

2-12-2007

The Beacon, February 12, 2007

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Athletic fee increase crucial to new stadium

CHARLIE GRAU
Staff Writer

Construction workers may have to hold on to their shovels a little bit longer before beginning renovations on the FIU stadium. According to Charles Tinder, senior director of the College Finances, stadium renovations that are scheduled to begin in two and a half months may be delayed or halted if the proposed athletic fee increase doesn't get approved at the Board of Trustees meeting Feb. 16.

"They were aware that the fee increase was part of the stadium

proposal," Tinder said. "I don't know if they have a plan B."

If passed, students will be charged \$13.05 instead of \$10 per semester in athletics fees.

The proposed increase would generate \$1.1 million in revenue, \$655,000 of which would go back to paying the bonds used to renovate the stadium. The rest of the revenue would go towards marketing and ticket sales.

Tinder went on to say that when the stadium renovations were proposed to the BOT, the student athletics fee was part of the proposal.

Phase one of the three phase

project will cost \$31 million and will add 10,500 seats and amenities such as 14 air-conditioned luxury suites, a wrap-around concourse with a full field view, 1,400 club seats, a video scoreboard and a stadium club.

Athletic director Pete Garcia said that no other phases would be built until the athletics department is able to prove they can sell out all 18,000 seats at the FIU football stadium.

While renovations to the FIU stadium will be taking place, FIU will be playing its home games at the Orange Bowl next season. Phase one of the stadium renova-

tions is set to be completed before the beginning of the 2008 football season.

Garcia said that all home games will be played at 7 p.m. and that the University will provide bussing services to the Orange Bowl.

"We will provide as many buses as you can fill up," Garcia said.

Besides the proposed athletic fee increase, revenue from ticket sales, vendor revenues, corporate sponsorships and naming rights will also be used to pay back the bonds.

At two public forums held at

University Park and Biscayne Bay Campus Feb. 7, Garcia explained to students and faculty how athletics would be used as a platform to promote other programs and schools at FIU.

Though all of the athletic fee increases would be used to support athletics, Garcia said that the money generated by the program would also be used towards other programs at FIU.

"Football is the only sport that can make money," Garcia said. "It is the only vehicle that can actually at one point make money."

ATHLETICS, page 2

Students help with tax headaches

NAIHOBE GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

It's tax season again, and for Carolina Garcia, a senior majoring in accounting, it's time to help others. Garcia helps out at the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, which helps low-income families prepare their taxes at no cost.

Garcia is joining dozens of other FIU students in the VITA program, which is sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service. Last year Jimmy Miller, a graduate student in the Executive Master in Taxation program, helped lead the effort.

"This is a partnership between the IRS and FIU," Miller said. "The idea is to provide a place where low-income individuals can go and have their tax preparations done for free. The IRS provides the training and we provide the students."

After completing online courses, participants take two tests and become certified tax preparers. Garcia studied for weeks before being assigned to two local sites. She and other FIU volunteers will be helping families earning less than \$35,000 per year at the Navarro Pharmacy on S.W. Eighth Street and 120th Avenue and the City of Sweetwater Community Center. Volunteers will be at these locations Wednesdays from 6 - 8 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. until tax season ends.

"Taxes are something you can do yourself," Garcia said. Last year she prepared her own taxes. "There are many programs like TurboTax that can make it easy."

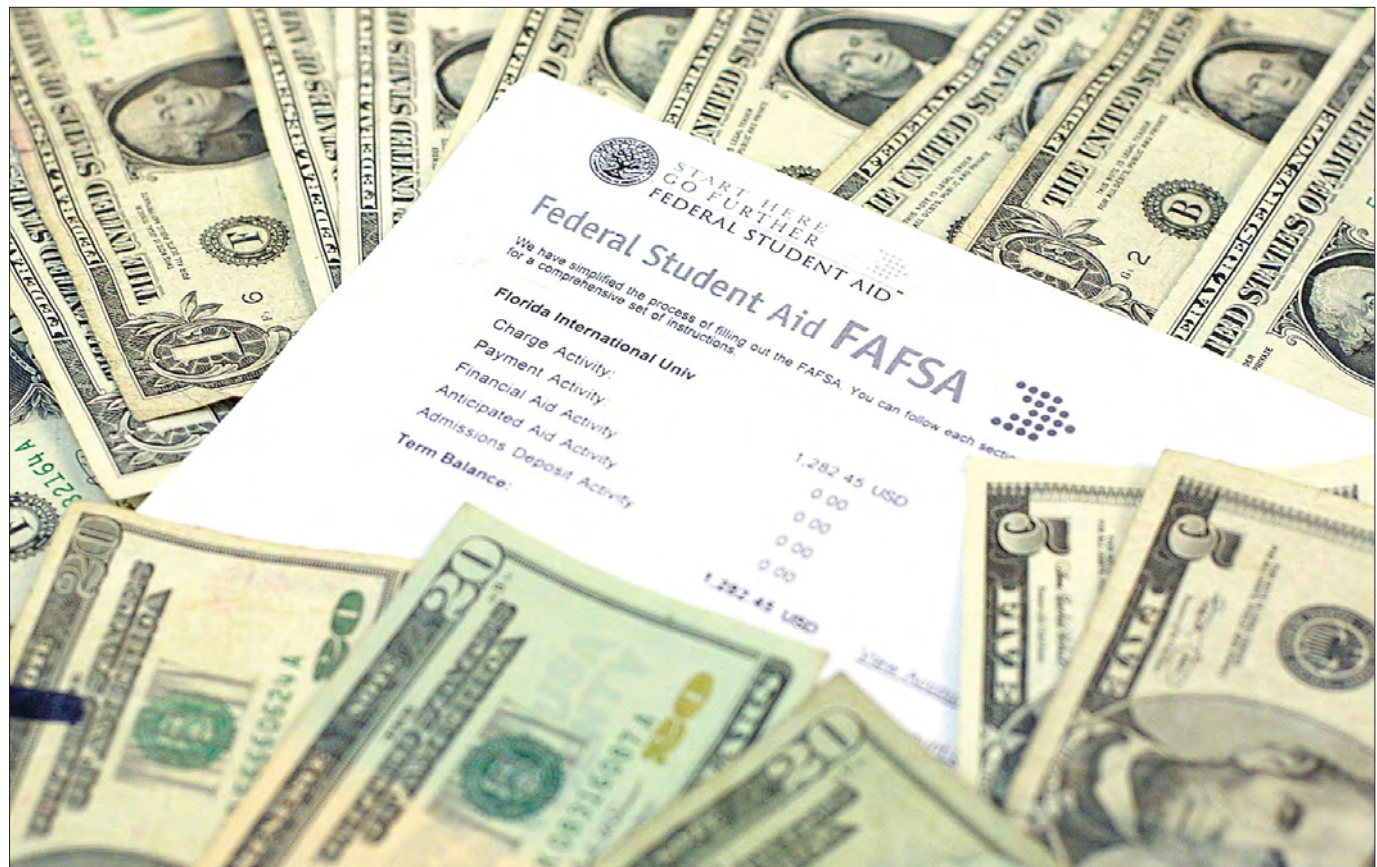
Not every student agrees. Sophomore Gustavo Martinez worked during part of 2006, and this year he is not sure how to file taxes for the first time.

"It seems so confusing. I don't even think I know if I need to do my taxes," Martinez said. "Don't my parents just put me in theirs?"

Michelle Duret, a certified public accountant, answered the question.

TAXES, page 2

SHOW ME THE MONEY



CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

BIG BUCKS: The Office of Financial Aid has a new campaign titled "Use your PIN, not your PEN" to encourage students to use the Internet to file their FAFSA and receive financial aid faster.

Getting cash for college as simple as filling a form

CHRISTOPHER NEWLAND
Contributing Writer

Freshman Whitney Smith is one of the many FIU students who rely on the billions of dollars that are released through financial aid every year to pay for tuition and housing.

"Scholarships and grants are a good thing because if you work hard in school you should be able to advance yourself by going to college. I wouldn't be able to pay for this school if I didn't have financial aid; I would be going to community college and living at home," Smith said.

However, many students miss the deadline to file their Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which is March 1, and as a result miss the opportunity to receive these funds.

To resolve this issue, FIU has launched a Financial Aid awareness campaign under

the slogan "Use your PIN, not your PEN," to encourage students to use the Internet to file their FAFSA and meet deadline.

Part of the campaign consists in posters and banners displayed around campus emphasizing the advantages of filing the FAFSA online, the greatest one being having a response period of less than a week rather than the usual five weeks.

Other advantages include having to answer fewer questions than on the paper version, an automatic checking feature that finds errors and prompts to fix them before submitting the application, and e-mail confirmation of submission.

The Financial Aid Office will also host an even called "Fat Tuesday" Feb. 20 in the Graham Center, room 1201. From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., representatives from the office will help students file their FAFSA while answering questions.

The campaign will also help students

understand the different financial aid options available, such as the Pell grant – a federal grant that awards up to \$2,025 per semester to full-time students – and the Smart grant, which helps full-time, junior and senior students majoring in a technical science by granting up to \$4,000.

