

12-7-2006

The Beacon, December 7, 2006

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Public Safety uses faulty radio system

NAIHOBE GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

Officer Alex Silva was working at a high school football game at the FIU Stadium when a fight broke out. He called for back-up on his new radio as he restrained one of the girls, who became violent. He received no response.

The struggle continued, and in seconds Silva was cornered by six people who ordered he let the girl go. He called for back-up again and tried to press the emergency button on his new radio, but there was no response. As they inched in, the group demanded he let the girl go a second time. After four failed calls for help, Silva decided to release the girl and watched her disappear into the crowd.

"True, no officer was injured, but due to the bad radio communication I did not get help until after the fact," wrote Silva in a correspondence through the FIU webmail to his supervisor requesting an internal investigation of the Sept. 9 incident. He also requested the e-mail be sent "up the chain of command."

Since June, the Department of Public Safety has been dealing with a faulty new radio communications system. New equipment was purchased from Motorola to make the conversion from the State of Florida system the department had previously used.

"Before we were on the state radio system, but then they changed vendors. If we were to continue with it, we would have had to purchase all new equipment, but we also had pockets on both campuses where we had trouble with communication," said Captain Michael Wright, interim chief from February to August 2005, on the need for conversion.

According to various sources, since the change took place, radio communication has been "unreliable" at both the University Park and Biscayne Bay campuses.

"You could be standing next to another officer, or even the dispatcher, and the transmission wouldn't work. And the times I've been at [BBC] the radios were worse than at [UP] — you couldn't hear any transmission whatsoever," said Officer Frank Torres.

Chief Bill King said that "glitches" do exist in the new system, but that this is not uncommon.

"There have been a couple of incidents where officers didn't feel their radio transmission was heard in a timely fashion and the quality of transmission sometimes is garbled," King said. "But I've been involved in three conversions of radio systems in the past and this one hasn't been too different."

While both Wright and King said that officers' safety has not been compromised, others in the department disagree. In his letter, Silva said that problems with the radios "are placing the

University and its occupants at risk."

Other officers have echoed similar concerns in dozens of e-mails and memos to supervisors that were shown to *The Beacon*. In an Oct. 3 FIU e-mail titled "Problems with New Radio System," Sergeant Alfredo Torres wrote: "This problem just seems to get worse and worse and we cannot keep ignoring it. I hope and pray that one of us does not have to pay the ultimate price in order to solve this problem." Among the e-mail's recipients were Wright and King. Even as

early as June 15, Sergeant Douglas Ochipa, the day shift supervisor at UP, warned in an e-mail to Police Communications Manager Janeene Hills that the radio situation was "becoming a major officer safety issue."

In early 2005, Wright was charged with the task of leading the department's transition. At the time, the department had three options: staying with the changing state system; switching to

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CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

THE LONG WALK: Surrounded by his players, FIU football's first head coach Don Strock waves in appreciation to the crowd as he walks off the field at the cage for the last time. **SEE SPORTS, PAGE 13.**

SGA offers scholarship through video competition

JOSEPHINE BRILLANTE
Contributing Writer

While helping organize FIU's First Film Festival, which will take place in March, Jennifer Ruiz, Student Government Association representative-at-large, thought it would be good to give students an opportunity to have a bigger role in it.

After learning SGA's intentions of doing a promotional video, Ruiz decided that allowing students to compete to do the film would be a good opportunity for students to experiment through creative expres-

sion.

"I started to think that it would be a nice idea to open it up to the students since the film festival is coming up soon," Ruiz said.

SGA's promotional video competition is open to all students, and applications are to be submitted to the SGA office, located in the Graham Center room 211, no later than Jan. 18, 2007 by 5 p.m.

Students with artistic drive and an inclination towards creative freedom are encouraged to participate in this unique competition, hosted at FIU for the first time.

The film must be a minimum

of three minutes, and a maximum of four minutes long. SGA is specifically looking for ideas that are original, fresh and exciting.

According to Ruiz, the promotional film will be in joint association with FIU's First Film Festival and the winner of the competition will have their debut screening at the film festival in March 2007.

Also, the winning applicant will have their film broadcasted for all incoming freshmen at orientations and first year experience classes for the next year.

On top of that, the winner will also receive a \$500 scholarship.

Guidelines for the film include insight into the who, what, where and how of SGA, which can be obtained through SGA's weekly house meetings and participation in SGA events.

"The idea is that more people will know exactly who we are, what we do, and how they can get involved with SGA," Ruiz said.

Applicants are asked to submit a written description of how the short film would be outlined, with inclusive details such as music, scenes and cinematography.

From the written applications, three finalists will be notified by Jan.

26, chosen based on their innovative vision, and will receive further instruction regarding film production at that time.

Students can use their own film equipment, but if they don't have any, FIU does have supplies available.

"We've been sending applications to the department of theatre and they're also available at the SGA office," said Ruiz. "Any student can participate."

For further questions contact Jennifer Ruiz or Jean Roseme, Marketing Coordinator with SGA, at (305) 348-2121.

Leon: M/W/F schedule needed to increase funding

C. JOEL MARINO
Editor in Chief

Alfonso "Alfie" Leon, president of the Student Government Council at University Park, sat down with *The Beacon* to discuss the recent controversy surrounding the decision to switch to a Monday/Wednesday/Friday class Fall 2007.

Q: Can you let me know a little bit about the history of the decision to switch to a Monday/Wednesday/Friday schedule?

It's something that has been happening for the last 15 years ... Now, the big push for M/W/F came about three years ago.

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability surveys the utilization of different institutions across the state, and one thing that they noticed is that FIU is drastically not using our classroom space to its highest capability.

That's when this became an issue, when legislators were pretty much asking FIU that they wanted to increase our [Public Education Capital Outlay] funding, but that's not possible if we don't use our space to the maximum that we can ... So two years ago, our legislative body was telling FIU that we need to start using our space more, we need to start incorporating a M/W/F

schedule into our classes, and this was not a joke, since we even had [Gov. Jeb Bush] telling us this.

There's been legislation trying to be passed to show that if you're not using your percentage to the highest that you can, you won't receive funding.

Thank God that didn't occur, but now we know that we need to start making the right moves to start using our space correctly so we can continue garnering funding for the University.

Q: So pretty much the schedule change is an issue of space utilization? Nothing else?

The state of Florida is telling us that we're the worst in the state in using space. Currently, we use all the classes we have 42 percent of the time ... It's strictly a funding matter because, if we don't receive PECO funding we can't build new buildings where we can house new students. We have students right now that complain

about their classes as it is because their rooms don't fit the standards of that student or because they're not capable or ready to handle PowerPoint presentations ... [students] can't have the full

spectrum of what they'd like to be doing in the classroom because we need to have outside resources brought in, and that's unfortunate because other universities have state-of-the-art facilities for their

classrooms and we don't, and we're a university with one of the highest enrollments, and the more we grow, the more build-

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WATERCOLORS



CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

LUMINOSITY: An anonymous group of students dropped numerous glowing orbs into the fountain by the Graham Center at University Park on Dec. 4.

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Late breakfasts offered during finals week

BEN F. BADGER JR.
Staff Writer

It's that time of year again when the students at FIU are up until late hours of the night studying for their final exams. Also around this time of year the Student Government Association throws an event called Cram Jam to alleviate the stress caused by final examinations, and this year is no exception.

Cram Jam is an annual event where students who stay up late to study are given free breakfast, drinks, and giveaways, and are encouraged to take a study-break while listening to music and hanging out at the Graham Center.

This year's Cram Jam will take place Dec. 11 and 12 from 11:45 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. in the GC Pit. The Fresh Food Company will provide food for the event.

The goal of Cram Jam, according to SGA President Alfonso "Alfie" Leon, is to reward students who study all year long and dedicate themselves to their academics.

"It's our way of telling the students we support their actions," Leon said.

"This is the one event of the year where we can really see how hard out students work. In the seven Cram Jams I've been to, students bring their text books with them to study and meet up with people they normally wouldn't."

