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## The Beacon, December 4, 2006

Florida International University

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## College of Law accredited in record time

**BEN F. BADGER JR.**  
Staff Writer

FIU's College of Law, a program which has been around for only four years, received full accreditation Dec. 2, the quickest accreditation granted in recent history.

"This was the fastest time possible in which we could achieve accreditation under [the American Bar Association's] rules," University President Modesto A. Maidique said in a press release. "This accomplishment is a testament to the quality of the administration, faculty and students of our College of Law."

The morning of the announcement was a tense one for the college's administrative

staff.

Dean Leonard Strickman, associate deans Ediberto Román and Michelle Mason, Maidique and Madlyn Downs, program assistant and law professor, appeared before the Council of the Section on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar of the A.B.A. There they were subject to a series of questions.

A half hour after their appearance, Strickman was informed that the College of Law was approved for full accreditation by a 24-member panel consisting of state supreme court justices, practicing attorneys and law school deans and professors from around the nation.

"Today was a great moment and a bit of a



**Ediberto Román**, Associate Dean of the College of Law

Today was a great moment and a bit of a 'pew' factor for me. This is the first milestone of many great achievements that FIU will make in the near future.

'pew' factor for me," Román said, relieved to hear about the accreditation. "This is the first milestone of many great achievements that FIU will make in the near future."

Now that the program is accredited, all the college's graduates are qualified to take the bar exam and practice law, including those who graduated before the accreditation was

granted.

The program started in 2002 and received provisional accreditation, one of the necessary steps needed to full accreditation, in 2004.

In order to be fully accredited, a col-

**LAW, page 2**

## M/W/F schedule conflicts discussed

**MARIA CHERCOLES**  
Asst. News Director

Although members of the committee in charge of implementing the new three-day schedule have more than eight months to work on the changes, the process may be more complex than it seems.

The first Classroom Utilization Implementation Committee meeting took place Dec. 1, a week after the new schedule was approved. It was opened by Interim Provost Ronald Berkman, who underlined the difficulty of the situation and the short time frame to fully implement the changes.

"I want to emphasize the rationale of this decision," Berkman said. "Even if we don't know whether state funds will be taken away, there is still a threat. At the end of the day students will begin to realize this was the best for them."

He went on to say that this transition is the second-highest priority for FIU after the College of Medicine.

The decision to change to a Monday/Wednesday/Friday class schedule was passed by the Faculty Senate Nov. 24 after the State Legislature proposed a bill that would reduce funds for universities inefficiently using classroom space.

Berkman explained he noticed "student anxiety" about the decision, and wanted to make sure students understand why the decision was made. He also pointed out he wants students who have been at FIU the longest to feel the changes the least.

"We've made a contract with them," Berkman said. "My goal is to add regularity and predictability to scheduling."

Berkman assigned a team of administration representatives to the committee, which include members from Enrollment Services, Academic Space, Student Government and Student Affairs. Although this meeting, like most FIU meetings, is open to the public under Sunshine Laws, no students attended, with the exception of SGC-UP President Alfonso

**M/W/F, page 3**



CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

**IN PRINT:** John Virtue, director of the International Media Center, looks at a freedom of the press poster in his office at the Biscayne Bay Campus. He has helped journalists in Cuba publish several hundreded articles abroad.

## Cuban reporters published abroad

**NAIHOBE GONZALEZ**  
Staff Writer

Jorge Dalmau has learned to outwit the Cuban government. Yet, Dalmau is not a spy or a U.S. official — he is an editor for FIU's International Media Center.

In his position, Dalmau edits over 150 articles a month written by independent journalists in Cuba. As many as 214 Cuban journalists have participated in the program: Professional Support for Cuba's Independent Journalists.

Because of obstacles imposed by Cuba's communist government, the International Media Center and Cuban journalists employed unique tactics to surpass what Dalmau calls "a basic problem of communication."

"The Internet can only send e-mails within Cuba, it is tightly controlled," Dalmau said. "The only way is to go to a hotel, ease your way in, dress and appear to be a foreigner, and then pay \$5 an hour for dial-up service — which is asking you to spend half of your monthly salary."

E-mail communication is seldom used, so program coordinators and participants also use mail correspondence to exchange articles, educational materials and feedback.

John Virtue, director of the center, explained a complicated routing process used in the early stages of the program.

"I'd have friends in Canada send mail to Cuba, but if back in Cuba they put mail in an envelope and addressed it to FIU in Miami, I'm sure it was taken out of the mail," Virtue said.

As a result of these barriers, Virtue

acknowledges that some correspondence sent by journalists may have been intercepted, resulting in potential participants never hearing back from the center.

In a Nov. 16 article, *The Miami Herald* picked up on this and other shortcomings in the program, and expanded them into an article called, "Cuba thwarts U.S. efforts to help dissidents." According to the article, FIU's program has "fallen short of its mark" in its efforts to train independent journalists in Cuba.

The catch is that FIU has received \$1.6 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development to train independent journalists in the island since 1999.

USAID is a federal agency whose

**CUBA, page 2**

2006 isn't over yet...

**2007**

**THE YEAR HEADLINES**

A Special Beacon Section

**Hits Stands Dec. 7**

## THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • DECEMBER 4

**Celebrating Kwanzaa:** 12 p.m., *Fresh Food Company Cafeteria*  
**Chamber Winds:** 8 p.m., *Wertheim Concert Hall*

TUESDAY • DECEMBER 5

**SPC Cultural Celebrations presents Israeli Culture:** 12 p.m., *GC Forum*  
**RESPECT Movie and Discussion "Bad Santa":** 7 p.m., *GC 140*  
**CES Workshop "Stress Management":** 12 p.m., *GC 305*  
**CES Workshop "Introduction to Career Services":** 2 p.m., *WUC 255*  
**New Music Ensemble:** 8 p.m., *Wertheim Concert Hall*

WEDNESDAY • DECEMBER 6

**SPC Hawaiian Culture:** 12 p.m., *GC Forum*

THURSDAY • DECEMBER 7

**SPC Indian Culture:** 12 p.m., *GC Forum*  
**GSA Grads Keller:** 6 p.m., *Gracie's Grill*

FRIDAY • DECEMBER 8

**SOC Winterfest:** 6 p.m., *GC 243*  
**SPC Films "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest":** 7 p.m., and 10 p.m., *GC 140*  
**Prims Concert - FIU Golden Panther**

## CORRECTIONS

In the issue dated Nov. 30, 2006, the At The Bay front page photograph titled Galloping Gobblers should have been credited to Cristela Guerra.

In the same issue, the So You Know box that accompanied the article jump entitled "State funding affects scheduleing" included MWF times and TR times in accordance with the email sent by Provost Ronald Berkman.

*The Beacon* will gladly change any errors. Call our UP office at 305-348-2709 or BBC at 305-919-4722.

# College receives full accreditation

LAW, page 1

lege must have graduated its first class and successfully completed several reviews.

The first class graduated this May.

Factors that were considered for full accreditation included the quality of the program, the curriculum's rigor, their financial resources and bar exam passing rates, according to Strickman.

The final step for accreditation was the completion of the college's building, the Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall at University Park. The building will be dedicated

February of next year at a ceremony with special guest, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, according to the press release.

In an e-mail sent to the college's faculty, Strickman expressed his gratitude for those who helped expedite accreditation of the law school.

"I am grateful to the Florida Legislature, the Governor, and the University administration for their support of our law school," Strickman said. "And I congratulate our faculty, law school administrators, staff, alumni and current students who all played important roles

in our arriving at this result."