There is also the first generation grant for students who are the first in their family to attend college for their bachelors' degree.

While March 1 is the official deadline for grants from the school, Lina Saenz, representative from the financial aid office, advises students to file their FAFSA even if it's past the deadline.

"If the school has not given out all of its money, it will still take applications until the money runs out on a first come first serve basis," Saenz said.

FAFSA, page 3

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • FEBRUARY 12

SPC Pan African Arts and Crafts: 12 p.m., WUC Panther Square (BBC)

SPC Pan African Heritage - "It's The Little Things Everyday Interactions That Anger, Annoy, and Divide the Races" with Lena Williams: 8 p.m., GC Ballrooms (UP)

TUESDAY • FEBRUARY 13

SGA/Women's CenterHep C- Alert Poetry Slam: 11 a.m., WUC Panther Square (BBC)

SPC Pan African Movie Series: 8 p.m., WUC 155 (BBC)

SPC Pan African Heritage - Black History Month Brain Buster Game Show: 12 p.m., GC Forum (UP)

SPC Pan African Heritage - Martin Luther King Jr.: The Man, The Dream, The Conspiracy: 8 p.m., GC 243 (UP)

WEDNESDAY • FEBRUARY 14

SOC Club Fair: 5 p.m., Academic I Atrium Area (BBC)

Campus Life Late Day Latte: 5 p.m., Academic I Atrium Area (BBC)

CCC Impact Movement Valentines Ball: 7 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)

SPC Pan-African Movie Series: 9 p.m., WUC 157 (BBC)

SPC Pan African Heritage - Afro-Cuban Rhythms: 12:30 p.m., GC Forum (UP)

SPC Films – Anti-Valentines Dinner & A Movie: Saw III: 8 p.m., GC Ballrooms (UP)

THURSDAY • FEBRUARY 15

On Point Poetry – Poetry Night: 5 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)

Wild Succulent Women: 8 p.m., Bay Vista 1st Floor Lounge (BBC)

HLSA's Abuela "Flan" Cook-off Student Cafe: 12 p.m., School of Law, \$3 to try the desserts.

Festival Grand Opening: 8 p.m., Wertheim Concert Hall

FRIDAY • FEBRUARY 16

U.S. & Iranian Relations: Past, Present and Future with Guest Speakers Dr. Abdy Javadzadeh and Dr. Hamid Serri: 7:30 p.m., GC 243 (UP)

SPC Films – Flags of our Fathers: 7 p.m. & 10 p.m., GC 140 (UP)

FIU Theatre presents "A Funny Thing Happened On The Way to the Forum": 8 p.m., Wertheim Performing Arts Center Concert Hall (UP)

-Compiled by Reuben Pereira

Athletics fee may see increase

ATHLETICS, page 1

Garcia went on to explain to those in attendance that one of the aims of the stadium is to provide something for students and alumni to do on the weekends. He also said that the football stadium would be used to hold events besides football on the weekends. This would help bring alumni back to FIU.

"A large percentage of UM's donors are FIU alumni," Garcia said. "We don't have people to reach our alumni. This doesn't happen by accident; you need people to market. There is nothing in athletics being promoted. There is nobody at FIU that sells tickets."

The marketing plan would include billboards, newspaper ads and television commercials endorsing and promoting FIU athletics.

He emphasized that bringing back alumni would help increase donations to the school which would allow athletics and other programs at the University not to rely heavily on student fees.

"We do believe our students are going to be showing up to these events," Garcia said. "We've got to have students coming to our events... no one wants to come to an empty stadium. If our stadium's not full, we can't pay our rent."

Though Garcia seemed optimistic

about his vision, many students and faculty were a bit concerned with the plan and didn't share his vision.

Some in attendance cited that the Florida Marlins won two championships and have yet to establish a stable fan base and that many South Florida sports fans are fickle.

Steven Ramirez, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication representative who attended the public forum at BBC, believes that marketing plans should focus on teams other than football.

"I believe this marketing plan should place more emphasis on other teams that win more games," Ramirez said.

Volunteers help locals with taxes

TAXES, page 1

"Most students are probably still being claimed as dependents by their parents," Duret said. "The rule is that if the student is at least 24 and his income exceeds \$3,200, then he cannot be claimed as a dependent. Either way he may have to file a tax return, but he should know whether his parents plan on claiming him or not because it could make a difference."

Duret explained that students with a gross income of more than \$5,000 last year have to declare their taxes. Independent students who are single and earned over \$8,200 are also required to file. And even if it is not mandatory, filing a tax return could "be worth the trouble."

"A vast majority of those who file a tax return get a refund," Duret said.

According to Duret, there are four major credits and deductions that students—or their parents—should know about:

The first is the Lifetime Learning Credit, which gives a credit for 20 percent of tuition and related costs. The maximum credit is \$2,000.

A second one is the Hope Scholarship Credit, which provides a credit of 100 percent on the first \$1,000 of tuition and 50 percent on the second \$1,000. This credit only applies for the first two years of college and the maximum credit amount students can receive is \$1,500.

The third is the Higher Education Expenses Deduction. It depends on income but could be as much as \$4,000.

A fourth one is the Student Loan Interest Deduction and can deduct up to \$2,500

on interest paid on student loans. Borrowed funds must have paid for educational expenses.

"Students or their families can only claim one of the first three, so I would recommend they see an accountant to make sure they make the best choice," Duret said.

One last tip Duret offered was to file electronically. Those earning less than \$52,000 per year can do so at no cost through the IRS's Free File program.

"Filing electronically is the way to go," Duret said. "Most people who e-file get their refunds in about two weeks."

Garcia, who committed 30 hours of service as a VITA volunteer, had a recommendation of her own.

"Just go to Navarro or the [Sweetwater] community center," she said. "It's so easy, and it's free."

TAX CREDITS, ETC.

Lifetime Learning Credit: 20% tuition credit; \$2,000 max.

Hope Scholarship Credit: 100% tuition credit on the first \$1,000, 50% on the second \$1,000; \$1,500 max.

Higher Education Expenses Deduction: depends on income, up to \$4,000.

Student Loan Interest Deduction: deducts up to \$2,500 for interest paid on student loans.

For a list of free tax preparation centers in Miami-Dade, go to <http://www.prosperitycampaign.com/countytaxsites.htm>

SGC-UP Notes

Feb. 7 Call to order: 3:35 p.m., Adjournment: 4:56 p.m.

Announcements:

- Carlos Isidro from Students Against Sweatshops:
 - Coke is responsible for human rights violations in Colombia and environmental violations in India. Coke has over 200 vending machines on campus and an exclusive contract with FIU. Coke has not responded to these allegations. Therefore, we feel FIU should negate their contracts with FIU. Today we are asking that SGA give some kind of support in this effort. We cannot do this alone. We already have 500 signatures from students on campus.
 - Pedro Armada: The resolution was unanimously approved by the union that represents FIU's faculty.

Comments

- Leon: Their contract is up for review this year and we do want to get student feedback. The challenge is how to get involved without overstepping our boundaries. We would like more information from a national or regional Coca Cola representative.
- Marbely Hernandez: Proposal by Charlie Crist to freeze tuition.
- Leon: I think it is important to reevaluate the meeting time. We had five excused absences today, so we can't approve the minutes. Cadavid: Appropriations are time sensitive.

President's Report (Alfonso "Alfie" Leon):

- Shaquille O'Neil plans to have a career in law enforcement and he will pursue his doctorate in criminology at FIU.

Comptroller's Report (Nancy Cadavid):

- Poor attendance at the Athletic Fee hearing. The proposed fee increase is \$1.39 and will raise \$1.08 million.

Student Union (Michael Jadoo):

- [Aramark] doesn't want to compete with so many vendors, referring to possibility of Chili's replacing Gracie's Grill.

Student Health Advisory (Rebecca Louisdor):

- Money expected to come in from fees was not as much as expected. After big storms, a lot of money had to go to repairing new wings. So money we do have left want to make sure it goes to right place.

Judicial Board (Kathryn Cubbon):

- Weekend meeting (Saturday) so we can get the bylaws completely done. Anyone welcome to attend. Hopefully we can get them done and bring them to the Council ASAP.

Absences:

- Andres Escobar (Engineering), Alan P. Rivera (Business), Maria Garcia (Law), Rocio Perez (Honors College), Charlene Collazo, Jennifer Ruiz (At-large), Mikana Maeda (Architecture), Paige LaPointe (Lower Division)

CORRECTIONS

In the issue dated Feb. 8, 2006, the Annual Student Art Show should have been advertised as taking place Feb. 16, not Feb. 9.

The "Poetry in Motion Coffeehouse" took place Feb. 5.

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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- Compiled by Angelina Troff

Renowned architect discusses book, works

**KHADIJA HARRIS AND
MARIA CHERCOLES**
Beacon Staff

Architect and designer Maya Lin was only 21 years old when her Vietnam Veterans Memorial design was chosen as the winning design to be built in Washington, D.C.