All students are welcome to participate, but in order to enter the Fresh Food Company for the all you can eat midnight breakfast, they must have their student ID. Anticipating the possibility that some students won't be carrying their IDs with them, the Panther ID office will be open selling duplicate ID cards for only \$5. The normal cost of duplicate IDs is \$15, so this will also be a good opportunity for those students who lost their IDs to get a new one.

According to SGA Academic Affairs Chair Melissa Sabatier, this year's Cram Jam coordinator, the event will have the largest selection of giveaways including Cold Stone Ice cream, Café Bustello items, Rock Energy Drinks, and perhaps one the most useful of the free giveaways, free Blue Books, said Sabatier.

"That's a great incentive for me to go," said senior Chris Perez. "Cram Jam was alright last year, but it would be better for them to serve breakfast at a normal time."

HORSING AROUND



FERNANDO GARCIA/THE BEACON

NEIGH! This untitled cast bronze sculpture was donated to FIU by artist Deborah Butterfield. Horses have been the focus of Butterfield's work for more than 30 years. She is recognized for her life-sized horse sculptures created from scrap metal and wood cast in bronze.

Drawbacks to schedule changes, Leon says

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ings we're going to need to have. So that's what it came down to.

Q: What're some of the things that past Student Governments have done in regards to this issue?

The issue of space utilization was directed to the University about two years ago.

There was an article that was published by the Provost's Office April 6, 2006, and at that time I wasn't president, but the past president, Alex Prado, at a Faculty Senate meeting, announced that he had gone over the space utilization report and said there was Student Government support because of the fact that we notice that if the

University didn't move in this direction, we'd lose funding.

And that was the biggest issue that we had. It was something that was approved by the past Student Government administration.

Q: You mentioned the benefits that this new schedule would bring to the University. What are some of the problems?

We haven't discussed all the benefits, but the drawbacks that could occur due to this M/W/F scheduling, we are aware that it's going to cause some student groups, especially the upper classmen who might be taking 1000 or 2000 level course ... More important than anything is the lack of student knowl-

edge on the issue, that's the biggest drawback.

Even Student Government, we didn't know what was going to be occurring until it was approved by [Interim Provost Ronald Berkman].

We don't know the entire drawbacks to the new schedule, because, until it's implemented or until we start running test ideas on how it's going to work, we'll see the drawbacks.

That's why an Implementation Committee was made.

Q: Are you a part of the Implementation Committee?

As of last Thursday, both myself and Camilo Silva, the president at Biscayne Bay Campus, sit on

the committee.

We are the only two student votes on the committee, but all students have input on that committee, if it's through us, seeing us through the week, or coming to the meetings Fridays at 9 a.m. at the MARC building.

One thing I can tell you is that having the meeting at 9 a.m. is not conducive to the students.

What I can tell them is that Camilo and I are representing them there, we have the ability to put some input for the first time and we want to hear all the student issues ... We have from January to July to put as much input in and then once the Implementation Committee sees the policy that we want, we'll be able to show it to the Provost's office.

CORRECTIONS

In the issue dated Dec. 4, the date of the College of Law's accreditation should have been given as Dec. 1. In the At the Bay section, Arun Gandhi's name was misspelled.

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

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Professor featured on C-SPAN for writing book

JOSE PAGLIERY
Staff Writer

Not all writers can claim to have something in common with authors Isabel Allende and Noam Chomsky, but FIU creative writing professor Dan Wakefield does after Nov. 29, when he was spotlighted by the famous C-SPAN Book TV Bus, known around the country for its coverage of non-fiction literature.

The interview, which will broadcast on C-SPAN 2's weekend program "Book TV," pertains to his most recent book, *The Hijacking of Jesus: How the Religious Right Distorts Christianity and Promotes Prejudice and Hate*, being released by Nation Books Dec. 28. This is not the first time Wakefield receives such attention.

A screenwriter and author, Wakefield is best known for his 1970 novel, *Going All The Way*, which was adapted to the screen in 1997 and stars Jeremy Davies and Ben Affleck. That novel was honored with a forward by Kurt Vonnegut, and apparently, is not his only hit. His 1992 memoir, *New York in the Fifties*, deals with the city and time that once graced the souls of Allen Ginsberg, William Buckley and C. Wright Mills, who were all personal acquaintances of the author.

His newest book details the neo-conservative distortion of Christian faith and how Jesus, who once stood for peace, love and empathy, is now being used for Republican reelections.

Wakefield, once an atheist and now a devout Christian, writes about his concerns over the silence of Christians and Catholics

in the wake of a bloody war in Iraq and what he sees as the Patriot Act's disregard for civil rights.

The ongoing debate over faith and politics has infiltrated churches and homes across the country, many times separating friends and family where there was once only God.

Mikaela Louve, a senior studying television production, remembers when Mayor Carlos Alvarez visited her church, where he campaigned and had the pastor's full support.

"The leadership of the church shouldn't use the pulpit for politics, because the pastor is a pastor of all political parties," she said. "It's not fair to ostracize another party."

Also a Christian, senior Ana Sanchez believes that Christianity has little to do with

party affiliation.

"Jesus was neither Republican nor Democrat. I think it's unfortunate that the Republican party manipulated the Christian community by appealing to their emotions and morals," Sanchez said.

Wakefield was once a journalist before he was a paperback author and scriptwriter, receiving a Neiman Fellowship in Journalism at Harvard University.

Since then, he has written for *The Nation Magazine*, *GQ*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*. He currently teaches fiction and non-fiction writing.

The Book TV Bus, which has been on a non-stop tour of the country since September 2005, is currently on tour throughout Florida.

Police officers request new communication system

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the Miami-Dade county system; and reverting to the department's old Ultra High Frequency system and purchasing new equipment.

Though Public Safety does have a permanent Technology Committee – which is in charge of assessing problems with communications needs – the committee was not asked to make the decision. On Feb. 24, 2005, Wright called an open department meeting to discuss the options. According to Wright, only 15 people came, and of those only one was a line officer. Wright also invited representatives from the Police Benevolent Association, the labor union that represents FIU officers, but no one from the PBA attended.

"We went around the table and everybody

put in their two cents. It was pretty much unanimous, except for the acting chief. If we could afford the county system, that was the way we all wanted to go," said Ochipa, who was present at the meeting.

Wright disagreed, saying that opinions were "evenly split."

On March 1, 2005, Wright wrote a letter summarizing the results of the meeting and making his final recommendation to return to the UHF system to Vice President of External Relations Marcos Perez, who oversaw Public Safety at the time. Based on a quote provided to him by then Police Communications Manager Edward Harris, Wright estimated the cost of the county system to be at \$277,545 for 67 radios. The projected cost of returning to the UHF system was \$96,462.

Wright was also concerned about numerous dead spots that were discovered during a test of the county system in areas like the Graham Center and Primera Casa in UP, and the Wolfe University Center and the Library at BBC. He felt confident that returning to the UHF system with new Motorola equipment would drastically reduce the dead spots, based on tests performed in 2004 and consultations with Motorola.

"I just couldn't get past the dead spots on campus," he said. "It wasn't just about money."

Andrew Axelrad, assistant general counsel for the PBA, wrote a letter to University President Modesto A. Maidique asking that the University reconsider the county radios.

"There's no reason why FIU couldn't have done that and now we think it's putting officers' lives at risk," Axelrad told *The Beacon*.

Subsequent estimates show that purchasing 54 radios with the county system would have cost \$101,009, according to documents provided by Wright. To date, estimates provided by Scott and Leidy Cabrera, accountants for Public Safety, show that \$157,438 has been spent on the radio system. Aside from the initial \$85,745 investment on 56 Motorola radios and five mobiles, Public Safety contracted Code 3 Technology to install new repeaters and make other enhancements.

Rosa Jones, vice president of student affairs and undergraduate education, who currently

oversees Public Safety, said in an interview with *The Beacon* that the radio situation is a "high priority" for her.

"It is at the top of my list, and we have contracted a company that is in the process of doing some retrofitting," Jones said.

Both King and Wright acknowledged that Code 3 Technology, which was hired in July, is yet to bring the communications system to the desired level. As a result, Public Safety is in the process of consulting other companies.

On Dec. 6, Rapid Wireless of Florida were scheduled to visit both campuses to "audit the system and make recommendations."