The college currently has more than 400 students enrolled with the number expected to exceed 600.

According to the A.B.A.'s website, there are 194 institutions approved as of June 2006.

When freshman Arielle Capuano found out about the news, she took a step back, covered her mouth and gasped.

"We are on better grounds now to compete with other Florida schools," Capuano said. "I know Dean Strickman had been working hard to get us fully accredited fast."

## GATOR GLIMPSE



ANGELINA ESPOSITO/THE BEACON

**CRUIKEY!** A baby alligator measuring around four feet in length was spotted in the lake next to the parking lot behind Primera Casa on Nov. 27. As of press time, there is no word whether the alligator has been removed.

## SGA Notes

Nov. 30 Call to Order: 4:00 p.m. Adjournment: 5:13 p.m.

### President (Alfonso "Alfie" Leon):

- *The Beacon* Editor in Chief C. Joel Marino spoke about the paper's role with SGA
- Trustee meetings Dec. 4-5. Dec. 4 issues: 8:30, Finance and audit, 11:30 Student affairs, 2:00 Admin and athletics. Dec 5 issues: 9:00 Medical school, China campus, athletics/coaches

### Vice President (Providence Okoye):

- Intramural field will continue construction, despite some controversy with lighting.

### Comptroller's (Nancy Cadavid):

- Readership survey - Goal: 500 responses by Dec. 4, 1000 by end of semester.

### Judicial Board (Kathryn Cubbon):

- Write opinions for situations that might arise. "[For example] if someone drinks at a game and hits a person. While that's not something we deal with, we need to have policies in place in case someone comes to us with that. We need to decide how to deal with that as a council."

### Homecoming (Alex Ravelo):

- Looking at budget to see what we have left - need to fix the Roary Balloon

### New Business (aye-nay-abstain):

- Appropriation A06-31: FIU Wind Ensemble instrument rentals passed for \$1000 (11-0-0)
- Council Bill B06-10: Amendment to the bylaws regarding the Finance Committee passed (10-0-1)
  - Finance Committee responsible for all allocations of the Finance Committee budget; must tell House of all appropriations, even if denied
- Council Bill B06-11: Amendment to the FIU SGC-UP Finance Policy was tabled: (9-0-2)
  - Representatives can overrule Finance Committee with 2/3 majority

### Announcements:

- Good luck on finals.

- Compiled by Angelina Troff, Beacon Staff

## Virtue: Reporters not students

CUBA, page 1

budget is appropriated by Congress, and FIU is among few universities to receive funding from the entity.

According to *The Miami Herald* article, a sign of FIU's International Media Center's failure was that of its 214 participants, only four actually "completed the required courses."

The center disagrees. In an unpublished letter to the editor, Virtue showed his discontent with the article's depiction of the program.

"As a journalist whose specialty is ethics, I was disappointed to read the references to [FIU's] training of Cuban independent journalists," Virtue wrote.

According to Virtue, it was "made abundantly clear" to the writer, Oscar Corral, that the program did not have a set number of required courses.

Virtue also resented the author's treatment of the participants as students throughout the piece.

"I didn't like Corral using the word 'students.' They are mid-level career professionals, journalists, some of them in their sixties," Virtue said. "And they have learned everything they know about journalism from us."

Most journalists participating in the program have never seen a real newspaper but as a result of the training, editing and facilitation provided by the center, many have had their works published in newspapers around Latin America, including *El Universal of Caracas* and Bogota's *El Tiempo*.

"We helped one journalist get her articles published in *The San Antonio Express-News*, which led to articles in *The New York Times* [and] *Los Angeles Times*," Virtue wrote.

Others were not so successful. In 2003, 24 participants were imprisoned in a Cuban crackdown on dissidents. Of the remaining participants, 40 are in exile, and about 100 are active with the center, filing articles

regularly.

Over time, the center has learned from its failures and successes. Today, fax machines have stabilized communication between writers and Dalmau. Though Virtue was only able to visit the island once to deliver his workshop, the program now employs video conferencing and has strengthened its collaboration with the U.S. Interest Section in Havana.

"It's been a challenge, for them and for us — their very existence is illegal and no one's ever done this before," Dalmau said. "But given our circumstances, we've been very adaptive and fairly successful."

Virtue agreed.

"For 18 years we have trained over 8,000 journalists throughout Latin America. We were there when Democracy returned to Panama and when the Sandinistas left Nicaragua," Virtue said. "We're preparing the independent journalists of Cuba for the day when there is freedom of press."

# UP Apartments to become a gated community

**REUBEN PEREIRA**  
Senior Staff Writer

Beginning Spring 2007, the University Park Apartments will be set to have the look and feel of a gated community due to the addition of gates that are being constructed at both entrances into the complex, one located on 107th Avenue and the other located opposite the Health and Life Science Building.

The decision to construct the gates was made primarily because the Department of Housing and Residential Life decided that they wanted the apartments secured during the summer months when the complex is closed, according to Jim Wassenaar, executive director of Student Affairs Operations.

"Basically, we have determined that during the summer months, when the apartments are closed, it would be advantageous for us to secure that environment from vehicular traffic," Wassenaar said.

According to Wassenaar, gate's construction would cost the University roughly \$30,000. During the winter break, a hedge will be added 107th Avenue portion of the fence. With landscape included, the fence project is estimated to cost the University around \$45,000.

"Students brought to us concerns that they didn't like the fact that there wasn't a barrier between the main road and the apartments," said Wassenaar.

The entire project is expected



EDDIE ZENG/THE BEACON

**DRIVE THRU:** Concrete pillars stand on the 107th Avenue entrance to the University Park Apartments where a gate will soon be installed. This is an initiative to help to keep outsiders away during the summer.

to be completed during the winter break.

Although senior Sam Enos didn't care much about the gates at first, he admitted that if the purpose of the gates was to keep students safe and regulate external traffic, then it was a good decision.

"I'm graduating at the end of the year, so the addition of the gates isn't going to affect me. But if it keeps the residents at the apartments safe, then it's cool with me," Enos said. "If it's to regulate traffic,

then that's cool, too."

Even though the gates will be installed and operational for Spring 2007 semester, they will remain open at all times and will only be closed during the Summer semester when the apartments are closed.

"The gate that we are putting up is actually very limited in its function," Wassenaar said. "It will be locked in an open position during the Spring 2007 semester and students won't be facing those gates when they try to get into the

complex."

Students like junior Rosanna Martinez, although happy at first with the addition of the gate, believing they would give students comfort and security, changed her opinion once she learned that the gates will remain open 24 hours a day during the Fall and Spring semesters.

"Being a resident of the apartments, I definitely thought that the gates would make the apartments a much safer place to live in, but

now that I know that they'll be open to the public, I think it's pointless and a waste of money," Martinez said. "But at least it makes the apartments look much better than it used to."

When the idea of the gates was first brought up, Housing and Residential Life did look over the possibility of closing the gates but decided against it because students didn't express a desire for it, according to Wassenaar.

Additionally, the closed gates could create lines of cars at the 107th Ave. entrance to the apartments.

"We have some of the infrastructure to do a more sophisticated system but, really, from an operation standpoint, we haven't decided to do it and the concept is not going to be taken into consideration anytime soon," Wassenaar said. "It would also come with a significant cost which would impact students' rental fees."

The second pair of gates built at the entrance facing the Health and Life Science building will also be closed only during the summer, except when the Department of Public Safety makes its rounds.