Since then, Lin has designed memorials, sculptures and buildings across the country; both for public and private use, including the environmental landscape sculpture *Wave Fields* outside Miami's Federal Courthouse. She also designed the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Ala.,

and a chapel for the Children's Defense Fund in Tennessee.

Lin will be at FIU presenting her first book, *Boundaries*, Feb. 16. Published in 2002, it is a collection of sketches, photographs and journal entries in the format of a memoir, which Lin refers to as a visual-verbal sketchbook. In *Boundaries*, Lin also explores her creative process by analyzing how her life experiences have shaped and affected her art, and describes her work as incomplete without human interaction.

The lecture is part of the Steven & Dorothea Green Critics' Lecture Series at The Patricia & Philip Frost Art Museum, which has brought prominent speakers to the University through the last 25 years. Some of these guests include Metropolitan Art Museum Director Philippe de Montebello and Fresh Air's host Terry Gross.

Nicole Kaufman, the museum's marketing director, helped plan Lin's visit to FIU.

"We are bringing her because she is a leading contemporary artist and architect," Kaufman said.

During her presentation, Lin will also be giving a synopsis of her work and her recent projects, including her exhibition "Systematic Landscapes," which is currently showing at the University of Washington's Henry Art Gallery.

"Systematic Landscapes" consists of 25 different large-scale installations inspired by the way scientists and computers represent visual information. The installations, made of wood, represent a hill from one view and an underwater peek from the other. The exhibition alludes to computer-generated visual effects such as pixilation, and visitors can climb on some of them, being able to experience the work from different angles and dimensions.

Lin's landscape design at the Federal Courthouse in Miami, "Field Waves," consists of a series of grass hills.

"When you look at it from a distance, it looks like a field of waves," Kaufman said.

Her work makes use of very common materials, such as plywood, pins and particle-board. She currently runs her studio in New



THE WALL: Architect Maya Lin, designer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Washington, D.C., will be lecturing at the University Park Green Library Feb. 16.

COURTESY PHOTO

York City.

Prominent city of Miami administrators, art critics and artists will attend the event. However, Kaufman gave no specific names.

Also during the lecture, Books and Books representatives will be selling Lin's book, *Boundaries*, for \$25, although Kaufman said

there would not be a book signing.

The lecture will take place in the Green Library, room 100, Feb. 16 at 8 p.m. and is free and open to everyone.

For more information on this and future events by the Frost Art Museum, go to <http://www.fiu.edu/~museum>.

FAFSA deadline nears

FAFSA, page 1

The financial aid office also has a \$500 emergency fund available to those in an emergency such as car accidents. According to Saenz, it can only be granted with sufficient proof of need.

While the financial aid program may seem like the perfect plan to pay tuition, there is a darker side: fees.

The state of Florida does not recognize fees as part of the tuition and therefore technically only pays 80 percent of the tuition or housing costs because the other 20 percent is made up of fees.

Although mandatory, the fees create opposition among students such as freshman Sara Ignacio.

"It's unfair that I have to pay a parking fee when I

don't have a car or a health fee when I don't use the health clinic here," Ignacio said.

To learn more about the application procedure or to apply, go to www.fafsa.ed.gov or call the financial aid hotline at 1-800-4-FED-AID. For information on scholarships, grants and loans specific to FIU, go to www.finaid.fiu.edu.

Apply by:
MARCH 1, 2007
www.fafsa.ed.gov



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FAFSA
US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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The Beacon is published on Mondays and Thursdays during the Fall and Spring semesters and once a week during Summer B. One copy per person. Additional copies are 25 cents. The Beacon is not responsible for the content of ads. Ad content is the sole responsibility of the company or vendor. The Beacon is an editorially independent newspaper partially funded by Student and Services fees that are appropriated by Student Government.

Group focuses on modern spirituality

CRISTELA GUERRA
BBC Managing Editor

There are many paths to inner peace, according to Dr. Heidi von Harscher.

"For some people it's [like] being on a boat in the middle of the ocean, for others at the top of a ski slope looking down over the mountain and you feel like OK, I'm centered, I'm connected now," said von Harscher, a neuropsychologist and associate director of Counseling and Psychological Services at FIU.

For some peace is a 5,000-year-old breathing technique now encouraged by modern science.

The Art of Living Foundation, the largest non-governmental organization within the United Nations, teaches rhythmic breathing exercises to calm all parts of the individual: mind, body and spirit.

"It's as simple as appreciating nature," von Harscher said. "It just makes sense."

In yoga, the method of controlling your breathing is pranayama and viewed as controlling the flow of a person's "life force."

They use these integrated science to fuse spirituality and medicine and help relieve the day-to-day strain.

FIU's Center for Spirituality has partnered with the Health and Wellness Center to bring attention to what they are calling "complementary medicines."

Indian spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar founded the AOLF to help "uplift the individual" and help people find new ways to channeling negative emotions.

"When I began in the field, meditation and mind, body techniques

were really outside the envelope," said Ronnie Newman, director of the research and health promotion center at Art of Living.

"I wrote my first paper on it in 1980, but since then we've really begun validating ancient health practices where they've been shown to help with cholesterol, depression and many other hormonal dysfunctions."

In many medical schools across the United States, mainstream Western medicine has turned its focus towards studies on holistic medicine, according to Nathan Katz, director for the Center of Spirituality.

Katz said that like Kabbalah, the tradition of yoga and eastern medicinal practices such as meditation have become secularized, but are now able to be proven by western science.

"Yoga works in many levels, but the physical is never separate from the psychological. You cannot separate the mind, spirit and body. If you do [only] one [it] doesn't work well," Katz said.

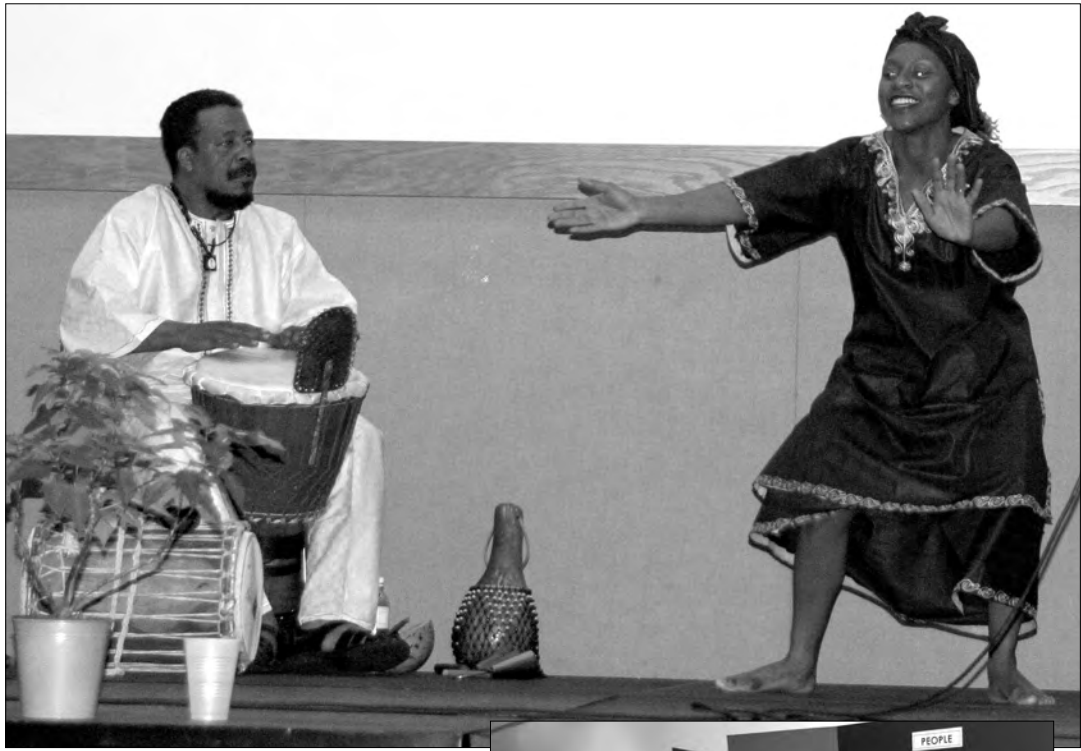
Newman said she believes students can learn this exercise to become free from stress, which she said "keeps you from expressing your full-intellectual potential."

"It's proven that these breathing techniques produce restful alertness," Newman said. "So you're completely relaxed, but very aware of your surroundings ... It's what happens with a mature brain."

Robert Dollinger M.D., executive director of the Health and Wellness Center at FIU, encouraged a relationship between AOLF and the University.

"An increasing number of FIU students who seek clinical and wellness services at the Univer-

FREEDOM PRAYERS



CRISTELA GUERRA/THE BEACON

AFRICAN SPIRITS: Hashim Saleh (top left) drums traditional African rhythms while Georgina Moore dances to the beat in an event sponsored by the Student Programming Council Feb. 7 in the Wolfe University Center ballrooms.