"If need be Code 3 will be replaced by whoever will get us there the fastest," Wright said. "We are really close, and at this point we have all the software and equipment to have functioning interoperability ... we should have things going by the FIU graduation [Dec. 18]."

In a Dec. 4 e-mail sent out on the FIU webmail to his staff, King announced that the department is "nearing the finalization of the work on the radio system."

However, some officers have doubts.

"The officers are frustrated because they want to go with what Miami-Dade county has – not back to our old system from almost thirty years ago," Ochipa said. "We keep hearing the same story that it's getting fixed, but we're on the same boat we were five months ago."

Perez was unavailable for comment.

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New class explores Middle East media

AGUSTINA PRIGOSHIN
Contributing Writer

A new class this Spring will offer students a chance to communicate with journalists in the Middle East to discuss social and political issues surrounding the media.

Middle East Media and Coverage is an interdisciplinary course and part of the Middle East certificate program offered through the College of Arts and Sciences for both degree and non-degree seeking students.

"The Middle East is very important these days," said Mario Diament, course professor.

"There's a lot of ignorance with press operations, which is why we hope to analyze it and the government's manipulation over the press."

Students will be expected to interact with the reporters to listen and learn about the political processes of each country through journalism.

The approach of the class, however, is not the typical lecture style. Students will be expected to teach through interviews with editors and reporters working abroad at newspapers in the region.

Students will speak to professional journalists via speakerphone during class time, and spend time studying the role of each country within the Middle East.

According to the course professors, Neil Reisner and Diament, students will each be assigned

a country in the region to study and follow along. They will then write a paper and present their findings on its politics and media to the class.

Both professors are experienced journalists who have lived in the region and are familiar with the conflicts, as well as the cultural differences between each country.

Reisner lived in Israel during some of his adolescent years and Diament, though born in Argentina, lived in Israel for seven years and spent one year as a phone correspondent for a group of Argentine magazines covering both Israel and Egypt.

According to Diament, they plan that social and political issues relating to the press will be an essential aspect to students' understandings of the region.

Reisner also believes that knowledge of the region before the interviews will let students grasp issues better when discussing with the professionals.

"Students will have to research each country before speaking to the journalists. We will also be talking to different interest groups to hear their opinions about the conflicts in the region," he said.

The class will be shown documentaries on the Middle East. Afterwards, they will research, share their findings and conduct interviews with reporters for *Al Jazeera*, *Al Haaretz* (an Israeli publication), *The Daily Star* in Lebanon and other news organizations.

'TIS THE SEASON



CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

HOLIDAY CHEER: Sophomore Odarris Dhaiti hangs Christmas ornaments Dec. 1 in Panther Square. Students and Wolfe University Center employees joined to decorate the tree.

"The class will be taught in a very unique way," Reisner said.

"I'm interested in how the media performs and works, how it covers conflicts and its influence on society."

Muhammed Malik, a senior double majoring in international relations and anthropology, plans on taking the class.

"Not many Middle East classes focus on the entire region," Malik said. "They mainly focus on one or two countries, which is why this

class would be different."

Reisner and Diament will be teaching the class Wednesday evenings from 5 p.m. through 7:30 p.m. According to Reisner, the time difference between the class and the reporters shouldn't be a problem.

"They will be very excited to talk to us," Reisner said.

An important aspect to many Arab and Muslim Americans, Reisner emphasized that biases will be left out of the class.

Palestinian student Lina Alqaddoumi, a sophomore majoring in international relations, has experienced biases in her past mass media classes and hopes this one is different.

"It means a lot to me that my country's media and people are portrayed in the right way," said Alqaddoumi.

"I'm looking forward to seeing what the class will be like."

For more information contact Reisner at 305-919-5625 or Diament at 305-919-5601.

NEWSFLASH

Flu vaccinations now available at BBC

Flu shots are now available at the University Health Services by appointment only. They cost \$12 for students and \$16 for faculty and staff. A Panther ID is required.

For more information, visit www.fiu.edu/~health/flu_update or call the BBC Health Center Building at 305-919-5620.

Haitian folk dancing comes to the Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre

On Dec. 9 at 8 p.m., The Louines Louinis Haitian Dance Theater will be presenting "An Evening of Authentic Haitian Folk Dances," part of the "VH-100 Series," held at the Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre at WUC. Tickets are available at the door and cost \$22 for general admission, \$15 for FIU faculty and students, \$12 for children 12 years old or younger.

For more information, call 305-919-5400.

Bill Foster holds forum addressing parking and transportation concerns

A group of 12 students met with William "Bill" Foster, director of the department of parking and transportation, and Lazaro Rodriguez, coordinator of the department of parking and transportation on Nov. 29 by request of BBC Student Government Council. It was the first time the forum was held at BBC to discuss concerns with parking and transportation.

-Compiled by Nicole Acosta

Center educates on Sephardic Judaism

ALEXANDRA MCANARNEY
Contributing Writer

The Jewish community has a presence in the North Miami area. There are kosher delicatessens such as Shalom Haifa near Aventura, and Jewish synagogues such as the Syrian Safra Synagogue.

"North Miami has the largest concentration of [Sephardic/Oriental] Jews; that is why the program is here," said professor Zion Zohar, director and president of the Navon Program for the Study of Sephardic and Oriental Jewry at the Biscayne Bay.

However, not everyone is aware of this branch of Judaism, which many consider to be an ethnic identification.

"What we do today is call them Sephardic/Oriental Jews. Many of them mixed with Arab Jews. Each tried to retain [their] own customs, although it was hard. All people who come from Turkey, Morocco, North Africa or Spain are

called Sephardic Jews. It's a very broad term," Zohar said.

Historically, the word "Sephardim" is a Jew who of Spanish descent. In 1492, the Jews were forced to leave Spain.

All of the Jews were either expelled from Spain or converted to Christianity under the rule of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castille. Those who did not convert or leave remained secretly Jewish.

These Jews who still practiced their religion were called *marranos* or pigs; the Jews who did not convert called themselves *annousim*, which meant that they were forced to live a life that was false.

"Those who fled Spain migrated to the Ottoman Empire or North Africa, and wherever they went, they mixed with the Jewish community that was there," Zohar said.

Zohar said more could be done in order to educate people about the Jewish community and the availability of

classes on Judaism at FIU.

"We need more Jewish students, more demand. There are 2,000 to 3,000 Jewish students in FIU and we usually get non-Jews in the classroom. If students came in and demanded their needs, there would be more things offered," Zohar said.

Informing students and doing research about Sephardic Jewry is what the center is geared towards.

"This center is invested in the research of Sephardic [and Oriental] aspects of Jewish culture, the world view and to teach a part of heritage," Zohar said. "We're here to educate Jews and Non-Jews."

Many FIU students, such as junior Laura Jimenez, did not know much about Judaism, let alone that there even was a Sephardic and Oriental Jewry Center at BBC.

"I really don't know much about Jewish culture," Jimenez said.

"They're part of the community here, and it's important

to know about them. I know about the Holocaust, and how they were marked by [tattoos], and their persecution, but I don't really know about the history."

In order to make an impact at BBC, the Center has been holding meetings since Oct. 19. A movie is shown every meeting, followed by a discussion about the content. All the movies relate to Sephardic and Oriental Jewry.

The next meeting and film, *Turn Left at the End of the World*, will be shown Jan. 18 at 7 p.m. in the Wolfe University Center's Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre. Those who attend must either show a Panther ID or give a \$5 donation.

Junior Rebecca Rubi, who is Jewish, was glad that the Center is doing something to raise awareness.

"[My family and I] aren't too traditional. It's important to know you're heritage though. I think more should be done to teach us about our history," Rubi said.



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OPINION

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

Iraqi government silences press

JUAN CAMILO ESTRADA
Contributing Writer

When the United States went to war with Iraq, our president told us it was because Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. When we did not find any WMDs, he told us that it was good enough that Iraqis experience democracy.

But what democracy was he referring to? We could assume that by “democracy,” he meant the kind of government we are used to here in America.

Essential to such an idea of democracy is the existence of a free press.

On Oct. 16, Iraq’s parliament recommended to Prime Minister Nour Al-Maliki that *Azzaman*, Iraq’s most prominent newspaper, and *Al-Sharqiya*, its affiliated TV network, should be closed due to allegations that they were interfering with the country’s political process by stirring up undue controversy.