Ultimately, Wassenaar added, the purpose of the gates and the hedge fence is for the protection and needs of the students.

"I think it's an improvement over the past because students can now feel as if they're in a gated community," Wassenaar said.

# Committee discusses three-day schedule's problems

M/W/F, page 1

"Alfie" Leon.

Berkman's idea is to have students register for classes for the Fall and Spring at the same time, which will reassure that the classes they need will be offered when they need them.

Also, according to Berkman, each college will be assigned classrooms for specific time blocks for the entire academic year. Colleges will have the freedom to control how they distribute the classrooms and time blocks among their departments and individual courses. The committee will supervise them, and departments that efficiently use their classroom space will be given additional space.

"This is not to take central control of the schedule but to create an equilibrium. I don't think the committee will be able to create the schedule, but instead it will create a policy guidance," Berkman said.

Another option is to group classes in six, nine and 12 credits. For example, a group worth nine credits would include a history, biology and math classes. However, Berkman said this could limit the amount of class choices for underclassmen because not all classes will be grouped.

Corinne Webb, the committee's chair, suggested a schedule system, supposedly used across the nation that consists on first asking students what classes they want to take, then creating the schedule based on demand.

Webb also considered opening registration earlier for classes meeting at unpopular times for students who really need them.

The committee is also debating whether the change may decrease the number of full-time students, and how to accommodate scholarship recipients who can't take electives and must take 15 credits to maintain their scholarship.

Berkman left before the meeting ended, but before doing so, he said he is considering hiring

a team of logistics consultants and conducting a trial schedule.

Webb continued the discussion by asking how the 50-minute schedule will function during finals and how it will affect the personal and working life of students.

Jeff Gonzalez, associate vice president of office of planning and institutional effectiveness, presented a study conducted by the office of program policy analysis and government accountability, which analyzed classroom usage in Florida's 11 state universities based on all scheduled classes, number of classrooms and classrooms on use at every hour.

Gonzalez showed the low classroom usage at FIU, which is 11.9 percent below the state average. Morning-time and Friday classroom utilization were both 18.8 percent and 16.6 percent below the average respectively.

"If we analyze the enrollment size and the class section counts, we clearly see we are doing something wrong, and that is what we'll have to work on," Gonzalez said.

According to Gonzalez, having 50-minute time blocks would allow the University to schedule 12 class times from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., while the current 75-minute classes only allow the scheduling of 8.5 classes during the same time interval.

"This is a commuting university, but this is not an excuse. There are other universities that are commuter too and do better than us," said Elizabeth Bejar, assistant provost, referring to the low classroom usage in the morning.

But the OPPAGA report may have its flaws. Some rooms are registered with the state as classrooms but are being used as research or office space.

Gloria Jacomino, director of academic space management, and a team of advisers, spent the last six months visiting every classroom to ensure they were still being used for lectures and corrected the information with the state.

Classrooms that have a large seating capacity are also sometimes booked for less students, thus changing the class capacity. And, according to Sylvia Berenguer, director of construction minor projects, larger classrooms are generally in high demand.

Although there were no official solutions, Webb pointed out her interest in helping stu-

dents ease in to the new schedule.

"I would like everyone here to encourage students to feel good about this," Webb said.

The committee's last meeting of the semester will be Dec. 8, and Spring semester meetings will begin Jan. 5 and will be held every other Friday after that at 9 a.m. in MARC 530, University Park.

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## Conference looks for peace through religion

JESSICA SOLIS  
Staff Writer

To Rabbi Mitchell Chefitz, religion serves a universal purpose, which is peace, happiness and tolerance.

Chefitz was just one of a myriad of religious figures from around the country and the world united for a common cause on Nov. 30 at the Biscayne Bay Campus' Kovens Conference Center for the World Peace Conference.

An interfaith panel comprised of Muslim, Jain, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Hindu speakers provided a non-political forum where peace was key topic of the discussion.

The rabbi spoke in a metaphor of people of faith climbing up a mountain, where at the base of the mountain are people of different religions and traditions, but at the top of the mountain is peace, a concept all religions embrace as reflected in the panel's views.

"It's at the summit where we resemble each other," Chefitz said.

Organized by the Kriya Yoga Institute and FIU's Center for the Study of Spirituality, the conference was called "Peace is our Birthright: Creating a Unified Vision for World Peace" and was designed to unite members of different religions to discuss the issues of peace, non-violence and spirituality.



CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

**GIVE PEACE A CHANCE:** Arun Gandhi (center left), Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, is joined by Lama Karma Chotso (left), Swami Paramahansa Prajnanananda (right) and Nathan Katz (center right).

More than a hundred people attended the event, a large crowd that included students and non-students alike.

The highlight of the night for many was the presence of Arun Gandhi, grandson of political and spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi.

Just like his grandfather, Arun Gandhi has dedicated his life to non-violence and spreading the message of peace.

Raised in South Africa during apartheid, Gandhi said he was an

angry child.

He was abused by white South Africans for being "too black," and beaten by black South Africans for being "too white."

"I was angry and frustrated," he said. "I wanted eye-for-an-eye justice."

Eventually, Gandhi learned his family's way and began to believe in the principles of non-violence.

"We need to get out of that negative mold and into a positive one," he told the audience. "We

have to learn how to use our anger positively."

Gandhi stressed that if people want peace in the world, they must work for it, and not just say they would like to see it achieved by others.

"Peace requires commitment, passion and understanding," Gandhi said.

He also mentioned that there was more to religion than habit.

"There is a distinct difference between religion and rituals. It

doesn't matter if we pray 10 times a day if there's no heart in it."

No one on the panel tried to separate the idea of peace from religion.

Rather each included a message of religion with a message of peace.

"When someone submits to God, he has peace," said Imam Mohammed Zakaria Badat.

He reminded the audience that no religion is intolerant, no matter what the world is led to believe.

A soft-spoken Paramahansa Prajnanananda, spiritual leader of the Kriya Yoga International Organization, spoke of the difference between spiritual and political peace, especially during a time of war where many are accustomed to use the word "peace" as meaning the end of war.

"The political mind speaks of peace in the whole world; a spiritual mind speaks of peace within," he said.

The conference opened the eyes of for audience members like Layla Shanti.

"It reminded me of a lot of things I've known, but I still learned a lot about how to know peace and bring it into your day-to-day life," Shanti said.

Reverend Mary Tumpkin agreed with Rabbi Chefitz metaphor and said skepticism will eventually be overcome by seeing peace work.

"We have to practice what we already preach," Tumpkin said.

## QUESTIONS ON PEACE



**Arun Gandhi**

**Q** Why are young people feeling more and more separated from religion?

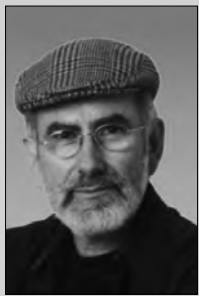
**A** My grandfather used to say that our children do what we do rather than what we tell them to do ... We need to move religion forward to make its mythical stories understandable and have young people relate to them.



**Swami Yuktatmananda**

**Q** What is your advice to students?

**A** To fill the mind with noble thoughts and then try to fashion our life according to them. When one is young is the most important time to cultivate the mind with these ideas because once we get old, the mind is already covered with so many experiences.



**Rabbi Mitchell Chefitz**

**Q** How do we separate the ego from the individual so that we can achieve inner peace?

**A** In every tradition in which I am aware there are exercises to keep a balance between insignificance and significance in the self.