(Bottom right) Students look on "Black Miami" a photographic exhibition by Marvin Dunn of the African New World Studies Program on Feb. 5



YALI PANELO/THE BEACON

sity have physical, psychological, and/or behavioral symptoms of stress," he said.

"One of the things we found based on the results of a recent health survey of FIU students, was considerable interest in alternative therapies, such as acupuncture, chiropractic, massage therapy and others...I think students are very much attune to potential health benefits of these therapies."

Dollinger said the reason AOLF picked FIU is because the University represents an international

student body and as such called "to expose our students to things they may not normally see or hear about."

The foundation will be celebrating their 25th anniversary Feb. 13 at 7 p.m. at an award ceremony in FIU called "Heroes of Humanity" in the Wolfe University Center Ballrooms at Biscayne Bay Campus.

The celebration will honor three individuals from South Florida recognized for exemplifying integrity, compassion and service,

according to the event website.

Performances will feature artist such as the Alton Road group, rap by MIZ and classical Indian dancing. Jennifer Wyld of BIG 105.9 will emcee.

A free raffle, prizes and an art gallery including works by Miami artist Britto as well as artist Liora Davis is also planned.

The cost is \$5 for students and \$10 for anyone else. For more information, visit www.uplifthusmanvalues.org or call 305-951-6743.

SGC-BBC Notes

Feb. 7 Call to order 4:33 p.m.

Vice President's Report (Brent Maximin)

- Asked the council to set aside some time to meet with him for a mutual evaluation. Maximin: "This is to see how you are doing and how you think SGA is doing. Some people might not be sure of their responsibilities."

Comptroller's Report (Zach Trautenberg)

- Asked SGC-BBC to turn in an evaluation of their budget this year. He has not received any evaluations from the council.
- Encouraged the council to leave information on their positions, what they do, so their successors can transition into the position easier.

House Report (Gabriel Labrador)

- The Hospitality Management "Ice Cream Social" will take place Feb. 20-21 from 11 a.m to 2 p.m.

Advisor's Report (Craig Cunningham)

- Student life award nominations are coming up. Reminded SGC-BBC that in order to get nominated, they must have an updated resume for him to see.
- The leadership summit (Superhero Leadership Training) had a 200 person turnout

New Business

- Vote for appropriations (one for a computer lab upgrade in WUCC 200) was postponed until next week due to confusion in quorum requisites.

-Compiled by Ana Davis

NEWSFLASH

Movie tackles conflict

The President Navon Program for the Study of Sephardic and Oriental Jeand Yovel present, *Shuli's Fiance [Ha'Bachur shel Shuli]*. The movie deals with the question: what is more important, love or family?

The movie is part of the Sixth Annual Lecture Series: Sephardic and Oriental Jews in Israeli Cinema. The screening will take place at the WUC Theater Feb. 15 at 8 p.m. The screening is free for FIU students; other guests will contribute with \$7.00, as a donation.

For more information, contact Professor Zion Zohar at (305) 919-5610.

School of Hospitality and Tourism Management hosts ice cream justice

The School of Hospitality and Tourism Management is hosting an Ice Cream Social Feb. 12 and 13. The event will take place at the HM patio from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. both days. The event will be an opportunity for students to learn about clubs and volunteering in the Food and Wine Festival.

- Compiled by Ana Davis

Join The Beacon!

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OPINION

C. Joel Marino Editor in Chief • Christopher Necuze Production Manager • Chris Cabral Opinion Editor

IRAN: A GRAVE AND GATHERING THREAT

Invading Iran a great idea

JOSE MARTINEZ
Contributing Writer

The current state of foreign policy is a sensitive subject for the Bush administration, which is finding itself committed to success in Iraq. This has not only drained the administration of its popularity with the American people, but has compromised the ability of the American government to respond adequately, in anticipation of impending threats elsewhere in the globe.

With the encroachment of Muslim extremists into Iraq from abroad, it becomes more and more apparent who is truly at the heart of coordinating and perpetuating the violence through funding, training, and providing aid and comfort.

"We have weapons that we know through serial numbers... trace back to Iran," Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno, second in command in Iraq, told *USA Today*.

The Guardian also reports that Hassan Kazemi Qomi, the Iranian ambassador to Iraq, told the *The New York Times* this week that "Tehran was stepping up its military and economic ties with Baghdad."

The most threatening menace endangering the stability of Middle Eastern diplomatic affairs, and ultimately, diminishing any chances of military



AP WIRE

ENFLAMED TENSIONS: Protesters in Iran burn an American flag outside the Swiss embassy. Some say invading Iran would make America safer and establish another flourishing democracy in the Middle East.

victory in Iraq is the Iranian theocracy, which operates under the guise of a legitimate government, with a political figurehead in President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

What most individuals fail to realize is that this is a nation that operates politically under a perverse and primitive form of religious extremism, which ultimately serves to strip the people of their liberties, and establishes a divine justification of rule.

The strides the Iranian regime has made toward the development of nuclear energy and weapons capabilities has been a stark reminder to Western society that these individuals are dead set on slaughtering innocents, all in the name of preserving power and perpetuating Islamic extremism.

Iranian foreign policy interventions essentially consist of

calculated efforts to fund terrorist endeavors against Western targets; negotiations with Russian exporters of nuclear armaments; and the infiltration of the disheveled Iraqi financial infrastructure.

The Iranian regime has taken exhaustive measures to establish banks and other institutions of finance and lending within Iraq, in an effort to foil the efforts of the United States in restoring tranquility to the troubled nation and providing monetary support to terrorist affiliates.

John R. Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control, stated in a recent address, "Russia has agreed to provide all fresh fuel for that reactor, and Iran and Russia are discussing an agreement to return all spent fuel to Russia."

However, if Iran should withdraw from the Nonproliferation

Treaty and renounce this agreement with Russia, the Bushehr reactor would produce enough plutonium each year for about 30 nuclear weapons.

Repeated threats of attack have been made towards Israel in response to any maneuvers on behalf of the United States Iran perceives as disruptive towards its nuclear program. Israel's geographic location in relation to Tehran puts it in incalculable danger of receiving the first blows of any pronounced Iranian military aggression.

The San Francisco Chronicle recently reported an Iranian troop surge: "The Iranian military also is attempting to give the impression that it is bolstering its conventional forces. In December, it staged a massive war game - deploying 120,000 troops as well as tanks, helicopters and armored vehicles near its western

border with Iraq. More recently, Iran's press reported that the Iranian air force had received orders to engage any plane that violates Iranian airspace, just after the reports emerged of U.S. spy planes monitoring Iran's skies."

If the threat posed by Iran is not neutralized soon, either by some method of assertive and aggressive diplomacy, or through the most powerful mobilization of military force the United States Armed Forces can muster, the safety of our nation, our allies and the stability of the Middle East will be irrevocably jeopardized.

I can only hope that liberal idealists who have wrenched control of our government can truly have the foresight and the courage to realize what needs to be done, and take decisive action before the situation worsens.

Cartoon signs of terror cause widespread fear in Boston

TROY BERNARDO
Contributing Writer

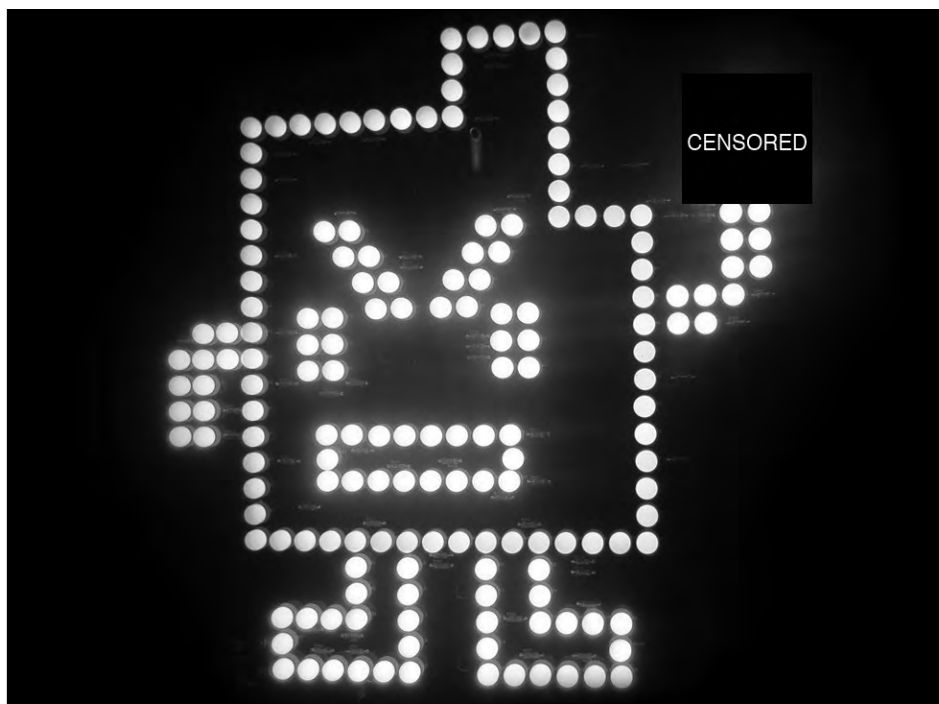
There was a recent scare in Boston after electronic devices were found in public areas and believed to be bombs. They looked like "Lite Brite" boards and were actually advertisements for the television cartoon "Aqua Teen Hunger Force." The signs depicted characters from the show making obscene gestures.