On Oct. 4, the Iraqi parliament passed legislation to divide the country by ethnicity into autonomous states. This goes against the wishes of impoverished regions, since it could spell economic disaster for them due to unequal accumulation of wealth. Currently, Shiites occupy the area of the country that has the most oil reserves. Sunnis would like the constitution amended so that it “guarantees the sharing of oil revenues.”

Azzaman and *Al-Sharqiya* criticized the legislation, saying that it would divide the

country along sectarian lines.

The parliament felt that such criticism was undermining its efforts by causing disagreement among the population, and on Nov. 28, the parliament barred access to all media from its chambers.

In an official statement, a parliament spokesman justified the actions saying that the media shut-out “was part of efforts ... to prevent media coverage that was deemed to inflame conflicts.”

“If there is any tension in the

Our president promised a democracy for Iraq, but he has failed to deliver it. At best, he has only set the outward appearance of a democracy...

state, then the media should be kept out because it may increase tension,” said Iraq’s National Security Council, which includes Iraqi and American advisers. The measure to keep the media out of parliament chambers will stay in effect indefinitely.

So this is the democracy that we’ve spent three and a half years fighting for? We’ve lost nearly 3,000 U.S. troops and nearly 50,000 Iraqis killed for a so-called democracy that doesn’t even support a free press?

Holding elections for government officials does not necessarily make a democratic state. Freedom of speech and press are essential to a democratic society.

A government that does not allow dissenting opinions to be heard cannot function as a democracy.

This demonstrates, first, that U.S. military presence may have gotten rid of the dictator, but it has failed to eliminate the authoritarian attitudes symptomatic of a dictatorship.

Second, American military and political leaders have not done anything to ensure the presence of a free press. They have not even commented on it. Were it not for reports from European news agencies like Reuters, this incident would have gone unnoticed by the Americans.

Most disturbing, however, is that American leadership in Iraq is not just silently standing by, allowing the crime to happen. Through the National Security Council, it has approved and supported the parliament’s request for censorship.

Our president promised a democracy for Iraq, but he has failed to deliver it. At best, he has only set the outward appearance of a democracy – an elected, organized government – but it lacks the principles that are at the heart of any democracy, its essential freedoms. So again, the question still stands – Why is it that we went to war with Iraq?



MICHELLE DIAZ / THE BEACON

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Campus dogs should evoke sympathy, not fear

Unlike the two viewpoints presented in your article, I am neither fearful nor “comforted” by the presence of stray dogs on campus; rather, as the owner of a rescued dog, saddened and angry that so little of effect is being done to protect the health of the campus and all who live, work and study here - including the wildlife.

The assertion that the dogs

are “big and scary” should certainly not overshadow the fact that they need our help.

Perhaps if, in the words of a student interviewed, the wild dogs were “pretty poodles,” your article would be less sensationalist and the actions of the University safety officials more sympathetic and effective, in short, someone would see these animals as deserving of humane treatment, and something might

actually get done.

If I were living on the scraps of food people drop and the occasional pile of dog food left by unknown “saboteurs”, I may be inclined to swallow up the occasional overprivileged fuzz ball of a faculty member, too.

Kristyn DeRosa
Junior
Art History Major

THE BEACON | Editorial

Skimping on police radios leaves officers in silence

On Nov. 2, *The Beacon* published a news article and an editorial outlining the shortage of police officers on campus.

In the article, we reported that Public Safety employs only 35 officers to patrol all FIU campuses and that only three are on duty at the University Park campus at any given time.

In the editorial, we concluded that 35 officers could not humanly ensure the safety of more than 37,000 students.

FIU’s understaffed and overburdened police force has been unable to stem a rash of vehicle break-ins that has developed at University Park over the past semester.

Just over a year ago, Public Safety replaced its 30-year-old radio communications system. The replacement was a dud: the department’s state-of-the-art replacement doesn’t work properly.

Now, the three officers patrolling campus can’t even talk to each other and communicate to work together.

What’s most frustrating is that this could have easily been avoided. The cause, it seems, is that Public Safety has a communication problem of its own.

When shopping around for a new radio system in early 2005, Captain Michael Wright, interim police chief at the time, held a meeting to discuss options with department members.

Accounts from some present at the meeting suggest that most members in attendance favored adopting the radio system used by Miami-Dade County.

In the end, Wright acted without consensus to purchase the Motorola system that is now in use.

Although Public Safety has a permanent technology committee, the committee was not included in this decision.

A member of the committee acknowledged that Wright consulted with some committee members individually, though he ultimately made the decision on his own.

In large part, the purchasing decision came down to money: the existing system cost \$85,745, while the county system would have cost just over \$100,000.

To make matters worse, rather than dealing with the faulty system by returning it and getting one that works, Public Safety has spent the past year trying to patch up the malfunctioning system by throwing money at it.

According to Public Safety accountants, the department has spent more than \$60,000 just trying to get its brand-new radios to work.

Of course, our grandmothers could have warned them about that: as a Spanish saying wisely says, “*lo barato sale caro*.” Buying on the cheap is usually a bad investment.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you work during winter break?

- No, I like to enjoy my time off.
- Yes, without school I can work full time.
- Yes, but I try not to work as much.

Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

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. 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.

EVER SINCE THEN

The Year in Headlines

Beacon changes as year progresses



Commentary
C. Joel Marino
Editor in Chief

From spies to a staggering increase in enrollment; from the silver anniversary of our University's president to an unexpected football brawl, FIU has made both local and national headlines this year more than any time in its short history.

As FIU's student-run newspaper, *The Beacon* has covered all the honors, scandals, tragedies and joys this year.

However, some readers may have noticed certain changes that have taken place in the paper during this particular term.

Though *The Beacon* has always strived to be a major information source for the University Park and the Biscayne Bay Campus, our stories have shifted from simple events coverage to news with a bigger mission: taking on the role of the students' voice.

We've published a variety of pieces on our student government - some positive, some negative - in an effort to hold our elected officials accountable for their actions, one of the main purposes of any newspaper.

Our coverage of administrative affairs has also increased since it's our belief that students should be aware of decisions made by our University leaders - after all, it's the financial implications of these decisions that have effects far beyond their educational impact.

The Life! section has followed its original purpose of covering issues that define what it means to live the college life, from serious topics such as addiction and sexual health to lighter fare such as hurricane parties and how to tell a friend you just want to stay pals.

We've also introduced a new section, At the Bay, which covers not just BBC but the North Miami community with which it holds a special relationship, something not seen in the self-sustaining mini-city that is UP.

Of course, being an entity run by students learning our craft, *The Beacon* will carry mistakes and errors. We've run wrong information, misspelled names, messed up headlines and announced wrong dates for events, facts that are always brought to our attention by dedicated readers.

We don't mean to do these things on purpose or to anger anyone. As some of our more upset readers have found out, we're willing to publish any critique submitted, no matter how harshly it's written, even if we disagree with the opinion.

But that's exactly why *The Beacon* exists, why students fund us every year: because, as our new slogan states on the front page, our University needs "a forum for free student expression."

Though I've been working at the paper since my freshman year in 2003 (back when I covered such exhilarating topics as the start of a new Frisbee club), this is my first semester as the paper's editor in chief, a job I'll continue in the Spring.

My staff and I will do our best to cover whatever the new year will bring FIU. However, we can't do it without your help and support.

For the upcoming year, I invite readers to stop by either our UP office at the Graham Center 210 or BBC at the Wolfe University Center 124 on Tuesdays and Fridays, our main production days, to see exactly what it takes to produce the paper.

We work hard to produce the pages you're now holding in between your hands, but this isn't our paper, it's yours. Whether you come in to tell us how much you appreciate our work or to tell us how many pages you use to line your parrot cage, you'll be met with a smile, an answer, and, if we have any left, a *Beacon* shirt.



