and are your admission to any or all of the lectures and lunches. This card is transferable so you can share it or give it as a holiday gift to a fellow student who might not be able to afford one. For these events students will be required to present their **Holiday Pass** at the door. Only 200 are available, so don't delay.

Holiday Session is a wonderful tradition that features the best of the Fromm Institute each December offering lectures to our members that set the season shining in our own unique way igniting wonder, reinforcing wisdom and celebrating the life of the mind. Everyone is invited to spend a little time with us over the holidays. We hope you can attend.



STUDENT BY-LINES

This week's Student By-Lines is written by Rachmael Ben-Avram who told the editors of "From the Rooftop" that coming to the Fromm Institute, located on a Jesuit campus, reminds him of a very special relationship – a habit from the past which, as his writing reflects, makes him smile deeply.

MY SISTER FROM PROVIDENCE

by Rachmael Ben-Avram

Some years ago when I was director of a regional theater company in San Francisco, I was invited to talk about "Drama as Theater" to a conference of Teachers of English. The teachers I spoke to responded with some enthusiasm and I was well enough satisfied with the way the meeting went. However, I was not expecting the telephone call I had the next week when a woman's voice at the other end said,

"Hello, this is Sister Claire Madeleine. May I speak with Mr. Ben-Avram?"

I didn't recognize the voice. I couldn't imagine who was calling. I do have a sister, but her name is Billie, not Claire. And the only Madeleine I knew was the mother of my dear friend Sandy, and she didn't have my number as far as I knew. "Who did you say this is?" I asked.

She replied, "You don't know me, but I heard your talk on Saturday. My name is Sister Claire Madeleine. I'm head of the English Department at the College of Holy Names in Oakland. We are a women's college, and I wonder if you'd be interested in talking to us about teaching at our campus?"

Indeed I was interested, and I signed a contract to start the following September.

As the year wore on, Sister Claire Madeleine and I became good friends and enjoyed tea and cookies every other week or so. One afternoon in the spring I noticed several volumes of the plays of Tennessee Williams on her desk. I was a bit surprised.

Sister caught the questioning look in my eye, and without waiting for my question started with, "Mr. Ben-Avram, I have a feeling you're surprised that we're reading the plays of Tennessee Williams. You see I have an evening meeting this week with our Young Adults Club. And we have some evenings when we talk about literature. I thought they might enjoy discussing the work of Tennessee Williams. You'll agree, I imagine, that he is certainly among our most important playwrights, and in his plays he reveals so many aspects of the human condition in our time."

"Forgive me Sister, if I'm a little startled that even someone as perceptive and informed as you, living the life of a nun, would be comfortable spending an evening talking about Tennessee Williams especially when I think of some of the subjects of his plays and the characters he creates. But you know, Sister," I said with a mixture of humor and admiration, "nothing about you surprises me any more."

"Yes, I've lived in the world. And here at Holy Names our life is not as closed and cloistered a life as it used to be. We're a teaching order, so we feel we have to be prepared to know the world of our young women."

"Have you seen any of the Tennessee Williams plays on stage, Sister?"

"Now that you ask, I've only seen "The Glass Menagerie," which I loved. I've read most of his other works. But you shouldn't be surprised at my leading a discussion of Williams' plays. I haven't been exposed, as some people may be, to the experiences, the anguish and suffering, the anger and wounds he shows us in his characters. But you know when I look into my own heart I can see and recognize their suffering and anger as if they were my own. I believe that in our hearts we are all the same, and we all respond to his characters because we see so much of ourselves in them."

My friendship with Sister Claire Madeleine continued to grow and deepen and finally I had the courage to ask her to call me by my first name. She responded immediately and said how pleased she would be. She and Sister Paul Francis, who shared her office, pronounced it correctly right off. They always accented the last syllable, the “el”; so it came out, Rak-mah-EL. I never got over the impression it made on me when they said my name; I felt they spoke ancient Hebrew all along, much better than I.

When we agreed that they should call me Rachmael, Sister naturally asked what everyone I know has asked, “Rachmael,” she said, “It’s a beautiful name. I love the sound of it. What does it mean?”

“It means the Grace of God,” I said, with as little pride as possible. “It’s my grandfather’s name. It’s part of my heritage.”

“And a rich heritage it is, to be sure.” she commented.