Even though they were up for two to three weeks and were basically harmless, since they were electronic devices in a public area, they were considered bombs. Many major roads and bridges were closed by Boston officials for several hours.

During a press conference, the city admitted that the Turner Broadcasting Company, which owns the T.V. show, had stepped forward and told them that the devices were merely part of a marketing campaign for an upcoming film based on the cartoon.

The city government did not take their word for it, and continued to keep Boston in a state of emergency. The bomb squad eventually blew up the signs.

The argument used by the authorities is that the ads had all the components for an



AP WIRE

THE FACE OF TERROR?: A cartoon character from the Cartoon Network show "Aqua Teen Hunger Force" is depicted on a sign. The ads were mistaken for bombs in Boston.

explosive device- except of course for the explosive part.

While many members of the public, media and government all view this as a

hoax or prank, I disagree with them. The men who posted the ads didn't do it to spread chaos throughout a city, but for publicity. Ultimately, it is the government of the

city of Boston that is truly at fault.

They put the entire city in a state of panic. People were late for work and commuters were stuck in traffic for hours. Assistant Attorney General John Grossman defended the response at a press conference. "This device looks like a bomb," he claimed.

If they were bombs, wouldn't the terrorists who planted them have made them a little less conspicuous? Wouldn't they hide their bombs in a better fashion than by making them look like glowing cartoon characters giving everyone the finger?

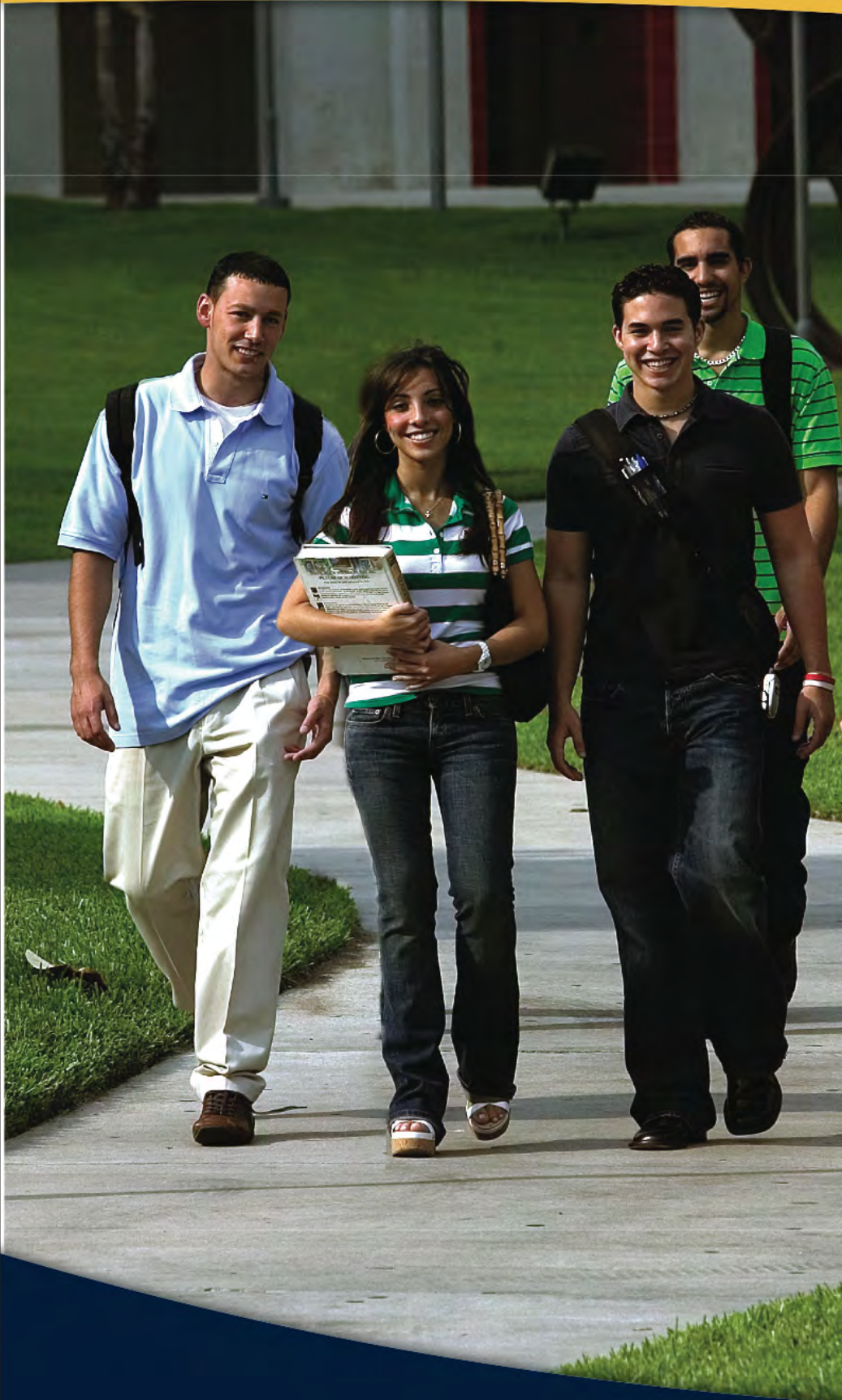
These signs look like somewhat crude advertisements for a cartoon, not weapons of mass destruction.

I have no idea how they could be so misconstrued or misunderstood. The signs weren't just in Boston, they were in 10 other cities in the north east as well. No other cities acted in this way.

Because the City of Boston wants to save face and not look like total idiots they refuse to admit that they were wrong. Now at least two innocent people are looking at two to five years of jailtime.

The Boston government overreacted, and that would be okay, if only they were willing to step forward and take some responsibility for their actions.

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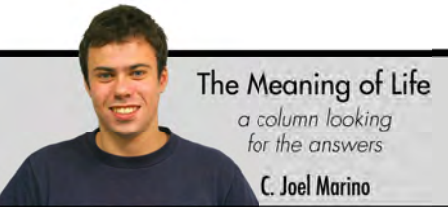
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Life a sad routine for cool mom



The Meaning of Life
a column looking for the answers
C. Joel Marino

“The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.”
— Ecclesiastes 7:4

Barbara Leonard is the embodiment of the “cool” mom.

She doesn’t mind if her children and their friends drink alcohol in the house (even if they’re underage), always makes sure the kitchen is well-stocked with ice cream, microwaveable pizzas and cookies, and she never bothers with curfews. Mrs. Leonard – as she likes to be called – is funny, slow to anger and slow to judge, and is always smiling or laughing.

But for as long as I’ve known her, I’ve always noticed something sad behind that smile. To me, Mrs. Leonard always looked as though she were secretly in mourning.

The first time I met her – my senior year of high school – I was surprised at how calming and easy-going she could be. She was the mom of the guy who would eventually become my best friend, so of course I spent a lot of time at the Leonard household.

By the time I started college, I could only see my best friend on weekends when I visited my parents in Coral Springs, Broward. My parents eventually complained that I was spending more time at Mrs. Leonard’s house than at my own, which was pretty true – once I was eating dinner or watching movies at that place, I didn’t want to leave.

Despite all the conversations we would have whenever I visited, Mrs. Leonard was always more interested in discussing my ambitions and projects than her own. I only found out about the life she’d led from snippets of often drunken chatter with my best friend.

How harshly she had been disciplined by her father.

How she divorced her husband after enduring a long, abusive relationship.

How she had to see one son sent to jail and have another one drop out of high school while struggling with her daughter’s psychological problems.

The pills she took for her depression. Life hadn’t been good to Mrs. Leonard.

“I’m not a person of great joy,” she told me the other day in an interview for this column. “There aren’t any single moments of great happiness that I can look back at and remember, just a dull feeling of contentment.”

For Mrs. Leonard, life is something that must be endured; a task that weighs us down more than it lifts us up.

But Mrs. Leonard is also a devout Christian, a life-long member of the

V DAY THROUGH THE YEARS

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\$1.06 billion American dollars are spent on Valentine’s candy annually. This makes it the fourth biggest holiday for confectionery purchases.

About **85** percent of Valentine’s Day cards are bought by women.



COMPILED BY GEOFFREY ANDERSON JR., GRAPHIC BY ALICIA BUSTAMANTE/THE BEACON

Pageant aims to disprove skin-deep stigmas

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Editor

FIU will be hosting its third Miss FIU pageant on Feb. 18 in the Graham Center Ballrooms for the first time since Jan. 2005. The first place winner will be eligible to compete in the Miss Florida beauty pageant and eventually the Miss America pageant. In addition, it’s an opportunity for contestants to receive scholarship money.