Professors indicted for espionage (A)	University removes student papers	Medical school approved (B)	Maidique granted pay increase	Student radio expands signal at UP	Maidique celebrates anniversary	Unexpected scuffle starts true crosstown rivalry (C)	Donor revokes \$20 million gift (D)	Football coach Strock resigns (E)	Three-day class schedule official
January 6, 2006	January 26, 2006	March 23, 2006	June 14, 2006	July	October 12, 2006	October 14, 2006	November 8, 2006	November 15, 2006	December 1, 2006
FBI agents arrested Carlos Alvarez, associate professor for the educational leadership and policy studies, and wife Elsa Alvarez, counselor for the psychological services department, after a decade's worth of investigation showed they had been working as covert agents for the Cuban government.	Public safety officers seized all copies of <i>The Beacon</i> at UP and BBC on orders from Vice President Marcos Perez and General Counsel Cristina Mendoza. This was done to protect the identity of a female sexual assault victim whose name had been printed in that edition of the paper despite protests that it violated the First Amendment.	The Florida Board of Governors approved the creation of an FIU College of Medicine after a tense, four-hour-long meeting. Administrators had been working on this project for over a decade.	The University's Board of Trustees gave Maidique's contract a three-year extension and included a 20 percent pay increase. Bonuses included, Maidique might make up to \$500,000 this year alone. A few months before, <i>The Miami Herald</i> published a story pointing out the president's lavish travel expenses.	The addition of transmitters on top of the Green Library at UP boosted WRGP's frequency. The station (which once could only be heard in Homestead and online) has a new signal, 95.3 FM, with wider reach.	This date marks Maidique's 20th anniversary as University President. He has been one of the longest serving university presidents in the country.	A brawl breaks out between FIU and UM football players during a highly publicized match at the Orange Bowl. New Athletic Director Pete Garcia later announces that two players were dismissed from the team.	Dr. Herbert Wertheim takes back a \$20 million gift he had given to the College of Medicine and resigns from the BOT after a dispute with long-time friend Maidique. He also asks that the new college not be named after him.	An embattled Don Strock says this will be his last season as the football program's head coach. His team finishes the year without a single win.	Interim Provost Ronald Berkman sends a University-wide e-mail letting students, faculty and staff know that, beginning Fall 2007, classes will switch to a Monday/Wednesday/Friday class schedule in order to receive construction funds from the state.

SPREAD BY CHRIS NEUZE AND ARTHUR BAUTE/THE BEACON

FINALS DESTINATION

Procrastination, lack of sleep mark last week of semester

GEOFFREY ANDERSON JR.
Asst. Life! Editor

For students like senior Rajiv Kirpalani, cramming is essential to getting through your last class when you haven't attended since your first.

"It's studying eight hours before a final exam when I haven't touched the text all semester," he said.

Junior Richard Lopez has a similar description of finals week.

"[Finals week] is grabbing your friends' notes the night before the test and waking up late before trying to grasp eight months of material in 30 minutes before the exam," Lopez said.

The reasons behind students' procrastination can vary greatly. Some do it to avoid the work, such as Kirpalani, while others simply find it hard to find the time before waiting until the last minute.

"When I procrastinate, I do anything from cleaning my room to using Instant Messenger – stuff just comes up," he said. "Once I have nothing else to do is when I sit down and work."

"I do it because I have a hectic life," freshman Cassandra Nuñez said.

Although it's common for students to have procrastinated at least once with positive results, such as in Kirpalani's case, others affirm that the practice may have its drawbacks.

Center for Leadership and Service Coordinator and gradu-

ate student Angel Garcia helps coordinate seminars and workshops that deal with the topic of time management and other organizational skills. He acknowledges the negative effects of delaying important tasks.

"One of the things procrastination impacts is a person's stress level. Sometimes, we can get away with procrastinating a task, but eventually it can become an issue because the job may not come out as successful as it could have been," Garcia said.

Some students like Nuñez admit that the practice has become a habit in college without serious repercussions. Post-graduation, however, can be a different story, according to Garcia.

"If you work for a big company and you're working on a big project for them, procrastination could definitely impact your results. Employers will find out that everything was rushed by the quality of the work," he said.

In addition, prolonged procrastination after leaving college can become counterproductive to higher education's purpose: retaining what you're learned, Garcia said.

"When you cram, you commit everything to short-term memory. You're not learning, only memorizing. After a while, you're going to forget everything you crammed," Garcia said.

The act of cramming can lead to more severe consequences than merely forgetting information after an exam. Florence Cardinal, a sleep disorders researcher on the general interest website *About.com*, warns against staying up late at night to do last-minute studying because of the potential to develop sleep disorders.

"Too many nights of forced wakefulness can eventually lead to a case of full blown insomnia and other sleep abnormalities," she said.

Of course, there are ways to curb this propensity to delay long-term projects. Lopez recommends keeping a schedule as a good start. "My advice to all who procrastinate is to get an agenda," he said. "If you're the type who loses your agenda – buy several."

THE AVERAGE PERSON SPENDS ...

7 years in
the bathroom

6 years stuffing
your face

1 year just
"looking for stuff"

8 months opening
junk mail

6 months waiting
at red lights

TIME MANAGEMENT

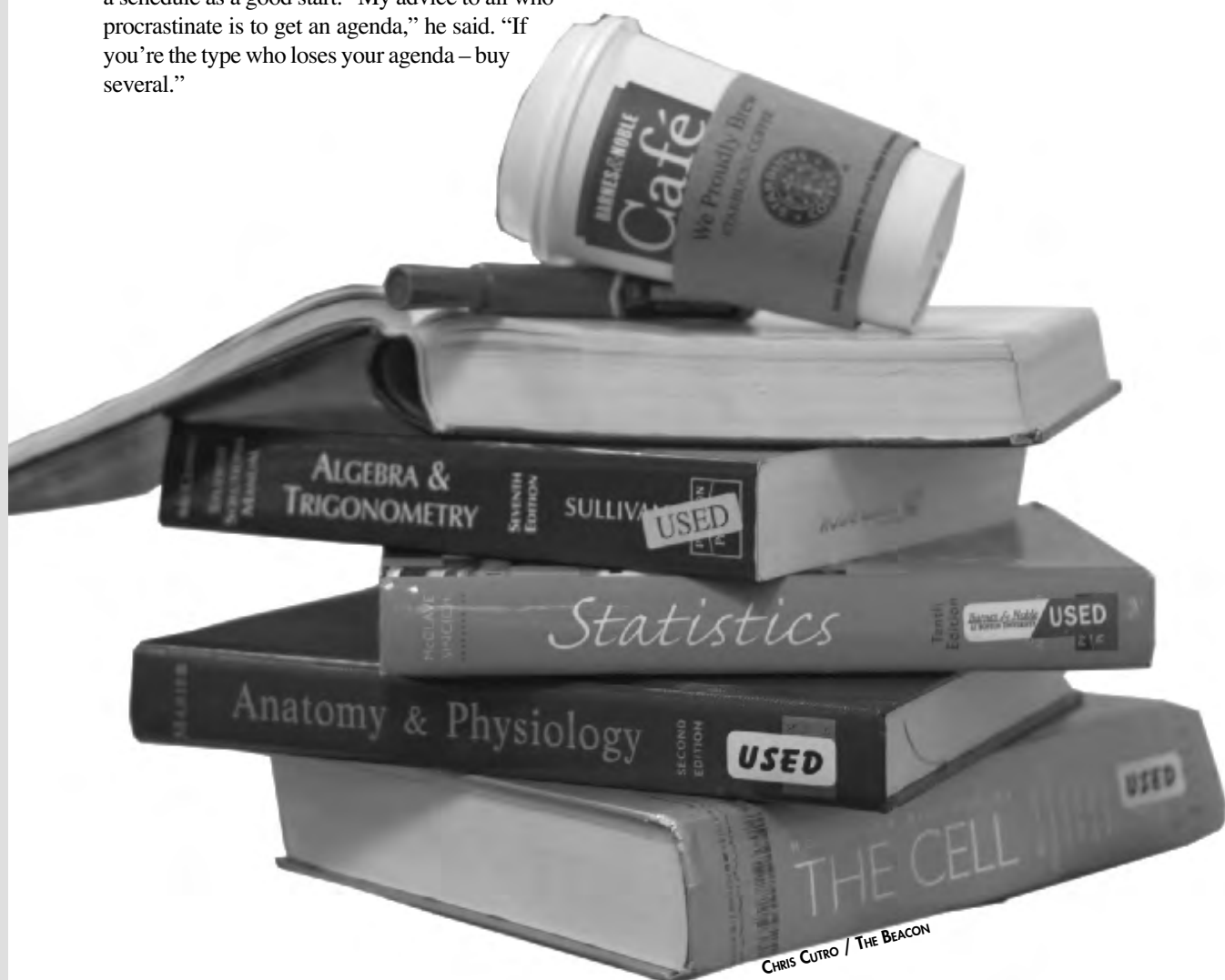
A continuous cycle of cramming for tests can be a symptom of having poor time management skills.