**Rev. Mary Tumpkin**

**Q** How do we awake community consciousness especially in such a multi-ethnic community as the one we live in?

**A** Only when people have a change of consciousness and see each other as equal can they start a community. A community is an inclusive place where we turn down the barriers.



**Lama Karma Chotso**

**Q** How do we reach our inner spirituality in our social context, which you have gotten to know as a spiritual leader in South Florida?

**A** The best thing to do is to practice meditation ... secular or religious, but we have to find a way and use techniques to let go of a lot of our attachments and allow the purity of our minds to come through.



**Samani Charitra Pragma**

**Q** How can we start the change?

**A** We have to start by minimizing our desire. We live in a nation of consumerism; we have to start making a distinction between our greed and our need.

-Compiled by Begone Cazalis

## THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • DECEMBER 4

**SPC Release Week-Game Day: 11 a.m., Panther Square**

**Campus Life Holiday Fest: 2 p.m. - 4 p.m., Panther Square**

TUESDAY • DECEMBER 5

**SPC Release Week-Massage Day: 11 a.m., Panther Square**

**BBC Wish Givers Holiday Auction Party and Wish Walk: 6 p.m., WUC ballrooms**

WEDNESDAY • DECEMBER 6

**ISSS-Christmas Around the World: 12:30p.m., WUC 363**

**CCC Impact Movement Weekly Lunch: 2 p.m., WUC 245**

**SGA General Meeting: 3:30 p.m., WUC 155**

**SPC Release Week- "Wild'n Out Ape Style": 7 p.m., Panther Square**

THURSDAY • DECEMBER 7

**SPC Release Week- Video game tournament: 11 a.m., WUC ballrooms**

**SPC Release Week- "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" 7 p.m., Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre**

FRIDAY • DECEMBER 8

**The Lounis Haitian Dance Theatre: An Evening of Authentic Haitian Folk Dances: 8 p.m., Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre**

-Compiled by Cristela Guerra

# OPINION

C. Joel Marino Editor in Chief • Christopher Necuze Production Manager • Jose de Wit Opinion Editor

## ALL WORK, NO PLAY

### Insufficient vacation time may be costing America

**SHAWN SPROCKETT**  
Asst. Opinion Editor

You're completely stressing out about exams, aren't you? Maybe you're freaking out about your relentless work schedule, too. I bet you'll even be anxious over winter break, with all of your multiple holiday obligations.

The truth is you're not alone, especially here in the United States, where vacations have become increasingly rare.

It may come as a surprise to Americans to imagine the government forcing companies to provide paid vacation for their employees, but in much of the first world this is becoming the norm.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the United States is the only industrialized nation that does not legally obligate companies to provide their employees with paid vacations. As a result, experts are worried that American workers are becoming more stressed and less productive than their international competitors.

John de Graaf is the coordinator of Take Back Your Time, an organization fighting to decrease the American workload. He says that the issue has not made much headway in American politics due to the influence of big corporations.

He also says that despite promises of economic prosperity by the Bush administration, little has been done to defend the

working citizen.

Similar organizations, such as Work to Live, argue that the extended weekend has replaced most vacation plans. They also point to the rise in technology, like cell phones and wireless laptops, as a source of constant distraction from recreation.

Patriots might argue that working hard is a part of our deeply-rooted American tradition.

Critics say it is our slavery to

It may come as a surprise to Americans to imagine the government forcing companies to provide paid vacation for their employees, but in much of the first world this is becoming the norm.

mass consumption that compels us to work ceaselessly.

Activists say that worker unions have more power in Europe than in the US.

The truth is we may never understand the cause of this overworked lifestyle, but we can certainly understand its consequences.

Statistics from the EPI show that much of Western Europe has surpassed the United States in terms of productivity.

The average American worker produces \$47.42 worth of goods and services an hour, while Norwegian citizens produce \$62.66 per hour. The tiny island nation of Ireland produces more than the United States, yielding \$48.86 an hour.

Even France is more efficient, with an average \$54.03 made in an hour.

To make matters worse, Americans are suffering from stress and constant pressure

from their employers to put in more hours.

Ask yourself how many hours you put into your job this week. Now consider this: in Germany, the economic powerhouse of Europe, laborers put in an average of 18.6 hours a week.

In the United States, the average person works 46.2 weeks of the 52-week year. The French average is almost 2 months shorter.

Stereotypes paint countries like Japan and China as the most industrious and dedicated producers, but

the EPI shows that both nations' citizens receive a higher yearly average vacation time than Americans. Japan requires that workers take at least 2 weeks off per year. China mandates 3 "Golden Weeks" that allow citizens a chance to recoup.

If other nations are producing more by working less, then I believe the American government should stop and think for a second.

Human beings do have physical limitations.

There is such a thing as working too hard.

Taking a break now and then refreshes you, clears your mind and allows you to concentrate better upon your return.

So when exams have passed, work is closed and the holidays have arrived, do yourself a favor and enjoy your time off.

With the way things are here, you may not get another chance soon.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Wild dogs pose rabies threat

I am writing you about the recent article that appeared in *The Beacon* about the roaming or "campus" dogs.

I strongly object to keeping them around and I feel that animal control needs to take care of the problem now.

Although I sympathize with the students who see them as campus pets, I have one word for those people: rabies. The campus has its share of other wild animals, such as raccoons, which are notorious for carrying rabies.

If people are genuinely concerned about what will happen to these dogs, then I encourage them to adopt one, take it to a vet and have it spayed or neutered, and vaccinated. Unfortunately, these dogs pose a health and security risk by roaming around

the campus.

I also greatly enjoy the nature preserve, which is the winter home to many migratory birds, but now I am unable and afraid to go into the preserve because of these dogs.

Please don't get me wrong, I love animals and have four rabbits which are all rescues (and live in my home and are "fixed"), but roaming dogs do not belong on a campus with 30,000 students, faculty and staff. These dogs are dangerous and should be taken care of. Surely there are some wonderful people out there willing to adopt them and give them proper homes and care.

**Georgiana Hall**  
Astronomy Lab Manager  
Physics Department

### Schedule change threatens academic performance

As I opened my FIU web-mail account, I was outraged to find that MWF classes had been implemented. Ironically enough, at the same time, I was handed an issue of *The Beacon* containing an article titled "Students have hard time juggling class, jobs, sanity."

Well, if students had to juggle before, now they will be forced to become trapeze artists.

Once again, the school sugar coats their reasons for MWF classes by claiming that this will aid student's learning process. Sure, more interaction could prove to be beneficial. But then what about Tuesday and Thursday classes?

Our MWF professors will be able to spend more time with students than those who have a Tuesday/Thursday block, giving an unfair advantage to MWF courses.

What truly gets to me is that the board has failed to analyze student life and instead made a choice based on monetary benefits. Many students take Fridays off in order to be able to complete homework, meet for group projects and study for classes. Also, many students

have weekend jobs or work longer hours Saturdays and Sundays, so they use Fridays to accomplish school work.

Moreover, I know many students (particularly science majors) who reserve their "free days" to take labs. Now, thanks to the new schedule, students will have to add their lab course to a fully packed week. As if matters weren't already bad enough, students can now wave good-bye to easy parking on Fridays.

