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Faculty Discover Complete Ancient African Genome

USFSP anthropologists and faculty Drs. Kathryn and John Arthur have made an enduring discovery in Mota Cave in the Ethiopian Gamo highlands: the first complete ancient African genome.

DNA extracted from a skeleton in the cave provides the first human genome sequenced from the African continent. The discovery was published Oct. 8 by the National Science Foundation and the prestigious journal Science.

“This is an extraordinary discovery, a contribution to the fields of anthropology and archaeology that will be recognized by scientists around the world,” said USFSP Regional Chancellor Sophia Wisniewska. “I could not be more proud of the Arthurs’ research, of their time and dedication to their field and to USF St. Petersburg.”

The Arthurs worked with an international team of researchers and scientists to excavate and analyze the skeletal remains, which they named Bayira -- meaning “first born” in the Gamo language. Read more about the Arthurs’ research and discovery.

USFSP to Host Science Fest, SAW Events Oct. 17

Saturday will be a busy day at USF St. Petersburg. Once again, USFSP’s waterfront will serve as the venue for the annual St. Petersburg Science Festival, held in conjunction with MarineQuest, the annual open house of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Fish and Wildlife Research Institute. The events run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
At the same time, USFSP will host its inaugural Sustainable Art Work (SAW) milling event in Poynter Park. Lumber from trees that were removed to make space for the new Kate Tiedemann College of Business building will be repurposed to create furniture and art work for the building and for donors, graduates and guests. Several milling demonstrations will be held throughout the day. Learn more about the SAW initiative.

'Food for Thought' Lecture Series Returns Oct. 26

USF St. Petersburg will host Saveur and National Geographic photographer Penny De Los Santos as she presents "Food Culture Through the Lens" on Monday, Oct. 26. Her multimedia presentation will be followed by a Q&A session. RSVP now for this free public event.

"Food photography is about so much more than taking pictures of food on plates," said Janet Keeler, visiting assistant professor and coordinator of the Food Writing and Photography Certificate Program at USFSP. "Good food photography captures our cultural connections with food and Penny De Los Santos's work exemplifies that."

The presentation is part of the "Food for Thought" lecture series, a yearlong celebration of food and culture through photography, writing, film and new sunshine state cuisine. It will feature four lectures throughout the academic year. Learn more.

USFSP Event Speaker to Appear at Reading Fest

USF St. Petersburg will host the 23rd annual Tampa Bay Times Festival of Reading on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This is the 10th year that the festival has been held at USFSP and, as usual, will feature many of our faculty writers.

In addition to headlining author Judy Blume, the daylong event will feature Cynthia Barnett, an award-winning environmental journalist who has reported on water from the Suwannee River to Singapore.

This Tuesday, Barnett will be the featured speaker at a campus event called "Blue Revolution: A Water Ethic for Florida and America." The event will be held in the University Student Center Ballroom on Tuesday, Oct. 20 at 6 p.m. It is co-hosted by the USFSP Environmental Science and Sustainability Club, University of Florida/IFAS Extension Pinellas and the USFSP Florida Studies.
Education Dean Speaks at Special Ed Symposium

USF St. Petersburg College of Education Dean Bill Heller served as the keynote speaker for the National Urban Special Education Leadership Initiative (NUSELI) Symposium at the University of Central Florida on Sept. 25.

The initiative serves to address the critical gaps between the traditional preparation of urban special education mid-level administrators and the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed for full implementation of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. The collaborative initiative includes UCF, urban school districts from around Florida, and special education leaders from around the U.S.

"I knew after my first year of teaching children with developmental and emotional disabilities that I wanted to be an advocate for all children with disabilities," said Dr. Heller, who shared about his path to success in special education and highlights from throughout his special education career that spans half a century.

This email was developed by the USFSP Office of University Advancement.

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