Procrastination is in essence a disorder, which both leads to and is caused by disorganization and anxiety, therefore creating an unmanageable cycle.

The following are ideas meant to keep in mind when organizing:

- Time management is life management.
- Make "To Do" Lists: Make tomorrow's list at the end of today.
- Prioritize your tasks: Refuse to accomplish your second priority before you finish your first.
- When tackling a project, clear your workspace of everything except what you're working on.
- Repetition leads to action: It takes 21 days for a behavior to become a habit (this applies for both good and bad habits).
- Get your own goal or you'll always be working for another's.
- Law of belief: there's a positive relationship between how intensely you believe your goal is achievable and how rapidly your goal will manifest in your reality.
- Time management ensures you work smarter, not harder.

– Compiled by Alicia Bustamante with additional reporting by Charlie Grau



CHRIS CUTRO / THE BEACON

TIPS FOR LOW-STRESS STUDIES

LEONCIO ALVAREZ Staff Writer

Yet another semester has come and gone and here you are one step closer to graduation ... you think. But just like past years, you are dreading finals and studying for them. Here are some tips to help you get through the end of the semester with minimal damage:

GO TO CRAM JAM

Free breakfast at midnight is always a plus – especially when you should be studying but all you can think about are scrambled eggs with cheese. Cram Jam might be the only event in which a large portion of students are expected to attend so make sure to get there early with your FIU ID close by to avoid a long wait.

GET COMFORTABLE

Make sure your spot is free of interruptions, distractions, has the perfect temperature for you and has a not-too-comfortable-chair. The last thing you need is to wake up an hour before your final with an eraser in your ear and the formula “ $y=mx+b$ ” inked on your forehead.

TEACH TO LEARN

Do you have to digest a lot of information in a short period of time? Then teach your study guide

to a friend or relative. You will find that explaining something to someone is always a good way of demonstrating what you’ve learned. Besides, your aunt probably admires Madame Marie Currie and would love to know that she was the first person ever to win two Nobel Prizes.

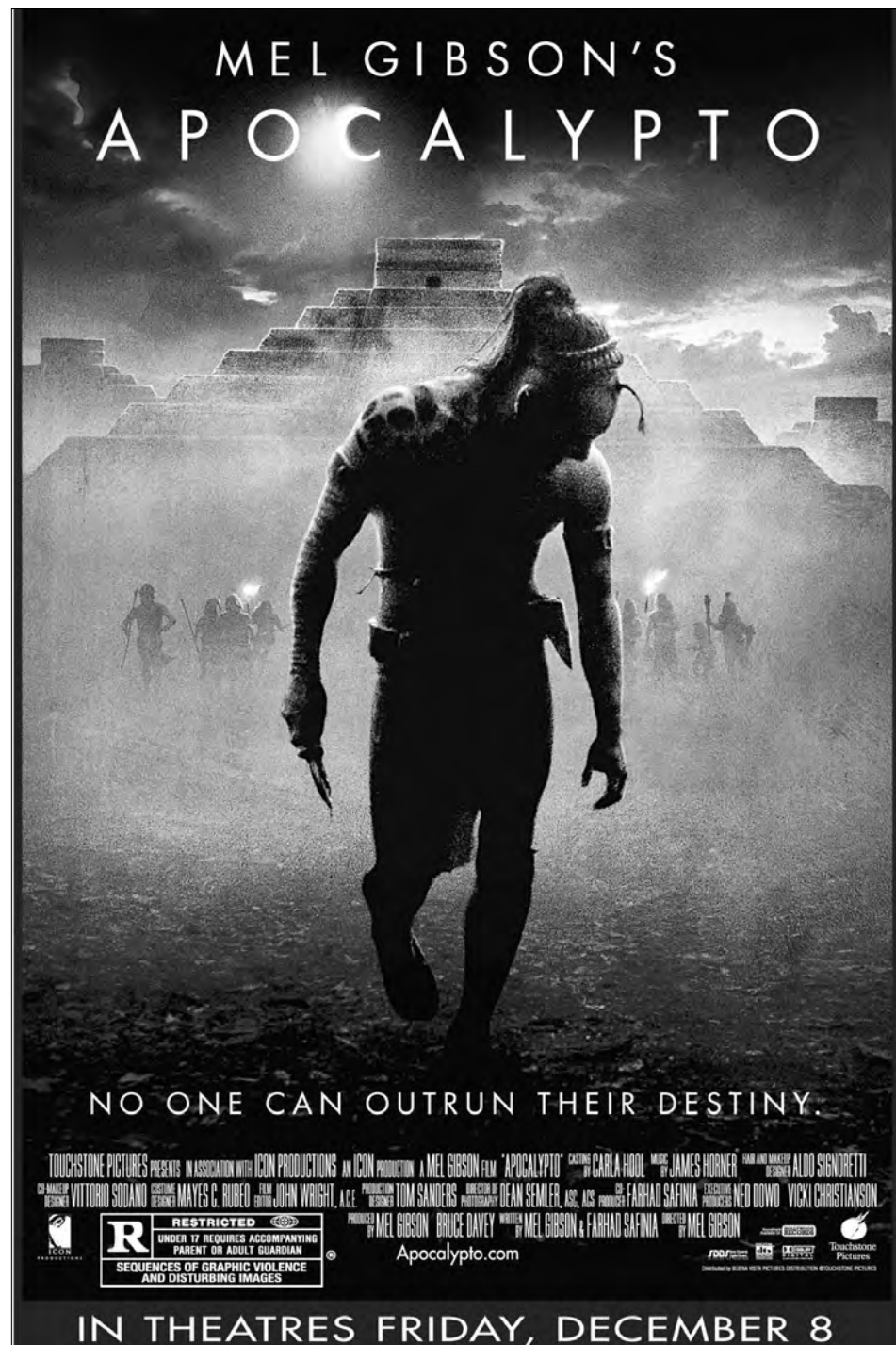
TAKE A BREAK

If your final is tomorrow and you haven’t even bought the book yet, chances are you’re going to fail. You might as well feel relaxed during your academic downfall.

Stop by the Wellness Center on Monday or Wednesday for a free massage or schedule an acupuncture appointment.

It is impossible to be completely stress free during finals. One needs a little stress to stay alert and motivated. The key is keeping the stress levels low.

Staying hydrated while studying is a good way to keep your mind leveled. If you’re going to sit down with a Frito Lay variety box next to your textbook all night, drink some vitamin water and put back some of the nutrients you are losing. Your best bet, though, would be to lose the chips and snack on some carrots or granola bars. If your body feels strong, your mind will follow.



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Abortion clinic defense entails eternal damnation

MY LIFE! EXPERIENCE



Commentary

Nicole Acosta
BBC Assistant

I never thought the priest who gave me my first communion when I was 8 years old would try to have me arrested 12 years later in front of an abortion clinic.

I was accused of being a "misguided animal that was feeding into a culture of death" by the priest, and when I replied with my beliefs, he hailed a nearby policeman to arrest me.

After the policeman left, the priest and other pro-lifers prayed and insulted me. When my mother called, the priest started yelling near the phone, "Your daughter is going to Hell!"

Every Saturday in October, I met

with other pro-choice defenders at 6660 SW 117 Avenue, the site of the A Choice For Women abortion clinic. The clinic, once almost completely hidden by trees and a concrete gate, had turned into a battle site between Catholic fundamentalism and the secular right for women to choose.

After hearing that the Miami Clinic Access Project, who was serving as a buffer to the pro-life protesters, was requesting for the FIU Women's Studies Department to recruit students to defend the right to have safe abortions, I joined the cause.