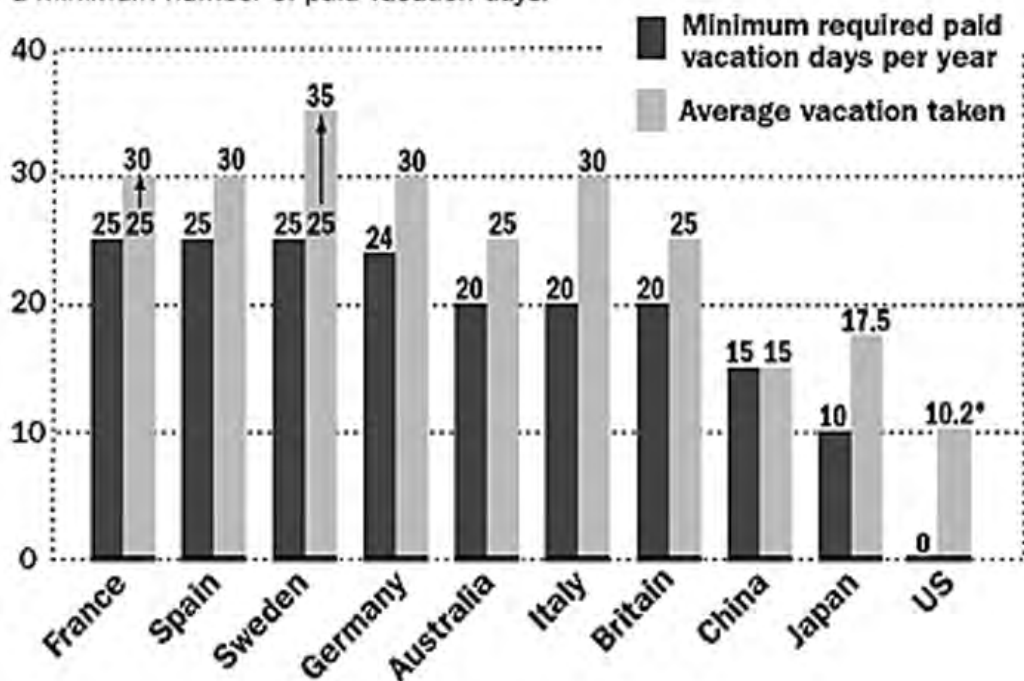
Coming into college, one of the ideas that attracted me most was the notion that I would have complete control of my schedule, but now that freedom has been ripped from me. Having classes three times a week should be an option, perhaps even a recommendation, but not a requirement.

I urge all those students who are negatively affected by the implemented schedule to speak up and demand a change. After all college is supposed to be about us, the students, isn't it?

**Meliza A. Frias**  
Freshman  
English

### Length of vacations around the world

For some Americans, paid time off is a luxury most do without. In fact, the United States is the only industrialized nation without laws requiring a minimum number of paid vacation days.



### SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor must be dropped off at GC 210 at University Park, WUC 124 at the Biscayne Bay Campus or sent to [beaconopinion@yahoo.com](mailto:beaconopinion@yahoo.com). Letters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words. Letters must include the writer's full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. *The Beacon* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints.

# Holiday Horrors

## Santa fights aliens, indulges carnal lust in bad Christmas films

CHRIS CABRAL  
Staff Writer

Students tired of the hackneyed holiday movie plots of *Santa Clause 3* and *Deck the Halls* may be wondering if there are better Christmas movies out there, films that warm the heart, lift up the soul, and massage the spirit.

For these students, bad Christmas movies might provide an alternate source of enjoyment this holiday season.

Here are four Christmas films that are so bad they just might make you find religion, as they are ranked among the worst movies ever, according to Internet Movie DataBase ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)):

### *Santa With Muscles* (1996)

This deservedly forgotten Hulk Hogan film, ranked #7 in the IMDB Bottom 100, has the two corny taglines, “He’s naughty, he’s nice, and he’s coming to save Christmas” and “He’s arrived in the Saint Nick of time.”

Its cast features such actors as Ed Begley Jr., Clint Howard (the freakish looking brother of Ron Howard) and a young Mila Kunis of “That ‘70s Show” fame. The movie is made all the more enjoyable with the priceless line “Santa, you sleigh me!”

### *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* (1964)

Faring much better than *Santa With Muscles* on the IMDB list (#79), *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* adds aliens into the mix.

As everyone who watched the film

knows, the Martians are out there – and it’s about time these jerks got what’s coming to them. Somebody needs to conquer Martians, and who better than Santa Claus?

In this film, Santa does not attempt to subjugate the Martians through a bloody campaign of destruction waged from the cockpit of his magical sleigh.

Instead, he overwhelms them with the joy of giving and the Christmas spirit, leaving the aliens alive and free to threaten mankind some other day.

### *Christmas Evil* (1980)

In most Christmas movies, good and bad, Santa Claus is depicted as a blithely obese pushover, a kind soul who metes out nothing more than coal to bad people everywhere. In the real world, the bad deserve harsher treatment.

What if Santa Claus was tough? What if St. Nick was willing to unleash the holy fury of holiday crusade upon those who provoked his jolly wrath?

In the 1980 *Christmas Evil*, a movie so powerful it has been given alternate titles in an attempt to label its majesty, Santa Claus makes a list, checks it twice, and then he pulls out his merry hatchet.

Harry, the “hero” of the film, catches Santa and his mother engaging in unspeakable acts of carnal lust.

He becomes traumatized, and once he grows up, he decides to dress up as Santa and give the gift of death to all he deems worthy.

### *Silent Night, Deadly Night* (1984)

For those who have seen and enjoyed *Christmas Evil* but feel it lacked the necessary nudity so often found missing from most holiday films,

then this movie may raise more than Christmas spirits. Not only does Santa kill people in this movie, he robs a convenience store at gunpoint. This film was so amazing that it spawned several sequels, one in which the Santa Claus killer is brought back to life by a mad scientist.



COURTESY PHOTO

## Internet gives mourners a place to express grief, pain

DAVID HUNT  
AP Wire

“Even though I can’t see your face, I know you’re with me everywhere,” reads one message.

“I miss you,” says another.

“I love you. ... I just wanted to tell you that before I go to work.”

Keystroke by keystroke,

Alicia Castaneda’s friends and family grieve on a personal Web page the 19-year-old Orange Park girl created before she died three months ago. The smiling pictures she posted, listings of her favorite TV shows and music – even references to her boyfriend, Joshua Maulsby, who’s charged in her beating death – they’re all still there.

Castaneda’s mother, Gwen

Harvey, has kept the Web page running as a tribute to her daughter, saying it’s a cure for loneliness that also lets the world see the compassionate, loving person she was.

Harvey is not alone.

In the online world, memorials often outpace newspaper obituaries, turning the digital traces of someone’s life into a shrine when they die.

The postings found on popular social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook live on as a virtual facsimile of the deceased, letting griever say goodbye just as they would have said hello before tragedy struck.

“Grief is a very dark, empty place,” Harvey said in an e-mail interview. “Emotions don’t stick to a schedule, either. When I am grieving at 2 a.m. or 4 a.m., I won’t call anyone, but I will log in and pour my heart out in an e-mail or I will post a poem on MySpace.”

A screen capture of the [myspace.com](http://myspace.com) page for Alicia Castaneda.

Amanda Lenhart, senior research specialist for the Pew Internet and American Life Project in Washington, D.C., said her group has ongoing research into the impact of social networking sites. Their role in people’s lives – especially young people’s lives – creates an obvious need for the sites in coping with death.

“Many of these people are conducting a lot of their lives on these sites,” she said. “What better place to grieve the death of someone than in a site that they themselves created?”

