

USC launches new Health Policy and Economics Center

By James Grant

A major new research center focused on health policy and economics has been established at USC, Executive Vice President and Provost C. L. Max Nikias announced Sept. 23.

The Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics is funded by a \$1.2 million operating gift from Leonard D. Schaeffer and his wife, Pamela Schaeffer. Leonard Schaeffer was the founding chairman and chief executive officer of WellPoint, the nation's largest health insurance company, and is a recognized expert in health policy and health economics.

The Schaeffer Center will be headed by Dana Goldman, who previously served as director of the RAND Corp.'s health economics, finance and organization division.

"At a time when the nation is struggling with health care reform, we are honored to announce the creation of this new interdisciplinary center, which will bring together USC's extraordinarily wide

range of expertise in order to address one of the most significant issues of our time," Nikias said.

"The addition of Dana Goldman and three of his distinguished colleagues from the RAND Corp. to our faculty will greatly expand our existing strengths in research and analysis of critical policy decisions."

The center is a collaboration between the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development (SPPD) and the USC School of Pharmacy. In addition to his post as director of the Schaeffer Center, Goldman will hold the Norman Topping Chair in Medicine and Public Policy at SPPD, and he also will hold a faculty appointment at the School of Pharmacy.

Two of the three new faculty members—Geoffrey Joyce and Neeraj Sood—have been appointed associate professors at the School of Pharmacy;



From left are Leonard D. Schaeffer, his wife, Pamela, and Dana Goldman, who will head the Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics.

Tom Queally

deans of the two schools.

"I am pleased to help the university establish a research center at a time when we must set biases aside and challenge assumptions if we are to succeed in transforming health care," Schaeffer said. "Using a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach, this new center is uniquely positioned to produce innovative research, reliable data and independent analysis that can lead to more effective health policy solutions."

The center's research will focus on five key areas: reducing unnecessary spending; improving insurance design; understanding how public policy affects medical innovation; identifying the macroeconomic consequences of U.S. health care costs; and improving comparative effectiveness and outcomes research.

Goldman said the new center's anticipated research projects include study of how coverage gaps in certain federally funded programs impact

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'At a time when the nation is struggling with health care reform, we are honored to announce the creation of this new interdisciplinary center.'

—C. L. Max Nikias, executive vice president and provost

A warm welcome for new dean of Dentistry

By Beth Dunham

Avishai Sadan stepped into his role as dean of the USC School of Dentistry in early August and was feted at a Sept. 23 reception attended by numerous Health Sciences faculty members and other USC leaders.

Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School of Medicine, welcomed Sadan to USC and hailed him as a strong collaborator who would foster ties between Dentistry and the Keck School.

"He is an accomplished clinician, a great leader, and someone I feel very comfortable working with," Puliafito said. "Our goal is to continue working closely in terms of research, clinical affairs and the advancement of medicine."

Sadan thanked attendees for their warm welcome and highlighted the continuing cooperation between the two schools, mentioning a newly awarded grant that will fund hiring of two new faculty members with dual



Jon Nalick

appointments in the School of Dentistry and the Keck School of Medicine.

"We're looking forward to increasing our collaboration," Sadan said.

USC hospitals implement six key upgrade projects

By Jon Nalick

Several significant facilities upgrades are well under way for both USC University Hospital and USC Norris Hospital to improve the quality of the patient care experience and to provide state-of-the-art care.

The projects are designed to boost operational efficiency, modernize and upgrade patient rooms and public areas, and improve quality of care.

"I want to thank so many of our physicians and staff for their participation in the planning process. Their input and guidance will create a very exciting health care environment in the near future," said Mitch Creem, CEO of the hospitals.

While a number of projects are still in the planning phases, six priority projects are moving forward as described below.