The first Miss FIU pageant took place in 2004, but lack of organization and sponsorship discontinued its support in 2006. However, junior Marbely Hernandez, a representative-at-large with the Student Government Council at University Park, along with faculty advisor Katie McGee decided that the pageant was an event that needed to return to FIU.

“Miss America pageant is the largest scholarship distributor in the country,” McGee said.

“Women have limited scholarship opportunities on campus,” Hernandez said. “Before [2005] it was small-scale, now we wanted to give it a twist.”

The 2007 pageant will stray from the previous two in terms of the number of participants: the 15 contestants

“It’s more than just representing your school. It’s about being a role-model, not just for women, but for everyone.”

— CONTESTANT PAIGE LAPOINTE

representing FIU make up the largest contestant pool that the pageant has ever seen.

Also, the traditional first place, second runner-up and third runner-up prizes are not the only awards distributed in this year’s pageant. The new awards are the Miss Congeniality and Miss Photogenic honors.

Similar to the planning of large campus events, such as Homecoming, a full committee was assigned to organize the pageant. The committee’s goal is to have contestants who want to become more involved within both the FIU and Miami communities.

Contestant Jimena Ordonez welcomes the challenge.

“As a full-time student and employee of FIU, I wanted to do something else,” Ordonez said. “I love my school and the diversity it’s composed of.”

For some pageant contestants, such as Paige LaPointe, the role of Miss FIU goes

beyond the confines of the name.

“It’s more than just representing your school,” LaPointe said. “It’s about being a role-model, not just for women, but for everyone.”

There are five judges consisting of three certified Miss Florida pageant judges and two FIU faculty members. The competition is divided into five categories: evening gown, swimsuit, talent, platform and one on-stage question. Each area accounts for a different percentage of the voting.

For the talent portion, contestants can perform routines such as dancing, singing or acting. During the interview portion, the contestant is asked questions on stage that give judges insight into the contestant’s personality.

Contestants must meet all Miss Florida requirements in order to be eligible. As potential representatives

Ineligible contestant uses pageant to promote awareness

PAGEANT, page 7

of FIU, the chosen girls must be currently enrolled as a full-time student while maintaining a 2.5 grade point average.

For senior Argentina Campos, pageant constraints were only a temporary setback to a greater goal.

The absence of U.S. citizenship prevented Campos from

competing. She was offered an opportunity to still perform her talent, but she declined because she wanted to be able to carry out her platform instead.

Campos was recently diagnosed with Type-1 diabetes. She is currently attempting to raise awareness for Type-1 diabetes, which has no representative group at FIU. She is gaining support from Delta Sigma Pi

along with a number of sponsors to raise money for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

"People diagnosed with Type-1 diabetes feel left out," Campos said. "I want to get FIU involved in an awareness program."

She hopes to organize a Type-1 diabetes walk on March 10 at Metro-Zoo. Campos is planning to contact Hernandez regarding the specifics of her plan.

"We didn't want her to feel left out. We wanted to give her an opportunity to still perform her platform," Hernandez said.

The amount of scholarship money is contingent on the sponsors and ticket sales. Although SGC-UP is the main sponsor for the pageant expenses, every contestant is responsible for having at least one sponsor, preferably one

who is affiliated with FIU.

The final destination for the first place winner would be the 2008 Miss America pageant.

"The Miss America pageant is more about character and talent not so much beauty," McGee said. "That's what the Miss FIU pageant is all about too."

Tickets for the Miss FIU pageant will be on sale in Feb. 12 and 16 in GC.

Worldly pleasures take backseat to God's warm comfort

MEANING, page 7

Methodist church.

Despite her somewhat cynical attitude toward the world and the human condition, Mrs. Leonard has a view of God that I've seldom heard, even from other Christians.

She doesn't believe in a deity who would use the threat of punishment or guilt to attract worshippers (she jokingly refers to this as "that Old Testament God"); instead, Mrs. Leonard clings to a vision of the Supreme Being as something resembling the perfect husband: just someone who can be there to listen to you at the

end of a long day.

"I couldn't have lived my life alone. God has been my companion as I get older, and he gives me the comfort and peace I know can't be found anywhere else," she said.

Though many Christians favor this personable view of God, hearing Mrs. Leonard describe her relationship with the Almighty as though she were about to physically lean on his shoulders surprised me.

Growing up the son of a Pentecostal pastor, I was taught two important things: the Devil would hurt you if you were good because he couldn't stand good people,

but God would punish you if you were bad because he couldn't stand bad people. Either way, I would end up getting hurt no matter how I chose to live my life.

For Mrs. Leonard, it's not God but the world and the people around us that punish us. There is little pleasure to be gained here and the few that we have will soon be forgotten.

Instead, we must buckle down and accept whatever lessons we may find in our daily tortures, hoping that these will bring us closer to the embrace of God.

Life is loss, conflict, chaos, something to be forgotten; God is gain, peace, hope and someone that will treasure you for-

ever.

"I provide my children guidance, not authority," she said. "That's what I feel God is like."

Perhaps that's why I continue to visit the Leonard household. They have the same fights, the same problems, the same meltdowns I see in my family, but unlike my house where we're constantly reminded of all the bad we've done, Mrs. Leonard moves on. You can't change things because that's what the world is like, so why dwell on it?

Life is sad, but Mrs. Leonard knows this, and this is the wisdom that keeps her happy.



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REVIEWS (YOU CAN USE)

THEATRE *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*

ANGIE ESPOSITO
Staff Writer

Maybe it was the soda during intermission or a bladder control problem but *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum's* hilarious antics left me on the verge of wetting myself.

Forum, directed by professor Phillip M. Church, follows the tale of Pseudolus, a witty Roman slave who wishes to gain his freedom from his young master, Hero, by uniting Hero with Philia, the beautiful virgin he's fallen in love with.

The plot keeps you guessing with a series of events that increasingly raise the stakes. What starts off as a nearly flawless plan by Pseudolus turns into a crazy collision of unexpected, hilarious twists as everything he

plans falls apart because of silly reasoning. This leads to even more mischief — like the pressing need for the young virgin Philia to drink a sleeping potion, though she refuses because her religion forbids the consumption of wine.

The combination of potty humor and intellectual jokes makes the show enjoyable for all parties. While it isn't entirely a family friendly show, only a few jokes could be considered truly offensive. However they should go unnoticed by the kiddies who would be more entertained by the slapstick comedy above all else.

The only setback that was evident was the tempo. At times the show just seemed to slow down and drag on. It's hard to say whether it happened because of the type of song at the moment or just the plot situation. Thankfully,

these rough spots aren't often and are easily forgotten by the quirky number that followed.

Of course, no student production is perfect, but the budding talent is immense and it shows.

I was taken aback by Pseudolus, played by Paul Perez. Having seen several productions of *Forum*, it was a delight to actually see someone give the character their own flare — rather than going with the easy and almost guaranteed laugh formula of taking inspiration from actor Nathan Lane, who won a Tony for his amazing performance of Pseudolus in the Broadway run in 1996.

Other characters that are sure to have you doubling over in laughter — or pee your pants like I almost did — are Domina (Ashley Capo) and Senex (Matthew Mur). The two take the woes of married

“What starts off as a nearly flawless plan by Pseudolus turns into a crazy collision of unexpected, hilarious twists as everything he plans falls apart...”

life and magnify them ten-fold, giving couples in the audience something to think about with Valentine's Day just around the corner.

The proteans and courtesans also have their own little quirks that you should watch out for to get a quick laugh throughout the musical.

Other things worth mentioning are the costumes and set. The costumes were wonderful: they emphasized for some, were prac-

tical for others, and others were just pure fun — like the clever use of pyramids and tassels. The set was practical and, well, I think it's safe to say, it's the best yet this season.

Don't miss out on the chance of experiencing a Roman evening of laughter, lechery and love.

A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum will continue to run Feb. 15 to Feb. 18, with tickets \$10 for students and \$12 for everyone else.

GAME *Rogue Galaxy*

LUIS H. GARCIA
Staff Writer

Exploration is always a big part of most role-playing games. Visiting new worlds and not knowing what to expect is what drives us to go further into the unknown. Level 5's newest work, "Rogue Galaxy," takes that desire to the vast reaches of space to deliver an engaging tale that moves the player to see what's out there.

The story starts on the desert planet of Rosa where young Jaster Rogue dreams of exploring space. A chance encounter with a bounty hunter and the crew of a space pirate ship quickly gives Jaster the opportunity he's been waiting for to reach for the stars. It begins simple enough, but with time, the plot thickens.

The settings throughout the game range from huge spanning cities to lush jungles. Towns are bustling with activity and largely populated by humans and various

alien races, which make the game feel big and alive. All exploring, towns and dungeons alike, is handled in real time seamlessly, including random encounters with enemies.

During combat you control one character and the artificial intelligence handles the other two active party members, who can suggest certain actions (like using a skill or item), allowing you to accept or deny them at the push of a button. Fighting tends to be simplistic with mainly attacking all the time, but the action gauge, which decreases with every action and must occasionally refill, does prevent things from being too monotonous and requires you to plan your moves ahead. Also available are abilities learned by placing certain items on a character's abilities chart and forging new weapons from existing ones.