I replied, “I often think of how blessed I am with his name. When I think about it, I see that it’s been a lucky name for me. I thank my lucky stars for my name. I thank my lucky stars for bringing you to my lecture at the Teachers of English Conference, and for bringing me to your campus, and again, it’s my lucky stars that put things in motion so that here we are, friends together, enjoying our tea at your Holy Names.”

“Rachmael,” she said gently, “Forgive me but you know we don’t call it ‘lucky stars.’ We call it Providence.”

The End

MORE and MORE “Brown Bags”

This **Thursday, October 26, at noon in the Maraschi Room, our very own Professor Gabriella Mautner will read from her memoir about the city of her childhood, The Good Place.** Prof. Mautner was born in Germany. Her family fled to Switzerland during World War II and later moved to America. She studied and taught English and Creative Writing at SF State. Her publications include the novels Out of A Season, and Lovers and Fugitives. In 1993, she won a competition for her short story “Water Lilies.” She completed four more novels, one of which, Kindred Spirits, was awarded the Marin Arts Grant. Come listen to her read while you eat your lunch. What could be better? Prof. Mautner will be happy to sign copies of her book after her reading.



Enjoying the noontime Brown Bags? You won’t want to miss **“Why Do We Travel?” on Wednesday, November 1 at noon in the Maraschi Room.** The first in a series of three coordinated by USF’s Intergenerational Committee on Aging, this “Brown Bag’s” mission is to bring the different generations on campus together. The topic “Why Do We Travel?” may sound simplistic at first. But you’ll have the chance to inquire more deeply into traveling as a form of both pleasure and escapism, research and cultivation. Prof. Stephen Zavestoski from the Sociology Dept. will give a 15 minute presentation, and then ask the audience to participate in a dialogue about this universal activity. What to expect? As this is an intergenerational event, thirty young students will be ready to interact with you in small group discussions. Show up. Have fun. Bring photos of your favorite vacation. Be ready to listen and share.

Two more “Brown Bags” will end the session with mid-day flourishes. On **Wednesday, November 8, Gail & Marc Goldyne with Nancy Watten Coopersmith** hold a book signing in **Maier Hall** for the children’s book **Frankie & The Phoenix** and on **Thursday, November 9 in the McLaren 252** our traditional, session ending “‘Telling Our Story’ Brown Bag” will feature Fromm Institute student **Thomas Kennelly** sharing his life story as narrated in his autobiography **One More Story And I’m Out the Door: A Life With Recollections About Jimmy Hoffa, the Mafia, G. Gordon Liddy and Gaurdian Angels, Among Others**. More details about these will follow in the last issue of the “Rooftop” due out on November 6.

Remember to bring your lunch to any of these events. Beverages and dessert will be provided courtesy of the voluntary \$5 Fromm Institute Student Association dues each student offers.



UPCOMING EVENTS & REMINDERS

MEDICAL LECTURE SERIES:

Wednesday, Oct. 25
10 a.m., Xavier Chapel

Medical Lecture Series presents John Featherstone, M.D.
“Star Wars Approaches to Tooth Decay”

Wednesday, Nov. 1
10 a.m., Xavier Chapel

Medical Lecture Series presents Nancy Byl, M.D.
“Physical Therapy - Body & Brain”

Wednesday, Nov. 8
10 a.m., Xavier Chapel

Medical Lecture Series presents Melvin Cheitlin, M.D.
“Are Heart Attacks a Thing of the Past?”

FROMM INSTITUTE DATES TO REMEMBER:

Thurs., Oct. 26, Noon, Maraschi Room *Gabriella Mautner Reading & Book Signing*

Wed., Nov. 1, Noon, Maraschi Room “*Why Do We Travel? ‘Brown Bag’*”

Coming up on Wed., Nov. 8 Frankie and the Pheonix in Maier Hall

and Thurs., Nov. 9, in McLaren 252 it’s “*Telling Our Story*” with Tom Kennelly.

DON'T FORGET:

Evaluate all your classes by the close of the session.

Your Holiday Pass for Holiday Session - December 12, 13, 14 - now available in the Fromm Institute Office for \$50 each.



**The Fromm Institute
For Lifelong Learning**

at the University of San Francisco

2130 Fulton Street

San Francisco, CA 94117-1080