Outpatient Surgery Move to Doheny Eye Institute

Effective Oct. 5, ambulatory surgery cases currently performed inside the USC University Hospital operating rooms will be scheduled in

the first floor of the Doheny Eye Institute building, which previously served as an outpatient surgery area. Services located at the new, temporary Outpatient Surgery Center will include ophthalmology, orthopedics, ENT, plastic surgery, urology, gynecology and general surgery.

The Doheny space has been recently renovated to house ambulatory surgery while a permanent home for an expanded state-of-the-art outpatient surgery center is built in the basement of the HCC II building.

Operating Room Upgrades at USC University Hospital

The outpatient surgery move in October will allow for prompt upgrading of the USC University Hospital operating rooms to accommodate new equipment and other technology requested by Doctors of USC faculty surgeons for the care of their patients.

Surgeons will enjoy not only upgraded surgical suites, but also the additional capacity to schedule more cases as patient

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"Run 4 Her Life" fundraiser for USC Norris set for Oct. 18

By Joe Peters

With a title like "Run 4 Her Life," the upcoming 5k/10k run in Glendale may sound like a fictional thriller about a woman in peril, but the lethal danger the title hints at—breast cancer—is all too real.

Expedition Inspiration, an organization formed to raise funds for breast cancer research through organized outdoor activities, created the event, which is hosted by the Americana at Brand in downtown Glendale, on Oct. 18.

Proceeds from the event will support breast cancer research at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Expedition Inspiration's annual Laura Evans Memorial Breast Cancer Symposium.

In addition to the run, the event at the Americana will feature live entertainment, a health expo, and a post-race party.

For families, the event also offers a 5K Family Run/Walk on a USA Track & Field certified fast, flat course.

Celebrities attending the event will include Marcellus Wiley of ESPN, and co-chairs Shannon Tweed and her daughter Sophie Tweed-Simmons.

Shannon Tweed said, "Being involved with breast cancer aware-

ness, although it's a selfless activity, there's a selfish element in it for me. I want my daughter to be informed and conscious about the disease and its prevention and treatment."

To promote environmental consciousness, emediagroup is providing runners with eco-friendly running bibs made from seed paper. If planted after the event, these will bloom into black-eyed Susans, providing a lasting memento of the event.

"We are grateful to be part of this event that Expedition Inspiration has created to raise funds for breast cancer research," said Michael Press, the Harold E. Lee Chair for Cancer Research at Norris.

"As we learn more about the molecular and genetic causes of breast cancer, we are positioned to attack this deadly disease at its origin and to prevent its development in thousands of women," he said.

Run 4 Her Life is scheduled for 7 am on Sunday, October 18, at the Americana at Brand, 889 Americana Way Glendale, CA.

Pre-registration costs \$35 per runner, and Run Day tickets are \$40.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit <http://run4her-life.com>, or call (661) 259-7537.

Diet author credits USC Norris with saving his life

By Yvonne Baetz

Diagnosed with late stage colorectal cancer after a regular check-up, diet book author and former chemist A. J. Djo listened to his doctors deliver a bleak prognosis: his tumor was too large for surgery and no chemotherapy could help.

Instead of giving up, Djo and his wife scoured the Internet for the best cancer care they could find—and soon began treatment at USC Norris Cancer Hospital that ultimately saved his life.

Three years later, he recently ran his first half-marathon and now speaks to cancer survivors and their friends and families about the importance of nutrition and exercise.

"The key to survival is going to USC Norris Cancer Hospital," Djo said, crediting the hospital's "one-stop-shopping" approach to care as crucial for his cure.

He said that another factor in surviving cancer is working to create and maintain a loving network of family and friends, adding that for him, "I also found that I had a loving network at Norris, too."

Djo completed and published *The Hot Diet*, a book on the importance of diet and nutrition during his cancer treatment. He said his next project will be a personal book about surviving his battle with cancer that addresses practical issues such as money, lifestyle changes, goal-setting and helping people.



A. J. Djo

SCHAEFFER: Center for Health Policy and Economics to bolster campus collaboration

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patient health and how insurance designs affect physician-prescribing behavior.