The game itself is quite extensive. With various planets to explore, there is a lot of ground to cover. Save points scattered through the locales allow for fast travel to towns and the nearest spaceport, so getting

around isn't much trouble.

Also, with optional content like bounty hunting and creating items in your own factory, there is plenty to do.

"Rogue Galaxy" does a fine job in its presentation. The visuals are handled with 3-D cell-shading to lend itself to a colorful, animated look. The music is nice, but nothing that great, while the voice acting of the script is handled very well. The only issue is that many of the voice

samples are repeated too often in battle or while exploring, but that can be fixed in the option menu.

Given Level 5's already solid PS2 track record (the "Dark Cloud" series and "Dragon Quest VII"), "Rogue Galaxy" marks another feather in their cap, even in the PS2's twilight. While the quest is nothing that has not been done before, it is still a captivating world to explore and enjoy.

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New Orleans	7-6	11-13	6-4	5-7
Arkansas State	7-6	12-13	9-2	3-9
North Texas	7-6	16-8	11-2	5-6
UALR	6-8	11-14	6-5	4-9
Louisiana-Lafayette	5-9	7-17	6-6	1-11
Denver	3-11	4-20	4-8	0-12

EASTERN DIVISION

TEAM	CONF	OVERALL	HOME	AWAY
Western Kentucky	9-5	17-9	9-2	6-5
South Alabama	12-2	18-7	10-2	7-6
Middle Tennessee	7-7	12-13	6-5	6-5
Florida Atlantic	6-7	11-13	7-2	4-11
Troy	6-8	11-14	6-3	2-10
FIU	4-9	9-14	7-4	2-10

*All records up to date as of Feb. 9

NEXT FOR MEN'S BASKETBALL

MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
			@ MTU 8:00			SAU 3:30
MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
			LLU 5:30			

WOMEN'S SUN BELT BASKETBALL STANDING

WESTERN DIVISION

TEAM	CONF	OVERALL	HOME	AWAY
Arkansas State	10-4	16-8	11-2	4-6
Louisiana-Lafayette	9-4	19-7	9-1	7-6
Denver	8-5	14-9	8-1	5-6
UALR	8-6	12-7	12-2	4-7
Louisiana-Monroe	4-9	13-5	6-5	7-5
North Texas	3-9	6-16	2-12	2-12
New Orleans	2-12	8-17	5-8	2-8

EASTERN DIVISION

TEAM	CONF	OVERALL	HOME	AWAY
Middle Tennessee	14-0	22-3	13-2	9-1
Western Kentucky	11-2	17-5	8-2	8-2
FIU	8-5	14-9	9-5	4-4
South Alabama	5-9	11-13	6-5	3-8
Troy	5-9	12-12	5-5	4-6
FAU	0-13	4-21	3-7	0-12

*All records up to date as of Feb. 9

NEXT FOR WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

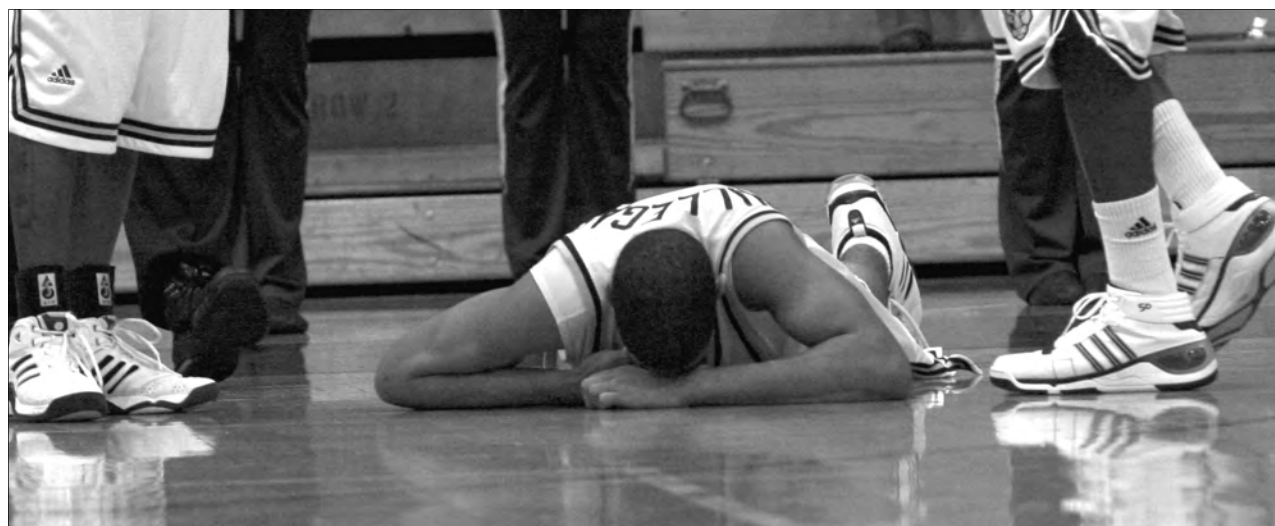
MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
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Sporadic shooting hurts team



JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON

FLOORED: Senior guard Jowen Villegas struggled from the field shooting 3-for-10 in the Golden Panthers' loss to Troy.

BASKETBALL, page 12

bombs from Jackson and guard Boo Ramsey erased that momentary breathing room.

In the blink of an eye, what looked like a sure high scoring affair morphed into a slow, grind-it-out contest - a pace that should have favored the Golden Panthers.

With the exception of sporadic hoops on the fast break from point guard Jerome Odem and big man Sammy Sharp, the Trojans went ice cold from the perimeter and the Golden Panthers followed suit. With both teams struggling from the outside,

the Trojans' dominance in the paint was never more evident. On every possession, the Trojans tossed the ball in the post to Jackson, who either delivered with a basket or dumped it off to one of his teammates coming off a screen. After Odem and Sharp - the recipients of the bulk of those passes - took turns converting lay-ups, the Golden Panthers found themselves in a 52-48 hole with just one minute remaining.

Villegas and the guard tandem of Michael James and Erick Nsangou had trouble breaking an aggressive defensive trap, while Galindo got cold offensively,

and it cost them the game.

If the Golden Panthers had pulled off the win, it would have been their fourth consecutive win at home against a Sun Belt opponent, making it the first time in school history it would have happened.

"It was a goal that I had and I am very upset because I thought we could have won this game," Rouco said. "We held them to just four 3-pointers. And if you hold Troy to four 3-pointers, then you should win the game. Our inside defense wasn't there to make the stops when we needed."

Galindo led the Golden

Panthers with 14 points on 5-for-13 shooting, but had five turnovers. Villegas complimented him with seven points and Nsangou and James chipped in with six points each. FIU swingman Chris Fuller finished with five points, shooting 2-for-9 from the field.

For the Trojans, Jackson did the bulk of the damage with 20 points on an 8-for-11 night from the field. Sharp had nine points and Odem put in six.

The Golden Panthers had never dropped a game to the Trojans prior to the loss and won 67-64 in their previous meeting Dec. 17 on a last second 3-pointer from Galindo.

Women finishing season strong



JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON

HUSTLE: Senior center Liene Bernsone outhustles a Troy defender to a loose ball in 66-61 victory.

WOMEN, page 12

at the end of the year, when we have a couple of home games left. We really need to get at it."

"Coach told us not to lose this game and said we were being out rebounded," junior guard LaQuetta Ferguson said.

Heading down the stretch in the second half, both teams exchanged buckets, matching each other shot for shot until the Golden Panthers pulled away on an 8-2 run that gave them a 58-50 lead with 5:04 remaining in the game.

Despite dealing with foul trouble and struggling to get into a rhythm most of the game, Ferguson finished the game strong scoring

the Golden Panthers' last three field goals.

Though her two-game streak of scoring 20 or more points ended, Ferguson grabbed a game-high 11 rebounds.

"I thought some of the calls were bad, but it comes with the game," Ferguson said, who finished the night off with 12 points, going 5-for-17 from the field. "I just had to calm down and play through it. I never got into a complete flow in this game, but my teammates stepped up so I didn't have to."

This is the Golden Panthers' fifth win in the past six games.

Coach Russo said that she believes her team is peaking right now, and is playing well heading into postseason play.

"I think there's good feeling as a team," Jakabson said. "After this game we should just go up on an emotional level."

The next game on Feb. 15 will be against conference rival Middle Tennessee, who holds the best record in the Sun-Belt Conference.

The first round of Sun Belt postseason play will begin on Feb. 28.

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This year's class will bring spark to next year's team

SIGNING DAY, page 12

Cristobal said.

Along with his versatility, Rolle also has big play capability. Rolle returned four kickoffs for touchdowns during his high school career.

In addition, Cristobal concentrated on recruiting athletes near home as 14 of the new players come from Florida, including eight from South Florida.

Among the eight were second-team All-Miami-Dade County defensive back Anthony Gaitor who recorded 87 tackles and seven interceptions this year while helping his team win the 6A High School Championship game.