The idea of the Internet as a grieving tool is not a new one, but use as such is accelerating. Hayes Ferguson, chief operating officer for Legacy.com, said the online obituary service was receiving no guestbook entries eight years ago but now receives one, on average, every five seconds.

More and more funeral directors are trying to harness the idea to enrich brick-and-mortar business, said Clay Roberson, president of the Florida Funeral Directors Association.

“I think it’s a great tool,” he said, adding his three-decade-old Port Charlotte funeral home put up a Web site six months ago. Now, friends and family can post messages and even download video tributes.

“Some people can’t make it

“They’re wearing their hearts on their sleeves and opening up their Internet kimonos.”

– DAVE MARCUS

# MySpace, Facebook among grieving tools for college students

**MOURNING, page 6**

to the funeral, but they still want to grieve. A lot of times the postings are funny stories and the, 'I know him' and other things the family would never know," Roberson said.

The downside of Internet memorials comes from those who log on not to grieve but to voice a grievance.

Of Legacy's 75 employees, 45 are dedicated to reading through guestbook entries before they're posted, deleting those that are in poor taste.

"Unfortunately, there are some folks out there who try to use the guestbooks to air dirty laundry," Ferguson said. "It's a tiny percentage of the millions of entries we receive each year."

Most social networking services will let a Web site live on until activity ceases for a year.

In the meantime, Mike Patterson tries to determine who's dead and who's simply not posting anymore. His Web site, MyDeathSpace, grew from an online forum he started in August 2005, now attracting roughly 20,000 visitors a day. It links news articles about people's deaths to the personal Web pages they created.

A screen capture of the Legacy.com

guestbook for Cpl. Joshua Watkins who was killed in Iraq October 2006.

"I just wanted to show teens that they're not invincible," the 25-year-old San Francisco man said.

Some computer security experts theorize that online memorials could be an emerging tool for identity theft, albeit postmortem.

Dave Marcus, security and research manager for McAfee, said the criminal mind could use what little it learns from the sites to prey on people's emotions, seeking sensitive information about the deceased's bank accounts and credit statements.

"They're wearing their hearts on their sleeves and opening up their Internet kimonos," he said. "It comes down to being very careful."

Harvey said she raised an eyebrow at the MySpace page her daughter posted while she was in high school. Now, she's seen such value in the service that she's started a site of her own, which she uses to post "I love you" messages to her daughter's page.

"I thought it was absurd for children or anyone to post all their information, pictures, etc. on the Internet for anyone to see," she said. "I wasn't aware of all the wonderful ways you could connect."

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# REVIEWS (YOU CAN USE)

## MOVIE *Apocalypto*

**REUBEN PEREIRA**  
Senior Staff Writer

Only Mel Gibson would make a film as bizarre and sensational as *Apocalypto*. The director's fourth film is a huge improvement over his previous film, the supremely over-rated and \$300 million-grossing *The Passion of the Christ*.

*Apocalypto* is engaging, involving and, above all, interesting. It takes you into a world that has never been filmed before and shows us the genius of a civilization, but also reveals its barbaric side. It shows us that mankind may have evolved a lot since its beginnings, but our primal animalistic

nature still remains.

*Apocalypto* shares many similarities with *The Passion of the Christ*. Like *The Passion*, it is spoken in an ancient language. Like the Jesus movie, it is set in an ancient time period. And like *The Passion*, it's an extremely violent and bloody affair. This film isn't for the meek at heart.

If decapitations, blood, gore and faces being ripped off don't appeal to you, then chances are good that you won't enjoy this movie.

However, unlike *The Passion of the Christ*, it won't have Christian fanatics or churches supporting it. Also, there isn't any controversial buzz surrounding the film. *Apocalypto* has the added disadvantage of Gibson's anti-Semitic rants over the summer. This will undoubtedly hurt its box office

numbers. This is sad because *Apocalypto* deserves to make at least the same amount of money *The Passion of the Christ* made. After all, it's a far superior film.

The heart of the story revolves around Jaguar Paw, a young tribesman who lives with his very pregnant wife, child and extended family in his village in the middle of the rainforests – the film's world looks like something out of Thomas More's *Utopia*.

His world is destroyed one morning when the village is ravaged and burnt to the ground by hunters from the Mayan civilization. He and his fellow tribesmen are then captured.

The crux of the film chronicles Jaguar Paw's escape from his captives and his journey back home to find his wife and child. And this is what makes the film the thrilling

adventure it is.

Mel Gibson has always been a master at visual direction and *Apocalypto* is no exception. The film is stunning to watch. Because the dialogue of *Apocalypto* is in Yucatec, an ancient Mayan language, Gibson keeps the dialogue down to a minimum, which makes the visuals impressive. Even more impressive is the recreation of the ancient civilization.

Gibson's devotion to realism really pays off because, for once, you actually believe that you're watching something from the time period. Be it the hunting techniques, the rituals, the humor or the lives of the natives, Gibson nails it.

Go watch *Apocalypto*. It's something different but it's definitely worth your time. It deserves to be seen on the big screen.

## GAME *Final Fantasy XII*

**LUIS H. GARCIA**  
Staff Writer

It has been almost five years since we have seen a traditional *Final Fantasy*. Granted, there have been plenty of spin-offs, and *XI* is still popular in the online realm, but now the wait is over: *Final Fantasy XII* is here in a big way because this installment of the series takes some bold moves that many will either embrace or despise.

The world of Ivalice has

definitely seen some drastic changes since the Tactics spin-offs. On top of new races like the Bangaa and the Seeq living alongside humans, medieval fantasy has married high technology to give birth to a vast unique world not seen very often, while taking design cues from their PS1 classic *Vagrant Story*.

War and political intrigue are the setups for the storyline. As the Archadian Empire continues their advance taking over neighboring states throughout Ivalice, the king-

dom of Dalmasca attempts to negotiate peace, though other motives soon surface.

As expected from the series, the presentation does not disappoint. The graphics are top notch and present the world of Ivalice in a realistic way. Cities are bustling with activity and nearly every locale explored is a sight to behold. The soundtrack also does a great job of complementing the game's various settings, and the voice acting is handled beautifully given an already very well written script (with translation by Alexander O. Smith) with

some Old English thrown in.

Going along with the XII's radical changes with art direction and sound, the gameplay offers the most significant departure from the previous titles: encounters are no longer random and combat is now handled in real time.

The quest is extensive, while not too long and there are plenty of side quests to embark so players who wish to focus on the main quest or explore the world. There are occasional load times, but otherwise, the game

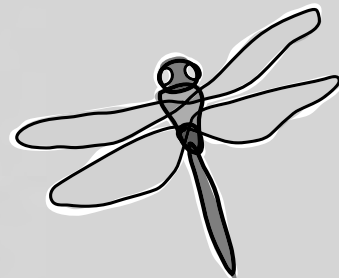
moves along at a very steady pace.

While some will be turned off by the new direc-



tion of *Final Fantasy XII*, there is no denying that the magic that the series has had is very evident.

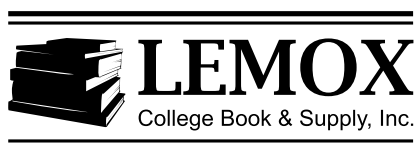
It is possible to say that *XII* is the best of the modern-day *FFs* (*VII* onward) and Square-Enix's effort on this title clearly shows it in every aspect. With the next console generation ahead, *XII* signals the end of its run on the PS2 with a bang and takes a bow that is greatly deserved.