"Our goal is to improve the health of our communities by conducting rigorous research that can be applied to policy, rather than by focusing on short-term approaches," he said.

Leonard Schaeffer is a veteran member of the board of councilors at SPPD, and he holds the Judge Robert Maclay Widney Chair, a

select executive-in-residence appointment accorded by the university president and named for one of USC's founders. Schaeffer lectures and writes widely on health policy issues.

As chairman of the Schaeffer Center's advisory board of scholars and practitioners, he will contribute the knowledge and experience gained from serving in both the public and private sectors.

Schaeffer led WellPoint from 1992 through 2004

and continued as chairman through 2005. He is currently chairman of Surgical Care Affiliates and a senior adviser to TPG Capital, a private equity firm.

In 1986, Schaeffer was recruited as CEO of WellPoint's predecessor company, Blue Cross of California, which was then near bankruptcy. He managed the turnaround of Blue Cross, founded WellPoint and later completed 17 corporate acquisitions.

During his tenure, the

company grew in value from \$11 million to more than \$49 billion.

Under Schaeffer's continued leadership, WellPoint was selected by *Fortune* as "America's Most Admired Health Care Company" for six consecutive years and by *BusinessWeek* as one of the 50 best performing public companies for three consecutive years. Schaeffer was selected by *BusinessWeek* as one of the "Top 25 Managers of the Year" and by *Worth* as one of the "50 Best CEOs in America."

Schaeffer also has an extensive public service record that includes appointments as administrator of the federal Health Care Financing Administration (now CMS); assistant secretary for management and budget of the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare; director of the Bureau of the Budget for the state of Illinois; chairman of the Illinois Capital Development Board; and deputy director of the Illinois Department of Mental Health.

He is a graduate of Princeton University and was the Regent's Lecturer at the

University of California at Berkeley.

"Leonard's involvement assures us success," said Jack H. Knott, dean of SPPD. "He is recognized as a national expert in health care financing and delivery. His distinguished career includes noteworthy public service at the federal and state levels, as well as innovative successes as founding CEO of the nation's largest health care insurer."

Dean R. Pete Vanderveen of the USC School of Pharmacy said the Schaeffer Center will provide many opportunities for additional collaboration across campus.

"The collaboration between our two schools, resulting in the creation of the Schaeffer Center, provides an opportunity for USC to rank among the very top tier in health economics and policy expertise," he said. "The center promises to be a vibrant, proactive voice impacting the future direction of health care."

For information on the Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics, visit <http://healthpolicy.usc.edu>

The Weekly

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HOSPITALS: Multiple improvement projects under way

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demand increases.

Upgrades to new Norris Inpatient Tower at USC University Hospital

Improvements to the new tower will include installing more sinks for frequent hand washing and additional nursing telemetry for patient monitoring, as well as flat screen televisions and patient communications systems. These upgrades should be completed by March 2010.

Ellen Whalen, chief nursing officer for the hospitals, said that the chief goal is to enhance patient safety and comfort.

"To that end, we are organizing patient care units by service," she said. "This will ensure patients are cared for by nurses who are specially prepared to address their specific needs, and they will be in an environment specially equipped to support them as they progress through their hospital stay."

Relocation of Norris Inpatients to Norris Inpatient Tower at USC UH

By early November, many Norris surgery patients will have their surgery at USC University Hospital and then be admitted into USC University Hospital inpatient rooms. Plans call for all Norris surgery patients to receive their post-

surgical care at USC University Hospital by February 2010.

The transfer of Norris inpatients will not actually entail the move of patients from one hospital to the other. Instead, a gradually increasing proportion of Norris patients will be scheduled for surgery at USC University Hospital and then be assigned to rooms in the new USC University Hospital tower.

Creem said the change will "ensure that our cancer patients have the best patient rooms we can offer, which affords the opportunity to merge the compassionate care at Norris with the compassionate care at University Hospital. We need to identify and embrace the best of what we have to offer our USC patients and their families—regardless of where they receive their care."