Accompanying Gaitor on the defensive side of the ball will be 6-2, 195-pound linebacker Jarvis Wilson who was an honorable Mention All-Dade County by the Miami Herald.

"This is our home state, there are plenty of good players here," Cristobal said.

Besides focusing on recruits at home, Cristobal and his coaching staff managed to land their first recruits outside the state of Florida. Under former head coach Don Strock, FIU only recruited within the state of Florida.

The most coveted recruit was 6-4, 195-pound quarterback Colt Anderson from Omaha, Neb., who is a dual threat with his arm and legs. He led his high school team to a 12-1 record last season, while recording 2,100 passing yards, 24 touchdowns,

350 rushing yards and four rushing touchdowns.

Aside from physical abilities, leadership skills factored heavily in the recruitment process. The goal was to recruit players who led their teams against the elite competition in the high school level. Hence the majority of the recruits - 95 percent - were their respective team's captains.

Offensive lineman Shaquan Hicks from Sandersville, Ga., weighs roughly 320 pounds. Although offensive lineman Ernest Goodley is much lighter, he allowed no sacks during his senior year at South Plantation High School.

"We need to be tough upfront," Cristobal said. "Without that, you can't get anything done."

The athletes' character and off-field attributes needed to match their athletic abilities on the field in order to be recruited; a successful 2007 football season is dependent on academics and athletic performance, Cristobal said.

"We came in here with a goal and a mind set to compete at a high level," Cristobal said. "We wanted guys that were not only of high character but of

great athletic ability. We chose not to compromise on either end of that."

According to Cristobal, recruitment was a non-stop, three-week process. It was a different experience for him as a head coach rather than an assistant, due to recruiting guidelines, which restrict the amount of visits a head coach can make.

However, Cristobal was not restricted from meeting the families of the new members of the Golden Panthers football team. Meeting the families gave Cristobal insight into the players' lives that could not be measured by strength and training exercises.

With the influx of freshmen, coaches believe that depth at several positions on the offensive side will spark fierce competition and help players develop faster and more efficiently.

"We made it a point to recruit guys that can make an impact. That can make a difference right now," Cristobal said. "We don't have the luxury of having to red-shirt guys and kind of putting them in the bank for the future. We want them on the field right now making those kinds of plays."

2007 FOOTBALL SIGNING CLASS

Name	Position	Height	Weight	High School
Colt Anderson	QB	6-4	195	Omaha Westside HS
Kendall Berry	WR	6-0	185	Haines City HS
Ricky Booker	DE/LB	6-3	245	Dr. Phillips HS
Curtis Bryant	DT	6-3	270	South Miami HS
Chris Cawthon	OL	6-4	320	Grayson HS
Greg Ellingson	WR	6-3	200	Tampa Robinson HS
Jason Frierson	WR	5-8	160	Coral Gables HS
Anthony Gaitor	DB	5-10	175	Northwestern HS
Ernest Goodley	OL	6-3	260	South Plantation HS
Shaquan Hicks	OL	6-2	324	Washington Country HS
Darold Hughes	QB	6-3	195	Archbishop Shaw HS
Bryan Mann	QB	6-3	195	Glades Central
Jermaine Malcolm	WR	6-1	190	Palm Beach Lakes HS
Devin Parrish	DB	6-0	185	Milford Academy
Cody Pellicer	DL	6-3	235	Spruce Creek HS
Marquis Rolle	WR	6-3	185	Olympia HS
James Rucker	WR	6-1	190	Englewood HS
Jarvis Wilson	LB	6-2	195	Carol City HS

As of Friday, Feb. 9 the players above signed their letters of intent to play for FIU.

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TALENT SEARCH

New coach looks to build future with recruits

CHARLIE GRAU AND SERGIO BONILLA
Beacon Staff

New head football coach Mario Cristobal had a reputation of being one of the best recruiters in the country while at the University of Miami and Rutgers. In fact, he was one of the recruiters who helped build Rutgers into the successful team it was last season.

On Feb. 7, National Signing Day, coach Cristobal began the process of turning the Golden Panthers into a hopeful future powerhouse with his first recruiting class. Cristobal took the initial steps by bringing in a class of 18 recruits, 12 of whom play on the offensive side of the ball.

Cristobal and his staff were the first to recruit players from out the state of Florida and were successful in signing three out of state players.

After rigorous film analysis of last year's team, the coaching staff decided to focus heavily on the offensive side of the ball, Cristobal said, and signed three quarterbacks, five wide receivers and three offensive linemen.

"Offensively, we're going to be very aggressive," Cristobal said. "Our receivers on offense will have to do a couple of things."

Many players, such as 6-4, 320-pound offensive lineman Chris Cawthon, fit Cristobal's vision. Cawthon's athleticism may cause some problems among coaches who will fight to have him on either the offensive or defensive side of the ball. If he's not anchoring the



SERGIO BONILLA/THE BEACON

SUPER MARIO: FIU head football coach Mario Cristobal's first recruiting class yielded 18 recruits; 12 which are on the offensive side of the ball.

offensive line as a guard, he may be stuffing the run as a defensive tackle.

Coaches are hoping to see the offense excel under offensive coordinator James Coley's spread offense, Cristobal said.

Among those players who may be benefiting the most from Coley's spread offense will be 6-3, 185-pound wide receiver Marquis Rolle, who will also be

pounding the ball inside as a running back. His tremendous speed, clocking in at 4.4 seconds in the 40-yard dash, fits demands that the spread offense requires.

"We need to have more physical receivers against the tougher teams,"

SIGNING DAY, page 11

Men's basketball falls short

RENALDO SMITH
Staff Writer

The men's basketball team used good defense to strangle one of the more potent offensive teams in the Sun Belt Conference, but it was their own offensive struggles down the stretch that proved to be the deciding factor Feb. 8.

The Golden Panthers shot a dismal 7-for-25 (28 percent) from the field in the second half, en route to a 56-51 loss to the Troy Trojans at Pharmed Arena.

After the game, coach Sergio Rouco summed up his team's offensive struggles.

"We are a team that sometimes shoots it well and sometimes shoots it bad, and we shot it bad today. We can always defend and there were break downs on defense at the end so they made the shots and won the basketball game," he said.

Right from the opening tip, both teams wasted little time finding their groove offensively. Sophomore Alex Galindo shouldered the offensive load for the Golden Panthers early-on taking advantage of his quickness in the paint. Meanwhile, the Trojans countered with a forward of their own in Cedric Jackson, who had his way with the small Golden Panther front court.

With both teams getting virtually whatever they wanted on the offensive end, the biggest lead for either team was a mere four points. Jackson was able to match Galindo's 10-point total by halftime, but the Golden Panthers held a slim two-point advantage at 30-28.

Senior guard Johwen Villegas' 3-pointer from the left corner gave the Golden Panthers their biggest lead of the game at 33-28 early in the half. However, the Trojans weren't ready to fall behind just yet and consecutive 3-point

BASKETBALL, page 10

Women's basketball team finishes game strong

CHARLIE GRAU
Sports Editor

At over six feet tall, senior center Lasma Jekabsone is usually the tallest player on the court.

Like her height, Jekabsone played a game head-and-shoulders above everyone else, scoring a season-high 26 points, blocking two shots and grabbing nine rebounds, as the Golden Panthers defeated Troy 66-61 Feb. 8 at Pharmed Arena.

"She had a lot of confidence with her shooting ability tonight," coach Cindy Russo said. "She took charge. She did a nice job. It reminds me of the old Lasma that I know. I'm real happy for her."

The Latvia native set the tone for the game by making two of the Golden Panthers' (14-9, 8-5)

first three shots and blocking Amy Lewis's first shot for Troy (12-12, 5-9).

"It was time for me to take initiative in the post area," Jekabsone said. "I used my height advantage and just took the same shots I take in practice."

Following Jekabsone's early performance, Troy bounced back quickly, going ahead 8-2.

The Golden Panthers slowly chipped away at Troy, finally capturing a lead off a 3-pointer by sophomore guard Iva Ciglar with 5:54 left to play in the first half.

Ciglar, who had just returned to the team after sustaining a high ankle sprain, converted the last two field goals of the half to give the Golden Panthers a 33-32 lead at the half.

The Golden Panthers' dismal first half shooting from the field

buried the team in a hole, but their defense allowed them to stay in the game.

Their 3-point and free throw shooting also helped them keep their lead. The Golden Panthers shot 5-for-15 from 3-point range and 10-for-11 from the free throw line in the first half.

"There were a couple of possessions where we just dug in defensively," Russo said.

Although the Golden Panthers were up by one at the half, coach Russo felt that her team wasn't playing to its full potential.

"I didn't think we were hustling in the first half. We were being out-hustled and out-rebounded," Russo said. "That's not the way you play at the end of the year or any time. Especially



JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON

CLEAR THE WAY: Sophomore guard Iva Ciglar fell short of a double-double, scoring 10 and dishing out nine assists.

WOMEN, page 10