At the time, I had no idea what I was getting into, as I had never participated in any sort of activism.

Our job was to use our blue "Keep Abortion Legal" rounders (signs) to help block the pro-life signs from obstructing the driveway and make sure every woman who had an appointment was safely escorted into and out of the clinic.

During the early morning before

sunrise, the scene was quiet. Some of the pro-lifers would stand to one side of the driveway with their signs, while others would stand around a three-foot statue of the Virgin Mary and pray in hushed tones.

The pro-choicers and I would either be sitting in folding chairs on the other side of the driveway, helping to hold the "Keep Abortion Legal" banner or standing while holding the blue rounders displaying the same message.

Things would start to get heated after sunrise, however. Always outnumbering us in vast quantities, the pro-lifers made their way to our side of the driveway and began to repeatedly recite the Hail Mary until it became incoherent noise.

When cars passed, I made sure to look into the eyes of the woman in the car. I wanted her to see me. I wanted her to know that by my sign and by my actions, I was there to help defend her choice.

Some of the women were in tears, and others smiled back. All of them

looked scared.

We would leave when all of the women who came for procedures were safely escorted out of the clinic. The pro-lifers would stay, holding their signs and praying, but we wouldn't. We had accomplished what we had set out to do.

Although I was damned, I know that the only way I would go to Hell is if, according to Dante, I didn't stand up for my beliefs. My choice to have an abortion is my decision, but I feel that people who impose their religious beliefs in this secular society are taking my personal rights away.

Once one group of people has their rights taken away, other groups will soon have their rights taken away. Abortion rights are the inalienable rights of every woman, and they represent the freedoms of everyone, regardless of their background.

And what's so wrong with being a feminist fighting for equal rights, anyway?

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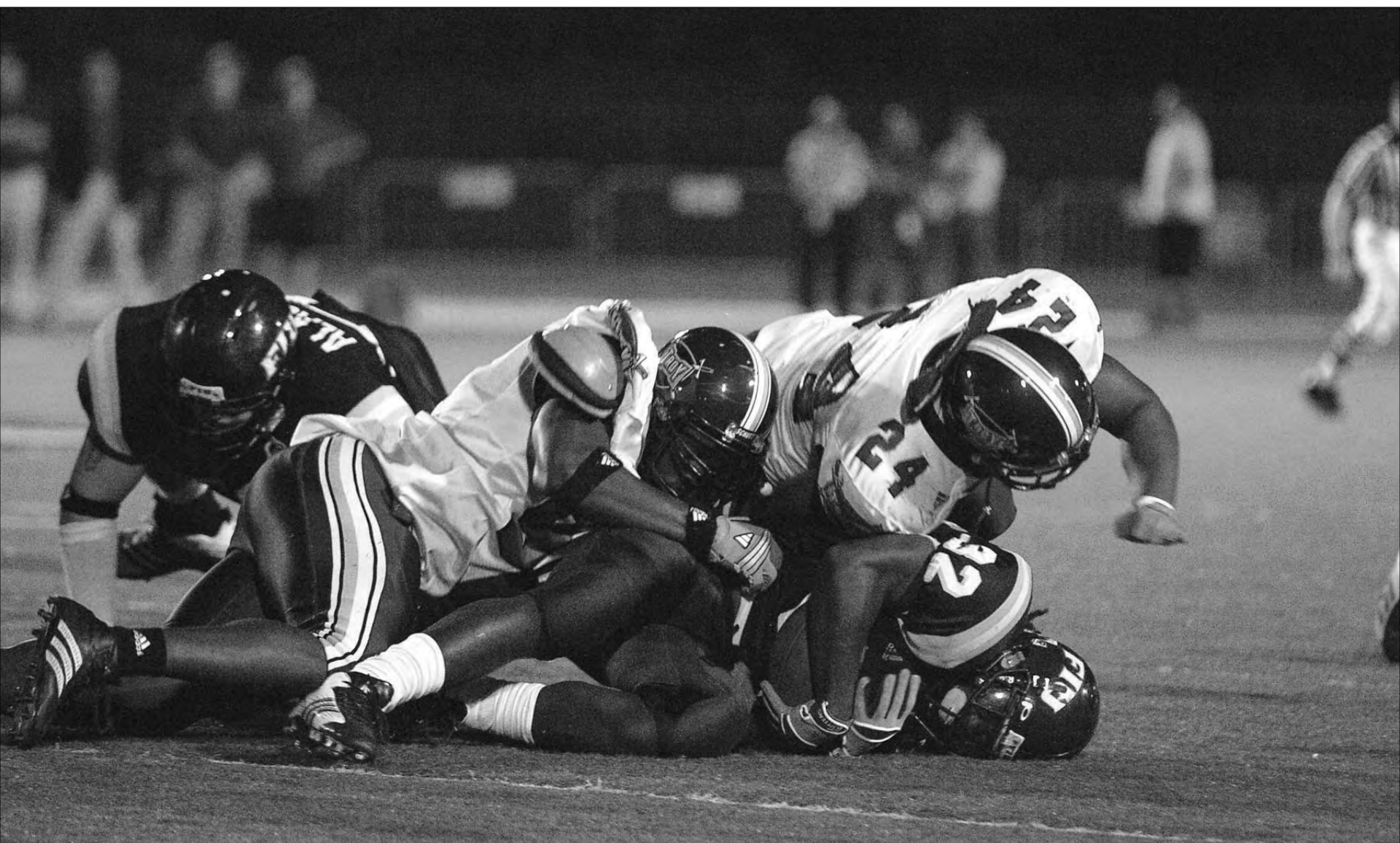
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THE DEFEATED SEASON

Football dropped by Trojans, finishes season 0-12



CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

DRIVEN DOWN: Sophomore running back Julian Reams is sandwiched between two Trojan defenders. With the 26-13 win, Troy captured the 2006 Sun Belt Conference title.

ANDONI GONZALEZ-RUA
Staff Writer

Coach Don Strock's final game at the helm of FIU's football program ended the same way the rest of the 2006 schedule did, with the Golden Panthers underachieving and falling for a 12th straight time.

The Golden Panthers (0-12, 0-6) ended the season winless as the offense could not carry the squad past Troy (7-5, 6-1), losing 26-13 Dec. 2 at FIU Stadium.

The visitors needed the win to clinch the Sun Belt Conference and a berth in the R&L Carriers New Orleans Bowl.

Special teams were the difference as

Troy returned a punt for their first score just minutes into the second quarter. Trojan punt returner Leodis McKelvin broke a 48-yard return for a touchdown following a Chris Patullo punt and the visitors took a 6-0 lead after a missed extra point.

"We need to give Troy credit," Strock said. "They won the football game. We had opportunities again but we didn't take advantage of them."

The Golden Panthers bounced back and took the lead with 6:15 to play in the first half as they blocked a punt and safety Cory Fleming returned it 22 yards to put Strock's men ahead 7-6.

The lead would last less than six minutes

when, with 34 seconds to play in the second quarter, Troy quarterback Omar Haugabook found Andrew Davis from 8 yards way, putting the Trojans in the lead heading into the locker room 13-7.

"Early in the game we had breakdowns," Strock said. "We should have been ahead in the game more than we were in the first quarter."

Though FIU showed promise in the first half as they moved the football offensively, the second half belonged to Troy.

The Trojans outscored the Golden Panthers 13-6 the rest of the way as kicker Greg Whibbs, who beat the hosts last season with a field goal, connected from 29 and 36 yards.

Toris Rutledge caught a 13-yard touchdown from Haugabook giving Troy the conference crown.

The game marked the end of the career of several important Golden Panthers both offensively and defensively.

In his final game, Strock found the same things that had plagued the team all season long.

"As far as the game was concerned it's the same things: the kicking game and protection. Hopefully, through maturity they will begin to understand what we were trying to get across to them and they'll get better in the future."

FOOTBALL, page 14

Men's basketball loses game and uniforms at Wisconsin

RENALDO SMITH
Staff Writer

After a delayed flight, lost luggage and freezing climate changes, the men's basketball team still had enough energy to give No. 12 Wisconsin a scare, before falling 79-63 Dec. 2 at the Kohl Center in Madison, Wis.