An assessment of space utilization at Norris will provide recommendations for renovating existing inpatient units to provide expanded outpatient programs and services for a growing cancer patient population.

"The expertise of our Norris faculty is constricted by available space in their current building," Creem explained. "By moving Norris inpatients to University

Hospital, we can explore the utilization of the vacated space for a women's health program, a men's health program, and other services that appeal to patients who seek the most comprehensive cancer care available."

Upgrades to the 1991 USC University Hospital Tower

An ambitious project slated for completion in late 2010 will focus on modernizing and updating the older hospital tower. Improvements will include seismic upgrades, additional telemetry, pathology services and room enhancements—all of which will bring the tower's rooms and services into parity with the newer Norris Inpatient Tower.

Public Space Improvements

Concurrent with the project to update the older inpatient tower, another initiative aims to improve the patient and family experience upon arrival while also improving patient flow throughout USC University Hospital. The project, targeting lobbies, family waiting areas on units and other public spaces, is intended to create a more modern, consistent and comfortable interior design.

The initiative is slated for completion in late 2010.

'We need to identify and embrace the best of what we have to offer our USC patients and their families—regardless of where they receive their care.'

—Mitch Creem, CEO of the USC hospitals

Doheny patient raises awareness, funds for rare eye condition

By Leslie Ridgeway

After suffering the effects of a rare condition that robs victims of the center of their vision, 19-year-old Jeremy Poincenot decided the best way to deal with his situation was to hop on a bike.

Poincenot, a patient of Alfredo Sadun, professor of ophthalmology at Doheny Eye Institute, arranged a three-day tandem 185-mile bike ride in late July from Santa Barbara to his hometown of Carlsbad, CA. The ride brought attention to his condition—Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy (LHON), which earlier this year left him legally blind.

"We raised almost \$3,000," said Poincenot. "Four of my friends stepped up to help me, and two people came with us to make a documentary. It was amazing, and was the highlight of my summer."

Poincenot's contribution supports research conducted by Sadun in rural Brazil, where he is working with a family group who all share LHON. The condition has an incidence of one in 50,000 people. Poincenot and his mother, Lissa, also spoke to the Luminaires, a philanthropic group that supports Doheny, about his experience.

LHON makes it impossible for Poincenot to drive, recognize faces and read without assisting technology. It is often misdiagnosed; Poincenot said that doctors initially thought he might have a brain tumor.

In addition to raising awareness of LHON with a Web site (<http://web.mac.com/poince/cure/Home.html>), Poincenot is continuing his studies at San Diego State University and meets with Sadun every six to eight weeks.

"He said he has seen signs of improvement," Poincenot said. "Dr. Sadun gives me hope."



Jeremy Poincenot (center) celebrates his ride from Santa Barbara to Carlsbad, CA. The ride was a fundraiser for the Doheny Eye Institute, supporting research for a rare condition called Lieber's hereditary optic neuropathy.

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A series of Sept. 28 *Los Angeles Times* articles on diet makeovers featured doctoral candidate in the Department of Preventive Medicine **Emily Ventura** as a nutrition expert. Ventura visited participants' homes to advise them on how they could improve their eating habits.

A Sept. 26 *New York Times* article highlighted the work of Professor of Ophthalmology **Mark Humayun**, Chief Scientific Officer of the Doheny Eye Institute **Gerald Chader** and colleagues in a story on technological advances toward curing blindness.

On Sept. 24, MedCenter Today Online ran a USC News story report-

ing that **Mark D. Amey** has joined USC as chief information officer for several units.

A Sept. 24 *New York Times* article quoted Assistant Professor of Plastic Surgery **Brian Kinney** about Sculptra, a long-lasting facial filler that just received Food and Drug Administration approval for cosmetic use.