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# REVIEWS (CONTINUED)

## GAME *Every Extend Extra*

**LUIS H. GARCIA**  
Staff Writer

When the PlayStation Portable system debuted last March, many players were caught by the spell of Q Entertainment's colorful and musically hypnotic hit puzzle game *Lumines*.

Once again, Tetsuya Mizoguchi and Q Entertainment bring gamers another unique puzzler to challenge their senses on the PSP: *Every Extend Extra*.

Anyone familiar with Mizoguchi's previous works like *Rez* and *Lumines* knows what to expect: elaborate colorful visual stimulation, a danceable soundtrack and simple yet high addictive gameplay.

*E3* is certainly no exception to this trend - Q Entertainment managed to add a

few new tricks to the game while retaining elements from the previous installments.

You still use your own lives to create explosions for combo points, time and lives as well as earn "Quicken Pick-ups" to speed up game progression to make the game more frantic. Also, you still start with three minutes to complete each stage.

The major changes are numerous. Now, there are more stages to play and unlock and, in the tradition of *Lumines*, each stage offers a different art styles, themes and sound design that makes the game quite a light show to watch as you play.

The number of explosion options has increased as well. Now you can charge your detonation by holding a button as well as create a double explosion by holding

any shoulder button before detonation.

Bosses are now more challenging as well. In order to do damage to them, you must first create a combo that exceeds a certain number before you can affect the boss, while you dodge more enemies and bullets.

Multiple paths to different stages become available as you progress by fulfilling certain requirements in a stage, which adds to the longevity and challenge of the game.

Other modes in the game include Stage Selection, Boss Rush (where you only play against the stage bosses one after another), a new Versus mode, which allows for game sharing so only one person with a copy of the game is needed and also included is the original *Every Extend*.

Once again, Q Entertainment brings gamers a dazzling, almost hypnotic array of light, color and music, blended with game play that is accessible to anyone.

Given the PSP's portability, *E3* is a perfect fit for gamers on the go or those who just want to kill a few minutes that could easily turn into hours.

“ Q Entertainment managed to add a few new tricks ... while retaining elements from previous installments. ”



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FERNANDO GARCIA/THE BEACON

**DANCING DIVAS:** Students Maheen Moughal (left) and Anastasia Wallace (center) learn some belly dancing moves from dancer Melly (right) in the Graham Center Pit on Dec. 1. The performance, which took place at noon and was set up through the Student Government Association, was part of a showcase celebrating Egyptian culture.

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Good luck with finals!

# Del Rio, Thomas linked by Dolphins' decision

MARK LONG  
AP Wire

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Jack Del Rio wanted to play one more season, and Miami Dolphins coach Jimmy Johnson gave him the chance.

But an undersized rookie linebacker, a fifth-round draft pick from Texas Tech, unwittingly sent Del Rio into retirement.

Del Rio and Zach Thomas have been linked since. They will reunite again Sunday when the Dolphins (5-6) host the Jacksonville Jaguars (6-5).

"I guess I did a pretty good job mentoring," Del Rio joked.

Del Rio spent a summer and a training camp in Miami in 1996, trying to extend his 11-year career. He knew the Dolphins had drafted another middle linebacker, but few expected Thomas to shine so soon.

Thomas' play prompted Johnson to cut Del Rio. Thomas has since made six Pro Bowls, while Del Rio turned to coaching and ended up with his first head job in Jacksonville four years ago.

"I was at the end of my career and was hoping to get another year with Jimmy down there in Miami and this talented kid came in there and just made play after play everywhere," Del Rio recalled. "It was obviously a good, sound decision by Jimmy. I've been fishing with Jimmy and joked, 'Come on, Jimmy, what the heck?'"

"Jimmy made the right decision. It's borne itself out. I was at the end of

my career, ended up not playing anymore and Zach's gone on and been a Pro Bowl guy and a very good player."

Thomas remembers the day Johnson told him he had beaten out Del Rio for the starting job.

"It was in the team meeting room. He came and told me and said, 'You're the man now,'" Thomas said. "I just thought I was going to start for a week to help motivate Jack, but Jack had a great game against Tampa. I remember like it was yesterday. He made a big third-down-and-1 play, so I was thinking I'm just going to back up the whole year. If he went down, I'd have a chance.

"When Jimmy told me that, I didn't know that they let him go. I was a little shocked after that. I was a little nervous. We went to go play Chicago. I missed like five or six tackles. I thought I was going to get cut. That's just the way the business is. It happens to every one of us. When you get older, those younger guys will come in and take your job. Even if you are a better player at the time, it's the best decision going with somebody who's less against the (salary) cap."



WILFREDO LEE/AP PHOTO



ALAN DIAZ/AP PHOTO

**ONCE TEAMMATES, NOW OPPONENTS:** Miami Dolphins linebacker Zach Thomas (left) and Jacksonville Jaguars head coach Jack Del Rio were once teammates in Miami until Del Rio was cut from the team.

Thomas has recorded 1,754 tackles, 18 1/2 sacks and 17 interceptions in 11 seasons since supplanting Del Rio.

By comparison, Del Rio finished his career with 1,078 tackles, 12 sacks and 13 interceptions while playing for New Orleans, Kansas City, Dallas and Minnesota. He made the Pro Bowl once, in 1994.

Thomas credits Del Rio with teaching

him some nuances of the position.

"I learned a lot from Jack. He was a great player in his 11 years," Thomas said. "He was a heck of a player that I looked up to, but I didn't take his job. Everybody said I took his job. That's not what happened. It's just Jimmy wanted to look toward the future, and that's how it panned out. What a great player - he's a great coach now. I have all the respect for him."

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JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON

**INTERESTING OPTION:** Mike Shula (right), recently fired from Alabama and son of the famous former Miami Dolphins head coach, would be a very intriguing hire for FIU.

## *Garcia says it's important to recruit in South Florida*

### COACH, page 12

experience in the NFL and college.

Last year, he was the offensive coordinator for the Arizona Cardinals and has worked with quarterbacks Daunte Culpepper and Randall Cunningham when he served as quarterbacks' coach for the Minnesota Vikings. Under his watch, the Razorbacks are ranked 33rd in total yards of offense, 24th in points scored per game and fourth in the nation in rushing.

Although he may not be the best candidate, he would be the easiest to obtain.

### MIKE SHULA

Even though he wasn't mentioned with the five above, it would be intriguing to see former University of Alabama coach Mike Shula, son of Hall of Fame coach Don Shula, receive some consideration for the job.

Though Mike is receiving other offers, his name

alone would be enough to grab some recruits.

After guiding his team to a 10-2 record last season, Shula was fired after going 6-6 this year.

With the exception of Wood, all of the candidates have one thing in common: they are all young and great recruiters, especially in South Florida. And that's exactly what they need, a young hungry coach who can keep the talented local high school athletes in South Florida.

Upon his arrival at FIU, Athletic Director Pete Garcia stressed the importance of retaining local high school students.

"We gotta get back our own. And what I mean by that is we have close to 40,000 students here. We have over 100,000 alumni in South Florida [and] those are the ones we gotta get to support our program in every way," Garcia said.

On Nov. 29, Garcia appeared on 790 The Ticket's Joe Rose show to dis-

cuss the coaching search and reiterated the importance of the next head coach being a great recruiter.

"One of the things that I would like to do in my career is establish an elite sports program at [FIU] that [the South Florida community] can rally behind and be proud of," Garcia said.