The Golden Panthers were forced to play in black and white uniforms and new tennis shoes (courtesy of the University of Wisconsin), and senior guard Johwen Villegas looked as comfortable as he has been all season in the new threads.

Villegas tied a season high with

24 points, making good on 7-of-10 attempts from beyond the arc - setting a new Kohl Center record.

The Golden Panthers jumped out to a 9-5 lead, thanks to early three-point hits from Villegas and senior center Facundo Giorgi. Despite that promising start, things began to go downhill for the Golden Panthers who shot a dismal 9-31 (29 percent) from the field in the half.

The Badgers, on the other hand, had their offense in gear behind Kammron Taylor as they opened up a 13-point advantage and led by as many as 16 with just over five minutes remaining in the half. Junior Dejean Prejean poured

in three baskets, and Villegas swished a 3-pointer to ignite a run that pulled the Golden Panthers within eleven at halftime intermission (38-27).

In the second half, Villegas poured in four 3-pointers, guard Chris Fuller attacked the hoop recklessly and Prejean continued to make his presence felt.

Despite all of those factors, the Badgers, who were equally as productive on their offensive end, still managed to pull away.

Prejean was the lone Golden Panther beside Villegas in double figures as he finished with 11 points and four boards in the tough loss. Fuller, who went scoreless in

the first half, finished with 8 points on 4-7 shooting.

After swishing a trey early, Giorgi cooled off in a hurry. He finished the game with just 7 points on 2-10 shooting, and sophomore forward Alex Galindo struggled as well with just 2 points on 1-6 shooting from the field. Nikola Gracesa, who made good on two three-point attempts late in the game, finished with 7 points. Strong shooter Elvis Lora went 0-3 from behind the arc on the night.

When the Golden Panthers couldn't stop the Badgers, they fouled them.

The Badgers made 24-30 free throws while the Golden Panthers

only attempted 13 and swished 11. The Badgers also won the bench scoring duel 34-22. Taylor finished with a side high of 16 points and Joe Krabbenhoft and Alando Tucker chipped in with ten points each in the win for the now 7-1 Badgers.

The Golden Panthers wrapped up their four-game road trip 1-3, with the lone win a 70-68 thriller against Kennesaw State Nov. 25.

The team will travel to Troy, Ala., to face the Trojans Dec. 17, before returning home for a three-game stretch of home games against Palm Beach Atlantic, Florida Atlantic and Middle Tennessee beginning Dec. 22.

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Football finishes as one of two winless teams in nation

FOOTBALL, page 13

Quarterback Josh Padrick, making his final start, equaled a program record he set himself last season against Troy with 51 pass attempts. The senior completed 30-of-51 passes for 225 yards a touchdown and an interception.

Classmate Chandler Williams, who led the Sun Belt Conference in receptions per game, managed 90 yards on 11 catches and had the lone FIU offensive score with 4:18 to play when he caught a Padrick pass from 5 yards.

The running game was once again non-existent for the hosts as the sophomore tandem of A'mod Ned and Julian Reams combined for 52 yards on 13 carries.

The defense, without leading tackler and captain Keyonvis Bouie for

the second game in a row, was led by fellow senior Alexander Bostic III's 11 tackles. Scott Bryant and Michael Dominguez filled the void left by Bouie and managed 10 and 9 tackles, respectively.

Defensive end Antwan Barnes recovered a fumble while fellow defensive linemen Roland Clarke and Justin West were both credited with sacks.

Haugabook led Troy, having his way both on the ground and through the air.

The junior completed just 9-of-23 passes for 53 yards but had two touchdowns through the air to go along with 107 net yards on the ground.

FIU came in giving up almost 145 yards per game on the ground and were torched by a Troy team that managed 263.

Kenny Cattouse looked sure to break over the 100 yard mark early in the third quarter but sat for much of the fourth, finishing the night with 91 yards rushing.

In his final FIU game, Strook was thankful for the opportunity to start a tradition at the University.

"I tried to coach to the best of my ability and I thank President [Modesto A.] Maidique and FIU for letting me start a football program here. Most people will never get that opportunity and I did. I am proud of what we have done."

The Golden Panthers finished the season tied with Duke for the worst mark in Division I-A.

Athletic Director Pete Garcia and his department are currently in search of a coach to fill the void left by Strook's resignation.

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Shorinji Kempo club teaches students balance

XAVIER E. MARTINEZ
Contributing Writing

For thousands of years mankind has sought after complete harmony between the body and mind. Many Asian teachings constantly stress the importance of mental and physical balance. Through the FIU Shorinji Kempo Club, FIU students now have an opportunity to join in this spiritual pursuit.

“Shorinji Kempo believes in balancing the spiritual aspects of the East with the material and scientific approach of the West,” said Sensei (teacher) Eric Messersmith, who began the club at FIU two years ago and still continues to teach it.

In 1981, Sensei Eric received his 6th degree black belt in Shorinji Kempo. He holds the highest rank among all non-Japanese members in the United States.

“We’re very lucky to have him here,” said brown belt Mike Kirgan.

Kirgan is an IT manager for the UTS department at FIU and has practiced Shorinji Kempo for two years.

“Students should take advantage of someone ranked so high,” he said.

The FIU Shorinji Kempo Club has 12 members, including both students and faculty. In the past, all classes were held in vacant classrooms around campus. Recently, the club was given a designated home on the second floor of the newly built recreation center.

The club is an affiliate of the World Shorinji Kempo Organization. According to their website, the WSKO has over 3,000 branches worldwide and approximately 1,500,000 registered members. FIU’s own Messersmith was once named director of the WSKO. His accomplishments in martial arts date back for decades.

In the 1974 All Japan Tournament, Messersmith won first place in the category of embu. The national competition was held in Tokyo and was attended by over 30,000 spectators and participants. Such martial arts superstars as Steven Segal competed in this tournament.

Embu is a choreographed series of fighting techniques performed at full speed. It consists of two martial artists facing-off and demonstrating their knowledge of kicks, throws and pins on each other. Embu is the most common method of competition used in Shorinji Kempo.

Shorinji Kempo was created in Japan at the end of

World War II. Directly translated into English, it stands for “the small woods temple law of fist.” Like many other martial arts, its origins can be traced to the Chinese Shaolin Temple styles. It’s one of the only Japanese martial arts that incorporate both striking and grappling techniques.

“Ideally, women should practice Shorinji Kempo because it teaches how to apply large amounts of damage with little strength,” said Sempai Clovis Tondo, who is not an FIU student. He has studied Shorinji Kempo for 30 years, and said he still enjoys training because he’s never stopped learning.

All kenshi or students are asked to follow four basic

philosophical teachings. The first states the answer lies in man, meaning one cannot blame society for his problems; everyone is responsible for their own being. The second teaching focuses on the unity of Ken (body) and Zen (mind). The third explains the importance of unity between strength and love. The final teaching states one should live half for himself and half for others, or people must always think of the welfare of others before they act.

“Shorinji Kempo is not simply a technology of self defense, but a method of cultivating one’s character,” said the official WSKO website.

The average class ses-



EDDIE ZENG/THE BEACON

BLACK BELT: Mike Kirgan, UTS manager (on the floor) allows Kempo student Anand Iengar to practice some new techniques on him.

sion lasts approximately two hours. It consists of warm-up, basic technique, goho (thrusts and kicks), juho (throws and pinning), lecture and clean up.

“I can do anything for exercise, but this isn’t boring and I can meet people,” said white belt William Zhu, who is not an FIU student. He

will be testing for his next rank Dec. 17.

Practices are held on the second floor of the Recreation Center on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. and Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. There are no fees for FIU students to observe or participate, so everyone is welcome.

“If you are looking for a complete martial art, one with a philosophical base, then Shorinji Kempo is the perfect way to build a strong body and mind,” Sensei Eric said.

For further information please visit <http://www.technicalsynergy.com/Shorinji/inex.cfm>.

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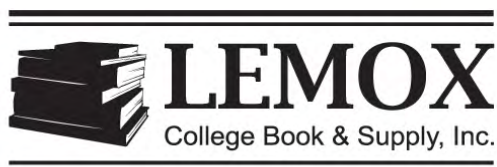
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