A widely carried *U.S. News & World Report* story featured research by Assistant Professor of Clinical Neurology **Nerses Sanosian** which found that blacks and Latinos with histories of stroke or coronary artery disease have higher blood pressure than whites, but that

Latinos are less likely to be prescribed medications to control it.

A Sept. 23 *U.S. News & World Report* article reported that clinicians from the Keck School of Medicine will work with USC engineering, communication and computer science faculty to create a speech-to-speech (S2S) translation system for clinics, emergency rooms and ambulances.

On Sept. 23, MedCenter Today Online ran a USC News story reporting that **Preet Chaudhary** has been named chief of the Jane Anne Nohl Division of Hematology and Center for the Study of Blood Diseases

at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital. Medical News Today also reported the announcement.

A widely carried Sept. 22 *U.S. News & World Report* article featured research led by Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at CHLA **Steven Mittelman** which found that leukemia cells may hide in fat tissue. The findings may explain why obese children with leukemia are more likely to develop chemotherapy resistance and have higher relapse rates. United Press International, Science News, AHN, and the *NCI Cancer Bulletin* also covered the research.

Calendar of Events

This Calendar of events is also online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar for the Health Sciences Campus community

Saturday, Oct. 3

9 a.m. – 5 p.m. California Family Medicine Conference for Medical Students. "Social Justice & Family Medicine: Access, Equality, and a Healthy Democracy," Various speakers. Health Sciences campus. Info: (415) 345-8667

10 a.m. – Noon. "Fight On for a Cure," Various speakers and free cancer screening assessments. NOR Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-7673

Monday, Oct. 5

Noon. Liver Grand Rounds. "Case Presentations," Joon Kim, USC. IPT C3J101. Info: (323) 409-7995

Tuesday, Oct. 6

9 a.m. Neurology Grand Rounds. "MRI Safety: Update 2009," Frank Shellock, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

11:30 a.m. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. "U.S. Mental Healthcare Trends," Anand Pandya, Cedars Sinai. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

Wednesday, Oct. 7

8:30 a.m. "Pathology/ILD," M. Koss, USC. GNH 11-321. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. Renal Grand Rounds. "Incontinence," David Ginsberg, USC. GNH 4420. Info: (323) 226-7337

Thursday, Oct. 8

Noon. Research Center for Liver Diseases Seminar. "Overcoming Barriers to the Use of Hepatocytes and Stem Cells in the Treatment of Liver Disease," Ira Fox, Univ. of Pittsburgh. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1283

Friday, Oct. 9

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. "Current Trends in MDS Treatment," Joseph Tuscano, UC Davis. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

Noon. Infectious Diseases Grand Rounds. "Updates of Pain Management and Specific Pain-related Issues in HIV Patients," Ali Nemat, USC. GNH 6441. Info: (323) 226-7504

Noon. Gastrointestinal Grand Rounds. "Case Presentations," Angizeh Sadeghi, USC. OPT A5C129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Tuesday, Oct. 13

11:30 a.m. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. "Grief and Bereavement," Sidney Zisook, UC San Diego. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

Wednesday, Oct. 14

8:30 a.m. "Introduction to Radiology," Alison Wilcox, USC. GNH 11-321. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. Renal Grand Rounds. "Prostatitis and BPH," Matthew Dunn, USC. GNH 4420. Info: (323) 226-7337

Noon. Research Center for Liver Diseases Seminar. "Disrupted Mitochondria Function and Nitric Oxide Biology in Fatty Liver Diseases," Shannon Bailey, Univ. of Alabama. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1283

4 p.m. KSOM Research Seminar. "Modeling Stem Cells," Arthur Lander, UC Irvine. MCH 256. Info: (323) 442-1144

Friday, Oct. 16

9 a.m. USC Childhood Obesity Research Ctr. "Sample-size Analysis: The Classical Approach, Plus More Crucial Issues," Ralph O'Brien, Western Reserve Univ. CSC 250. Info: (323) 442-2637

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. "CNS Lymphoma," Tracy Batchelor, Massachusetts General Hospital. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