When he signed to become athletic director, Garcia was guaranteed that FIU would be very competitive — especially when it comes to salary — when hiring a new head coach.

While at UM, Garcia was known for his ability to evaluate talent and find athletes that other schools managed to over look or never find.

During UM's probation years, he was able to lure talented athletes to UM despite the lack of scholarships the program had and poor facilities.

Let's see if Garcia can sell the program to a coach as well as he can to high school athletes.

# Bostic's goal is to help young African-Americans

### COACH, page 12

always joke around. That's the type of person he was."

According to Bostic, he became worried as he watched friend after friend lose his life.

"I still believed in God, but I was scared for my life," Bostic said.

His family and friends lent Bostic strength as his losses mounted. His parents told him not to worry because he had no control over the losses he had suffered.

"I told him to stay focused. I let him know these types of things happen," the elder Bostic said.

Bostic is now concentrating on giving back to those who have helped him.

He is on the verge of receiving a bachelor's degree in sports management with a minor in entrepreneurship.

"I want to take care of my family,

whether I'm playing in the NFL or working," Bostic said.

Bland has known Bostic for years and has given him advice on entrepreneurship and life.

"We talk about all sorts of subjects," Bland said. "Nothing specific, but we talk about life in general."

Bostic also wants to make sure he never sees another young face in a casket. He wants to help kids in the African-American community to reduce violence on the streets.

"My goal is to help kids. Everyday, African-American men are dying. Families have to go through that," Bostic said.

He is now a guide to his little brother — after so many years of being led by his older brothers, friends and Bland.

Following the grief he has experienced, Bostic believes he has become more strong-willed.

"My whole outlook on life has changed, but I'm not going to feel sorry for myself,"

Bostic said.

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## NEXT IN LINE?

### Help wanted: football looking for qualified coach



Commentary

Charlie Grau  
Asst. Sports Editor

FIU is among the many college football programs in search of new coaches. So as coaches bounce around from team to team, being recycled like old car parts, the million dollar question is: who will land at FIU?

Many reports have said that some candidates have emerged as leaders for vacant head coaching position: University of Miami defensive coordinator Randy Shannon, former UM offensive coordinator and current San Diego Chargers tight ends coach Rob Chudzinski, University of Georgia defensive coordinator Willie Martinez, UM offensive line coach Mario Cristobal and University of Arkansas quarterbacks coach Alex Wood.

All five candidates have ties to South Florida, especially when it comes to recruiting.

So let's separate the truth from fiction and see who would be the best fit for the

Golden Panthers next season.

#### RANDY SHANNON

Fiction. Don't look for UM's defensive coordinator to be stalking the sides lines of FIU next season. Besides being recruited by FIU, many believe him to be Larry Coker's successor if UM can't land Rutgers coach Greg Schiano. Along with the possibility of coaching the Hurricanes, Shannon said he would never coach his son, Xavier, who is the center for the Golden Panthers.

"I don't believe in getting a son on your team, if not he won't develop as a kid. If I'm here and he's here, he won't ever grow up," Randy said. "Go any where you want to grow but I told him you'll never go anywhere where I'm coaching."

#### ROB CHUDZINSKI

Another former UM coach, Chudzinski ran the offense when they were scoring over 30 points a game and the Hurricanes had the ability to score at any moment.

He is currently the San Diego Chargers tight ends coach and has been credited with the development at All-Pro Antonio Gates, the best tight end in the National Football League.

While at UM, Chudzinski had a good relationship with high school coaches in South Florida and had the Hurricanes offense scoring 30 points a game. Chudzinski is a long shot and is more likely to stick as an assistant coach in the NFL.

#### WILLIE MARTINEZ

Fiction. On Nov. 29, Carter Strickland of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported that Martinez had taken his name out of the running for the position.

"I'm extremely flattered that Florida International called and I had the opportunity to interview," Martinez said to the *Journal-Constitution*. "But our family is very happy in Athens and I look forward to continue being part of the building process that's going on at Georgia. I think we have a lot to look forward to here."

While defensive coordinator at Georgia, his defense has ranked among the top in the country year in and year out. Martinez used to play defensive back for UM and graduated from Hollywood Hills High School.

Money talks, though, and many coaches have denied being interested in coaching jobs only to surprise everyone at the last minute and leave.

Remember a couple of guys named Butch Davis and Jimmy Johnson?

#### MARIO CRISTOBAL

Here's where things get interesting. Cristobal is widely regarded as one of the best recruiters in the country, especially in South Florida. He has a good relationship with high school coaches in Miami-Dade and Broward county.

There is speculation that Cristobal may not be retained if Shannon is rewarded the head coaching position at UM. Cristobal is also good friends with Rutgers head coach Greg Schiano, who has been mentioned as the leading candidate to be UM's new head coach. It is worthy to note that he was offered a coaching position by the New York Jets, but declined the offer to remain at UM.

#### ALEX WOOD

The Arkansas Razorbacks' offensive coordinator has also been mentioned as a possible option. Wood doesn't have much experience recruiting in South Florida, but has more than 26 years of coaching

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#### Long Shots

#### Possibilities



SHANNON



CHUDZINSKI



MARTINEZ



WOOD



CRISTOBAL

## Trouble and tragedy lead senior to mentorship

**SERGIO BONILLA**  
Contributing Writer

The Royal Funeral Service holds the casket of a young boy.

The funeral service attendant watches the boy's family sobbing and gripping the casket. The attendant hides his emotions and directs the family to their seats.

The funeral service attendant is FIU linebacker Alexander Bostic III, who worked part-time at the service this past summer.

The senior linebacker's father is a pastor who serves as the service's chaplain. It was through his father that Bostic met and was mentored by Leon Bland, Royal Funeral Service's owner.

Bostic was surprised when Bland suggested he

should work at funeral services part-time.

"I'm working where? Funerals had always been one of my biggest fears," Bostic said.

Several of Bostic's friends have died throughout high school and college: Damien Miller, Eviton Brown, Lance Preston and Bryan Pata.

Eviton Brown taught Bostic the fundamentals of playing Linebacker. He was a starter at Norland High School at the time, while Bostic rode the bench. He looked up to Brown who was shot and killed while Bostic was still in high school.

"He was one of my closest friends. He showed me the ropes and he played linebacker just like me," Bostic said.

Damien Miller was Bos-

tic's good friend. He was killed by a gunshot fired by another friend.

"They were playing with a gun and Damien was shot in the neck," Bostic said.

By sophomore year in high school, Bostic had lost two of his closest friends.

When Bostic began to excel as the team's starter, he admits he began to let the success get to his head.

"I thought I was so big. Tenth grade was my [indoor suspension] year. I was the class clown," he said.

Luckily, Bostic had two older brothers, Eric and Sheldon.

"They taught me how to handle all types of situations. Anything I would think of doing they had already done," Bostic said.

Lance Preston, a Golden

Panther linebacker, similarly served as a guide when Bostic first arrived at FIU. Preston was killed in a motorcycle accident this past Labor Day weekend.

"He took me under his wing. I was one of the youngest players on the team, too," Bostic said.

On Nov. 7, Bryan Pata, the University of Miami's defensive lineman, was shot and murdered. Bostic was in disbelief when he heard the news several of Bostic's friends have died.

Though Pata attended Central High School, Norland's rivals, both were still friends.

"Not Bryan," Bostic said. "I couldn't believe it. I would see him at the combines and he would



JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON

LOST FRIENDS: Senior linebacker Alexander Bostic III has had four close friends die - three from fatal gun shots.

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