Noon. Gastrointestinal Grand Rounds. "Case Presentations," Sarah Sheibani, USC. OPT A5C129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Monday, Oct. 19

Noon. Liver Grand Rounds. "Case Presentations," Joon Kim, USC. IPT C3J101. Info: (323) 409-7995

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. "Paneth Cell A-Defensins: Peptide Mediators of Enteric Innate Immunity," Andre Ouellette, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

Thursday, Oct. 22

Noon. Research Center for Live Diseases Seminar. "Progeroid Syndromes and the Molecular Basis of Aging," Lucio Comai, USC. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1283



Carol Matthieu

HEART WALKERS WANTED—USC University Hospital employees (above) encourage students, staff and faculty of the Health Sciences Campus to register for the USC Heart Walk Team. The team will walk on Saturday morning, Oct. 3, for the American Heart Association's annual event to raise money for research to fight heart disease and stroke. Vaughn Starnes, chair of the Department of Surgery at the Keck School of Medicine, serves as honorary captain of the USC team. The walk starts at 9 a.m. at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. All registered team members will receive a USC team t-shirt and an invitation to a USC team gathering before the walk. In addition to the non-competitive 5k walk, the event includes a Wellness Festival featuring health screenings, food, a Kids Zone, music, giveaways and more. For more information or to join the USC team, visit <http://tinyurl.com/qzc9vf>.

Body Computing 3.0 conference highlights health care tech

By Leslie Ridgeway

Applications and devices that can help people manage their health and communicate with their health care provider will be subjects of discussion at the Body Computing 3.0 conference on Oct. 9.

This year's conference, sponsored by the Keck School of Medicine of USC Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, takes place from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 9, at the UPC Town and Gown Banquet Hall. The conference is preceded by the popular

Body Computing Slam and dinner at 5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 8, at the Davidson Conference Center, where experts in healthcare, technology and entertainment meet to "think out loud" about the future of technology in health care.

Guest experts from companies including Microsoft, Qualcomm and the Mayo Clinic will join with experts from the Keck School of Medicine of USC, USC Viterbi School of Engineering, and USC School of Cinematic Arts for talks on everything from what happens when

personal health data is used in gaming devices to how to create devices that are as interesting and fun to use as they are useful for managing one's own health.

The conference also includes demonstrations of iPhone apps that enable users to track their heart health, and that allow physicians to interact with patients and to share data and communicate with other physicians.

For more information on the conference, go to <http://www.usccardiology.org/bodycomputing/>

Triathlon raises \$1 million for CHLA for pediatric cancer research

Pediatric cancer research was the big winner at the Nautica Malibu Triathlon on Sept. 13, with \$1 million raised for the Pediatric Cancer Research Program at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles.

The Nautica Malibu Triathlon has raised more than \$2.7 million for pediatric cancer research at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles in the three years the hospital has been the beneficiary of the event.

Teri Hatcher ("Desperate Housewives") led the field of celebrity competitors, including Felicity Huffman ("Desperate Housewives") and her husband William H. Macy ("Shorts," "ER"), Jason Lee ("My Name is Earl"), Jon Cryer ("Two and a Half Men"), Mario Lopez ("Extra"), Jeremy Piven ("Entourage") and more.

The Pediatric Cancer Research Program at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles provides groundbreaking treatments and therapies for some of the most serious and life-threatening pediatric cancers that strike children everywhere.

"Our ongoing commitment and dedication to medical research and disease prevention at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles is making a difference in the fight against this terrible illness," said Stuart E. Siegel, director of the Childrens Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, and professor and vice chair, pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California. "Those of us responsible for the Pediatric Cancer Research Program are very, very grateful for the generosity of all involved with the Nautica Malibu Triathlon and, together, we look toward a time in the future when research will conquer this horrific disease."

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Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week's issue—although three weeks' advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to HSC Weekly, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or e-mail to ebalauw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location, and a phone number for information.